

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY 8 MAY 2025 AT 9.30AM IN NIPB HEADQUARTERS, JAMES HOUSE, BELFAST

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mr Mukesh Sharma (Chair)
- Mr Brendan Mullan (Vice Chair)
- (1) Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
- Mrs Linda Dillon MLA
- (2) Ms Cheryl Brownlee MLA
- Miss Nuala McAllister MLA
- Mr Tommy O'Reilly
- (3) Mr Peter Osborne
- Mr Les Allamby
- (4) Mr Frank McManus
- (5) Mr Alan Chambers MLA
- (6) Mr Peter McReynolds MLA
- (7) Mr Trevor Clarke MLA
- (5) Mr Mark H Durkan MLA
- (8) Mr Gerry Kelly MLA
- (9) Mrs Marian Cree
- (10) Mr Keith Buchanan MLA
- (11) Mr Patrick Nelson
- Dr Kate Lavery

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

- (12) Mr Jon Boutcher, Chief Constable
- (12) Mr Bobby Singleton, Deputy Chief Constable
- (12) Ms Pamela McCreedy, Chief Operating Officer
- (12) Mr Mark McNaughten, Assistant Chief Officer Corporate Services
- (12) Mr Anthony McNally, Assistant Chief Constable
- (12) Mr Lloyd McKeag, Head of Legal
- (12) Ms Claire McGuigan, Detective Chief Superintendent
- (12) Four Officials

**NORTHERN IRELAND
POLICING BOARD OFFICIALS
IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mrs Sinead Simpson, Chief Executive
Mr Sam Hagen, Senior Director of
Resources
Mr Adrian McNamee, Director of
Performance
Four Officials

**OPERATION KENOVA IN
ATTENDANCE:**

(5) Sir Iain Livingstone

**OTHER OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr John Wadham, Human Rights Advisor

- (1)** Left at 1.10pm
- (2)** From public session, left at 1.45pm
- (3)** From 10.15am
- (4)** Left at 2.15pm
- (5)** Public session only
- (6)** Left at 1.45pm
- (7)** From public session, left at 2.45pm
- (8)** Left at 2.30pm
- (9)** Left at 2.55pm
- (10)** Left at 2.50pm
- (11)** Left at 2.20pm
- (12)** Item 10 only

The Chair opened the meeting and set out the programme, reminding Members of changes to the standard programme due to commemorations for the anniversary of VE day.

Members **AGREED** the agenda.

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared and Members did not indicate any matters they wished to raise under 'Any Other Business' at agenda item 12.

3. DRAFT MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING(S):

3.1 Thursday 3 April 2025

The Chair asked Members to consider the draft minutes from the Board meeting held on Thursday 3 April 2025.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The minutes of the Board meeting held on Thursday 3 April 2025 be approved for publication.

4. QUESTIONS TO THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

4.1 Chief Constable's Accountability Report

Members **NOTED** the Chief Constable's Accountability report to inform discussion with the PSNI leadership team and were reminded that the Chief Constable will provide a deep dive in the public session of today's meeting on legacy, including the impact of legacy investigations on PSNI budget and operations.

Members also **NOTED** the Operation Kenova progress report previously made available to the Board in November 2024 and that Sir Iain Livingstone, Head of Operation Kenova, will be joining PSNI at today's meeting in public to provide an update.

4.2 Individual Members Written Questions and Responses

Members **NOTED** the follow up responses to verbal questions from the Board meeting on 3 April 2025 and the PSNI responses to Members' written questions received during the reporting period.

Members raised the following matters in respect of PSNI written responses:

- Allegations of sectarianism in the PSNI Tactical Support Group (TSG) and plans to address wider issues around inclusion as part of the scope/ Terms of Reference (TOR) for a future Cultural Audit.
Following discussion it was agreed to progress this matter at the Board's Resources Committee. **(AP1)**
- Dissatisfaction with the detail provided in response to the written response on the PSNI use of technology supplied by the company Cellebrite.
Following discussion the Member was content to follow up with PSNI later in the meeting.
- In relation to PSNI use of Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS) further information was requested on the criteria used as part of the PSNI Crime review of CHIS, and it was agreed to follow up with PSNI later in the meeting.

Members also advised of additional questions to the Chief Constable and his team at the public and private sessions later in the meeting.

4.3 Committee Written Questions and Responses

There were no Committee written questions during the reporting period.

4.4 Key Issues of Public Interest

Members **NOTED** a paper from the Communications manager which detailed recent issues of public interest relevant to the Board's areas of work.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

5.1 Partnership Committee – 17 April 2025

The Board **NOTED** the Partnership Committee Chair's report and draft minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2025.

The Committee Vice Chair advised of two recommendations in relation to the Committee Annual Report 2024-25 and the Draft Policing & Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) Annual Effectiveness Report 2023-24.

A Member requested amendments to the PCSP Annual Effectiveness Report in respect of strategic priorities and agreed to share further details, in writing, with the Chief Executive. **(AP2)**

It was subsequently **AGREED** by Members to:

- **APPROVE** the Partnership Committee Annual Report 2024-25, and,
- **APPROVE** the PCSP Draft Annual Effectiveness Report 2023-24 and its publication on the Board's website, subject to the changes referenced above.

5.2 Resources Committee

In the absence of a scheduled Resources Committee meeting for April 2025, Committee Members **NOTED** the outcome of decisions taken by Selected Medical Practitioners (SMP) and Independent Medical Referee's (IMR) and **CONFIRMED** the implementation and reassessment dates for the SMP and IMR cases outlined by written procedure.

Members were asked to **NOTE** the decisions taken by the Board by written procedure in April 2025, and the requisite number of Board Members **APPROVED**:

- The PSNI Above Delegated Authority (ADA) Request in relation to a compensation claim against the Chief Constable, and,
- The two General Authorisation extensions and one Occasional Authorisation requests submitted by PSNI.

A Member raised concerns regarding the ADA request referenced above and whether key learnings have been implemented, and was advised that correspondence has been issued to PSNI to highlight Committee concerns and a response is awaited.

5.3 Performance Committee – 10 April 2025

The Board **NOTED** the Performance Committee Chair's report and draft minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2025.

6. BOARD BUSINESS

6.1 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection Report 2024-25

The Director of Performance presented a paper asking Members to consider and agree next steps following the recent publication, on 2 April 2025, of an HMICFRS Inspection Report – ‘The Police Service of Northern Ireland: An inspection of police effectiveness and efficiency’, and a request for initial feedback from Members.

Members were advised of next steps which includes seeking Board approval to issue correspondence to the Chief Constable for comments on the report, preparation of any review comments from the Board and PSNI, and a response to PSNI comments where appropriate.

Further discussions will also take place at the Board’s Performance and Partnership Committees, followed by the preparation of draft Board response and a publication report for Members to consider at a future Board meeting, and a copy of any published document will be shared with DOJ.

A Member provided initial comments on the report and it was agreed that further details will be submitted, in writing, to the Director of Performance. **(AP3)**

Following discussion it was **AGREED** to:

- **APPROVE** the next steps outlined and issue draft correspondence to the Chief Constable to fulfil the Board’s legislative remit in relation to the HMICFRS Inspection report.

6.2 Review of the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) – Response and Next steps

The Chief Executive presented a paper for Members to **NOTE** the responses from the NIPB Review working group to the recommendations made in the Report of the independent review of the Board, as previously noted at the Board meeting in March 2025, and proposed next steps following extensive discussions by the working group.

Members raised the following matters in relation to the review of the Board and next steps:

- Reference to the Tripartite relationship (between NIPB, PSNI, and DOJ) and the development of a new Partnership Agreement being clearly recognised as part of next steps to evolve the relationship, and it was agreed to include as part of the Board's response. **(AP4)**
- Concern around the suggestion of removing the July Board meeting from the schedule in response to the Board's excessive workload, given the operational challenges on policing at this time of year.
- Whether the proposal to carry out an external effectiveness review of the Board every 5 years is sufficient.
In response Members were advised that an internal review will be carried out on an annual basis to ensure more frequent review and that agreed actions are monitored to facilitate progress to completion.
- Concern as to whether the proposed next steps sufficiently address the real or perceived view of a dominant political culture.
In response Members were advised that the review authors consulted with a wide range of external stakeholders and the review did not quantify this view, and Members were assured there will be further opportunities

to discuss such concerns including as part of the annual/5 yearly reviews and more imminently it was suggested that this should be the theme for a facilitated discussion between members.

- Clarity on the proposed recommendation in respect of commissioning an independent assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of PSNI. In response Members were advised of the DOJ considerations which included a full Peel inspection by HMICFRS noting the significant costs for DOJ of such an inspection and the impact on PSNI.
- To ensure that recommendation 13 regarding legislative amendments clearly reflects the view of the Board that it will continue to lobby for legislative change to remove the administration of Ill Health Retirement and Injury on Duty schemes from the Board, and it was agreed to include as part of the Board response. **(AP4)**

Members expressed concerns regarding the delay in responses from PSNI and DOJ on the review report and whether a timescale could be set to move this along. Members also discussed the need for another meeting of the review working group to discuss the implementation of next steps.

In response Officials agreed to engage further with PSNI and DOJ in relation to response timescales and Members were advised that discussions will take place with the Board Chair and Vice Chair to explore action on next steps and the need for another working group meeting. **(AP5)**

Following discussion Members:

- **AGREED** the proposed next steps, subject to the implementation of the changes outlined above, and,

- **AGREED** the proposal to publish the Board response when the Minister has formally responded.

6.3 Justice Bill – Clause 22: Delegation of functions to Members and Officials of the Board.

The Chief Executive presented a paper on Clause 22 of the Justice Bill which makes provision for the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) to delegate to Members and Officials the ability to exercise functions of the Board.

Members were advised that following previous discussions at the Board Meeting in March 2025, the Board's Committees have now had the opportunity to consider the functions set out in the TOR for each committee and determine which, if any, of their functions they were content to delegate to Officials when there is a functioning Board, and which, if any, functions they would wish to delegate to Officials when there is not a functioning Board.

Members were referred to the scheme of delegations in the accompanying paper for the Performance Committee, Resources Committee, Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, Special Purposes Committee, Discipline Committee, and the Chair's Advisory Group.

In respect of the Partnership Committee, the Chief Executive outlined concerns from Committee Members in relation to the administration of the Police Property Fund (PPF) in the absence of a functioning Board.

Specifically, some Committee Members were content to delegate the full administration of the scheme to officials with the support of independent Members in the absence of a functioning Board, and other Members were of the view for the scheme to be launched but no decisions should be taken on the scope of the funding arrangements.

Members discussed the quantum of funds involved with the PPF; concerns in relation to the adherence to criteria for funding; and the negative impact if the PPF cannot be administered in the absence of a functioning Board.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** to:

- **APPROVE** the proposed scheme of delegations with a change to the delegation from Partnership Committee on administration of the Police Property Fund to make it clear the delegation related to the administration of the fund and there should be no deviation from the previously agreed scope of the funding arrangements.

The Chief Executive advised that an updated paper to reflect the changes discussed will be brought to the Board meeting in June 2025 for Members information. **(AP6)**

7. **ACTION LOG**

Members **NOTED** the action log for the Board meetings held on 3 April 2025, 6 March 2025 and 6 February 2025.

In relation to action point 4 from the Board meeting on 3 April 2025 the Chief Executive advised that this relates to a Home Office consultation on the National Crime Agency strategic priorities for 2025-26 and a request for clarity on the role of the Board in this consultation process. A response is awaited on this matter and this action will remain open.

In relation to the open action points from the Board meeting on 6 March 2025 the Chief Executive provided the following updates:

- Action point 6 – this relates to the removal of Ill Health Retirement (IHR) and Injury on Duty (IOD) scheme management responsibilities from the Board to PSNI and a formal response is awaited from the Chief Constable.

In the interim the Chief Constable has provided an informal response that he is keen to own the process and has suggested a roundtable discussion to progress the matter.

- Action point 8 – this relates to the Board's draft response to the Omagh Bomb Inquiry, and discussions are continuing with the Crown Solicitors Office prior to submission. This action will remain open.
- Action point 9 – this relates to a complaint from a serving PSNI officer and correspondence has been issued to the Chief Constable to request the necessary assurances. A response is awaited and this action will remain open.

In relation to the open action points from the Board meeting on 6 February 2025 the Chief Executive provided the following updates:

- Action point 4 – this relates to correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office regarding Historical Institutional Abuse.
The Board has been copied into an interim response from PSNI to the Committee outlining PSNI's intentions to meet with the Clerk to the Committee to discuss how the request can be more fully met. This action can now be closed.
- Action point 6 – this relates to the proposed schedule for the publication of the McCullough Review report and discussions will take place between the Board and PSNI on a specific timeframe. This action will remain open.

Members **NOTED** the updates provided.

8. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

8.1 Chair's Report

The Chair asked the Board to **NOTE** the Chair's report and associated addendum which advised Members of:

- The Chair's engagements carried out during the period 4 April 2025 to 30 April 2025.
- A full list of correspondence issued and received by the Chair during the period 31 March 2025 to 6 May 2025.

In respect of engagements which may be of particular interest the Chair referred Members to Appendix 1A of the report for further information.

The Chair did not highlight any engagements but drew Members attention to the following matters in relation to correspondence:

- Correspondence from Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Henderson in relation to a PSNI workplace dispute and the Chair asked the Member with some involvement in this case to provide further comments.
The Member outlined the circumstances of the case involving a serving PSNI Officer; nature of the complaints; recent media coverage; actions taken by PSNI to address the Officers concerns, which he considered to have fallen below expectations; assurances received in the correspondence as part of a workforce dispute resolution process. Some issues were raised about the appropriate role for the Board in such matters and it was agreed that the Board acknowledges the

correspondence and the current handling of the case by the DCC and seeks an update in due course on progress.

(AP7)

- Correspondence received in respect of allegations of sectarianism in the PSNI Tactical Support Group (TSG).
- Correspondence from PSNI outlining plans to video Board Members participating in the ride-along scheme, and that Members interested in participating should contact the Board's Communications manager.

A Member asked for an update on matters relating to the President of the National Black Police Association and it was agreed to follow up with PSNI on this matter. **(AP8)**

Members **NOTED** the additional updates provided.

8.2 Board Decision taken by Written Procedure – 3 April 2025

Members were asked to **NOTE** correspondence in relation to a mutual aid request for the secondment to An Garda Síochána (AGS) of an Officer and victim recovery dog to assist in a missing person search.

The Chair advised that due to time pressures the decision was taken to approve the request from AGS and retrospective approval was then sought and **AGREED** with Members by written procedure.

8.3 Chief Constable attendance at Board meeting in June 2025

Members were asked to **NOTE**, as previously advised, that the Chief Constable will not be attending the Board meeting in June 2025 due to a prior engagement.

8.4 25 Years of New Policing Arrangements

Members were asked to **NOTE** that November 2026 will be the 25 year anniversary of the Policing Board and PSNI, and advised of the proposal to establish a working group to consider plans to recognise the occasion.

Nominations were requested for the working group and it was subsequently **AGREED** that:

- Mr Keith Buchanan MLA, Mr Gerry Kelly MLA, Dr Kate Lavery, Mr Brendan Mullan, Mr Tommy O'Reilly, Mr Peter Osborne, and Mr Mukesh Sharma will sit on the working group.

9. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

The Board **NOTED** a report from the Chief Executive which provided an overview of governance and organisational matters and to inform the Board of key items of correspondence relating to Board business.

The Chief Executive drew Members attention to the following matters:

- DOJ have advised of the 2025-26 opening budget allocations for NIPB and this will be progressed through the relevant Board Committee.
- Overview of Management accounts to the end of March 2025 alongside explanations for the easements highlighted to DOJ.
- The Business plan performance report for quarter 4 providing a summary of progress made against the Annual Business Plan 2024-25 actions in quarter 4 (Jan 2025 – March 2025).

- Equality and Disability plan updates for quarter 4 provided for information.
- In relation to information management, work continues to manage a backlog of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, reviews of decisions on FOIs, and Data Protection Act requests.
- In relation to Senior Officer matters evidence has now been submitted to the Senior Salaries Review Body as part of a recent oral evidence session, and evidence is due to be submitted to the Police Remuneration Review Body later this month.
- Upcoming dates for TEAM PSNI events and Attestation ceremonies provided for information should Members wish to attend.
- The recruitment competition for a new Board Human Rights Advisor which closes on 12 May 2025 with interviews planned for June 2025.
- Changes to access arrangements for Board meetings in public with full details of the revised process available on the Board's website.

Amendments to Committee agendas over the coming months to mirror Board meeting agendas where strategic presentations and decision items are taken at the start of the agenda.

The Chief Executive did not highlight any items of correspondence.

The Vice Chair requested an update on progress made in relation to providing Independent Custody Visitors with access to custody records, and the Board's Human Rights Advisor provided Members with an update following a recent meeting with DOJ on this matter.

Members were also advised that this has been raised at the NI Assembly Justice Committee, and Members discussed the option of an amendment to the Justice Bill currently being progressed through the NI Assembly, as well as the role of the Justice Committee, Justice Minister, and the Board's Political Members to progress the amendment.

Members **NOTED** the updates provided.

10. PRIVATE SESSION WITH THE CHIEF CONSTABLE AND PSNI LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Chair welcomed the Chief Constable Jon Boutcher, Deputy Chief Constable Bobby Singleton, Chief Operating Officer Pamela McCreedy, Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) Corporate Services Mark McNaughten, Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Anthony McNally, Detective Chief Superintendent Claire McGuigan, and Lloyd McKeag, Head of Legal to the meeting.

Following this the Board Chair invited Members questions to the Chief Constable and the following matters were discussed with the PSNI Leadership team:

Publication of photos of convicted offenders - Referencing a recent media article, a Member sought an update on the review of the policy regarding the publication of photos of convicted offenders. PSNI provided detail on the considerations around public interest, and acknowledged that whilst it has taken longer than anticipated to finalise the policy, the intention is to move to a position to publish, in most cases, noting that it may not always be possible due to required safeguards.

Processing of firearms licenses - In response to a Member's question regarding the costs associated with the processing of firearms licenses, Members discussed with PSNI the aspiration that this should be cost-neutral to the service and noted an upcoming DOJ consultation on the matter. In a follow

up question, a Member referenced the failure of the previously introduced system to deliver the expected streamlining of the service and expressed a preference of an internal independent review of the system, noting the revenue generated from gun related sporting activities in NI. The Chief Constable agreed to provide a written update on delays in the processing (including in relation to appeals) and the extent to which some issues may be outside the control of the PSNI for example in relation to medical assessment requirements.

Recent media coverage regarding convictions in relation to network of individuals involved in human trafficking and controlling prostitution - A Member commended PSNI work in relation to this and sought an update as to whether this investigation is still ongoing. The Chief Constable noted there are no further investigations at this time and praised the bravery of the women who came forward to support the prosecution.

Other areas discussed with PSNI included:

- A recent NIAO Report on PSNI Fleet Management including the number of EV vehicles which PSNI have not yet commissioned into service – PSNI noted that this report would be brought to a future meeting of the Resources Committee.
- Stop and Search and the over-representation of young people in these statistics – it was agreed the PSNI would provide a written response to the Member's question in relation to this.
- Follow up questions regarding responses received to written questions. One in relation to the scrutiny and review processes in place regarding the management of covert human intelligence sources (CHIS), and the second in relation to PSNI use of Cellebrite technology.
- Progress towards a multi-annual budget settlement for PSNI – Members commended PSNI for bringing the 2024-25 budget in with minimal underspend (- 0.018%) and discussed the steps needed to move towards multi-year financial planning.

The Chair thanked the Chief Constable Jon Boutcher, Deputy Chief Constable Bobby Singleton, Chief Operating Officer Pamela McCreedy, ACO Corporate Services Mark McNaughten, ACC Anthony McNally, Detective Chief Superintendent Claire McGuigan, and Lloyd McKeag, Head of Legal and they left the meeting.

11. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

The Communications manager provided an update on proposed media activity in relation to the PSNI recovery plan business case and legacy discussions at today's meeting.

Members discussed the role of the Board in respect of legacy cases and the importance of engaging with all stakeholders and acknowledged the positive progress regarding increased openness and transparency on these matters.

Following discussion it was agreed to write to the Justice Minister in respect of the Department of Finance response to the PSNI recovery plan business case **(AP9)**, and to write to the relevant parties on legacy funding following the Chief Constable's comments at today's meeting. **(AP10)**

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Following the PSNI response to a written question a Member requested that further consideration is given to representativeness in PSNI by geographical/council area, for both current Officers and during the recruitment process, and it was agreed to refer this matter to the Board's Resources Committee. **(AP11)**

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Board Meeting is scheduled for Thursday 5 June 2025 at 9.30am in James House.

The meeting closed at 3pm.

Strategic Planning & Governance
May 2025

Chair