

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY 5 JUNE 2025 AT 9.30AM IN NIPB HEADQUARTERS, JAMES HOUSE, BELFAST

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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

**POLICE SERVICE OF
NORTHERN IRELAND IN
ATTENDANCE:**

- (7) Mr Bobby Singleton, Deputy Chief Constable
- (7) Ms Pamela McCreedy, Chief Operating
Officer
- (7) Mr Mark McNaughten, Assistant Chief Officer
Corporate Services
- (7) Mr Anthony McNally, Assistant Chief
Constable
- (7) Mr Ryan Henderson, Assistant Chief
Constable
- (7) Ms Melanie Jones, Assistant Chief Constable
- (7) Mr Davy Beck, Assistant Chief Constable
- (7) Ms Clare Duffield, Assistant Chief Officer
People and Organisational Development
- (7) Three Officials

**NATIONAL CRIME AGENCY IN
ATTENDANCE:**

- (7) Mr Graeme Biggar, Director General
- (7) One Official

**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
Ms Jenny Passmore, Director of Partnership
Ms Sarah Reid, T/Director of Police Pensions
& Injury Benefits
Three Officials

**OTHER OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr John Wadham, Human Rights Advisor

- (1) Out for item 9.3 only
- (2) Left after public session
- (3) Left at 2.30pm
- (4) Left at 2.35pm
- (5) Left at 3.05pm
- (6) Left after public session, rejoined from 3.30pm
- (7) Items 10 & 11 only

The Chair opened the meeting and set out the programme, noting that today's programme includes public and private sessions with the National Crime Agency Director General.

Members **AGREED** the agenda.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr Frank McManus and Mrs Linda Dillon MLA.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair advised Members of a conflict of interest at agenda item 9.3 and that he and another Member will leave the meeting for this item.

A Member indicated a potential conflict of interest in relation to an item of correspondence in the meeting papers and indicated they will leave the meeting should this item be discussed.

Members did not indicate any matters they wished to raise under 'Any Other Business' at agenda item 13.

3. DRAFT MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING(S):

3.1 Thursday 8 May 2025

The Chair asked Members to consider the draft minutes from the Board meeting held on Thursday 8 May 2025.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The minutes of the Board meeting held on Thursday 8 May 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, with a foreword from the Deputy Chief Constable, to inform discussion with the PSNI leadership team at today's public and private meetings.

4.2 Individual Members Written Questions and Responses

Members **NOTED** the follow up responses from PSNI to verbal questions at the Board meeting on 8 May 2025 and the PSNI responses to Members' written questions since the last meeting.

In relation to the PSNI response on recommendations from the stalking & domestic violence report a Member asked for clarity regarding training on this matter and whether it was optional or mandatory and the extent to which uptake reflects the culture of the organisation.

In response, the Director of Performance advised the matter will be considered further with PSNI at the next Board's Performance Committee meeting in May 2025. **(AP1)**

Members advised the Chair and Chief Executive of any additional questions for the Office of the Chief Constable and the NCA DG at the public and private sessions later in the meeting.

4.3 Committee Written Questions and Responses

There were no Committee written questions submitted 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 Resources Committee - 29 May 2025

The Board **NOTED** the Resources Committee Chair's report of the meeting held on 29 May 2025.

The Committee Chair advised of the recommendation to **NOTE**, but not approve at this stage, the PSNI Resource Plan 2025-26, due to a significant funding gap

which can hopefully be addressed through in-year monitoring rounds, and the Committee recommendation to approve two PSNI Above Delegated Authority requests in relation to compensation claims.

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

- **NOTE** the PSNI Resource Plan 2025-26, and,
- **APPROVE** the two PSNI Above Delegated Authority Request outlined in relation to compensation claims against the Chief Constable.

5.2 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) – 29 May 2025

The Board **NOTED** the ARAC Chair's report of the meeting held on 29 May 2025.

The Committee Vice Chair advised of one recommendation in relation to the ARAC Annual Report 2024-25 and it was subsequently **AGREED** to:

- **APPROVE** the publication of the ARAC Annual Report 2024-25 as part of the composite report for all Committee Annual Reports.

5.3 Performance Committee – 15 May 2025

The Board **NOTED** the Performance Committee Chair's report and draft minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2025.

6. BOARD BUSINESS

6.1 National Crime Agency & PSNI Serious and Organised Crime Performance Reports

The Director of Performance presented a paper which provided Members with a summary report of the NCA and PSNI's performance and activity in Northern Ireland in respect of Serious and Organised Crime for Quarter 3 & Quarter 4 (October 2024 to March 2025).

Members **NOTED** the detailed analysis provided by Board Officials to inform discussion with NCA and PSNI later in the meeting and facilitate effective oversight of work taking place in relation to Serious and Organised Crime.

Members raised several matters to discuss with PSNI and the NCA including Paramilitary Crime Task Force disruptions, use of biometrics, NCA access to EU databases/ networks post Brexit, tackling Child Sexual Exploitation, and in relation to the role of the PSNI Illegal money lending officer it was agreed to write to PSNI on this matter. **(AP2)**

6.2 Chief Constable's Individual Performance Review & Objectives for 2025-2026

The Chief Executive presented a paper for Members to **NOTE** an update on the Chief Constable's Individual Performance Review (IPR) discussion 2024-25 with the Board Chair and the proposed objectives for 2025-26, informed by input from Members.

Members raised the following matters in relation to the suggested performance objectives for 2025-26:

- The objectives should include managing sickness & absence due to the significant costs and challenges in this area.

- The 2024-25 objective regarding the delivery of 'an effective Neighbourhood Policing Service within budgetary constraints' should be included as part of the objectives.
- Engagement with local communities should be included as part of improving confidence in policing.
- The objective in respect of the PSNI Service Executive Team should reference the need to build upon the foundations already in place.
- Whether the suggested objective in respect of financial controls and governance should be included as the focus should be on improving policing outcomes for all.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** to update the suggested objectives to incorporate Members comments and circulate for agreement by written procedure. **(AP3)**

6.3 Draft Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) Annual Business Plan 2025-2026

The Director of Resources presented a paper on the proposed actions for the NIPB Annual Business plan 2025-26 and draft correspondence for issue to the Department of Justice (DOJ) seeking Ministerial approval of the Board's Annual Business Plan.

As background Members were advised that following DOJ approval of the draft NIPB Corporate plan 2025-30 in April 2025, Officials met to consider the Annual Business Plan objectives 2025-26 which sit under each of the Board's objectives in the Corporate Plan and include a new objective in respect of the management of NIPB as an organisation.

Members raised the following points in relation to the proposed Business plan actions:

- Objective A to include an additional action in relation to advocating for funding to deliver the PSNI Workforce Recovery Plan and ring-fenced funding to meet the costs for legacy related work within PSNI.
Additionally, action 5 to include progress being made against the findings of the PSNI Cultural Audit and to include workforce survey data measuring levels of employee's satisfaction and engagement
- Objective C to include additional actions in respect of 'Conversations with Purpose' and planning for the PSNI 25 year anniversary.
- Objective D to clearly reference the Board's view that management of Ill Health Retirement (IHR) and Injury on Duty (IOD) schemes should be moved from the Board to PSNI.
- The dual role of the Board to advocate for additional funding for PSNI as well as ensuring that PSNI operates as efficiently as possible with the current resources available.
- To ensure that actions reference the PSNI Workforce Recovery plan as part of securing additional funding for recruitment.
- Whether the Board can advocate for ring fenced funding in the legacy space due to the ongoing challenges to meet its obligations, and the need to lobby a range of stakeholders including the Northern Ireland Office (NIO).
- Mechanism by which progress is monitored against the Policing Plan and that PSNI provide quantitative reporting (facts/ figures) against performance to allow for proper scrutiny.

In response Members were advised that Policing Plan indicators were monitored through the Board's Committees, and the Chief Constable will report on performance against each of the outcomes across the financial

year, followed by an annual performance report to outline delivery against the entire Policing Plan.

Following discussion and subject to the implementation of the changes suggested by Members it was **AGREED** to: **(AP4)**

- **APPROVE** the actions proposed for inclusion in the NIPB Annual Business Plan 2025-2026, and,
- **APPROVE** the draft correspondence for issuing to DOJ seeking Ministerial approval of the NIPB Annual Business Plan 2025-2026.

6.4 PSNI Draft Code of Ethics 2025

The Director of Performance presented a paper to update Members on work taking place to review the PSNI Code of Ethics and the Performance Committee's proposed final draft following negotiation and agreement with PSNI as set out in the legislation.

As background Members were advised that the original Code of Ethics was published in 2003 with the last major review completed in 2008.

The Board's Performance Committee received a revised draft from the Chief Constable and a Working Group of the Committee was set up to consider Members comments and bring an agreed proposal back to the Committee. Following discussions at Performance Committee meetings in April and May 2025 a final draft version of the Code of Ethics was agreed with PSNI and Committee Members which included proposed amendments.

The Director of Performance provided Members with an overview of proposed amendments in relation to Article 1, Duty of Candour; Article 6, Equality/ Gender Identity; and Article 10, the role of Supervisors.

Members were advised of next steps in relation to key stakeholder consultation following Board approval of the updated draft Code of Ethics.

Members thanked Officials for their hard work and raised the following matters:

- Support for publishing the revised Code of Ethics following the completion of the consultation process.
- Approval of the Chair's Foreword with suggested amendment to reinforce the overarching aim of the Board.
- Support for consulting with additional stakeholders including Non-Governmental Bodies; and for the consultation to go beyond that required in legislation and to be made public with the draft version published on the Board's website to enable a wider response.

Members raised concerns regarding legal implications of not adopting an open consultation process; the need to balance wider consultation with not prolonging or unduly delaying the process; and the involvement of the Board's Performance Committee to identify a cohort of additional stakeholders to include in the consultation.

In response, the Director of Performance advised that the legislation only requires the Board to carry out a closed consultation with the key stakeholders outlined but that consideration can be given to open consultation and the impact this will have on timeframes.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** by Members to:

- Proceed with an open consultation process on the PSNI Draft Code of Ethics including publication of the draft version on the Board's website.
(AP5)

6.5 Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) Report on Continuous Improvement Arrangements in Policing

The Director of Performance presented a paper to provide Members with a summary of the main findings and three recommendations contained within the NIAO Report on Continuous Improvement Arrangements in Policing, published on 13 May 2025.

The Director of Performance advised that the report includes an unqualified audit opinion and Members have been provided with a draft statement detailing the Board's response to the three report recommendations, and the proposal to proceed to consultation on the draft statement with the Chief Constable in order to include the PSNI response to each recommendation.

Members asked if there were any concerns regarding the Board's implementation of the three recommendations and the importance of ensuring the draft statement is checked for accuracy/ errors prior to submission.

Members **NOTED** the NIAO Report on Continuous Improvement Arrangements in Policing May 2025, and:

- **APPROVED** the Board's draft statement and to proceed with consultation on the statement with the Chief Constable. **(AP6)**

6.6 Justice Bill – Clause 22 – Delegation of functions to Members and Officials of the Board

Due to time pressures Members **AGREED** to defer this item until the next Board meeting in July 2025.

7. ACTION LOG

Members **NOTED** the action log for the Board meetings held on 8 May 2025, 3 April 2025, 6 March 2025 and 6 February 2025.

In relation to the open action points from the Board meeting on 8 May 2025 the Chief Executive provided the following updates:

- Action point 5 -this relates to next steps following the Sweeney review of the Board and will be considered later in the meeting under at agenda item 8.
- Action point 8 – this relates to a request for an update on the complaint against the President of the National Black Police Association (NBPA). Members were advised the PSNI have confirmed the complaint process is nearing completion and it is expected that an outcome will be communicated to the NBPA President in due course.
- Action point 10 – this relates to Legacy Funding for PSNI and Members were advised that a verbal update will be provided later in the meeting at agenda item 8.6.

In relation to action point 4 from the Board meeting on 3 April 2025 the Chief Executive advised that correspondence has been received on the consultation process for the NCA Annual Plan 2025-26, delayed this year due to the UK Home Secretary's additional consultation on the NCA.

Members were advised the Home Secretary's Strategic Priorities have now been outlined as well as the NCA Strategy for 2023-28, and whilst there are

some changes to the overall NCA priorities the devolved administrations section is largely similar to previous years.

Members views were now being sought on the NCA annual Plan 2025-26 as part of the consultation process and the matter will be progressed by the Board's Performance Committee and Members were asked to provide any feedback by 13 June 2025.

In relation to action point 6 from the Board meeting on 6 March 2025 a response is awaited from PSNI on the principle of transferring Ill Health Retirement (IHR) and Injury on Duty (IOD) responsibilities from the Board to PSNI, with the Chief Executive noting that the Chief Constable has indicated his desire to assume responsibility for this workstream.

In relation to action point 6 from the Board meeting on 6 February 2025 and the proposed schedule for the publication of the McCullough Review report, this action will remain open as plans have yet to be shared with the Board.

Members discussed the Board's response when the proposed schedule has been confirmed given that it has been classified by the Board as a Section 59 report.

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 9 May 2025 to 3 June 2025.

- A full list of correspondence issued and received by the Chair during the period 6 May 2025 to 3 June 2025.

In respect of engagements which may be of particular interest Members were referred to Appendix 1A of the report for a summary of the key issues discussed.

The Chair did not highlight any engagements and in relation to correspondence highlighted the following items:

- Correspondence from some Members regarding a complaint about a Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) Member, and Members were advised this matter is being handled by Officials in accordance with the Board's policy for dealing with complaints about PCSP Members.
- Correspondence from DOJ to PSNI, copied to the Board Chair, in relation to the PSNI Workforce Recovery Outline Business case, stating that it is not affordable at this time and all partners should "collectively seek to secure the necessary future funding that will address the affordability issue".

Additionally, correspondence from the Chief Constable setting out the urgent need to prioritise PSNI funding in the upcoming June 2025 monitoring round. The Chair asked Members to consider these items of correspondence as part of the discussion later in the meeting at agenda item 8.6 on legacy funding for PSNI.

- Correspondence from the Chief Constable that shared the draft Public Interest Immunity (PII) guidance with the Board and Justice Minister. Members were advised that comments are now being sought by PSNI from the NIO before the guidance can be finalised.

For context, the Boards Human Rights Advisor advised Members of the complex nature of the guidance reiterating that the draft guidance has been shared with the Board for information.

In response a Member requested that PSNI amend the draft document to clarify that it has been shared with the Board for information only and that the Board had no input or role in approving the document. **(AP7)**

- Correspondence from the British-Irish Association and invitation to attend the annual conference in September 2025, and the Chair confirmed he will attend on behalf of the Board.
- Correspondence from the Minister of Justice (MOJ) regarding an ongoing whistleblowing case. The Chair provided Members with a confidential update and following discussion, Members agreed a response to be issued to the MOJ and that the Board would continue to monitor developments in this case.
- A Member raised concerns in respect of the support provided by PSNI to the individual concerned and the manner in which the complaints were dealt with.

Following discussion Members **AGREED** the Board's response to correspondence from the Minister of Justice, also copied to PSNI, to reiterate the Board's commitment to monitor developments, and confirm that the Board does not plan to refer the case to the Police Ombudsman at this time although it will reconsider this position following the conclusion of internal grievance and Industrial Tribunal processes. **(AP8)**

Members **NOTED** the updates provided.

8.2 Review of the Northern Ireland Policing Board – Next Steps

The Chair updated Members on the Board's response to the review of the Policing Board which has been submitted to DOJ.

In relation to next steps and taking forward actions, the Chair suggested the issue of political dominance within the Board should be prioritised for discussion and invited those Independent Members who raised concerns to lead on the development of a paper for the next Board meeting in September 2025.

Following discussion, it was agreed that Independent Members would input to a paper to be considered by the NIPB Review working group. **(AP9)**

The Chair raised the matter of potential deep dive topics relevant to the TOR of the Board's Committees and that following discussion at Committee meetings in June 2025 the selection methodology for deep dive topics will be developed by Officials and this will be used to develop a short list to agree at the Board meeting in July 2025, with the potential to include input from academia and other thirds party providers dependant on the topic for deep dive.

Following discussion Members were advised that Officials will consult with the Committee Chairs as part of the process to identify key topics suitable for deep dives to be brought back to the Board meeting in July 2025. **(AP10)**

8.3 Engagement & Outreach - Visit to PSNI Roads Policing on 22 May 2025

Members **NOTED** the recent visit to PSNI Roads Policing and that it provided a very useful insight and engagement opportunity with PSNI for those who attended.

8.4 Update from 'Your Voice' Meeting in May 2025

Members were asked to **NOTE** the discussion points from the Engagement Meeting between Board Members and the PSNI 'Your Voice Forum' on 15 May 2025.

The Vice Chair, who chaired the Your Voice meeting, provided an overview and welcomed the positive engagement which took place with the PSNI staff associations and the opportunity to listen to their issues and concerns.

Discussions also took with the PSNI Service Executive Team and included the importance of publishing the revised PSNI Code of Ethics, the next PSNI Cultural Audit to address ongoing concerns in respect of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, and work taking place to address Violence Against Women and Girls.

8.5 Terms of Reference for the PSNI Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Independent Review

The Chair asked Members to **NOTE** the TOR of the VAWG Independent Review on what the PSNI is currently doing and what it could be doing better in this area, and that a report is expected in Autumn 2025.

As background the Chief Executive referenced a paper from the Board meeting in October 2024 on the appropriate role the Board should have in relation to both external investigations and external reviews carried out by PSNI, and that the VAWG review falls into the category of an external review.

Following discussion at the Board meeting in October 2024 correspondence was issued to the Chief Constable outlining the need to engage with the Board for a greater role in respect of the selection of reviewers, and the development of TOR before commissioning independent reviews of PSNI work areas.

For additional context the Board's Human Rights Advisor provided Members with an overview of his Annual Report which covered the area of external

investigations and external reviews which provided a series of recommendations including selection criteria and the selection of consultees.

The Chief Executive advised of the current situation and that the Chief Constable has recently confirmed the appointment of an independent reviewer for the 'VAWG Review' and shared the TOR with the Board, however, as previously indicated, it would have been appropriate for the Board to be asked for its views on the TOR before the work commenced.

Due to the circumstances and status of the review it was proposed that Members issue a response to PSNI to establish when the Board will have sight of the final report and the mechanism by which the Review team will engage with the Board including individual Members.

During discussion of the TOR Members suggested the list of consultees includes the Commissioner for Victims of Crime and the Equality Commission to ensure that Northern Ireland stakeholders are represented in the consultation process; and raised concerns that the review is strategic and policy focused and therefore will not address previous cases as part of a process to identify failings and lessons learned.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** to draft correspondence to the Chief Constable in respect of the issues raised by Members on the TOR for the VAWG review and share with Members prior to issue. **(AP11)**

8.6 PSNI Funding for Legacy

The Chair provided a verbal update on PSNI funding for Legacy cases given that the PSNI recovery business case remains unfunded and the ongoing financial impact of managing this type of work.

Members were asked to consider the Board's next steps and options available for Political Members to take forward with their party colleagues.

The Chair summarised Members comments from the previous Board meeting in May 2025 which outlined Members concerns in terms of the impact of dealing with legacy cases on policing today, recruitment and confidence in policing, and the legal strategy adopted for such cases.

It was previously agreed by the Board to seek a meeting with the Minister of Justice and PSNI and Members views were sought on inviting other key stakeholders.

Members discussed the role of NIO and the Secretary of State for NI, the wider cross cutting nature of Legacy across government, and for the Board to continue to focus on advocating for the PSNI recovery business case.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** to invite NIO to meet with the Board, PSNI and DOJ to collectively discuss Legacy matters as part of PSNI resourcing challenges. **(AP12)**

9. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Members **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:

- The Board's Statement to the Omagh Bombing Inquiry has been provided for Members information. Additionally, an application by the Board for core participant status has been refused and a meeting is

scheduled with the Crown Solicitors Office to discuss next steps, albeit it is not anticipated that any appeal of this decision will be lodged.

- Overview of the Board's Management accounts to the end of April 2025 alongside an explanation for the small underspend against profiled budget.

Members were advised that following the addition of a new Objective in the Board's Corporate Plan 2025-30, financial matters will be considered in more detail by the Board's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC), with the next meeting scheduled for September 2025.

- In relation to the Board's Equality Scheme, launched in 2023, a review of the scheme in year 2 is not a statutory requirement following advice from the Equality Commission, and that a review will be required in year 5 to comply with the legislation.
- In relation to information management, work continues to manage a backlog of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, reviews of Board decisions on FOIs, and Data Protection Act requests.
Members were updated on correspondence from the Information Commissioners Office on withholding information in respect of a request received.
- Upcoming dates for TEAM PSNI events and Attestation ceremonies have been provided for information should Members wish to attend.
- The panel for the appointment of a new Board Human Rights Advisor will interview potential candidates this month.
- Publication of the official statistics for the 2025 Policing Plan Survey 2025 is anticipated by the end of the month.

- The Board has received a request to join with PSNI and DOJ at the 2025 International Association of Chiefs of Police Conference on the theme of “Policing is too important to leave it to the police alone – building legitimacy, trust and confidence in a post conflict Northern Ireland justice system.”

Following discussion of the benefits of the Board’s involvement, Members agreed to be part of the delegation with further details about the event and Board participation/attendees to be discussed further at the July meeting.

In relation to correspondence the Chief Executive advised Members of a request from the NI Assembly Justice Committee for the Board’s Human Rights Advisor to brief the Committee on Human Rights reports relevant to the Justice Bill, and this is scheduled for 12 June 2025.

Members were advised that the Board’s Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25 have now been submitted to the NI Audit Office, and the Chief Executive acknowledged the hard work of Board staff and the scrutiny provided by the Board’s ARAC as part of delivering this piece of work.

Members **NOTED** the updates provided.

9.2 2025 International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Conference

This matter was discussed earlier in the meeting at agenda item 9.

9.3 Correspondence for Members’ Consideration

Members **NOTED** items of correspondence including sealed hard copies hand delivered by the correspondent to each Board Member, and the proposed draft response to correspondence received.

The Chair and Independent Member referred to in the correspondence left the meeting for this item, and the Vice Chair assumed the role of Chair.

The Chief Executive advised that this matter has come to the Board as the complainant was not content that it was handled in accordance with the Board's complaint handling procedures.

Members were provided with an overview of the correspondence received and nature of the allegations made, including the proposed Board response outlining that following consideration of all the material provided there was no evidence to support the allegations made, noting that the necessary policies had been complied with, and that officials deemed no further action is required, other than forwarding to Minister of Justice given her role in appointment of independent members.

The Vice Chair supported the view outlined by the Chief Executive and the content of the draft response, and Members discussed next steps should additional correspondence be received on this matter.

Following discussion Members **AGREED** to issue the proposed draft correspondence as a final response to the correspondence received.

A Member indicated a potential conflict of interest relating to a separate item of correspondence, not discussed in the meeting, and indicated that further details can be provided to the Chief Executive after the meeting.

10. **PRIVATE SESSION WITH THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTABLE AND**
- & NATIONAL CRIME AGENCY DIRECTOR GENERAL**
- 11.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the private session of the meeting and invited initial private session comments from the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) and National Crime Agency (NCA) Director General (DG).

The Deputy Chief Constable offered some comments in respect of value for money aspects of the workforce recovery business case and provided assurance to a Board Member regarding a question raised in respect of handling the conduct/public commentary of officers that carry out representational roles for a wider group of officers/staff.

The NCA DG offered some initial comments in respect of recent drug seizures, recent cyber-attacks on retailers, the upcoming spending review and various funding streams for NCA.

Member questions in private session related to:

- **Increases in the levels of race-hate crime.** The PSNI acknowledged there had been an uptick in these types of crimes and noted that social media activity, general anti-immigration narrative and issues around social housing have contributed to this. The NCA DG noted that on a national level they too have concerns in relation to the increasing polarisation of society and breakdown in terms of respect and tolerance. He also noted two Inspection reports from HMICFRS which highlighted the need for more investment in relationships within communities.
- **NCA financing** and whether PSNI's contribution forms only part of what contributes to the work of the NCA in NI. The NCA DG noted that they currently await the outcome of the spending review but confirmed that additional sums (to that provided by PSNI) contributed to the NCA's work in NI.

- In relation to **NCA wider support for NI** and the NCA Proceeds of Crime Centre a Member referred to ongoing discussion surrounding restraint matters regarding the Department of Communities working in Northern Ireland and the NCA DG agreed to revert in writing on this matter.
(AP13)
- **Post-Brexit arrangements** including any impediments as a result of divergence in terms of access to data bases and whether any progress has been made towards a replacement for the European Arrest Warrant. The NCA DG noted the recent announcement regarding the UK's relationship with the EU, provided an update on progress made to date and advised that further negotiations are ongoing.
- The NCA DG also addressed a member's question regarding **the IPCO (Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office)** and assurances sought that the NCA are providing everything the IPCO needs to see in order to provide a clean bill of health including in relation to NI. The NCA DG noted their very strong culture of compliance and co-operation with IPCO and that they take that assurance seriously as well as issues relating to privacy.

The Chair thanked the DCC, the NCA DG and members of the wider PSNI SET and they left the meeting.

12. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

The Communications manager provided an update on proposed media activity following the public session with PSNI at today's meeting.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A Member commented on working relationships within the PSNI Service Executive Team and raised concerns in relation to Member privacy and the media during the public session.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Board Meeting is scheduled for Thursday 3 July 2025 at 9.30am in James House.

The meeting closed at 3.50pm.

Strategic Planning & Governance
June 2025

Chair