

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2025 AT 9.40AM IN JAMES HOUSE, BELFAST

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

- (8) Mr Jon Boutcher, Chief Constable
- (8) Mr Bobby Singleton, Deputy Chief Constable
- (8) Ms Pamela McCreedy, Chief Operating Officer
- (8) Mr Mark McNaughten, Assistant Chief Officer Corporate Services
- (8) Mr Ryan Henderson, Assistant Chief Constable
- (8) Ms Melanie Jones, Assistant Chief Constable
- (8) Mr Davy Beck, Assistant Chief Constable
- (8) Ms Clare Duffield, Assistant Chief Officer People and Organisational Development
- (8) Ms Aldrina Magwood, Assistant Chief Officer Strategic Planning & Transformation
- (8) Six Officers/ Staff

**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 Sarah Reid, T/Director of Police Pensions
& Injury Benefits
Three Officials

**OTHER OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr John Wadham, Human Rights Advisor

*Attended via video conference

- (1) From 9.50am, left after public session
- (2) Left after public session
- (3) Left at 2.20pm
- (4) From 9.50am
- (5) Left at 1.55pm
- (6) From 10am, out for public session
- (7) Left at 3.15pm
- (8) Item 10 only

The Chair opened the meeting and set out the programme.

The Chair advised that this will be the last Board meeting for Mr Mark H Durkan MLA and thanked the Member for his hard work and commitment during his time on the Board.

The Chair advised that agenda item 6.4 has been postponed and Members **AGREED** the agenda.

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

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 3 July 2025

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

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The minutes of the Board meeting held on Thursday 3 July 2025 be **APPROVED** for publication.

3.2 Thursday 12 June 2025

The Chair asked Members to **NOTE** the minutes of the special Board meeting held on Thursday 12 June 2025.

The draft minutes were considered and approved for publication by Members via written procedure over the summer period.

3.3 Wednesday 11 June 2025

The Chair asked Members to **NOTE** the minor change to the minutes of the special Board meeting held on Wednesday 11 June 2025.

The draft minutes were considered and approved for publication by Members via written procedure over the summer period.

3.4 Thursday 5 June 2025

The Chair asked Members to **NOTE** the minor change to the minutes of the Board meeting held on Thursday 5 June 2025.

The draft minutes were considered and approved for publication by Members via written procedure over the summer period.

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 Service Executive Team at today's meetings in public and in private.

4.2 Individual Members Written Questions and Responses

Members **NOTED** the follow up responses from PSNI to verbal questions at the Board meeting on 3 July 2025 and the PSNI responses to Members' written questions since the last 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.

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

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

5.1 Discipline Committee – Friday 25 July 2025

The Chair asked Members to **NOTE** the Discipline Committee Chair's report of the meeting held on 25 July 2025.

6. BOARD BUSINESS

The Chair drew Members attention to an update on the McCullough Review in the Chief Executives report and the Chief Executive provided further details on plans for handling receipt and publication of the Report, as follows:

- The Report will be shared with Members ahead of a special Board meeting with Angus McCullough KC and the Chief Constable, at which Members will also have the opportunity to discuss its findings with the Board's Human Rights Advisor (HRA), who will be undertaking reassurance work over the coming weeks.
- Members will be provided with a paper in advance of the special Board meeting to help their consideration of whether the report delivers against the Terms of Reference (TOR), whether it has been a robust process and on whether there is a need for a follow up section 60 Inquiry, and to consider the Board's overall response to the findings.

- Arrangements for Report publication will be made jointly with PSNI as the Chief Constable commissioned the review and the Board agreed to accept it as a section 59 report.
- Proposals for the Report to be shared with the media followed by a public launch with final plans to be confirmed.

Members asked whether the views of the Group of Experts and Stakeholders (GoES) that provided advice, expertise and experience throughout the review process has been sought on the Report findings; proposed a venue change for the special Board meeting to allow Political Members to attend as it falls on a sitting day in the NI Assembly; and practical arrangements on the day should the venue be moved from James House.

In response the HRA advised that the views of the GoEs on the latest draft of the Report has been shared with the review team, the high level of detail in the Report including a useful executive summary, and that negotiations between PSNI and the HRA are ongoing in respect of background checks including due diligence and case sampling.

Following discussion Members indicated they were content with the plans outlined by the Chief Executive in respect of the forthcoming publication of the McCullough Review Report and agreed to change the venue for the special Board meeting to Parliament Buildings at Stormont Estate.

6.1 Proposed changes to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspections

The Director of Performance presented a paper to Members outlining proposed changes to the schedule of PSNI HMICFRS Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) Inspections from 2026 onwards.

Following discussions on a proposal to change how HMICFRS inspect the PSNI, correspondence from His Majesty's Inspector (HMI) to the Minister of Justice, also copied to the Board, outlines the current position and that working on a series of one-off inspections does not match the continuous assessment approach of police forces in England and Wales.

The HMI proposal is to integrate the schedule of PSNI inspections into the forthcoming programme of PEEL inspections and this change will result in aligning PSNI inspections to the wider PEEL programme.

However, the 2025-26 inspections will be carried out as planned with one change to the programme and that from 2026-27 PSNI inspections will be aligned with the biannual PEEL schedule.

PSNI will receive a full report every other year, with a shorter assessment of progress against outstanding recommendations and 'Areas for Improvement' on an annual basis, and the HMI has stated that these changes equate 'to the same annual funding costs but will provide a much more comprehensive assessment of the service'.

The view of the Justice Minister is that the 'overall proposal to be pragmatic and a strong foundation for collaborative progress'; and requests more information and greater clarity on the legitimacy pillar of the PEEL framework and how this is being addressed under the existing inspection framework. Views are now being sought from the Board and the Chief Constable prior to any approval for the proposed changes to the inspection process.

In relation to a change to the 2025-26 inspection programme Members were advised of correspondence from HMI to the Board Chair outlining that following the review of PEEL inspection methodology there will not be capacity to complete one of the three inspection areas for 2025-26, in respect of the question on 'How good the service is at responding to the public?'.

To inform Members and respond to the Minister's request the Director of Performance referred to the potential positives and potential negatives of the proposed changes and advised that PSNI have yet to provide a formal response to the proposal.

Members asked whether the question to be excluded from the 2025-26 inspection programme could be integrated within another question and were advised that resources were not available to facilitate this; how the programme aligns with the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI) programme and the need to avoid duplication of work streams; status of the review of PSNI's response to 999 and 101 calls as it was part of the question to be removed from the inspection programme; the role of the Board and ultimate influence on the outcome of the proposal; and the impact on annual reporting given the proposal outlines a biannual inspection report.

In response Members were advised that an annual assessment of progress will also be provided and Members views were being sought on the proposal outlined.

Following discussion and consideration of the HMI's proposal to align PSNI inspections to the wider PEEL programme and the HMI's proposed changes to the areas for inspection by HMICFRS for the 2025-26 PEEL inspection, it was **AGREED** by Members to:

- **APPROVE** the revised 2025-26 PEEL inspection proposal and for the Chair to respond to the Minister so that the Department can commission the 2025-26 inspection.

6.2 Department of Justice consultation on Legislative proposals relating to Police Officer Misconduct matters

The Director of Performance presented a paper outlining the DOJ consultation on Legislative proposals relating to Police Officer misconduct matters and

asked Members to consider the Board's response to the formal stakeholder consultation.

As background Members were advised that in May 2024 the Board participated in a process which invited stakeholders to give their views on the issues being considered in relation to seven proposals, all of which require legislative change.

The DOJ has now launched a formal stakeholder consultation on a total of nineteen proposals for reform, which incorporate the original seven referenced above and an additional twelve proposals from PSNI.

The Director of Performance asked Members to consider the additional twelve proposals in the paper and the information provided by DOJ in relation to previously gathered stakeholder views.

Members were advised that a template has been provided for Members to consider and provide a response to DOJ by the deadline outlined on the nineteen proposals and that the first seven areas have been prepopulated with the Board's previously agreed position.

Members raised the following matters:

- **Proposal 3, Misconduct Hearings in Public** – concerns raised around security and Members were advised that hearings should take place in public when it is in the public interest to do so and following consideration of potential security concerns.
- **Proposal 1, Chairing Misconduct Hearings** – the HRA outlined a change to the Board's previously agreed position for panels to be chaired by a Legally Qualified Chairperson (LQC) due to the significant workload placed on Senior Officers at Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) level to Chair the Panel.

Subsequently, the revised view of the Board is that the Panel did not need to be Chaired by a LQC and the Board was advised to clearly articulate its position.

The Director of Performance advised that the Board's Performance Committee considered this matter at its meeting in April 2024 and due to the demands placed on ACCs Members recommended that the rank of Officer to Chair a misconduct hearing should be extended to Chief Superintendent to reduce delays and demand on ACCs.

For context, Members were advised this follows a review in England and Wales when regulations were changed again to allow Senior Officers to chair misconduct hearings and LQCs would be present in an advisory capacity only as Legally Qualified 'Advisors' and will not make any decisions.

- **Proposal 17, Extensions of the period of a final written warning and Proposal 18, defining the period of a 'Reduction in Rank' sanction in respect of applying for a promotion** – highlighted cultural concerns and in respect of proposal 17 whether the extension of a final written warning up to 5 years indicates cultural issues and raised questions as to whether the right person can remain in role for such an extended period of time.
- **Proposal 2, Criminal Proceedings** – further consideration be given to the proposal to remove the requirement for the Police Ombudsman to wait for criminal proceedings to conclude and Members were advised that this matter will be taken forward by the Board's Performance Committee.

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

- **APPROVE** to delegate to the Board's Performance Committee to agree the final Consultation response to be submitted to the Department of Justice by the deadline.

6.3 PSNI Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) Strategic Planning & Transformation (SP&T) Role

The Chief Executive asked Members to **NOTE** a paper on the future of the ACO SP&T role and other matters relating to the PSNI Service Executive Team (SET).

As background the Chief Executive advised that at the Board meeting in December 2024, Members agreed to extend the fixed term contract of the ACO SP&T subject to satisfactory performance and the provision of clear deliverables, which have since been received including achievements to date.

The Chief Constable has asked the Board to consider making the role permanent, highlighting the long term need for the post and the rationale for the enduring need for the position, and has stated in correspondence that PSNI 'require a continued focus on Transformation and to maximise the effective use of resources. This will be effected through the implementation of the Service Operating Model, Estate Strategy Implementation Performance focus in the delivery of the Policing Plan and the Implementation of the Business Case for Headcount Recovery'.

The Chief Executive advised Members of the employment matters explored when the extension was first considered and due to the sensitive nature of discussions proposed that the Senior Officer Employee Matter (SOEM) Group, which has a remit to deal with senior officer employee matters, be convened following receipt of legal and HR advice to discuss further and then make a proposal to the Board.

Additionally, the Chief Executive outlined a proposal for the SOEM group to meet again in February 2026 at the end of the 2 year extension period of the SP&T role to discuss overall performance with the Chief Constable and provide an update to the Board.

Members were advised that the SOEM Group should take the opportunity to discuss with the Chief Constable, the review of SET conducted at the end of 2023/ early 2024.

Members raised the following matters:

- Focus on SP&T role delivery and clear evidence of the Transformation work which has taken place to date, and a fixed term contract should have provided options if key deliverables had not been achieved.

In response the Chief Executive advised that it is appropriate to have a wider conversation at SOME in respect of SET performance, the long term requirement for the SP&T role, noting that SET line management responsibilities sit with the Chief Constable.

- Acknowledgement of Chief Constable view that the SP&T role be made permanent and an appreciation of the work which has taken place to date and the need for specific key deliverables.

In response Members were referred to correspondence from the Chief Constable in the Chair's report at agenda item 8.1 outlining plans to invite the Board to a 'Show and Tell' session to provide a clear and strategic perspective on current priorities.

Members were also advised that the Board's Resources Committee will receive an update on Transformation at its next meeting on 25 September 2025 and Members can submit comments in advance of the meeting.

- Limited role for the Board given employment law in respect of fixed term contracts; rationale of establishing the SP&T role as a fixed term contract from the outset and not as a permanent post within SET; view of the Chief Constable that the SP&T role is essential to facilitate transformation initiatives; and further clarity is required on the future of the role to ensure a joined up approach with clear objectives beyond a planning function.

In response the Chief Executive advised that the requirements of the SP&T role have changed since its inception and deliverables have moved beyond original parameters.

- Review membership of SOEM Group to allow Members with relevant skills and experience to contribute, and Officials agreed to explore further, reiterating that it is intended to be a smaller Group due to the personal and sensitive nature of discussions. **(AP1)**

Following discussion Members **AGREED** to:

- Convene the Senior Officer Employee Matters Group to explore the ACO Strategic Planning & Transformation role moving from a fixed term position to a permanent position, and other Service Executive Team matters, and to invite a slightly wider membership for this discussion. **(AP2)**

6.4 Department of Justice Criminal Justice Vision

This item has been postponed, as advised at the beginning of the meeting.

7. ACTION LOG

Members **NOTED** the action log for the Board meetings held on 3 July 2025, 5 June 2025, and 6 February 2025.

In relation to the open action points from the Board meeting on 3 July 2025 the Chief Executive provided the following updates:

- Action point 1 – this relates to strategic deep dives and is being progressed by the Board’s Committees in respect of next steps, and an update on the research panel has been provided in the Chief Executives report at agenda item 9.
- Action point 4 – this relates to the arrangements and expectations regarding the publication of the McCullough Review Report and was covered earlier in the meeting at agenda item 6. This action can now be closed.
- Action point 5 – this relates to the issue of real or perceived political dominance following the Independent Review of the Policing Board. A meeting of the Board Review Working Group has been scheduled for 11 September 2025 to discuss a paper with contributions from Independent Members and suggested actions will be brought to the Board for consideration and approval.

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 July 2025 to 26 August 2025.

- A full list of correspondence issued and received by the Chair during the period 4 July 2025 to 2 September 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 highlighted a discussion with Rachel Langdale KC in relation to the ongoing independent review commissioned by the Chief Constable on the PSNI Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy and Action Plan and Members indicated they have been contacted to provide comments.

In relation to correspondence the Chair drew Members' attention to the following matters:

- Correspondence from the Chief Constable in respect of the Policing Plan and 'Outcome 3.3: Make Best use of Resources', with plans in place to hold a 'Show and Tell' session with key partners and further details will be shared when available.
- Correspondence from the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) to advise of the research jointly commissioned with the Equality Coalition on mapping far-right activity online.

Following publication of this work CAJ has requested to meet with the Board to discuss the findings of the report, and Members indicated that a presentation from CAJ would be welcome.

A Member referenced a response from PSNI to a written question requesting specific detail in relation to the above-mentioned report and that the PSNI response lacked sufficient detail. The Member advised that additional written questions have been submitted to PSNI for response.

- Correspondence from the PSNI Chief Operating Officer in respect of workforce planning to recover resource levels over the next 5 years.
- A response to the Chair from the Secretary of State (SOS) for NI on PSNI resourcing challenges and the implications of complying with statutory obligations in relation to legacy and otherwise, outlining the SOSs view that it is not accepted that funding is not available to the NI Executive to cover legacy matters, and that it is for the NI Executive to ‘take decisions on the allocation of funding and to deliver in the best possible way for the people of Northern Ireland’.

In response Members asked whether the Board should follow up on this matter due to the legacy challenges undermining PSNI's ability to utilise existing resources; whether an open letter should be issued in response from all Board Members, both Political and Independent; requested confirmation that any Board response does not relate to additional in year funding for PSNI; status of additional contributions to PSNI from HM Treasury by way of Additional Security Funding (ASF); ongoing and escalating costs associated with unresolved legacy cases; and the need to expand the legacy conversation to a wider audience should the Northern Ireland Office be unwilling to engage further in relation to the case for additional funding.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** to draft a response to the correspondence from the SOS for NI reiterating the Board's position regarding the impact legacy related issues are continuing to have on PSNI including reputational damage, as well as undermining the PSNI budget and the overall funding model for legacy structures. The response will be shared with Members and consideration will then be given to whether this should be an “open” letter from the Board. **(AP3)**

- Separate items of correspondence from the Chief Constable to two journalists, also copied to the Board, in respect of matters relating to the McCullough Review.
- Items of correspondence in relation to the President of the National Black Police Association, shared with Members via the Criminal Justice Secure Mail (CJSM) platform, regarding an extended period of secondment.

Members raised the following matters:

- Status of PSNIs involvement in the training initiative organised by the College of Policing with delegates from the Saudi Arabian police and security services, and Members were advised that PSNI has taken the decision not to participate in this training.

A Member raised concerns in relation to the extent of international support provided by PSNI given current resource challenges, and oversight mechanisms in place, for example, in relation to human rights issues in other jurisdictions. Following discussion the Member agreed to raise these matters at the next meeting of the Board's Resources Committee in September 2025.

- Current status of a strategic deep dive by the Board's Resources Committee into Firearms Licensing given that the Chief Constable is planning to carry out an independent diagnostic in this area. Members discussed the need for collaboration, joint agreement of the TOR and it was agreed to issue correspondence to the Chief Constable from the Board Chair regarding the PSNI review, outlining that it is in collaboration with the Board's Resources Committee which will consider further at its next meeting in September 2025. **(AP4)**

Members **NOTED** the updates provided.

8.2 25 Year Anniversary of New Policing Arrangements - Working Group

The Chief Executive presented a paper from the Communications Manager to provide an update on plans to mark 25 years of the new policing arrangements in NI and the draft TOR for the Working Group.

Members were asked to consider the type of events being proposed to mark the anniversary and provide feedback on the proposals outlined to Officials in writing.

Members **NOTED** the update provided and draft terms of reference for the Working Group.

8.3 PSNI Above Delegated Authority Request from Resources Committee

The Director of Resources provided Members with an update on an Above Delegated Authority Request from PSNI and advised that the request was considered by the Resources Committee via written procedure over the summer period and it was agreed to recommend to the Board for approval.

A Member expressed concerns in relation to the process for negotiating legal costs, the role of the Cost Drawer appointed by the Crown Solicitor Office, and the rationale used to determine proposed total costs.

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

- **APPROVE** the PSNI Above Delegated Authority Request outlined in relation to total projected costs for settlement and estimated plaintiff's costs.

Mr Trevor Clarke MLA and Mr Keith Buchanan MLA asked to be recorded against the above decision taken by the Board.

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:

- In relation to Finance the outcome from June Monitoring has been received and will cover increased national insurance contributions.
- In relation to the Board's Management Accounts, an easement with reasons has been reported and a breakeven position is now anticipated subject to the timing of expenditure.
- In relation to active consultations, the UK Home Office is consulting on regulatory change to give immigration and customs officials in NI Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) powers, and there is a live consultation being progressed by the Performance Directorate as discussed earlier in the meeting at agenda item 6.2.
- In relation to governance matters, Members were asked to consider the draft schedule for 2026 Board and Committee meetings provided at agenda item 11 and details of proposed changes to the schedule were outlined. Members indicated they were content with the proposed schedule and noted that such would have to be discussed with PSNI.
- The Business plan performance report for quarter 1 has been shared with Members to provide a summary of progress made against the Annual Business Plan 2025-26 actions, and it is expected that the

reporting methodology for actions under Objective E will be finalised by the Board's Audit & Risk Assurance Committee at its next meeting in September 2025.

- Board decisions taken by written procedure over the summer period have been noted in the report.
- In relation to the Independent Review of the Board an update has been provided on work taking place following previous discussions to agree actions.
- 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.
- In support of the Board's Engagement Strategy for 2025-30 a new Engagement initiative entitled "Conversations with Purpose" will be launched soon and Members have been provided with a flyer to provide further details including plans for the first Engagement event in October 2025.

Members highlighted the need to focus on Engagement activities in areas of NI where applicants to join PSNI has been historically low, for example, in Council areas including Derry/ Londonderry and Mid Ulster, and that it would be beneficial for Members to meet with the Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) managers in these areas to discuss further.

In response the Chief Executive highlighted the strategic deep dive being taken forward by the Board's Partnership Committee to address issues raised in the Independent Review of the Board to address confidence in policing within communities where it has been historically low, and

following discussion with academia as part of a scoping exercise it is intended to progress this matter through the Committee

- Invitation from the National Crime Agency (NCA) Director General for Members to visit NCA Headquarters in November 2025 and the additional opportunity for Members to attend the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Partnership Summit 2025 on 'Building Safer Communities in a Connected World'. Members were advised to contact the Director of Performance or Chief Executive should they wish to attend.
- Upcoming dates for Attestation ceremonies and TEAM PSNI Events have been provided for information with an open invitation for all Members to attend.
- Developed Vetted clearance with UKSV for the Board's new Human Rights Advisor is ongoing and arrangements are in place to extend the contract of the current HRA on a month to month bases to facilitate the transition process.
- The team responsible for the PSNI Data Breach review have been asked to carry out a review of the implementation of the recommendations from the review report, and a TOR for the review is awaited.
- Matters in relation to the McCullough Review were discussed earlier in the meeting and a brief update has been provided on the work of the Omagh Bombing Inquiry.

The Chief Executive highlighted the following items of correspondence:

- Correspondence from DUP Board Members in relation to the Board's attendance at this year's PRIDE event and Members were advised that this matter will be considered by the Board's Partnership Committee as it is responsible for the Board's Engagement Strategy.

- Correspondence from the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) in relation to allegations made by a serving Officer including an update on the ongoing absence from work, conclusion of a criminal case, details of correspondence from the Justice Minister to PSNI in respect of Whistleblowing and potential referral to the Police Ombudsman, an ongoing Industrial Tribunal, and the Workplace Dispute Resolution process.

Members considered whether it was necessary to involve the Police Ombudsman, concluding it wasn't, and the need to seek a further update following the conclusion of the Industrial Tribunal, and to request an assessment from the DCC on organisational learning from this case.

Following discussion it was agreed to issue separate responses to the DCC and the Justice Minister now that an update has been provided.

(AP5)

Members indicated they were content with the update provided and welcomed the DCCs involvement to address the concerns raised, and highlighted ongoing issues in relation to PSNI culture, sectarianism, treatment of Officers/ Staff from the LGBTQ+ community and welcomed the completion of another PSNI Cultural Audit this year to provide additional insights.

A Member highlighted the high number of complaints/ allegations against the Officer in this case, all of which were proved to be unfounded and potentially amounted to harassment, the role and actions taken by the Professional Standards Department during the case and lesson learned, and the considerable negative impact of these allegations on the individual concerned.

- Correspondence received from a member of the public in relation to Firearms Licensing and Members were advised that a response will be issued in line with standard Board procedures. **(AP6)**

- A Member asked about correspondence from CJINI in relation to the annual review of the effectiveness of Part 1 of the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 and request for stakeholder feedback and comments.

Officials advised that Members should submit their comments to the Director of Performance to be brought to a meeting with CJINI in the coming weeks.

Members **NOTED** the updates provided

10. PRIVATE SESSION WITH THE CHIEF CONSTABLE AND PSNI SERVICE EXECUTIVE TEAM

The Chair welcomed everyone to the private session of the meeting and invited initial private session comments from the Chief Constable.

The Chief Constable asked ACC Beck to provide Board Members with an update on a developing situation in a Board Member's constituency. Members were given a brief outline of the circumstances relating to the man found initially unresponsive in a property in Mountnorris. The Board was advised that following the man's death, a murder investigation had commenced. Members expressed concern at a further murder in the province and the cumulative effective on the major investigation teams of multiple ongoing murder inquiries.

The Board Chair thanked PSNI for this update and went on to invite questions from Board Members.

A Member commended the PSNI on the recent launch of the Race & Ethnicity action plan, however noted that other minority groups, for example LGBTQIA+ may ask 'what about us?'.

The Member asked PSNI to advise of their plans, if any, to roll out similar action plans for other minority groups. The Chief Constable noted that while the Race & Ethnicity Action Plan had come from a very specific place, the PSNI also has in place (as required by all public authorities) a Disability Action Plan and Equality Action Plan. Members were advised that there were no current plans for other minority action plans however PSNI did not rule this out at some future point.

In response to a question from a Member, the Chief Constable provided the Board with an update on progress towards payments to Officers and Staff in the Holiday Pay and Data Breach cases. The Chief Constable noted support for his approach in terms of achieving value for money and to resolve these matters as quickly as possible, however highlighted that affordability was still an issue. Members were advised of the possible implications of affordability not being resolved in terms of escalating costs. The Board noted the Chief Constable's intention to write to the Minister of Justice in these terms.

A Member raised the issue of proactive work required by PSNI to stamp out the use/sale of drugs at concerts and other venues following the recent tragic deaths at a Belfast concert. The Chief Constable advised of the need for a systemic approach to dealing with this issue, not just enforcement action from PSNI and noted the need for ongoing education and engagement on the matter. PSNI assured Members that drugs continue to be a priority area for PSNI including in local policing plans and in the work of Organised Crime Branch. PSNI also noted matters related to the issue of safety certificates for certain events and the importance of leveraging legislation to make sure events such as these take place safely. Members were also provided with an overall update on the policing of concerts over the summer period, cost recovery opportunities and arrests made etc.

A Member highlighted two cases referenced in the Chief Constable's monthly report where sentencing for those convicted of crimes of abuse against children

seemed unusually lenient in comparison to the severity of the crime. The PSNI highlighted that sentencing remained a matter for the judiciary however noted that, where PSNI felt sentences were unduly lenient, a framework did exist for PSNI to challenge such decisions. PSNI noted that, where they felt it appropriate, they would continue to use this mechanism.

Other matters discussed with the Chief Constable included:

- Processes for carrying out independent reviews while respecting the respective roles of the PSNI and the NIPB and achieving the best use of time and resources.
- An update on progress regarding the ongoing review of CPU arrangements.
- The ongoing gap in the PSNI annual budget, further funding which may crystallise with the outcome of October monitoring, the tension between the Chief Constable's dual roles in relation to Accounting Officer responsibilities and responsibilities to keep people safe and how this will be managed if the funding gap isn't addressed.

Further areas discussed where PSNI advised written updates would be provided included in relation to:

- Accountability arrangements regarding the Home Office proposals for PACE powers to be afforded to some immigration officers/designated customs officials.
- Officer attrition numbers so far in 2025 (excluding IHR numbers) with comparisons to 2023/24 figures.

The Board Chair thanked the PSNI for their responses and they left the meeting.

11. 2026 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

This item was considered earlier in the meeting at agenda item 9.

Members **NOTED** the schedule of meetings for 2026.

12. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

No issues were highlighted.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Board Meeting is scheduled for Thursday 2 October 2025 at 9.30am in James House.

The meeting closed at 3.50pm.

Strategic Planning & Governance

September 2025

Chair