

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY 11 DECEMBER 2025 AT 9AM IN JAMES HOUSE, BELFAST

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mr Brendan Mullan (Vice-Chair)
- Ms Cheryl Brownlee MLA
- (4) Miss Nuala McAllister MLA
- (3) Mr Tommy O'Reilly
- Mr Les Allamby
- (4) Mr Alan Chambers MLA
- Mr Trevor Clarke MLA
- (2) Mrs Linda Dillon MLA
- Mr Gerry Kelly MLA
- Mr Keith Buchanan MLA
- Mr Patrick Nelson
- Dr Kate Lavery
- Mr Peter Osborne
- Mr Frank McManus
- (4) Mr Colin McGrath MLA
- Miss Deirdre Hargey MLA

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

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

**NATIONAL CRIME AGENCY IN (5)
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Graeme Biggar, Director General
One Official

**OTHER GUESTS IN (6)
ATTENDANCE**

Sir Iain Livingstone

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

Mrs Sinead Simpson, Chief Executive
Mr Sam Hagen, Senior Director of
Resources
Ms Jenny Passmore, Director of
Partnership
Mr Adrian McNamee, Director of
Performance
Ms Sarah Reid, T/Director of Police
Pensions & Injury Benefits
Ms Paula Gow, T/Director of Partnership
Four Officials

**OTHER OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr John Wadham, Human Rights Advisor

- (1) Items 10 & 11 only
- (2) Open to part items 10 & 11
- (3) Item 3 to close
- (4) Item 3 to 9
- (5) Item 10 only
- (6) Part item 11 only

The Vice-Chair opened the meeting and set out the programme.

Members were reminded of the care that is needed in respect of protecting the confidentiality of Board business and requested that all electronic devices were turned off or placed in silent mode for the duration of the meeting. The Vice-Chair went on to extend a particular welcome to the new Political Member Deirdre Hargey MLA who has replaced Cathal Boylan MLA on the Board.

The Vice-Chair also advised that today marked the last meeting at which the Board's current Human Rights Advisor, Mr John Wadham, would be present and noted that this would be marked at a later break in the meeting.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from the Board Chair Mr Mukesh Sharma, Mrs Marian Cree and Mr Peter McReynolds MLA.

Members **AGREED** the agenda.

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:**

3.1 **Thursday 6 November 2025**

The Vice-Chair asked Members to consider the draft minutes of the Board meeting held on Thursday 6 November 2025.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The minutes of the Board meeting held on Thursday 6 November be **APPROVED** for publication on the Board's website.

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 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 oral questions at the Board meeting held on 6 November 2025 and the PSNI responses to Members' written questions since the last meeting.

A Member raised an issue in respect of a written response relating to Mutual Aid officers and their compliance with Human Rights when deployed in Northern Ireland. Following discussion, it was **AGREED** Board officials will source the response and give consideration to whether further consideration of the response should sit with Performance or Resources Committee. **(AP1)**

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.

The Director of Performance briefed Members on the papers included at items 6.1 and 6.2 (Policing Plan Performance Monitoring – Outcome 2 and the NCA and Serious & Organised Crime Performance Reports) in order to inform Members' consideration of any additional questions they wished to raise in the

public or private sessions with the Chief Constable or Director General of the NCA. Following discussion, Members agreed the additional questions for the Chief Constable, PSNI leadership team and NCA DG at the public and private sessions of today's meeting.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

5.1 Performance Committee – 13 November & 4 December 2025

The Board **NOTED** the Performance Committee Chair's report and draft minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2025.

5.2 Partnership Committee – 20 November 2025

The Board **NOTED** the Partnership Committee Chair's report and agreed a recommendation from the Committee to **APPROVE** the 6 projects from the Police Property Fund Large Grants Scheme selected for funding by the assessment panel at a combined value of £150,957 for a Letter of Offer and that one project should be held in reserve.

While playing no part in the application to, or assessment of any of the Large Grants Scheme applications, Board Member Mr Patrick Nelson declared an interest in respect of one of the projects approved under the Police Property Fund Large Grants Scheme.

5.3 Resources Committee – 27 November 2025

The Board **NOTED** the Resources Committee Chair's report of the meeting held on Thursday 27 November 2025.

The Committee Vice-Chair advised Members of the Committee recommendation to approve one PSNI Above Delegated Authority request in relation to the amendment of the divisor being used to calculate Holiday Pay

entitlements for officers and staff from 1 April 2025. The Board noted that by amending the divisor as outlined in the PSNI's request, payments going forward would minimise the need to amend or update claims at a later stage.

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

- **APPROVE** the PSNI Above Delegated Authority request relating to the amendment of the holiday pay divisor.

A Member asked a follow up question in relation to another PSNI above delegated authority where outstanding follow up information had been requested from PSNI. The Director of Resources advised that the requested information had now been received and would be considered by Resources Committee at the upcoming meeting on 18 December 2025.

6. BOARD BUSINESS

6.1 Policing Plan Performance Monitoring Outcome 2 – 'We have safe and engaged communities with confidence in policing'

The Director of Performance presented a paper providing Members with an overview of the Chief Constable's accountability report to the Board on Policing Plan Outcome 2; We have safe and engaged communities with confidence in policing'.

Members noted the paper following which questions to the Chief Constable at the Outcome 2 public accountability session were agreed.

6.2 National Crime Agency & PSNI Serious and Organised Crime - Performance Reports

The Director of Performance presented a paper which provided Members with the National Crime Agency (NCA) (Q1 & Q2) and the PSNI Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) Report (Q1 & Q2) Performance Updates.

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 agreed a number of questions to raise with PSNI and the NCA including in relation to:

- Successes achieved in the current reporting period,
- Funding for the PCTF and any impact should this funding be discontinued,
- Whether waste-water analysis is being undertaken in Northern Ireland, and,
- Difficulties the UK faces with the PRUM Framework and gaining access to biometric data and how these could be resolved.

6.3 ACO Strategic Planning & Transformation and other associated SET Issues

The Chief Executive introduced a paper seeking Members' views on commencing a process to move the PSNI ACO Strategic Planning & Transformation role from a fixed term position to a permanent position and other associated SET issues.

Members noted that a paper had previously been considered at the September meeting at which time it was agreed that the Senior Officer Employee Matters (SOEM) group would consider the issue and bring a recommendation to the Board. Members were advised that the Chief Constable had also been in attendance at the SOEM group meeting during which the deliverables expected in the coming years from the post holder were discussed.

The Board was advised that the recommendation from the SOEM group is that, given the ongoing need for the role, the Board should commence a process to move the ACO Strategic Planning & Transformation role from a fixed term position to a permanent position.

In respect of other SET issues, Members noted the proposal from the SOEM group to invite the Board's Human Resources advisor to undertake work in 2026 to review the terms and conditions of the SET, taking account of national developments. Members also noted the request from the Chief Constable to look at the senior officer selection process to ensure the process used follows best practice.

During discussion Members considered that DoJ should be advised in advance of the Board's intention in respect of reviewing the terms & conditions of the PSNI SET.

Following discussion it was **AGREED**:

- To approve the recommendation to commence the process of moving the ACO Strategic Planning & Transformation role from a fixed term position to a permanent position.
- To issue the draft letter to the Minister of Justice (MoJ) regarding the ACO Strategic Planning & Transformation role.
- That Headstogether (the Board's HR Advisor) be commissioned to undertake work to review the terms and conditions of the SET and that the SOEM group should meet with Headstogether to discuss the scope of this work.
- DoJ to be advised of the work being undertaken in respect of reviewing the terms and conditions of the PSNI SET, and,
- That the separate Headstogether review of the senior officer appointment process guidance should include a review of the overall selection process.

6.4 Perceived Political Dominance – Recommendations to the Board from the NIPB Review Working Group

The Chief Executive introduced a paper which included recommendations to the Board from the NIPB Review Working Group in respect of addressing the issue of perceived political dominance on the Board. The Chief Executive noted the actions previously agreed regarding addressing this aspect of the Review Report and went on to summarise the recommendations coming out of NIPB Review Working Group discussions at the 26 November 2025 meeting. These recommendations related to:

1. election process for the leadership roles of Board Chair and Vice-Chair,
2. A more random physical layout at the public session of the Board meetings,
3. Equal media representation by independent and political members of the Board,
4. The potential for having joint committee leadership models (i.e. Committee Co-Chairs),
5. A mandated annual review of the mechanisms of board meetings and representations, and
6. More procedural discipline during public sessions of the Board meeting by discouraging repetitive or duplicate questioning.

The Board accepted the Working Group recommendations in respect of points 1 & 2 above and noted that regarding point 3, the Board handbook provides for both independent and political members to speak publicly on matters the Board has agreed on. The Board did not agree proposals in relation to a joint committee leadership model or the mandated annual review of Board meeting mechanisms, with plans already in place for annual Board and Committee reviews.

Board Member Trevor Clarke MLA noted that he was against changing the current arrangement in respect of the election of the Board Chair and Vice-Chair.

Following discussion it was **AGREED: (AP2)**

- A paper will be brought to the February 2026 Board meeting on the election process for Board Chair and Vice-Chair positions.
- A more random seating arrangement will be used at public Board meetings in 2026 while keeping political party members seated together.

Leading on from matters around procedural discipline at Board meetings, Members discussed the current processes relating to individual Board Member written questions to the Chief Constable. Members noted that when written responses to these questions are received, they are shared with the specific Board Member who initially asked the question following which they are shared in the papers for the subsequent Board meeting but not relevant Committees.

Following discussion in which Members were keen that their ability to ask questions of the Chief Constable remains unfettered, it was **AGREED:**

- Written responses received to Board Member individual questions to the Chief Constable will be funnelled through the appropriate Committee for consideration and any follow up actions and to ensure an appropriate level of scrutiny of the PSNI's response. **(AP3)**

7. ACTION LOG

Members considered the updated action log further to the meeting which took place on 6 November 2025 and **NOTED** the actions closed since that meeting.

The Chief Executive provided an update on the remaining open actions, including:

- AP1 from the November 2025 meeting relating to the group established to oversee plans for the 25-year anniversary events. Members noted

that the group did not meet as planned on 9th December and will instead meet in January 2026 with an update being provided to members at the end of January Board Development Event.

- AP6 from the November 2025 meeting relating to ICVs access to custody records and the need for legislative amendment. Members noted that the wording of the amendment has been agreed with PSNI and ahead of writing to the Justice Committee, further information from DoJ is awaited regarding the likelihood of the amendment being included by them. Members noted this action will remain open until that issue has been resolved, and finally,
- AP5 from the July 2025 meeting relating to the Board paper on perceived political dominance. The Chief Executive advised that this action had been addressed by consideration of the paper at item 6.4 of today's agenda and as such, this action would now be closed.

Members **NOTED** the updates provided.

8. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

8.1 Chair's Report

The Vice-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 6 November 2025 to 2 December 2025, and,
- A full list of correspondence issued and received by the Chair since the November Board meeting.

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.

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

- Correspondence from a journalist in relation to PSNI non-response to FOI queries. Members were advised the correspondence has been issued to PSNI on this matter and a response is awaited.

Members **NOTED** the updates provided.

8.2 Operation Kenova – Final Report

The Board noted the final Operation Kenova Report which was published earlier this week and that Sir Iain Livingstone would be joining the private session of the Board meeting alongside the Chief Constable to answer any questions Members may have on the final report. NOTED.

8.3 Updated Committee Membership

Members considered and agreed recent changes to the membership of the Board's Standing Committees. These included:

- The appointment of Deirdre Hargey MLA to the Performance and Partnership Committees with immediate effect following the resignation of her party colleague Cathal Boylan MLA from the Board, and,
- Membership changes to the Board's ARAC which came into effect earlier this year which included the appointment of Dr Kate Lavery to the Committee following the resignation from the Committee of Mr Frank McManus.

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 the report:

- In relation to Finance and the Board's management accounts, the Director of Resources provided an update on easements and funds handed back to the department following the recent monitoring round.
- On governance matters, the Chief Executive noted a complaint which had been referred to NIPSO in relation to how the Board handled an FOI request. Members noted that NIPSO are now not progressing that complaint any further.
- Members noted the upcoming dates for PSNI Attestations and TEAM PSNI Events which have been provided for information with an open invitation for all Members to attend.

Other updates provided in the report included in relation to the review of the PSNI Code of Ethics, the development of the Policing Research Partnership, the 25 Year Anniversary Plans, and the structural review of the Board commissioned following the NIPB Review Report.

In relation to matters not included in the report the Chief Executive highlighted:

- The recent data theft and that the ICO have responded to advise they are taking no further action.
- The upcoming commencement date of the Board's new Human Rights Advisor.
- Correspondence from the MoJ relating to planned legislative changes for misconduct procedures. Members were advised the Performance Committee would write further to the Minister on this matter, and,
- The Chief Constable's comments on the PSNI's finalised Public Interest Immunity policy (PII). The Board noted that a copy of the Chief Constable speech would be shared with Members.

Members **NOTED** the updates provided.

9.1 Board Development Event – Draft Programme

The Chief Executive briefed the Board on the current draft programme for the upcoming Board Development Event at the end of January 2026, advising Members on the process to date in terms of developing the programme and requesting their views on the draft.

A Member noted their preference for the previous format in which only the Board Members met on Day 1 with PSNI etc joining on Day 2. The Chief Executive noted that due to scheduling conflicts including a PSNI Attestation ceremony taking place on Friday 30 January, the running order needed to be amended to incorporate PSNI on Day 1 of the event.

Suggestions from Members included:

- Taking time to consider how the Board can more effectively spend the time they have with the Chief Constable each month.
- Further discussing the format of the public accountability sessions on the Policing Plan.
- The inclusion of discussions around mentoring and promotion within PSNI, and,
- The prioritisation of resources within PSNI and what PSNI can do within the budget they are allocated.

Following discussion it was **AGREED**:

- The draft programme for the Board Development Event be updated to reflect these discussions, and,
- Board officials should meet with PSNI regarding the format of the February 2026 Board ahead of the public accountability session on Outcome 3 of the Policing Plan. **(AP4)**

9.2 Theft of Ammunition from Steeple Firearms Training Site

The Chief Executive briefed the Board on the papers included at this agenda item including a recent update from the DCC which was circulated to Members on Wednesday 3rd December 2025.

The Chief Executive highlighted the recently added draft Terms of Reference (ToR) shared by PSNI in respect of an independent review they intend to commission into this incident and noted that the review will be carried out by the National Police Chiefs' Council Firearms Lead. Members were advised that PSNI are keen to have Member views on the draft ToR. Given the short timeframe Members have had to review the ToR, the Chief Executive requested that any thoughts be shared with her by close of play on 17th December 2025.

Members' initial discussions included:

- Concerns at the overall current level of controls and assurance in place which this review will seek to address.
- .
- Whether PSNI's annual audit plan is sufficiently robust given that this issue was not picked up through that mechanism. It was noted that the Chair of PSNI's ARAC is attending the Board's December ARAC meeting and that this issue can be raised with him at that point, and,
- That, under normal circumstances, review and consideration of these ToR should come through Performance Committee for consultation but in the interests of timeliness Board member views were being sought.

Following discussion it was **AGREED**:

- Member views on the draft ToR for the PSNI Review of the Handling & Management of Firearms and Ammunition to be received by close of play on Wednesday 17 December 2025 and shared with PSNI. **(AP5)**

9.3 PSNI Response - McCullough Review Report Recommendations

The Chief Executive briefed Members on correspondence issued to PSNI seeking updates and assurance from PSNI in respect of the recommendations in the McCullough Review Report and the PSNI's response.

Members considered the PSNI response and following discussion **AGREED** that correspondence be issued to the Chief Constable: **(AP6)**

- Suggesting Angus McCullough KC return in February 2026 to do a stocktake on the implementation of the recommendations,
- Seeking confirmation on the status of notifications to the names on the database and any engagement with ICO on that, and
- Seeking further information on PSNI comments regarding the need the to restructure in order to respond to the McCullough Report.

The Board's Human Rights Advisor also updated the Board on follow up work he will be undertaking in an upcoming visit to PSNI in terms of reviewing the closed annex of the report following which a written report will be provided to the Board.

In matters related to this agenda item, Members were also updated on the jointly commissioned (PSNI & the Board) legal advice regarding misconduct. A progress update is awaited and will be brought back in due course. Following discussion it was **AGREED**:

- The previously agreed Terms of Reference for the review of the McCullough Report from a misconduct perspective be circulated to all Members. **(AP7)**

10. PRIVATE SESSION WITH THE CHIEF CONSTABLE AND NATIONAL & 11 CRIME AGENCY DIRECTOR GENERAL (NCA DG)

The Vice-Chair welcomed everyone to the private session of the meeting and as neither the Chief Constable nor the NCA DG had any further initial comments

to make in the private session, the Vice-Chair moved straight to Member questions.

Member questions in private session related to:

- The upsurge in referrals for child sexual exploitation, the number of arrests in this area and the proportion of the 500+ referrals resulting in arrest. Members were updated on steps being taken to manage the workload in this area and maximise the use of the available investigative skills to cope with demand. The NCA DG also noted that alongside the increasing number of referrals the complexity of each case is increasing with each case taking more effort and resources. A Member went on to express concern about the possible de-prioritising of cases when an offender is in the early stages of offending which could lead to more serious outcomes at a later date.
- Whether waste-water testing is taking place in Northern Ireland and its impact. Members were advised that while this has taken place in NI by NI Water, the report has not yet been published, however results show NI is broadly in line with GB in this area.
- Concerns raised by NIPSA regarding the filling of police staff vacancies by police officers.
- Mental health services available to serving and retired officers, and,
- A progress update on the ongoing review of CPU.

At a national level the NCA DG also updated Members on proposals for police reform in England & Wales, elements of which may affect PSNI. Members noted that a white paper on this issue is due in January 2026.

The Vice-Chair thanked the Chief Constable and the NCA DG following which the NCA DG and the wider PSNI SET left the meeting.

PRIVATE SESSION WITH SIR IAIN LIVINGSTONE – OPERATION KENOVA

The Vice-Chair welcomed Sir Iain Livingstone to the meeting and, having commended Sir Iain and the wider Operation Kenova team on their work, invited initial comments to the Board following the recent publication of the final Operation Kenova Report.

Sir Iain thanked the Vice-Chair for his comments and for the opportunity to discuss the final report with the Board today. He noted that the final report also incorporates updates on other work being carried out by the Kenova team (including Op Denton, Op Mizzenmast and in relation to the additional material produced by MI5 following the publication of the interim Kenova report).

Discussion with Members in this private session focussed on the Government's position on Neither Confirm Nor Deny (NCND), how this impacts on trust and confidence in policing, whether any lessons are likely to be taken away by MI5 following the publication of this final report and the accountability arrangements in relation to MI5.

Following discussion, the Vice-Chair thanked the Chief Constable and Sir Iain Livingstone and they left the meeting.

12. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

None.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A Member raised the issue of the poor conditions in the shared conference room at James House today and it was agreed Board officials would write to seek assurance that this issue will be resolved ahead of the next public accountability session in February 2026. **(AP8)**

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Board Meeting is scheduled for Thursday 5 February 2026 at 9.30am in James House.

The meeting closed at 3.45pm.

Strategic Planning & Governance
December 2025

Chair