

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY 5 MARCH 2026 AT 9.40AM IN JAMES HOUSE, BELFAST

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mr Mukesh Sharma (Chair)
- Mr Brendan Mullan (Vice-Chair)
- (1) Mrs Marian Cree
- (2) Miss Nuala McAllister MLA
- Mr Tommy O'Reilly
- (3) Mr Les Allamby
- (4) Mr Alan Chambers MLA
- (5) Mr Trevor Clarke MLA
- Mrs Linda Dillon MLA
- Mr Gerry Kelly MLA
- (6) Mr Keith Buchanan MLA
- (7) Mr Patrick Nelson
- (8) Mr Peter Osborne
- (9) Mr Frank McManus
- (2) Mr Colin McGrath MLA
- Ms Deirdre Hargey MLA
- (10) Mr Peter McReynolds MLA

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

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

- (11) Chief Superintendent
- (11) Three 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
Six Officials

**OTHER OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Aonghus Kelly, Human Rights Advisor

- (1) Left at 3.45pm
- (2) Left after public meeting
- (3) Left at 4pm
- (4) From 10am, left after public meeting
- (5) From 9.55am, left at 2.05pm
- (6) From 9.50am, left at 4pm
- (7) Out after public meeting, back at 2.35pm, left at 3.30pm
- (8) Left at 3.50pm
- (9) From 10.20am, left at 3.20pm
- (10) From 10.50am, left after public meeting
- (11) Item 11 only

The Chair opened the meeting and set out the programme.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Dr Kate Lavery and Ms Cheryl Brownlee 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 12.

3. DRAFT MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING:

3.1 Thursday 5 February 2026

The Chair asked Members to consider the draft minutes of the Board meeting held on Thursday 5 February 2026.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The draft minutes of the Board meeting held on Thursday 5 February 2026 be **APPROVED** for publication on the Board's website.

3.2 Friday 20 February 2026

Members **NOTED** that the draft minutes of the Board meeting held on Friday 20 February 2026 have now been finalised by the Chief Executive and will be shared to agree by written procedure.

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 both the public and private sessions at today's meeting.

4.2 Individual Members Written Questions and Responses

Members **NOTED** the one PSNI response to a Members written question since the last meeting.

4.3 Committee Written Questions and Responses

No responses to Committee questions were received since the last meeting.

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.

4.5 Update on Independent Review into Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and PSNI Culture

Members **NOTED** the interim report from PSNI on the Langdale VAWG review and the Chief Executive noted the linkage to the Police Ombudsman NI (PONI) report on Abuse of Position for Sexual Purposes by PSNI Officers.

Members were advised of information shared with Members by the Communications manager in relation to information provided by PONI following media queries which provided a summary of cases under investigation.

Following discussion, Members agreed to write to PSNI requesting that the public and private sessions of the April Board meeting include a focused update on the PONI Report (Abuse of Position for Sexual Purposes), the Langdale Report, Operation Roric, and the CJINI 2025 report, noting that this issue is likely to feature at further meetings throughout the year. Additionally, representatives from PONI to be invited to the Board's Performance Committee in April 2026. **(AP1)**

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

Members were reminded to keep their questions brief to ensure sufficient time for responses and to allow all questions to be taken. Members were asked to **NOTE** that written responses can be requested from PSNI for any additional detail required.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

5.1 Discipline Committee – Tuesday 10 February 2026

The Board **NOTED** the Discipline Committee Chair's report of the meeting held on Tuesday 10 February 2026.

5.2 Performance Committee – Thursday 12 February 2026

The Board **NOTED** the Performance Committee Chair's report and draft minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 12 February 2026.

5.3 Resources Committee – Thursday 19 February 2026

The Board **NOTED** the Resources Committee Chair's report of the meeting held on Thursday 19 February 2026.

The Committee Chair advised of the Committee recommendation to approve four PSNI Above Delegated Authority requests, and following consideration it was subsequently **AGREED** by Members to:

- **APPROVE** the four PSNI Above Delegated Authority requests for the cases outlined in respect of two cases for psychological injuries

sustained in the course of duty; one legacy case for compensation of injury, loss and damage; and one case for an Industrial Tribunal finding on discrimination.

5.4 Partnership Committee – Thursday 26 February 2026

The Board **NOTED** the Partnership Committee Chair’s report and draft minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 26 February 2026.

The Chief Executive advised of the Committee recommendations in relation to issuing correspondence on the Adult Protection Bill and the Speed Limit Review consultation 2026.

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

- **APPROVE** the issuing of correspondence in relation to the above matters.

6. BOARD BUSINESS

6.1 Draft Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) Annual Business Plan 2026-2027

The Director of Resources presented a paper on the proposed actions for the NIPB Annual Business plan 2026-27 and draft correspondence for issue to the Department of Justice (DOJ) seeking Ministerial approval of the Board’s Annual Business Plan 2026-27.

As background Members were advised that following DOJ approval of the draft NIPB Corporate Plan 2025-30 in April 2025, the business plan will align with year 2 of the Corporate Plan.

Members were advised of changes to the proposed business plan actions 2026-27, as follows:

Objective A (PSNI resources) – inclusion of an assessment of the impact of the implementation of the ‘People’ transformational initiative and to monitor and oversee the PSNI Data Strategy.

Objective B (monitor, oversee and assess PSNI performance) – new action to establish the Policing Plan Review Working Group, deliver two research projects (deep dives), and design, implement and deliver a report on the 2026 Community Survey on Policing.

Objective C (engage and collaborate) – new action for reconstitution of PCSPs following local government elections in May 2027, with engagement beginning in Jan-March 2027.

Objective D (fair, transparent, and independent processes for police pensions, injury benefits, and appeals) – additional wording on continuing to lobby for urgent action to address the recommendations in the 2020 NIAO report on the review of the Injury on Duty (IOD) scheme and reconsideration of roles and responsibilities.

Objective E (management of NIPB as an organisation) – amend action on the DOJ led review of the Policing Board to read ensuring a business improvement process is put in place informed by Board development events and effectiveness reviews.

Members raised the following points in relation to the Business plan actions for 2026-27:

- High level approach to business plan and therefore difficult for the Board to hold to account on delivery of actions.

- Objective D and review of Ill Health Retirement (IHR)/ IOD awards - include preparatory work to action legislative change in the next Assembly mandate, and additional, more specific language in respect of the ongoing work on the Reassessment policy and additional language to reflect the Board's contribution to laying the groundwork to ensure draft legislative proposals can be ready for introduction at the start of the next Assembly mandate.

It was requested that a piece of work be undertaken, with input from PSNI, on the overarching work being done by NIPB and PSNI in relation to IHR/ IOD, and Members were advised that a paper detailing the various workstreams will be brought to the Board's Resources Committee in March 2026. **(AP2)**

Following discussion, Officials will consider issuing a joint letter from NIPB and PSNI to DOJ setting out the intentions and ambitions in respect of IHR and IOD matters, including proposals regarding where responsibility for these functions should sit following any future regulatory change.

- Clarity was sought on the Objective E action relating to 'business plan monitoring', given the high level nature of the action and the need for specific targets and milestones.

In response Members were advised of the process underpinning the annual business plan and alignment with the five-year Corporate Plan and that discussions had previously taken place with Members in 2025 to agree the details now provided. It was further noted that additional discussions could be arranged should Members wish to amend any of the actions.

Members were also advised that the scrutiny and accountability role will be carried out by the Board's Committees to ensure delivery of the high level actions within the annual business plan.

- Status of proposed structural changes at the Board and Deep Dives for 2026-27 and following discussion it was agreed that officials will update the section relating to Deep Dives, and the draft minutes of the Board meeting held on 20 February 2026 to discuss proposed structural changes at the Board will be shared in due course.
- In respect of Objective D, whether there was a process to address increasing costs as part of a review of IHR/ IOD awards to serving and former Officers in line with review mechanisms in place for other benefits claimants (for example, Disability Living Allowance/ Personal Independence Payments).
In response Members were advised that reassessments take place for IOD claims and the criteria is based on earning capacity.
- Plans to address an expected flat cash budget for the Board over the coming years and impact on meeting pay obligations. Members were advised this matter will be discussed when the NIPB Resource Plan is presented as part of the Objective E updates at the ARAC meeting in March 2026.
- On Objective A, whether high level transformation initiatives should be parsed out to provide additional detail, and Members were advised that changes will require further consideration by the Board's Resources Committee and actions currently align with the Policing Plan objectives.

Following discussion and subject to implementation of the changes suggested above **(AP3)**, it was **AGREED** to:

- **APPROVE** the actions proposed for inclusion in the NIPB Annual Business Plan 2026-27, and,
- **APPROVE** the draft correspondence for issuing to DOJ seeking Ministerial approval of the NIPB Annual Business Plan 2026-27.

6.2 Review of the PSNI Code of Ethics 2026

The Director of Performance presented a paper to update Members on the Draft Code of Ethics Review and the Performance Committee's proposed final draft document following negotiation and agreement with PSNI as set out in the legislation of Section 52 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000.

Members were reminded of progress made in the past 18 months including a review of the Code of Ethics by the Board's Performance Committee since November 2024, in collaboration with PSNI Senior Officers, and with the Board at the meeting in June 2025.

Following the completion of a 12-week public consultation on the draft revised Code of Ethics, as requested by the Board in June 2025, and consideration of the 18 responses received, the Board's Performance Committee has agreed a final draft of the revised Code of Ethics 2026.

Members raised the following matters:

- Offered congratulations to Officials, recognising their hard work in producing the final draft, including the welcome inclusion of a 'Duty of Candour'.
- Concerns that DOJ has indicated that regulatory change may take up to six months to implement before the new Code can become legally enforceable, and the importance of ensuring any delays were minimised.

- Suggested an amendment to the positioning of the logos on the front page, and that the NIPB Chair foreword should include additional detail to acknowledge the work undertaken and the critical role of the Board in the process.
- Members were advised of potential delays in reviewing the foreword, and it was suggested that all communications and press releases should reflect the points raised to emphasise that it a Policing Board document produced in partnership with PSNI.
Following discussion, it was agreed to amend the positioning of logos and agreed communications strategy. **(AP4)**

Following discussion and subject to the minor change outlined above Members **AGREED** the revised Draft Code of Ethics 2026 and:

- **APPROVED** the revised Draft Code of Ethics 2026 to allow the Chair to inform the Justice Minister to proceed with the required regulatory changes, and that correspondence should request that any delays are minimised.

6.3 Election process for Board Chair & Vice-Chair and amendments to Standing Orders

The Chief Executive presented a paper on the proposed amendments to the Board's Standing Orders to reflect the revised process for the nomination and election of the Board Chair and Vice-Chair as agreed at the Board meeting in February 2026.

The paper reflects the agreement reached by the Board on how the new process for nominating and electing a Board Chair and Vice-Chair would be conducted and Members were asked to advise if content to agree the amendments made to Standing Orders to reflect that new process.

Members were asked to **NOTE** the inclusion of role profile for Chair and Vice-Chair to inform nominations or self-nominations at the Board meeting in April 2026.

Members discussed a minor amendment to the number of votes required to reflect an absolute majority in the voting process; confirmation that the existing Chair and Vice-Chair can be nominated again for the positions; and clarity around the role profile as well as leadership responsibilities of the Chair and Vice-Chair.

Members **NOTED** the update provided, that the full set of Standard Orders will be brought to the Board meeting in April 2026, and following discussion:

- **AGREED** the amendments to paragraph 4 of the Board's Standing Orders – Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

On a separate matter a Member raised a concern in relation to the PSNI failing to respond to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request and involvement of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), and whether this matter could be further escalated by the Board.

Specific concerns were raised in respect of communication from PSNI and whether the security classification of the response was appropriate in this case.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** to escalate this correspondence. **(AP5)**

6.4 Review of NIPB Members' Code of Conduct

The Chief Executive asked the Board to consider and agree the revised Code of Conduct for Members which includes Members comments to date, and to note the next steps which include taking further legal advice, and to note that

the Code would be brought back to Members if the legal advice requires any changes to be made to the Code.

The Chief Executive talked through the proposed changes to the Code of Conduct with Members and following discussion and proposed amendments from Members it was subsequently **AGREED** to bring an updated draft to a future Board meeting, and to request legal advice in parallel with this work.

(AP6)

6.5 NIPB Board Development Event 2026

The Chief Executive presented a paper asking Members to consider and agree next steps following discussions at the Board Development Event in January 2026.

Members **NOTED** a rolling action log which incorporates remaining actions agreed following the Independent Review of the Board and new actions that emerged at the Board Development Event.

The Chief Executive highlighted the following points within the action plan - revised Members' Code of Conduct, strategic review of Communications & Engagement, revised Process for the Election of Chair and Vice-Chair, and progress towards the agreement of a Tripartite Plan between the Board, PSNI, and DOJ.

The Vice-Chair suggested that discussions to progress a Tripartite Plan exclude the Members' Code of Conduct as this is an internal matter; requested a recruitment update as part of the review of the Board's senior staff structure; sought clarity on Members responsibilities following a recent assessment of the grading of the Chief Executive role; and asked that further consideration be given to how PSNI can provide assurance regarding the balance between risk assessments and resource allocation for key high risk areas.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** to issue correspondence to PSNI and DOJ on progressing agreement to a Tripartite Plan, taking account of Members comments above. **(AP7)**

6.6 Consultation on Proposed Guidance regarding Notifiable Memberships and Conflicts of Interest

The Director of Performance presented a paper to provide Members with information on the PSNI consultation on proposed Guidance regarding Notifiable Memberships and Conflicts of Interest and previous discussions that have taken place at the Board's Performance Committee.

As background Members were advised that the Board's Performance Committee has been discussing this matter since March 2021 in relation to a Conflicts of Interest policy, and that Committee Members and the previous Board Human Rights Advisor have been supportive of this change.

The Director of Performance advised that PSNI is required to formally consult with the Board on the proposed Guidance on Notifiable Memberships and Conflicts of Interest.

The Deputy Chief Constable has requested a formal response from the Board and Members feedback will be brought to the next meeting of the Board's Performance Committee in March 2026 to consider and finalise the Board's response.

Members raised matters in relation to the wording of the accompanying Service Instruction to more closely align with current Legislation, and that it should mirror the PSNI Code of Ethics in respect of declarations of Conflicts of Interest.

Following discussion Members agreed to share any feedback with the Director of Performance following the meeting.

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

- Delegate to the Board's Performance Committee to finalise and **AGREE** a response from the Board at its next meeting on 12 March 2026.

7. **ACTION LOG**

Members **NOTED** the action log for the Board meetings held on 5 February 2026 and 11 December 2025.

In response to a Member's query regarding action point 5 from the Board meeting held on 5 February 2026, Members were advised that this relates to the review of the Board's senior staff structure. A meeting to discuss next steps took place on 20 February 2026 and the draft minutes will be shared with Members to approve by written procedure.

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 5 February 2026 to 26 February 2026.
- A full list of correspondence issued and received by the Chair during the period 19 December 2025 to 3 March 2026.

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

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.

Due to limited availability of a Member on the working group established to progress plans to mark 25 years of the new policing arrangements in NI, the Chief Executive asked that if any Member would be willing to join the group to advise officials.

The working group will continue with its existing membership regardless of any changes to current membership.

Members **NOTED** the updates provided.

10 DRAFT BOARD PROGRAMME OF WORK 2026-27

The Chief Executive presented Members with the draft Board programme of work 2026-27 and advised that scheduling of Board briefings planned for 2026-27 were subject to change and dependent on the completion of related workstreams.

Members discussed the year end Policing Plan update to the Board from PSNI scheduled for June 2026, and the framework in place with the Board's Performance Committee for agreeing a final RAG status for the 3 outcomes of year one of the Policing Plan.

Members also considered whether the programme would include a meeting with the Police Ombudsman NI; whether there were plans to schedule an Operation Denton update as part of the ongoing work of Operation Kenova; confirmation that the National Crime Agency Director General will next meet with the Board in July 2026; and the status of the strategic review of communication and engagement processes. **(AP8)**

Members **NOTED** the updates provided and draft Board programme of work 2026-27.

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

The Board Chair welcomed everyone back to the private session of the Board meeting and invited the Chief Constable to make initial comments further to those he had made previously in the public session. The Chief Constable advised he had no further comments and as such the Board Chair moved directly to Member questions.

In response to a Member's question regarding the deployment of 100 officers to Neighbourhood Teams from 1 April 2026, the Chief Constable updated Members on the process for considering how resources are deployed as the new student officers (recruited as a result of the workforce recovery plan) graduate and become operational. Members were also advised of the wider considerations and resource allocation processes across the organisation where resources could now be invested as a result of new recruits coming online.

In response to a question from a Member regarding when the Board could expect to see the final Langdale Report (Independent Review into Violence against Women & Girls (VAWG) and PSNI Culture), the Chief Constable

updated Members on the current status of the report including factual accuracy checking, internal governance processes and his intentions in respect of a timeline for sharing the report. Following discussion, it was agreed that consideration would be given to giving this report, and other recent reports on similar issues a particular focus at both the public and private sessions of the forthcoming Board meetings. The Chief Constable also noted the timeframes in place for follow-up reviews following the completion of this initial report.

Other questions asked by Members in the private session related to:

- Figures in respect of race hate incidents and whether someone is more likely to be a victim of race hate because of pre-existing isolation or vulnerability, and whether this could also lead to such victims being less likely to achieve justice.
- Press coverage of a recent road stop in west Belfast and any additional information the PSNI could provide in respect of the incident, and,
- Member concerns regarding recent media reports relating to the Newforge Sports Complex. PSNI advised of steps being taken in relation to this matter, (including how potential conflicts of interest are being managed during the investigatory process) and were keen to emphasise that status of the organisation as a registered charity and not a part of PSNI. Members highlighted the importance, for community confidence, of this distinction be articulated where possible and in any engagement with the media on this issue.

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

11. COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES

None.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A Member requested a status update on the Board commissioned 'Deep Dives' and was advised that, upon completion of the academic work, draft reports will be considered by the appropriate Committee.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Board Meeting is scheduled for Thursday 2 April 2026 at 9.30am in James House.

The meeting closed at 4.05pm.

Strategic Planning & Governance

March 2026

Chair