

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING OF RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2021 AT 09.30AM AT THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD, WATERSIDE TOWER AND VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE

PRESENT:

Mr Gerry Kelly MLA (Chair)

Dr Janet Gray* (Vice-Chair)

(1) Mr John Blair MLA*

Mr Tom Buchanan MLA*

(2) Mr Trevor Clarke MLA*

Mr Seán Lynch MLA*

Mr Colm McKenna*

Mr Frank McManus*

Ms Deirdre Toner*

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

(3) Mr Mark McNaughten, T/Executive Director of
Finance & Support Services & Human Resources*

(4) Mr Jeff McNamara, Director of Information and
Communications Services*

(5) PSNI Chief Medical Adviser*

(3) One PSNI Staff Member*

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs Amanda Stewart, Chief Executive*

Ms Jenny Passmore, Director of Resources

(6) Ms Aislinn McGuckin, T/Director of Police
Administration*

Four Board Officials*

* Attended the meeting via Video Conference

(1) Part item 4.2 to end (Joined meeting at 9.40am)

(2) Part item 6.1 to end (Joined meeting at 10.15am)

(3) Items 6.2 to 6.4

(4) Item 6.3

(5) Item 6.4

(6) Item 6.5 only

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

The Committee agreed the agenda for the meeting.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2021

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the Committee meeting held on 20 January 2021. It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 20 January 2021 be approved.

4. UPDATE ON ACTION LOG

4.1 Correspondence from Y Cooke re PSNI Sickness Absence (AP1- Dec 2020)

The Committee noted correspondence from PSNI Director of Human Resources (HR) dated 5 January 2021 which responded to a request from the Committee during the meeting held on 16 December 2020 for the PSNI to provide more information on the levels of sickness absence within the PSNI by officer rank including calendar days lost, the average number of working days lost and the percentage of sick absence lost because of long term sick leave. It was agreed that this action may be closed on the Action Log.

4.2 Correspondence from Y Cooke re PSNI Human Resources Issues (AP6 to AP9 – December 2020)

The Committee noted correspondence from the PSNI Director of HR dated 5 January 2021 which responded to a number of actions that had arisen at the committee meeting on 16 December 2020 including further information on the number of officers remaining in service after 1 year, 2 years and 5 years. The correspondence also provided further information on female representation within other police services, and information on the increasing cost of sick absence within the PSNI. It was agreed that these actions may be closed on the Action Log.

Members discussed the tender specification that had been received from the PSNI noting that the Committee had requested to receive a copy of the recruitment partner contract. Members discussed the Board's role as the PSNI's accountability body and the requirement to have sight of relevant information in order to hold the PSNI to account. It was agreed that the Committee Chair should write again to the PSNI Director of HR and request the recruitment partner contract. **(AP1)**

4.3 Correspondence from DCC Hamilton re the NIAO report – Reducing Costs in the PSNI (AP1- November 2020)

The Committee noted correspondence from the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) dated 20 January 2021 which responded to a request from the Committee to provide more information about how the PSNI were intending to address the recommendations within the Northern Ireland Audit Office's (NIAO) Report '*Reducing Costs Within the PSNI*' which the DCC had discussed with the Committee at the meeting on 20 January 2021. Members noted that the NIAO Report had been published in April 2020 and expressed concern about the timely provision of quality information to the Committee by the PSNI. It was agreed that the Chief Executive would progress this issue and the Board Chair would write to Chief Constable. **(AP2)**

4.4 Correspondence from M McNaughten re Behavioural Video Analytics

Business Case (AP1 – January 2021)

The Committee noted correspondence from PSNI T/Executive Director of Finance & Support Services and Human Resources (HR) dated 25 January 2021 which responded to the Committee's request to review the business case prepared by the PSNI for the procurement of a Behavioural Video Analytics tool. It was agreed that the action may be closed on the Action Log.

4.5 Correspondence from the Deputy Chief Constable re Operation Yurta Lessons Learned (AP3 - November 2020)

The Committee noted correspondence from the DCC dated 9 February 2021 which responded to the Committee Chair's correspondence of 30 November 2020 requesting sight of the Terms of Reference of the PSNI's Operation Yurta Lessons Learned internal review. The Chief Executive updated the Committee on a meeting of the Chair's Advisory Group during which the Lessons Learned Terms of Reference had been discussed and it had been agreed that the Board Chair would write to the Chief Constable. It was agreed that the action may be closed on the Action Log.

4.6 Correspondence from M McNaughten re Grant Evaluation Process (AP2 – December 2020)

The Committee noted correspondence received from PSNI T/Executive Director of Finance & Support Services and HR dated 25 January 2021 which responded to the Committee's request for further information on how PSNI evaluated grant applications. It was agreed that the action may be closed on the Action Log.

4.7 Correspondence from Justice Minister re NIPB Budget Allocation 2021 – 22 (AP3 – December 2020)

The Committee noted correspondence received from the Minister of Justice dated 26 January 2021 about the Board's Budget for 2021-22 and noted that the Board's Resource Plan for 2021-22 would be dealt with later in the meeting.

It was agreed that the action may be closed on the Action Log.

5. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

5.1 Unauthorised use of Stop and Search

The Committee noted correspondence to the Board Chair from the DCC dated 18 January 2021 which detailed the number and approximate value of legal claims following the PSNI's use of unauthorised stop and search powers during 30 July and 11 August 2020. It was agreed that a letter would be sent to the DCC seeking further information on projected total cost of legal claims (including legal costs and fees). **(AP3)**

6. ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS

6.1 NIPB Resource Plan 2021-22

Officials presented a paper which detailed the proposed NIPB Resource Plan 2021-22 noting that the proposed Resource Plan contained a number of strategic assumptions as outlined in the paper. In response to a Member's question about Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) spending the monies that had been allocated to them during 2020-21, it was noted that the Chief Executive had asked Internal Audit to conduct an audit of one PCSP and the Board's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee were monitoring the situation.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The proposed Board Resource Plan 2021-22 be recommended to the Board for approval.

6.2 PSNI Finance Report – January 2021

The Committee noted the PSNI's Finance Report to 31 January 2021 and Officials provided an overview including a summary of the PSNI's financial position. Following initial commentary by Officials, the Chair welcomed Mr Mark McNaughten, PSNI T/Executive Director of Finance & Support Services and HR to the meeting.

The PSNI T/Executive Director of Finance & Support Services and HR briefed the Committee on the PSNI's Expenditure Report and various PSNI financial issues to 31 January 2021 noting a full year forecasted easement of £3.6 million which had increased from a previously reported projected easement of £1.1 million. The PSNI T/Executive Director of Finance & Support Services and HR updated the Committee on the uncertainty around a number of PSNI legal cases noting that the PSNI had written to the Department of Justice (DoJ) seeking permission to carry forward monies from the 2020-21 Budget into 2021-22 but this had been declined by the DoJ.

The Committee were also updated on the PSNI's capital expenditure for 2020-21 noting that the PSNI hoped to achieve a breakeven capital spend by the year end.

The PSNI T/Executive Director of Finance & Support Services and HR compared the PSNI's 2019-20 spend on a number of areas to the spend in 2020-21 noting that year on year there had been an increase in spending and that the anticipated 2021-22 'flat cash' budget represented a significant challenge for the Service.

During discussions Members asked the PSNI T/Executive Director of Finance & Support Services and HR about a number of issues including:

- In-year capital expenditure and the number of orders placed with

contractors for delivery and planned spending by the PSNI Estates Team by 31 March 2021.

- The Business Case for 'nearly new vehicles' and how this is operated by the Construction and Procurement Delivery (CPD) Team.
- The profile of PSNI's capital spend during the year. The T/ Executive Director of Finance & Support Services and HR acknowledged Members' concerns but stated that increased capital expenditure towards year end is an ongoing issue and is a consequence of single year budgets which necessitate the procurement processes to be completed in the first part of each year leading to no actual expenditure until closer to year end. He noted with Members that the provision of multi-year budget may allow for a more even distribution of capital expenditure.
- The rollout of ruggedised laptops to police officers and the savings may have in terms of officers' capacity and overtime.

The PSNI's T/Executive Director of Finance & Support Services and HR also provided an overview of the PSNI's budget planning for 2021-22 noting that draft budget allocation from the DoJ had been received however to date there had been no agreed funding for COVID-19, Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF) and Legacy. Members noted that the Chief Constable had previously advised the Board of the pressures facing the PSNI as a result of a projected £23 million budget deficit, which excludes the three areas outlined above, but that the Chief Constable had confirmed his commitment to the Neighbour Policing Teams for 2021-22.

The Committee noted that the PSNI's Strategic Management Board would consider the draft 2021-22 Resource Plan before it was considered by the Committee at its next meeting on 24 March 2021 and the short timescale to properly consider the detail of the draft Resource Plan before recommending it to the Board for approval.

The Chair thanked the Mr McNaughten for his committee briefing.

6.3 PSNI Briefing on Digital Strategy

The Committee noted the PSNI's Digital Strategy 2021 and Beyond document. Following initial commentary by Officials, the Chair welcomed back Mr Mark McNaughten, PSNI's T/Executive Director of Finance & Support Services and HR and Mr Jeff McNamara, PSNI Director of Information and Communications Services to the meeting.

The T/Executive Director of Finance & Support Services and HR noted that as part of the Chief Constable's Service Modernisation Plan, a Strategic Outline Case costing some £90 million to enhance the use of digital technology to support front line policing had been endorsed by the DoJ progressing to Outline Business Case stage.

The Director of Information and Communications Services presented the PSNI's Digital Strategy 2021 and Beyond paper to the Committee noting that the aim was to encourage public engagement with the PSNI through a number of platforms including online channels, and the provision of ruggedised laptops to police officers to ensure officers had the capability to work anywhere and to ensure they continued to be visible to the community they served.

Members discussed a number of issues with the Director of Information and Communications Services including:

- The technology connectivity between multiple criminal justice agencies including the PSNI. The Director of Information and Communications Services noted that the PSNI worked in collaboration with a number of agencies including the Public Prosecution Service and Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service.

- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) considerations when sharing data between criminal justice partners.
- Challenges facing the PSNI Resource Plan 2021-22 and whether there are sufficient monies to deliver a Digital Strategy.
- Consideration of accessibility issues to ensure that the PSNI could engage with vulnerable/disabled people. Members noted that the aim of the strategy was to increase the public's choice in how they engage with the PSNI, not remove current well established channels of communication.
- Engagement with peer organisations on a national level so that the PSNI benefited from technology that had been tried and tested in other industries, including those outside policing. The Committee also noted that the PSNI engaged with international hardware and software providers to ensure it was aware of technology developments.

The Chair thanked the Mr McNaughten and Mr McNamara for the Committee Briefing.

6.4 PSNI Briefing on Occupational Health and Wellbeing Annual Report

The Committee noted the PSNI's Occupational Health and Wellbeing (OHW) Annual Report 2019. Following initial commentary by Officials, the Chair welcomed back Mr Mark McNaughten, PSNI T/Executive Director of Finance & Support Services and HR and the PSNI's Chief Medical Adviser to the meeting.

The PSNI's Chief Medical Adviser provided an overview of the work of the OHW including the multidisciplinary team of professionals across a number of areas including medicine, welfare and physiotherapy. He advised Members that following his appointment in 2017 he had been undertaken a review of the department to identify its strengths and weaknesses in terms of the service provided and improve accountability and clinical governance.

Members discussed a number of issues with the PSNI's Chief Medical Adviser including:

- Recruitment concerns due to OHW staff employment terms and conditions which are in line with Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) grading, salary and benefits and were less attractive than similar staff employed by the Health and Social Care Trusts.
- The expansion of mental health services by OHW to provide a proactive service to build resilience among PSNI staff and officers, including the provision of debriefs following traumatic incidents.
- Cancellation of 23% of OHW appointments and the establishment of a working group to address the underlying reasons for cancelled appointments. The Director of OHW noted that OHW had launched telephone and video OHW consultations.
- OHW's consideration of Injury on Duty causes including musculoskeletal and psychiatric injuries and the Director of OHW's engagement with other PSNI Departments in planning for fleet cars and body armour.
- PSNI's Chief Medical Adviser further noted that OHW engaged with other health professionals including pain management specialists and Rheumatologists to manage the cases of officers who have sustained injuries on duty.
- Police officers entitlement to Ill Health Retirement upon reaching 26.5 years of service.

Members thanked the T/Executive Director of Finance & Support Services and HR and PSNI's Chief Medical Adviser for attending the Committee.

Following discussions, the Committee agreed that the Committee Chair should write to the PSNI T/Executive Director of Finance & Support Services and HR to seek further information about the employment of OHW professional staff under NICS Terms and Conditions and also the average service of officers

seeking ill health retirement which is 26.5 years. (AP4)

6.5 Police Administration Cases for Committee Decision

The Committee considered a paper requesting Members review and make decisions on the eligibility of awards under Injury on Duty and Police Pensions Regulations further to assessments undertaken by Selected Medical Practitioners (SMPs) and Independent Medical Referees (IMRs).

Following discussion it was agreed that the medical recommendations of the SMPs and IMRs be approved in all cases assessed between 12 January 2021 and 9 February 2021.

The Committee further agreed that the nine Reconsideration applications considered by Members should progress, as requested, for assessment by the SMP or IMR as appropriate.

7. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

The Committee did not raise any questions for submission to the Chief Constable.

8. COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES /OPPORTUNITIES

No communication issues were raised.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was raised.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee would meet on Wednesday 24 March 2021 at 9.30am.

The meeting ended at 13:13.

CHAIR

**RESOURCES DIRECTORATE
February 2021**