

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING OF RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 MAY 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*

(2) Mr Tom Buchanan MLA*

Mr Trevor Clarke MLA*

Mr Colm McKenna*

Mr Frank McManus*

(3) Mr Mike Nesbitt MLA*

Ms Deirdre Toner*

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ATTENDANCE

IN(4) Mr Tom Frawley, Board Vice-Chair*

EXTERNAL ADVISORS ATTENDANCE

IN(5) Ms Joanne, Kane, Director Heads Together

(5) Ms Angela Barratt, Senior Consultant Heads Together

(5) Ms Cherith Biggerstaff, Consultant Heads Together

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

(6) Mrs Pamela McCreedy, Chief Operating Officer

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

(8) Chief Superintendent Emma Bond, Head of the Police College

(6) One PSNI Staff Member*

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs Amanda Stewart, Chief Executive*

Ms Jenny Passmore, Director of Resources

Ms Aislinn McGuckin, T/Director of Police Administration*

(4) Ms Dympna Thornton, Director of Partnership*
Three Board Officials*

* Attended the meeting via Video Conference

(1) Part 4 to end (Joined meeting at 9.37am)

(2) Part 4 to end (Joined meeting at 9.40am)

- (3) Item 1 to Part item 6.6 (Departed meeting at 12.15pm)
- (4) Item 6.8 only
- (5) Item 6.6 only
- (6) Items 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6
- (7) Items 6.4 and 6.5

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr Seán Lynch MLA.

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 21 APRIL 2021

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the Committee meeting held on 21 April 2021. It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 21 April 2021 be approved.

4. UPDATE ON ACTION LOG

The Director of Resources updated Members on the Committee Action Log, noting that in relation to AP6 from the February 2020 committee meeting the PSNI had appointed a Head of Estate Services and work in relation to the Board's oversight role of the PSNI Estate would be progressed. In relation to AP3 from the January 2021 Committee meeting legal advice was awaited from the Crown Solicitors Office and Officials were following up.

The Director of Resources further noted that correspondence in relation to two actions had been received.

Correspondence from the PSNI T/ Executive Director of Finance re Occupational Health and Welfare Branch Terms and Conditions (AP2 March 21)

The Committee noted correspondence dated 23 April 2021 received from the PSNI T/ Executive Director of Finance providing further information about the employment terms of conditions of nursing, clinical and medical staff employed within the PSNI's Occupational Health and Welfare Branch (OHW) after the initial response was considered by the committee at its meeting on 21 April 2021. Members noted that the response did not fully address the Committee's concerns about the recruitment and retention of OHW staff, and in particular medical staff who were employed under Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) terms and conditions. It was agreed that a response should be sent to the PSNI noting the Committee's concerns and the different pay scales that OHW staff were employed under. **(AP1)**

4.2 Correspondence from Chief Constable re Service Executive Team Portfolios (AP2 Feb 21)

The Committee noted correspondence dated 11 April 2021 from the Chief Constable about the Service Executive Team's portfolios, which had been previously noted at the Board on 1 April 2021. The Committee noted that the Chief Operating Officer (COO) would be the PSNI's Lead for Resources Committee. Members noted that the Deputy Chief Constable would be the Lead for both Partnership and Performance Committees.

5. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

5.1 PSNI Digital Strategy 2021 and Beyond

The Chair noted that the PSNI's Head of Communications and Information had had briefed the Committee on the PSNI's Digital Strategy at the Committee meeting in February 2021 and the Strategy had recently been approved by the PSNI's Strategic Management Board and was provided to the Committee for information. The Committee noted that it would welcome a future follow up presentation around this area of work.

6. ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS

6.1 Annual Report of the Independent Assessor of PSNI Recruitment Vetting

Board Officials presented a paper and provided an overview of the Annual Report of Sir Patrick Coghlin, the Independent Assessor of PSNI Recruitment Vetting. The Committee noted that this was Sir Patrick's Coghlin's final Annual Report as his term as Independent Assessor had ended and Sir John Gillen had been appointed the Independent Assessor of PSNI Recruitment Vetting by the Department of Justice (DoJ), with the Board's endorsement, was effect from 1 May 2021.

6.2 Evaluation Report – PSNI Support to Royal Oman Police

Board Officials presented a paper and provided an overview of the Evaluation Report received from the PSNI following completion of a PSNI secondment to Oman providing assistance to the Royal Omani Police which had been partially impacted by COVID-19. Members discussed the Evaluation Report and noted that they would welcome more information on the improvement and benefits to the PSNI of their participation in secondments. Members further asked Officials to clarify what monies Royal Omani Police contributed to the secondment costs. **(AP2)**

6.3 Overview of PSNI Officer Sickness Absence Research

The Committee noted the briefing paper provided by Board Officials which provided an overview of the PSNI sick absence research being undertaken by Heads Together noting that the update presented at today's meeting was their initial findings. Following some initial commentary the Chair welcomed Ms Joanne Kane, Director, Ms Angela Barratt, Senior Human Resources (HR) Consultant and Ms Cherith Biggerstaff, HR Consultant, to the meeting and invited them to provide an overview of their research to date and initial observations.

An overview of the research undertaken to date was provided including:

- A review of PSNI policies, engagement with the PSNI including various HR representatives including Attendance Management Team and HR Business Partners, focus groups with Police Sergeants, meetings with the PSNI Chief Medical Adviser and engagement with the Police Federation.
- The main reasons for sick absence were musculoskeletal and psychological reasons and there may be many causes of psychological illnesses.
- Initial findings indicated that focus was on resources gathering management information and data but proactive support was not offered to line managers in their management of sick absence.
- Lack of training was a barrier to line management proactively managing sick absences and making referrals to the PSNI's OHW Branch.
- The management of duty adjustments, of which 65% were permanent duty adjustments.

During the presentation Members discussed a number of issues including:

- PSNI's sick absence rate in comparison to other Northern Ireland public sector organisations and UK public sector services including Fire and

Rescue and Police Services, and Members asked that the Research Terms of Reference be expanded to include benchmarking with the NI Fire and Rescue Service and the NI Prison Service.

- Reasons why there was a modest improvement in the PSNI's 2019-20 sick absence rate in comparison to the 2018-19 sick absence rate. Ms Barratt noted that it may be because of a reporting change and change from the Bradford Factor Calculator but agreed to consider it in further detail for the Final Report.

Members noted that PSNI had initiated a HR Department Review by Grant Thornton and Officials agreed to ascertain if the Review was complete and provide a copy of the Report to Heads Together as it was relevant to the research of PSNI sick absence.

Members discussed with Ms Kane, Ms Barratt and Ms Biggerstaff further information that they would like to be considered and included in the Final Report.

The Chair thanked Ms Kane, Ms Barrett and Ms Biggerstaff for their presentation.

6.4 PSNI Finance Report - April 2021

The Committee noted the PSNI's monthly Finance Report and Board officials provided an overview of usual monthly Finance Report providing a summary of the PSNI's financial position to the end of financial year 30 April 2021.

The Chair welcomed PSNI Chief Operating Officer (COO) Mrs Pamela McCreedy and PSNI T/Executive Director of Finance, Support Services & HR Mr Mark McNaughten to the meeting and invited the PSNI T/Executive Director of Finance, Support Services & HR to present the paper.

The PSNI T/Executive Director of Finance, Support Services & HR presented an overview of the monthly Finance Report including a summary of the PSNI's financial position to 30 April 2021 including:

- The PSNI's final budget for 2021-22 had been confirmed and would be discussed later in the meeting and an additional £12.3 million had been confirmed.
- After one month the PSNI's had overspent on their Overtime Budget as a result of recent Disorder in Northern Ireland, but it was difficult to assess the position, and overtime spending over the coming months would be monitored, and additional monies may be requested from the DoJ.
- Additional information had been provided within the Report in response to Members queries raised at the meeting on 21 April 2021 during the Procurement and Logistic Services briefing.

During the briefing Members raised a number of questions with both the PSNI COO and T/Executive Director of Finance, Support Services & HR including:

- The Government Actuary Department (GAD) 2019-20 valuation of Injury On Duty (IOD) expenditure and whether a similar valuation would be made for the 2020-21 PSNI Annual Report and Financial Statements. The T/Executive Director of Finance, Support Services & HR noted that a revised GAD valuation would be reflected in the Accounts but it was not anticipated to be as significant an adjustment as in 2019-20.
- The number of long term contracts, over five years in duration, PSNI had in place with suppliers. The T/Executive Director of Finance, Support Services & HR noted that all contracts were awarded in conjunction with Construction and Procurement Delivery (CPD) guidance and that at times a balance had to be struck between Value for Money, and investment required by the supplier in infrastructure and reward for the investment.

The Committee thanked the COO and T/Executive Director of Finance, Support Services & HR for the update provided.

6.5 PSNI Updated Resource Plan 2021-22

The COO and PSNI T/Executive Director of Finance, Support Services & HR provided an overview of the PSNI's updated 2021-22 Resource Plan which the Committee were asked to recommend to the Board for approval.

The PSNI T/Executive Director of Finance, Support Services & HR noted that the Updated Resource Plan included additional funding of £12.3m and a number of other confirmed funding streams and the PSNI's confirmed 2021-22 Budget was £783.6 million and the 2021-22 projected shortfall was £24.8 million. The PSNI T/Executive Director of Finance, Support Services & HR provided an overview of the initiatives to balance the budget including a reduction in overtime and other non-pay areas.

Following discuss the Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- Recommend to the Board the approval of the PSNI 2021-22 Updated Resource Plan. **(AP3)**

6.6 PSNI Learning and Development

The Committee noted the briefing paper provided by Board Officials which provided an overview of the Police College including the an update on the 2016 Gibson Review of the Police College noting that only two Recommendations made from that Review had yet to be implemented.

Following some initial commentary the Chair welcomed the COO and Chief

Superintendent Emma Bond, Head of the Police College to the meeting and invited her to update the Committee on the Police College.

Chief Superintendent Bond noted that from January 2022 all graduates of the Police College would complete a new graduate level qualification, in conjunction with Ulster University, during their two year probationary period which will focus on reflective learning; the Police College was the first UK institution to offer this graduate qualification.

Chief Superintendent Bond further updated the Committee on the outstanding Gibson Report recommendations noting that the Police College's bank of exam questions was subject to a quarterly quality assurance process and an annual review by the responsible Chief Officer. Chief Superintendent Bond further provided an update on the regular review of exam pass rates which were reported to Ulster University.

During the briefing Members discussed a number of issues with the Chief Superintendent Bond and the COO including:

- Oversight mechanisms of the Police College other than Ulster University.
- The entry routes for degree and non-degree holders who graduate from the 21 week student officer programme at the Police College before undertaking the new graduate level programme.
- Impact of COVID-19 on the delivery of training through the Police College and the use of other sites for the delivery of training. It was noted that while other sites had been utilised to deliver training this would cease and all training would be delivered at the Police College.

The Chair thanked the COO and Chief Superintendent Bond for attending the meeting and they left.

Members discussed the Police College oversight structures requested that

Officials prepare a proposal in respect of a potential review or oversight of the work of the Police College for Committee discussion. **(AP4)**

6.7 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).

The T/ Director of Police Administration provided an update to the Committee on two cases where information was outstanding and that the Committee were not being asked to make a decision. In the first case information was awaited from the Applicant's legal representatives and in relation to the second matter legal advice was being sought from the CSO. The Committee noted that they would defer their decision in relation to both matters.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** that:

- The medical recommendations of the Selected Medical Practitioners in 18 cases assessed between 14 April 2021 and 7 May 2021 approved.
- The medical recommendations of the Independent Medical Referees in one case assessed between 14 April 2021 and 7 May 2021 be approved.
- The two anonymised cases put forward for reconsideration by an Independent Medical Referee be progressed.

6.8 Committee Effectiveness Review

The Chair welcomed the Board Vice-Chair and Director of Partnership to the meeting and asked them to provide an update on the Committee Effectiveness Review which had been initially discussed at the meeting on 21 April 2021.

The Director of Partnership noted that following the meeting on 21 April 2021 further feedback had been received from Members and provided an overview of the paper presented which summarised the Committee's Survey Responses. The Vice-Chair noted that the Effectiveness Evaluation was part of a broader review of Committees that both he and the Director of Partnership were working on and would be discussed further at a future Board Strategic Planning Day.

The Chair thanked the Director of Partnership and Board Vice-Chair for their work in completing the Committee Effectiveness process and Members agreed that they should be invited back to update the Committee following completion of the review of the Committee Structure.

7. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

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

8. COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES /OPPORTUNITIES

Members agreed to request the PSNI provide an update on its involvement in EU funded research projects. **(AP5)**

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was conducted.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee would meet on Wednesday 16 June 2021 at 9.30am

The meeting ended at 1.10pm.

CHAIR

**RESOURCES DIRECTORATE
May 2021**