

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING OF RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 28 OCTOBER 2021 AT 2PM AT THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD, WATERSIDE TOWER AND VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE

PRESENT:

Mr Gerry Kelly MLA (Chair)
Dr Janet Gray (Vice-Chair)
Mr Trevor Clarke MLA
Ms Carmel McKinney *
Mr John Blair MLA*
Mr Mike Nesbitt
Mr Colm McKenna
Mr Frank McManus*
Ms Deirdre Toner*

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

- (1) Mrs Pamela McCreedy, Chief Operating Officer
- (2) Mr Mark McNaughten, T/Assistant Chief Officer
Corporate Services
- (3) Ms Tabitha Ramsay, T/Head of Human Resources
- (4) Mr Will Young T/Assistant Chief Officer People and
Organisational Development
- (5) Mr Jonathan Glendinning, Head of Estate Services

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mrs Sinead Simpson, Chief Executive*
Ms Jenny Passmore, Director of Resources
- (6) Ms Aislinn McGuckin, T/Director of Police
Administration
Six Board Officials

* Attended the meeting via Video Conference

- (1) **Item 6.4 to 6.6**
- (2) **Item 6.4 and 6.5**
- (3) **Item 6.6 only**
- (4) **Item 6.6 only**
- (5) **Item 6.4 only**
- (6) **Item 6.7 only**

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mrs Linda Dillon MLA and Mr Tom Buchanan MLA.

The Committee agreed the Agenda for the meeting and no one raised any business that they wanted to consider further under 'Any Other Business'.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Colm McKenna advised he would like to declare a perceived conflict in that he is aware that one of the sites the PSNI will reference in their Estates Strategy briefing later in this meeting is the Ulster University Jordanstown campus and he is currently a Non-Executive Director Board Member in the Department for the Economy.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2021

The Director of Resources noted that in relation to agenda item 5.1 in the minutes, (ACO Terms and Conditions), discussion on the spot salary option was outlined and the committee decision recorded in the minutes.

The Director of Resources added that for completeness, the minutes should also record the other options that Members considered which were:

- The creation of a pay range;
- To pay a spot salary to be reviewed in line with performance and contribution;
- To pay a market rate and offer a bonus for performance.

Following discussion Members confirmed they were content for this additional information to be included in the minutes and it was **AGREED** that:

- The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 23 September 2021 be updated to reflect the above information and be brought to the next Committee meeting to be ratified. **(AP1)**

4. UPDATE ON ACTION LOG

The Committee noted the updates detailed within the Action Log and the related verbal overview provided by the Director of Resources.

The Director of Resources noted there were four actions arising from the previous meeting on 23 September 2021. In respect of Action Points 1 and 2, correspondence had been issued to the PSNI and a response is awaited.

In relation to Action Point 3 from the meeting on 23 September 2021, Members noted that the T/Director of Police Administration would provide an update regarding an Officer's eligibility for Ill Health Retirement at agenda item 6.7.

In relation to Action Point 4 from the meeting on 23 September 2021, the Director of Resources advised an updated programme of work will be brought to the next meeting which will include details of the People Strategy the Committee will be monitoring from December onwards.

In relation to Action Point 4 from the meeting on 19 May 2021 in respect of the oversight arrangements within the Police College, Members noted they will receive a briefing from PSNI at our meeting in Garnerville next month.

In relation to Action Point 6 from the meeting on 20 February 2020 in respect of an Estate Services Protocol this is tabled at today's meeting for Members' consideration at agenda item 6.2.

5. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

5.1 Correspondence from PSNI re DAO 05/21 Contracts Register

The Chair noted this item relates to correspondence received from DoF providing guidance on the information that should be included in the Contracts Register. The Chair noted that this was previously discussed at the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 30 September 2021 in respect of the Board's Contracts Register. Following which, on behalf of the Committee, the Chair wrote to PSNI in order to seek assurance that this was being adhered to in respect of their Contracts Register. The Chair noted that the T/Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) Corporate Services confirmed that the PSNI's Contracts Register accurately reflects the key requirements of the DAO letter and their approach has been the subject of internal and external audits both of which have been positive.

5.2 HR Grant Thornton Report

The Chair referred Members to correspondence received from PSNI regarding the Review of their HR Services, which was commissioned internally and carried out by Grant Thornton. Members noted this was referenced in the recent report on Police Sickness Absence and, on behalf of the Committee, the Chair had requested sight of the report on its completion. The Director of Resources provided a brief summary of the findings and recommendations and noted the T/ACO People and Organisational Development will take these forward and the Committee will have the opportunity to monitor progress over the next number of years. Members agreed to keep a watching brief on progress and will monitor through the Committee.

5.3 The Chair noted he would like to update the Committee regarding a meeting he and the Vice-Chair had with the Chief Operating Officer (COO) and T/ACO People and Organisational Development on 15 October 2021. The Chair noted

this was an informal meeting to discuss the work of the Committee. The next recruitment campaign was discussed, which is due to be launched on 2 November 2021, as was the move away from advertising internally for staff roles to ensuring all vacancies go to the open market. The Chair advised both the COO and the T/ACO People and Organisational Development assured him they were committed to addressing cultural issues within the organisation to ensure all staff have mutual respect and that a safe space is created for those staff from minority groups to speak out and be heard.

6. ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS

6.1 Grant Proposals – Above delegated limits

Members considered a paper seeking the Committee's recommendations in respect of requests by PSNI to make grant payments to the Rainbow Project, the Migrant Centre NI and Leonard Cheshire within the current financial year. In all three instances the sums proposed would take the PSNI over their delegated limit in terms of the total value of grants paid to each organisation. Board officials confirmed that, in the event the Committee did recommend these grants for approval, final approval from the Department of Justice (DoJ) and Department of Finance (DoF) would be necessary prior to any funds being paid.

Members noted the important work carried out by each organisation in respect of Hate & Signal Crime Advocacy Services (HCAS) however expressed concern at the continued use of the grant mechanism for the disbursement of funds. Members were made aware of the PSNI/DoJ intention to move the provision of HCAS services onto a commercial contract from 1 April 2022 and acknowledged that the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic had impeded their ability to move to a commercial contract from 1 April 2021, the original agreed commencement date.

Members were of the collective view that, in recommending the approval of

these grants last year, their recommendation had been conditional on it being the last time under the grants approval arrangement. Related matters discussed by the Committee included:

- Equality issues in terms of how funds are accessed under the grants approval mechanism and,
- The potential impact on victims who rely on HCAS should these grants not be approved.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** Board officials would source further information on the potential impact on victims should this funding not be approved and also provide clarification on the decision of the Committee in respect of these requests in the 2020/2021 year. **(AP2)**

6.2 NIPB/PSNI Estates Protocol

The Director of Resources presented a paper outlining the draft protocol between the Board and PSNI in respect of the day to day operating procedures relating to the PSNI Estate. The Director of Resources advised Members that the protocol has been developed to formalise the arrangements in terms of what the Board has sight of and what is carried out by the PSNI on our behalf, and to ultimately provide assurance to the Board that the estate is being managed effectively. Members were asked to note the draft protocol and provide feedback following which Board officials will continue to engage with PSNI in respect of finalising the document.

During discussion Members noted they would like to see more clarity on roles and responsibilities, in particular the inclusion of more references to the Board and this Committee's responsibilities. In respect of the Category 1 Activities Members requested that a reference to timeliness and the need for early engagement at the appropriate stage with the Board be included.

It was **AGREED** that:

- Director of Resources would update the protocol to reflect Members' comments and liaise with PSNI regarding appropriate timeframes for information to be brought to the Committee. **(AP3)**

6.3 Disposal of Portadown (Edward Street) PSNI Station

The Director of Resources presented a paper requesting Members consider the attached report from PSNI Estate Services and make a recommendation to the Board on the disposal of land and building which was the former Portadown PSNI station.

During discussion Members commented on the length of time the disposal process has taken since the station was formally closed and it was agreed to ask the PSNI to provide a breakdown of the maintenance costs of looking after the site during this period.

Members also **AGREED** to recommend to the Board their approval to dispose of the former Portadown PSNI Station.

6.4 PSNI Estates Strategy

The Director of Resources presented a paper which noted that, as the Board is the owner of the PSNI Estate, the Resources Committee is required, on behalf of the Board, to endorse the PSNI Estate Strategy. In addition to the strategy document the PSNI also provided a document on the State of the Estate and an update on the Police College redevelopment site. Members were asked to note the briefing documents which the PSNI representatives would present and to consider the PSNI Estate Strategy 2021 and Beyond.

The Chair welcomed PSNI Chief Operating Officer (COO) Mrs Pamela McCreedy, PSNI T/Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) of Corporate Services Mr Mark McNaughten and the Head of Estate Services Mr Jonathan Glendinning to the meeting and invited the Head of Estate Services to present the PSNI Estates Strategy.

The Head of Estate Services explained that Horizon 2025 sets out the overall service modernisation plan over the next 5 years, and from this vision, subsequent strategies have been developed that will progress the necessary next steps to aid the transformation. The Head of Estate Services presented the PSNI's Estate Strategy and gave an overview of the paper including:

- The State of the Estate
- Age and costs – benchmarked against other UK wide police services
- Development of the Estates Strategy
- Seven pillars of Estate Transformation
- Key aspects of the strategy
- Next steps

During the briefing Members raised a number of questions with the COO, Head of Estates and the T/ACO of Corporate Services including:

- Identification of the 11 sites that are currently closed and earmarked for disposal and how many more can/will be added to this list PSNI agreed to provide the information;
- A breakdown of the various stages of the disposal process and a timeline for the disposal of future buildings;
- The Board's role in the process;
- The projected income from the sale of these properties and the use of these capital receipts for further investment. PSNI agreed to revert in respect of the estimated projected income following the disposal of these sites.
- The PSNI's capacity to deliver on the projects/programmes in order for them to be delivered simultaneously;
- Sustainability and environmental concerns;
- The number of police stations required going forward, given agile working practices;
- The consideration given to working with the Policing and Community

Safety Partnerships (PCSP's) and Neighbourhood Policing Teams.

The Head of Estate Services then presented the Police College Redevelopment Update and outlined:

- The college project objectives.
- The background and considerations.
- Shortlisting considerations.
- Resultant considerations.
- The strategic benefits and opportunities the former University of Ulster site at Jordanstown could offer.

As discussion ensued and the former Police College site in Cookstown was referenced, Carmel McKinney declared a Conflict of Interest due to her position of Chairperson of the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) and advised she would not be asking any questions during this section of the briefing.

During the briefing Members raised a number of questions with the COO, Head of Estates and the T/ACO of Corporate Services including:

- The size of the Jordanstown site.
- Concerns for local residents regarding the noise level some PSNI activities would generate.
- Implications of not securing a site in this financial year.
- Contaminated land on other sites on the short list.
- What sites have been definitively ruled out.
- Why all shortlisted sites are geographically situated east of the river Bann.
- The support of DoJ supportive in terms of funding for the acquisition of the site.
- The other options if the Jordanstown site was not secured.

The COO noted the business case to identify a preferred option for a site is still a work in progress. Whilst the strategic benefits and opportunities for rationalisation have been noted in connection with the Jordanstown site it was too early in the process to confirm the preferred option. The COO noted once the business case has been finalised a preferred option will be selected along with other alternative options.

The Chair thanked the Head of Estate Services for the presentations and briefing and he left the meeting.

Following discussion Members **AGREED** to:

- Endorse the direction of travel of the PSNI Estates Strategy noting it was work in progress and that further consultation and engagement with the PSNI will follow as the implementation of the strategy develops.
- To write to the PSNI to request further information in relation to the disposal of PSNI stations. This information to include the number of stations currently listed for disposal, projected income from the sale of these properties and the amount of time between closure and listing for sale on the open market. Members also requested a synopsis of running costs relating to the Portadown police station since its closure in April 2017. **AP4**

6.5 PSNI Finance Report - September 2021

The Committee noted the PSNI's monthly Finance Report and Board officials provided a summary of the PSNI's financial position as at 30 September 2021.

The Chair invited the T/ACO of Corporate Services to present the report.

The T/ACO of Corporate Services presented an overview of the monthly Finance Report including a summary of the PSNI's financial position to 30 September 2021 including:

- The financial position halfway through the financial year is that the PSNI are reporting an underspend of £1.6m and a projected full year pressure of £8.9m. The T/ACO Corporate Services reported that in relation to October monitoring, the NI Executive had not yet reached agreement but Members were advised that October PSNI monitoring bids would be rolled forward and included in the January monitoring exercise which has now commenced.
- An update on in year Capital spending noting there was a year to date underspend of £2.9m. This reflects ongoing delays in Estates projects. A significant part of the capital budget this year was for the acquisition of a site for the new police college. As a preferred option for a site has not as yet been identified and secured, it is unlikely that this capital spend can take place within the current financial year and therefore an easement of £10.2m was declared as part of the October monitoring exercise.
- No further developments to date regarding the future years funding exercise or the 10 year capital plan exercise completed in August and September 2021 respectively.

During the briefing Members raised a number of questions with both the COO and T/ACO of Corporate Services including:

- PSNI Overtime pressures – the T/ACO Corporate Services acknowledged overtime costs continue to be over budget each month and advised the Deputy Chief Constable is currently leading on a programme of work to implement measures to reduce this cost. It was noted that this is part of the People Strategy Action Plan and while the T/ACO Corporate Services advised it is unlikely to lead significant reductions in the current financial year, results should become evident from the 2022/23 financial year onwards.
- The overspend on telecoms and transport – the T/ACO Corporate Services advised there have been unanticipated areas of demand on both. The rollout of the ruggedised laptops has been accelerated and due to social distancing regulations less people are allowed in vehicles

together which consequently leads to more vehicles and increased costs.

- In relation to a Member's question about the NI Transitional Allowance for PSNI staff, PSNI confirmed that a business case is currently in the draft stages, negotiations are ongoing and the funding stream is yet to be confirmed.

The Committee thanked the COO and T/ACO of Corporate Services for the update provided and the T/ACO of Corporate Services left the meeting.

6.6 PSNI Human Resources Dashboard

The Chair welcomed The T/ACO People and Organisational Development Mr Will Young and T/Head of HR Ms Tabitha Ramsay to the meeting.

The Committee noted a paper which provided a breakdown of figures for both the police officer and police staff side including staff numbers, recruitment, and information on leavers, absence, disability and national identity. Professional Standards information regarding grievances and discipline was also included.

The T/Head of HR presented the PSNI HR Dashboard and provided commentary on the key areas of :

- Resourcing
- Attendance Management
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Disciplinary Procedures, Grievances, Bullying and Harassment

Following the presentation Members raised a number of questions with both the T/Head of HR and the T/ACO People and Organisational Development including:

- Staff sickness levels – (COVID-19 related and otherwise).
- The increase in the staff absence rate and what action line managers

are taking to manage this.

- The impact of Long COVID in particular with regard to rates of sick pay
- Numbers of cases of bullying and harassment for both police officer and police staff and what action plans are in place to deal with these.
- PSNI misconduct.
- Professional Standards policies and procedures.

The Chair thanked the COO, T/ACO People and Organisational Development and T/Head of HR for the briefing and they all left the meeting.

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).

Board officials advised Members that between 17 September 2021 and 20 October 2021, SMPs had considered 15 cases referred to them under the relevant regulations and during the same period, IMRs had considered 2 cases.

Members also considered 5 submissions where applicants have requested their case be reconsidered by either the SMP or IMR.

Further to the information provided at the September Resources Committee, Board officials provided an update in respect of Case 38-20/21. Members noted that the Committee sub-group convened to consider this case will meet again on Monday the 8 November 2021 to consider further information, following which it is expected that this case will be referred to the full Committee for final decision at the November meeting. NOTED.

The Committee also received an update on Case 80-21/22 which was

previously considered at the 23 September 2021 Resources Committee meeting. Further to the Members' request for additional information to inform their decision making in this case, Board officials updated the Committee on the nature of the misconduct allegations facing this officer and also the PSNI's view that, should the allegations be proven in the course of misconduct proceedings, it is unlikely to result in the officer being dismissed. Therefore, on this occasion PSNI have confirmed they are not requesting the Board refuse permission for this officer to be ill health retired. In view of the SMPs recommendation that the officer meets the criteria for both Ill Health Retirement (IHR) and Injury on Duty (IOD) awards, Board officials requested the Committee approve this officer's applications in that regard.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** that:

- The medical recommendations of the Selected Medical Practitioners in 15 cases assessed between 17 September 2021 and 20 October 2021 be approved.
- The medical recommendations of the Independent Medical Referees in two cases assessed between 17 September 2021 and 20 October 2021 be approved.
- The five anonymised cases (RECON IMR 10-21.22, RECON IMR 11-21.22, RECON SMP 9 21.22, RECON SMP 10 21.22, RECON SMP 11 21.22) progress to reconsideration by either a SMP or IMR.
- To approve the IHR and IOD awards in case 80-21/22.

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 conducted.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 25 November 2021 at 2pm at the Police College, Garnerville. The Director of Resources advised that before the meeting formally commences Members are invited to meet with senior Police College staff and have a tour of the college facilities following which a light lunch will be provided. Members were advised that the Zoom facility will not be available at this meeting.

The meeting ended at 5.30pm

CHAIR

RESOURCES DIRECTORATE
October 2021