

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 25
APRIL 2024 AT 9.30AM IN JAMES HOUSE**

PRESENT:

Mr Trevor Clarke MLA (Chair)
Mr Frank McManus (Vice-Chair)
Mr Gerry Kelly MLA
Mrs Linda Dillon MLA
Dr Kate Lavery
(1) Ms Nuala McAllister MLA*
Mr Keith Buchanan MLA
Mrs Marian Cree

**EX OFFICIO MEMBERS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Mukesh Sharma
Mr Brendan Mullan

**POLICE SERVICE
OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN
ATTENDANCE:**

(2) Ms Pamela McCreedy, Chief Operating Officer
(3) Mr Mark McNaughten, Assistant Chief Officer,
Corporate Services
(4) Clare Duffield, Assistant Chief Officer, People and
Organisational Development
Two PSNI officials

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

Mrs Sinead Simpson, Chief Executive
Mr Sam Hagen, Senior Director of Resources
Ms Natalia McMahon, T/Director of Police
Pensions and Injury Benefits
Six Board Officials

- (1) Left at 11am
- (2) Items 7.3 to 7.4 only
- (3) Item 7.3 only
- (4) Item 7.4 only

*Attended meeting by video conference facility

The Chair opened the meeting by emphasising to Members that care is needed in respect of protecting the confidentiality of Board business.

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

The Committee agreed the agenda for the meeting, and no one raised any business that they wished to discuss at agenda item 10 under 'Any Other Business'.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

The Chair then highlighted the recent elections of new Vice-Chairs to their respective Committee's and informed Members that it was agreed that the Resources Committee will retain Frank McManus as Vice-Chair. The Chair then took the opportunity to welcome Frank back as the Vice-Chair of the Committee.

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 FEBRUARY 2024

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the Committee meeting held on 22 February 2024.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 22 February 2024 be

approved.

5. UPDATE ON ACTION LOG

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

In respect of action points from the meeting in February 2024, the following updates were provided by the Director of Resources:

- Action point 1 – a response was received from PSNI noting receipt and confirming a response will be issued shortly in respect of the Committee’s request to establish an independent review panel to look at the legal fees accrued for long running legal case.
- Action point 1a – in respect of financial provision being made for a number of ongoing legal cases, Members were informed that a list of legal cases can be provided to the Committee for information and discussion. It was highlighted that The Chief Executive as accounting officer is required to take the expert legal opinion of Crown Solicitors and would be placed in a conflicted position should an internal case review panel request a different course of action from the expert legal advisor.

The Committee noted the additional information received following which it was agreed that the Chief Executive will report to the Committee on an annual basis regarding legal cases being progressed by the Board and cases where the Board is a respondent. **AP1**

- Action point 2 – a response was received from PSNI in respect of the schedule of high value cases with a date of claim of 10 years or over and the reasons behind this.

The response confirmed that there is currently only one high value case where the Letter of Claim is ten years or over and went on to detail the reason behind this being multiple procedural steps and a complex medical position requiring numerous reports from consultants in various specialisms.

- Action point 3 – a response was received from PSNI in respect of the proposed 3-week German Police internship. It was confirmed that Newry, Mourne & Down (D District) and Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon (E District) will host four officers between 11 – 31 May 2025. The response went on to explain that the officers will not be engaging in any operational activity and whilst they will be wearing their own issued uniform for practical reasons their remit is strictly to observe their PSNI colleagues while they accompany any local officers on their patrols.
- Action Point 4 – a response was received from PSNI in respect of a request for further information on the outcome of the consultation between the Chief Constable and the DOJ referred to in correspondence between the Chief Constable and Secretary of State. A letter was provided that detailed a response from the DoJ Permanent Secretary to the Chief Constable on the Chief Constable's intention to commence Police Officer recruitment in 2024/25 and reiterated that as this was an operational matter for the Chief Constable, as such accountability for any decisions relating to it will ultimately rest with the NI Policing Board.
- Action point 5 – a response was received from PSNI in respect of additional information requested around the commissioning/decommissioning of vehicles following on from February's presentation on Vehicles/Transport to the Resources Committee. The response detailed that the figure of 817 quoted in the

NIAO report represented the number of line items within the ledger, rather than the number of vehicles, therefore a number of lines on the ledger may refer to a single vehicle.

The 817 lines have now been reconciled and as of March 2024 this equates to 479 individual vehicles in the course of construction and 76 soft skin vehicles in the process of disposal.

- Action point 6 – a response was received from PSNI in respect of a request for an update on the number of IT assets which are currently considered as being 'in the course of construction'.

PSNI provided a table which detailed a reduction in both the number and value of assets from March 2023 and explained that the impact of movements from assets in the course of construction to assets had resulted in a significant depreciation charge, creating a projected pressure by the end of the year. Board officials advised Members that in accountancy terms, depreciation is applied on assets following their commissioning into service rather than at the point of purchase.

- The Committee noted the information received and it was agreed further detail on the definition of the term “assets in the course of construction” would be requested along with current examples as it relates to IT assets. **AP2**
- Action point 7 – a response was received from PSNI in respect of the Committee’s request for further updates on Recommendation 15 – Armoured Vehicles of the South Armagh Review Recommendations Update. The response detailed a gradual introduction of a soft skin/non armoured vehicle capability within a 3 - 5 year period of the publication of the South Armagh Policing Review. It also highlighted that 2 ½ years after the launch of the review, 30% of the fleet

available to the Slieve Gullion Neighbourhood teams are currently soft skinned/non-armoured.

PSNI also confirmed that they would continue to provide Members with 6 monthly written updates on the relevant Recommendations as required.

- In respect of Action point 1 from the meeting in January 2024 on Electric Vehicles a Member raised concerns that whilst the response from PSNI stated that additional points had been added to the estate in recent months, a number remain inoperable while others are providing output below the required level. In addition, and following the Committee's visit to PSNI Seapark, a Member also requested an update on progress towards the completion of the vans awaiting cages/conversion to cell vans. It was agreed PSNI would be contacted on both these matters. **AP3**
- In respect of Action Point 2 from the meeting in December 2023 regarding the increase in Maternity and Adoption Leave provisions, Members noted the response received which stated that Occupational Maternity/Adoption pay is solely attracted by the birth mother, or the primary carer in cases of adoption and therefore Shared Parental leave is unaffected by the amendment. Following discussion Members agreed to request further detail on whether PSNI intends to explore options to extend this increase to the organisation's Shared Parental leave provision. **AP4**
- In respect of Action Point 8 from the December 2023 meeting on NIPB Staff Turnover, Members noted that a paper would be presented to the Committee later in the meeting at agenda item 7.9.
- In respect of Action Point 9 from the December 2023 meeting on NIPB policy on Senior Officer recruitment, Members noted that a

paper would be presented to the Committee later in the meeting at agenda item 7.8.1.

Members **NOTED** the correspondence.

6. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

The Committee **NOTED** the updates and related verbal overview provided by the T/Director of Police Pensions and Injury Benefits and the Senior Director of Resources in respect of the following agenda items.

6.1.1 Letter from Minister Long to the former Board Chair

The Committee considered correspondence sent from Minister Long to the former Board Chair regarding DoJ's position on the future acceptance of Further Medical Evidence (FME) at both the Appeal and Reconsideration stages of the IOD process.

Members noted the proposals included within the correspondence and highlighted the importance of effective communication with those going through the IOD process in respect of any proposed amendments to the current processes and procedures. The T/Director of Police Pensions and Injury Benefits informed Members that Board officials have issued a holding reply to the Minister and have sought legal advice on the matter and are awaiting this. Members were also advised of the likely impacts on the operational processes within the branch associated with the potential changes outlined in the Minister's correspondence.

Members **NOTED** the correspondence.

6.1.2 Response from Minister Long to former Board Chair - IOD Scheme

The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Justice to the previous Chair of the Board providing an update on the work being

carried out by the DoJ following the NI Audit Office's report recommendations on Injury on Duty (IOD) schemes in NI.

The letter also confirmed that a targeted IOD consultation will issue in late March and run for a period of 12 weeks. The T/Director of Police Pensions and Injury Benefits then confirmed to Members that the IOD Consultation letter was shared at the last Board meeting and since this, the IOD consultation has launched on 26th March and closes on 17th June. It was also detailed that NIPB officials are currently preparing a draft response to the consultation and will bring this to the May Resources Committee for consideration/approval.

Members **NOTED** the correspondence.

6.2 Invitation for Resources Committee visit to PSNI Estate

The Committee considered correspondence from PSNI offering a visit to the Special Operations Branch of PSNI. The letter highlighted that at previous Committee meetings Members had raised concerns around the costs of Bearcat vehicles and discussed other vehicles that currently sit within the Crime Department.

The letter asked if a Committee visit might be beneficial to allow Members to get a better understanding of the work of the Specialist Operations Branch and also discussed the possibility of the monthly Resources Committee meeting being held on site prior to the presentation.

The Committee considered and welcomed the invitation to visit the special operations site to see some of the more specialist capabilities of the PSNI and it was agreed that Board officials would be in contact in due course to further explore scheduling options and a proposed agenda. **AP5**

Members **NOTED** the correspondence.

6.3 Letter to Chief Executive from DoJ – Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24

Members noted correspondence received by the Chief Executive from the DoJ Permanent Secretary discussing the department's work around the Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24.

The letter explained that the DoJ successfully met the summer recess deadline for laying the accounts in the House of Commons and Assembly and thanked all the NDPB's finance departments for their work in achieving this.

It was highlighted to Members that as this was the first year a set of consolidated accounts had been produced, it was a particularly complex process involving more engagement with NDPBs.

Members **NOTED** the correspondence.

6.4 Letters to Chief Constable – Accounts Direction 2023-24

Members noted Accounts Direction correspondence issued to the Chief Constable by the DoJ in relation to the PSNI Police Pension Scheme. The Committee also noted that this correspondence had been copied to the NIPB Chief Executive given the Board's role in preparing the Accounts.

Members **NOTED** the correspondence.

7. ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS

7.1.1 Annual Review of Committee Terms of Reference & Committee Programme of Work for 2024-25

The Strategic Planning and Governance Manager presented a paper to

Members seeking their agreement to recommend the Board approve the Resources Committee Terms of Reference. The Committee was also asked to consider and agree the Resources Committee Programme of Work 2024-25.

Members noted that only minor amendments had been suggested to the Committee Terms of Reference and discussed two areas including:

- The reference in the ToR to the Committee having no executive functions and what this means in practice.
- The scheduling of the Board's Finance reports to the Committee and that the proposed update to the ToR has been included to reflect current practice.

Following discussion it was **AGREED**:

- To make a recommendation to the Board that the Terms of Reference for the Board's Resources Committee be approved.

Members also **AGREED**:

- The Committee's Programme of Work for 2024/25

Members noted that this would now also be shared with PSNI.

7.1.2 Resources Committee Annual Report

The Director of Resources presented a paper asking Members to consider the Resources Committee draft Annual Report outlining the work of the Committee from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

The Committee considered the content of the paper and a Member

requested an update be added at section 4.3.7 of the report reflecting the Board's stance in relation to the Board's role in processing PSNI Injury on Duty (IOD) scheme applications ie that this operational function should be removed from the Board. **AP6**

It was also agreed that Board officials would confirm if the link in relation to the PSNI Disability Action Plan had previously been provided to Members.

AP7

An ex-officio Member raised the matter of the Committee's self-evaluation process and noted that in tandem with consideration of the Performance Committee annual report, Committee Members had undertaken to complete 3 questions designed to assess the Committee's effectiveness throughout the year. The Member suggested and it was agreed that the Resources Committee would also undertake this process.

Following discussion, it was **agreed** that the below 3 questions would be circulated for Committee Members' consideration in relation to the effectiveness of the Committee over the 2023-24 year. **AP8**

1. Is the Committee delivering against its Terms of Reference?
2. Could the Committee be more effective? How can it improve?
3. What area/s should the Committee focus on over the next 12 months?

Following discussion Members **AGREED:**

- To recommend the Board approve the Resources Committee Annual report for publication as part of the composite Committee Report that will be published on the Board's website, detailing the work of all Committees for 2023-24.

7.2.1 Police Pensions and Injury Benefits - Cases for April 2024

The T/Director of Police Pensions and Injury Benefits presented a paper asking Members to consider the outcome of decisions made by Selected Medical Practitioners (SMPs) in respect of the 15 cases considered and provided opinion on between 15 March 2024 and 12 April 2024.

Members **NOTED**:

- the outcome of the decisions made by Selected Medical Practitioners and **CONFIRMED** the implementation and reassessment dates for the 15 cases outlined.

7.2.2 Pension Scheme Manager Report

The T/Director of Police Pensions and Injury Benefits presented a paper providing Members with a summary of police pension related work completed since the last update provided to Committee.

Members were informed that as part of the McCloud III Health Retirement Remedy Project, 37 cases had been reassessed since the last update in February 2024.

Members also considered a draft response to DOJ consultation documents on the draft Police Pensions (Remediable Service) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2024 which outlines proposed changes to the existing police pension scheme regulations, including legacy schemes and were informed that Board officials had sought the advice of the Boards independent pensions advisor in order to draft a response to the three questions within the consultation.

Following discussion Members:

- **NOTED** the various updates in relation to work undertaken in the

reporting period relating to police pensions; and

- **APPROVED** the response to the consultation launched by the Department of Justice in relation to the Draft Police Pension (Remedial Service) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024.

Before PSNI joined the meeting Board officials provided Members with an overview of agenda items 7.3 the PSNI Finance Report and 7.4, the PSNI Update on Attendance Management/OHW Services/Early Intervention/Prevention/Treatment.

The Chair welcomed the Chief Operating Officer (COO), ACO Corporate Services and the ACO People and Organisational Development to the meeting.

7.3 PSNI Finance Report

The ACO Corporate Services presented Members with an overview of the monthly PSNI Finance Report and financial position at the end of March 2024.

The ACO Corporate Services reported a year-to-date non-ring-fenced easement of £0.751m or 0.09% of budget at the end of March 2024, which was only due to the significant additional funding (£60.6m) received from the DOJ in February.

Detail was also provided that within the £751k figure is £279k earmarked for easements relating to Op Sanukite (£199k), Covid (£65k) and PCTF (£15k) leaving a Main grant easement of £472k or 0.06% of the budget. It was also documented that there is a ring-fenced depreciation easement of £3.7 million down from a pressure of £0.4m last month.

On capital spend an easement of £166k against budget (0.25%) was recorded at year end. Unused receipts of £370k due to the disposal of vehicles gave an overall capital easement of £536k for the year.

In respect of overtime, the ACO Corporate Services advised that expenditure in March was within the revised budget, but that it had not been possible to deliver the planned savings in this area.

The ACO Corporate Services also informed Members that whilst no budget has yet been allocated for 2024/25 total projected pressures are currently estimated at £317.2m including provision for Holiday Pay and Data Breach claims or £141m if these significant legal cases are excluded.

A summary was also provided on Op Kenova, Op Sanukite, and an overspend on the Additional Security Funding (ASF) budget with particular pressures within CPU being highlighted.

Following the presentation Members discussions with PSNI included the following.

- The management and allocation of the additional funding of £60.6 million.
- Management of the capital expenditure budgets and reasons why the spend in this area happens so late in the year. The ACO Corporate Services noted that this is a symptom of the current framework and annual budgets which make it impossible to commit to capital expenditure programs ahead of a budget being confirmed.
- On the recent announcement of the imminent closure of a number of local enquiry offices, the ACO Corporate Services explained the factors and processes when assessing potential office closures including assessment of the reduction in hours/costs and related risk assessments.
- G4S provision of site security and confirmation that this only covers occupied sites.
- An update on potential data breach costs, detail around the group

litigation process and whether these costs are likely to crystallise in the 2024-25 year. PSNI advised that an element of provision for this had been made in the PSNI's budgetary return to the Minister.

- Pressures on the Additional Security Funding stream and in particular, how this relates to the work of the Close Protection Unit (CPU). On this matter a Member requested a breakdown of the costs associated with providing close protection to members of the Judiciary and how much of these costs are overtime. **AP9**
- A Member also discussed with PSNI the possibility of the inclusion of "break clauses" in future contracts.

The Chair thanked ACO McNaughten for the briefing and he left the meeting.

7.4 PSNI update on Attendance Management & OHW Services (including early intervention, prevention and treatment)

The ACO People and Organisational Development presented Members with an update on the work of Attendance Management/OHW services/Early intervention/Prevention and Treatment.

The ACO People and OD covered the following key areas in the presentation:

- **Absence Overview** – detailed breakdown of Average Working Days Lost (AWDL) for Officers and Staff against targets for 2022-23 and 2023-24 year to date.
PSNI sickness absence is at high level and continues to rise with the main reasons including respiratory conditions, mental health, and musculoskeletal injury.
- **Attendance Administration** – attendance management triggers

were outlined, and these are currently under review with consideration given to reducing the number of days absent at which attendance management processes are triggered.

- **Ill Health Retirement** – detailed breakdown of the number of police officers currently progressing through the IHR process and the variance in average working days lost when excluding those awaiting an Ill Health Retirement (IHR)
- **Attendance Management Group (AMG)** – this multi-disciplinary forum has been reformed and brings together representatives from across a wide range of areas to direct the organisation across priority work streams which include a framework and action plan for duty and reasonable adjustments, development and implementation of revised Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and developing line manager capability.
- **SMB Attendance Management Workshop** – a workshop which helped identify key requirements for any future attendance strategy.
- **Internal Audit** – to examine controls and governance of attendance management in PSNI and a number of recommendations were made. These were categorised in one of three risk priorities and a detailed action plan has been agreed.
- **Heads Together Review** – an update on progress on the 9 recommendations following an Audit commissioned by NIPB in 2021.
- **Occupational Health and Wellbeing (OHW) Services** – the services available through Occupational Health and Wellbeing were outlined.

Members raised the following points with the PSNI team:

- The increasing numbers of officers leaving the service by way of Ill Health Retirement (IHR), the potential for abuse of the IHR process, the total length of time to go through the IHR processes and the ongoing engagement with PSNI HR once the IHR process has begun.
- Impact of increasing sickness absence and reduction in Officer/staff numbers on workload pressures and mental health,
- Clarity on absence triggers, whether the Data Breach was a factor and ensuring line manager interventions takes place at the right time.
- The upward trend in terms of Average Working Days Lost. A Member noted that this is now averaging at 3 weeks/year and discussed the impact on the service in terms of officers not available for deployment. The Member noted the long history of unsatisfactory audits in this area and the Committee discussed with PSNI the challenges to effecting change and providing assurance in this area.
- The importance of the role of line managers in sickness absence management, the level of support they are currently provided with, systemic changes which could assist them to be more effective in this area and how the line management capacity within PSNI compares to GB services.
- The absence culture within the organisation.
- Members requested a breakdown of the 1,100 officers on duty adjustments including the length of time they have been or are expected to remain on duty adjustments. **AP10**
- The variance in last year's absence figures if excluding officers going through the Ill Health Retirement process. On this It was agreed that PSNI would provide a breakdown of sickness absence figures for the last year in relation to the gross number of days lost (including those progressing through the IHR process) as compared with net number of days lost (excluding those progressing through the IHR process)
AP11

- Clarity on the current position on implementing the Holiday Pay Award.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

The Chair thanked PSNI for the briefing and COO McCreedy and ACO Duffield left the meeting.

7.5 NIPB Management Accounts (including Contracts Register)

Members received an update from the Finance Manager in relation to the NIPB management Accounts and noted a £304k underspend against budget at the end of March 2024. On this it was explained the current figure is now estimated at £256k and once final accruals are received this has the potential to change.

An update on recruitment of Independent Members to the PCSPs was provided and it was highlighted that additional funding of £90k (ringfenced) was received in October 2023 to support PCSP recruitment. In relation to the DoJ's appointment of an Independent Medical Referee (IMR) in January 2024 and appeals recommencing, Members were informed that whilst NIPB had not allocated any funding to support payments for this service, NIPB received additional ringfenced funding of £25k out of the estimated £40k from DoJ.

On the £205k of additional funding received from DoJ without being requested, it was highlighted that the DoJ were immediately advised that the funding was not required, and it has now been reallocated to other areas of the Department.

Following this a Member expressed concern around the unrequested £205k allocated to NIPB and how this would be shown and presented on the year-

end accounts. It was explained that without a further monitoring round there was no mechanism to return the additional baseline funding, however the Department have been able to re-distribute the value to other parts of the Department following confirmation from NIPB that it would not be in a position to spend the allocation.

Members agreed that a note should be added to the accounts and Board officials advised they would give consideration to where this could best be reflected. **AP12**

Members **NOTED** the correspondence.

7.6 PSNI Above Delegated Authority request

The Committee considered a request for an above delegated authority sum which is the maximum amount PSNI consider may be payable for both compensation and estimated legal costs in this case. Members noted a summary of the claim which related to an incident that occurred in January 2012.

Further detail was given that PSNI had provided some aspects of advice they received from Senior Counsel in respect of the proposed settlement of this case, including that the Plaintiff is likely to succeed in establishing the claim should the matter proceed to hearing based on the coroner's findings.

Members discussed the length of time it had taken for the case to be settled and requested PSNI provide further clarity on whether the case is being settled primarily on the basis of the findings of the coroner's court in 2014, and if so, the reasons why it has taken a further approximately 10 years to bring the case to the point of settlement. **AP13**

Following discussion it was **AGREED**:

- To **recommend** the Board approve the Above Delegated Authority request up to the maximum sum advised in documentation provided by PSNI to settle both financial compensation and payment of legal costs.

7.7 Verbal update on PRRB Oral Evidence Session

The Director of Resources provided a verbal update following the PRRB Oral Evidence session in April 2024.

Members noted that NIPB were represented at the session by the Chief Executive, Chair of the Board and Director of Resources. Representatives from PSNI, DoF and SANI also made oral representation to PRRB.

The Committee were informed that the introduction from the Chair of NIPB included:

- Corporate Plan and the 3 overarching outcomes and objectives.
- Representativeness
- Financial Pressures
- Demands from non-policing areas including Health and Welfare.
- Recruitment being stopped.
- Police numbers reducing means less policing.

Members were also informed that among the questions asked by the panel included:

- Budget situation
- Commitment to pay parity.
- Level of pay award.
- Review of Allowances – CRTP

- NPCC review of allowances.
- Second Jobs for Officers
- Improving morale, managing attendance.
- Timeliness of pay awards.
- Recruitment and Retention

The Committee was notified that PRRB requested additional information on Neighbourhood Policing and abstractions around the role, and additionally the CJINI report on Community Safety and Local Policing arrangements in NI has been provided to PRRB.

The Chief Executive noted that an update had also been provided to the panel on the increased number of officers seeking support from the RUCGC Benevolent Fund.

Following discussion, a Member requested that the Committee be provided with a summary report of the session. **AP14**

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

7.8.1 NIPB Policy on Senior Officer Recruitment

The People and Organisational Development Manager presented a paper on NIPB's Policy on Senior Officer Recruitment and specifically reach agreement on the role of the Specialist Policing Advisor (the Chief Constable) in Senior Officer Recruitment.

Members noted the previous discussion around potential options at the December 2023 Committee meeting and that following advice from CSO and Heads Together, five potential options had been drafted for consideration in relation to the scope of the role the Chief Constable in senior officer appointment panels. Members noted that the Chief Constable

had requested a more pro-active role in the appointment process.

Members discussed each of the available options and raised the following points:

- The legislative duty to “consult” the Chief Constable in this process, and previous practice where the Chief Constable had been drawn into discussion around the technical elements of answers provided to the appointment panel.
- The merits of continuing with the process which has worked well in the past versus the reasonable expectation of a senior manager (the Chief Constable in this case) to be actively involved in the appointment of their own team.
- That the Chief Constable has the authority to make temporary appointments to the SET without reference to the Board and the extent to which this may or may not suggest a preferred candidate for any vacant post.
- The role of the HR Advisor
- Ensuring fairness in the appointment process.

Following discussion Members:

- **AGREED** the Chief Constable will sit in on the recruitment process and be consulted on the policing content of the responses provided by the candidate.

7.8.2 Recruitment of Senior Officers

The Chief Executive presented Members with a paper in relation to suggested next steps for progressing upcoming Senior Officer recruitment competitions.

The Chief Executive talked through the likely process, the time commitment

needed from Panel Members and the projected timeframes for being able to commence first the DCC appointment process following by the ACC appointment process.

Members were provided with a summary of the factors to be considered and discussion focused on the following areas:

- current permanent vacancies at senior officer levels
- eligibility considerations including aligning with appointment processes in GB, the length of service at either a Ch/Supt or Supt level and the modular nature of the new Police Leadership Programme (which has replaced the Strategic Command Course) and now takes approximately 12 months to complete.
- Whether the same panel could sit on both the DCC and ACC appointment processes.
- the composition of the Panel or Panels and the provision of necessary training. Members considered the proposed option for the panel to be made up of 5 Members which would include the Board Chair, 1 representative from each of the main political parties (SF, DUP and Alliance) plus one additional independent Member. The CE noted that following the nominations to the Panels from the political parties, she would then endeavour to make the panel as representative as possible in terms of gender/community background in respect of the selection of the 5th panel member.

Members **NOTED** the update provided and it was **AGREED** that a paper regarding the eligibility requirements and panel membership would be brought to the May 2024 Board for consideration.

7.8.3 Handling of Appeals of Decisions in relation to Sick Pay for Senior Officers

The Chief Executive presented Members with a paper on the Handling of Appeals in relation to Sick Pay for Senior Officers.

Members were asked to note the proposed recommendation in the paper that the role of the current Senior Officer Employee Matter (**SOEM**) group be extended to include the handling of appeals relating to PSNI decisions on sick pay for senior officers. Members were advised that currently there was no appeal pending for consideration however, in line with processes in place for officers serving at lower ranks, it is intended that the implementation of the recommendations in this paper would put in place appropriate mechanisms to consider and make decisions in such instances should they arise.

Members noted:

- the relevant legislation providing for the constitution of a Committee of the Board of 5 or more Members;
- The confidential and personal nature of the information likely to be under consideration and the necessity to provide any prospective appellant with assurances in terms of confidentiality;
- that the update to the group's Terms of Reference required it to be given a decision-making role and whilst the Board would be provided with an overview of matters considered by the Group, the full Board would not be asked to ratify the decisions of SOEM given that the specifics of the information discussed should remain within the group.

Members then raised the following points:

- the need for sensitivity around the handling of such appeals, and,
- the importance of ensuring the same right to appeal applies at all

ranks/grades across the organisation.

Following discussion Members:

- **AGREED** to make a recommendation to the Board that the Senior Officer Employee Matters (**SOEM**) Group is the appropriate mechanism to consider and decide upon appeals of decision made by PSNI in relation to Sick Pay for Senior Officers.

7.9 NIPB Resourcing Staff Action Plan

An update was provided on the NIPB Resourcing Staff Action Plan and Members noted the actions being taken forward to address the issue of staff vacancies.

Following on from previous presentations to Committee, Members were informed that work has begun to commence an external AO recruitment competition and HR Connect have been engaged in relation to progressing the recruitment competition process.

It was noted that work was being done to provide a testing tool that would enable a high volume of applications to be managed down to an acceptable level and Members were informed that the entire recruitment process was likely to take 6-8 months.

The Committee were also informed of considerations for any future recruitment process including:

- Budgetary restraints
- Capacity of the HR Team
- The requirement of security clearance to counter-terrorist level for successful candidates.

Following discussion, a member requested that the Committee receive a further update on the AO competition in 3 month's time. **AP15**

Members **NOTED** the correspondence.

7.10 GENERAL AND OCCASIONAL AUTHORISATIONS

Members were presented with a paper informing of 2 applications made by PSNI for a renewal of a General Authorisation for Fermanagh District Recreation Club and for the granting of an Occasional Authorisation for Gough Barracks.

Members noted the application process and operational requirements for all licenced premises on the police estate and were advised of the now withdrawn Service Procedure No.48/2007 governing the application process. The Committee was informed that both the clubs had followed procedure and adhered to all previously applicable guidelines.

It was also highlighted that Board officials continue to engage with PSNI Social Policy Branch with a view to establishing PSNI's intentions regarding the reinstatement of an updated version of Service Procedure No.48/2007 to support future applications.

Members then raised the following points:

- Where the responsibility sits for events which take place in such establishments. On this it was explained that it would lie with the District Commander and for all events held at the premises a serving officer must be present during the event.
- Whether there were any other similar facilities within the police estate? The Committee was advised that in the years prior to Covid-19 (2019 and 2020) Board officials had only received applications

from these two locations.

Following discussion Members agreed to:

- **APPROVE** the General Authorisation application for Fermanagh Recreation Club for a period of 1 year (1 January 2024 – 31 December 2024) and the Occasional Authorisation from Gough Barracks for a one-off event on the 15/5/2024 under the relevant legislation.

7.11 PSNI LEASE ACQUISITION

Members were presented with a paper detailing a PSNI Lease Acquisition request for a new 3 year lease at Ballykinler.

Members noted that PSNI require approval for the lease to allow a temporary decant of the PSNI Tactical Training Facility (TTF) into different accommodation.

Detail was provided that the existing building has been deemed a Health & Safety risk due to extensive water damage causing structural disintegration and a decision was made in December 2023 to close the building.

Members were informed that the completion date for work to provide new training facilities at the Ballykinler site is currently early 2026 and that the costs for the rent for the two buildings held within the lease is £51k for a period of 3 years.

Following discussion, a Member requested that the PSNI are made aware that this is a temporary measure, and following this it was:

- **AGREED** to make a recommendation to the Board approving the acquisition of the new lease for 2 buildings at Ballykinler for a period

of 3 years

8. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

It was agreed a written question would be forwarded to the Chief Constable in respect of CPU costs relating to the Judiciary.

9. COMMUNICATION ISSUES/OPPORTUNITIES

A Member requested that details of the implementation of the PSNI pay award be highlighted to the media after the meeting ends. It was agreed that a communication on this would be issued by way of social media.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was considered.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for 9.30am on Thursday 23 May 2024 in James House.

The meeting ended at 13.30pm

CHAIR

RESOURCES DIRECTORATE

APRIL 2024