

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING OF RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 9.30AM IN JAMES HOUSE

PRESENT:

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

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

- Ms Pamela McCreedy, Chief Operating Officer
- (3) Mr Mark McNaughten, ACO Corporate Services
- (4) Ms Aldrina Magwood, ACO Strategic Planning & Transformation
- (5) Ms Clare Duffield, Assistant Chief Officer People and Organisational Development
- (4) John Rafferty, Head of Transformation
- (4) Damian Foley, Head of Estates
- (5) Chief Superintendent Sam Donaldson
- (5) The Director of Occupational Health & Wellbeing

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

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

- (1) Left at 12.30pm
- (2) From 11.20am
- (3) Item 6.2 only
- (4) Item 6.3 only
- (5) Item 6.4 only

* Attended meeting by video conference facility

1. APOLOGIES

No Apologies were received.

The Committee agreed the agenda for the meeting and no one raised any business they wished to discuss at agenda item 9 under 'Any Other Business'.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 JUNE 2024

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2024.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 27 June 2024 be approved.

4. COMMITTEE ACTION LOG

The Committee **NOTED** the updates and correspondence detailed in the action log and the related verbal overview provided by the Director of Resources.

Updates were provided on correspondence issued and received for agenda item 4.1.

4.1 PSNI responses to matters raised at the Resources Committee meeting in June 2024

In respect of action points one to eight from the Committee meeting in June 2024, Members **NOTED** the responses from PSNI in relation to the following matters:

- Electric Vehicles (EV) Infrastructure.
- Close Protection Unit (CPU) costs for the Judiciary.
- Temporary promotions.
- Staff Performance Development Reviews (PDRs),
- Equality and Disability Action Plan 2023-24.
- PSNI Resource Plan 2024-25.
- Domestic Violence Protection Orders.
- PSNI Finance Report.
- PSNI HR Transformation Plan.
- Data Breach impact on staff from Minority and diverse backgrounds.
- Endorsement of Retrospective Business Case
- Vetting Report 2024

Members raised the following matters in response to the correspondence from PSNI:

1. Equality and Disability Action Plan 2023-24 - further Information requested on the process whereby the feedback is obtained from ReAL events but gives no examples of where the feedback from such events has actually made a difference and been incorporated into PSNI's policies and practice. Members requested that PSNI provide examples of where the feedback from the ReAL events has had an impact and led to a change in approach? **AP1**

2. Cultural Audit – further information requested on whether a disconnect exists between Junior and Senior Ranks in the responses received from the Cultural Audit and whether the community background of leavers from the service is recorded, and if not, are there plans to record this in the future. **AP2**

Following discussion, it was agreed to issue correspondence to PSNI in relation to the matters highlighted above.

In respect of action point 15 from the April meeting the Director of Resources confirmed an update would be provided at agenda item 4.4

4.2 Committee Effectiveness Review Update

The Vice-Chair of the Resources Committee provided Members with an update following the meeting of the Committee Chair, Vice Chair, Chief Executive and Director of Resources to discuss the next steps following the results of the Committee Self-Evaluation questionnaire that consisted of three questions designed to assess the Committee's effectiveness throughout 2023-24.

The key discussions and outcomes from the meeting were as follows:

- **Focus Areas for the Committee:** The committee has a broad scope as per the Terms of Reference. To manage this, they will focus on one main business area each month, with specific themes like Finance, People, Transformation, Estates, Fleet, and Digital.

Other issues, such as the cultural audit, will be addressed alongside routine business.

- **PSNI Reporting to the Committee:**
 - PSNI (Police Service of Northern Ireland) will identify key issues related to the committee's focus areas and provide an executive summary with the main report.
 - PSNI's presentations should be limited to 10 minutes to allow for greater discussion by the Committee. Lengthy presentations are discouraged.
 - Instead of cover papers for all PSNI documents, only the relevant points should be highlighted verbally before the meeting.

- **Document Summaries**
 - PSNI should provide concise executive summaries of large documents to focus on the key points for the committee.

- **Committee Minutes and Actions:**
 - There may be differing views among members regarding decisions recorded in the minutes. Draft minutes are brought to the committee for review to ensure accuracy, and any corrections are advised at the following meeting.
 - The action log should be timebound, with completed actions removed entirely from the log.

- **NIPB Oversight and Reporting:**

- Oversight of NIPB (Northern Ireland Policing Board) resources and legal case summaries may be more appropriate for the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC) rather than the Resources Committee.

On this point a Member highlighted that as the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC) was made up of not just NIPB Members but also other Government bodies it was important to ensure that relevant matters were not passed to ARAC before being fully dealt with at the Resources Committee.

- The NIPB Management Accounts will be available monthly with a quarterly detailed report provided .
- A staffing report will be provided every six months, linked to existing actions on the committee's log.

Following discussion Members requested a further paper be brought to the Committee that clearly outlines what decisions have been agreed upon, to ensure clarity on what the Committee is acting upon. **AP3**

4.3 Letter from Board Chair to Minister of Justice - IHR IOD and Joint Guidance

The T/Director of PPIB updated Members on correspondence issued to the Justice Minister from the Board Chair regarding Ill Health Retirement, Injury on Duty and Joint Guidance for Medical Practitioners. Members were informed that a response is still awaited from the Department and a further update will be provided once this is received.

Member **NOTED** the correspondence.

4.4 NIPB Resourcing Update

A Board official provided an update on the NIPB external recruitment competition currently being undertaken to recruit Administrative Officers on permanent contracts. Members were provided with the following details:

- **Initial Requirement and Reserve List:** The competition initially aims to fill 6 roles, with a reserve list created for potential future vacancies.
- **Competition Timeline and Applications:** The competition launched on 22 July 2024 and closed on 02 August 2024, with 598 applications received. Online testing was conducted from 15 to 22 August 2024, with 263 applicants passing.
- **Interview Shortlisting:** Initially, 30 candidates were planned for interviews, but due to NICS and PSNI also recruiting for similar roles, the number was increased to 40.
- **Interview Invitations and Dates:** Invitations to interviews were sent on 10 September 2024, and the assessment days were scheduled from 26 September to 04 October 2024.

It was noted that this is NIPB's first direct recruitment after previously relying on agency staff, and discussion focused on challenges around other AO competitions being run at the same time and the disadvantage PSNI and NIPB face around security clearance for new recruits.

Members **NOTED** the update provided

5. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

The Committee **NOTED** the updates and related verbal overview provided by the Director of Resources in respect of the following agenda items:

5.1 Correspondence from Head of PSNI Estates to the Chief Executive – Castleberg PSNI Station

Members were advised of correspondence dated 16 July 2024 in relation to Castleberg PSNI Station with an update provided that the D1 process is being progressed within appropriate timescales for both Stage 1 & 2 with an outline on key milestones to be agreed and set by next month.

Members **NOTED** the correspondence.

5.2 Correspondence regarding PSNI funding

Members were advised of correspondence received regarding PSNI funding and informed that the details of the letters between the Chief Constable, Permanent Secretary and the Department of Justice had already been presented to the Board in September but were included in the Resources papers as the details relate to what the Committee has responsibility for.

Members **NOTED** the correspondence.

5.3 Correspondence between Board Chair and the Minister of Justice – Police Officer pay

Members were advised that a response from the Minister has been received in relation to Police Officer Pay and the outcome of the Police Remuneration Review Body.

Members were informed that the outworkings of the findings have been implemented in England and Wales however in Northern Ireland the details remain with the Department and the affordability argument will also need to be factored into any agreement.

Members **NOTED** the correspondence.

Before PSNI joined the meeting Board officials provided Members with an overview of agenda items 6.1 to 6.4.

6. ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS

6.1 Police Pensions and Injury Benefits

6.1.1 The T/Director of Police Pensions and Injury Benefits (PPIB) presented a paper asking Members to consider the outcome of decisions taken by Selected Medical Practitioners (SMP) in respect of 25 assessments considered and provided opinion on, and the decisions taken by Independent Medical Referees (IMR) in respect of 12 assessments.

Members were also asked to review and confirm amended implementation dates in respect of two Independent Medical Referee (IMR) assessments.

Members:

- **NOTED** the outcome of the decisions made by Selected Medical Practitioners and **CONFIRMED** the implementation and reassessment dates for the 25 assessments outlined,

- **NOTED** the outcome of the decisions taken by Independent Medical Referees and **CONFIRMED** the implementation and reassessment dates for the 12 assessments outlined,
- **CONSIDERED** the anonymised information provided and **CONFIRMED** the implementation dates listed.

6.1.2 Pension Scheme Manager Monthly Report

The T/Director of PPIB presented a paper providing Members with a summary of police pension related work completed in the reporting period.

An update was provided on the McCloud Remedy Project with confirmation that all eligible individuals for reassessment have now been reassessed.

Members were also informed about a Police Pension Board meeting held on the 3rd of September, along with efforts over the summer to reduce the backlog of officers awaiting assessment.

It was highlighted that whilst there are 127 IHR/IOD cases still awaiting assessment, most have now been allocated, leaving only seven to be processed. Overtime has significantly helped reduce this number.

A Member raised a question regarding an unresolved tax issue, which the T/Director of PPIB explained is a Home Office issue affecting all Constabularies in England and Wales and the calculations would be done by PSNI once the outcome of McCloud reassessments was received by them. It was highlighted that although the sum is relatively small, it is crucial that the Home Office resolves it correctly. It is hoped that the issue will be resolved next month.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

6.1.3 Proposals for IMR and SMP future costs

The T/Director of PPIB presented a paper providing Members with an update on proposals for IMR and SMP future costs.

Members were informed about ongoing efforts by the Department to source more Independent Medical Referees (IMRs), with one IMR having started in February 2024. Proposals for Specialist Medical Practitioner (SMP) and IMR costs were also shared. Figures from early September indicated that these costs are best estimates and subject to change based on doctor availability.

It was outlined that the Department has been facing challenges in identifying suitable providers for this niche work and as such, Members were asked to consider the proposals regarding the IMR.

It was outlined that the Board were facing similar challenges as ongoing SMP recruitment hadn't been successful given the current case rate vs market rate and therefore Members considered a proposal to revise the funding and increase SMP rates.

Members considered the information and noted that proposals regarding the potential new IMR are not affordable or sustainable and therefore advised that a more affordable option is sought. Members did however accept proposals to increase SMP and IMR rates in line with current market rate and outlined that in the interest of parity, there should be a standardised rate for both SMPs and IMRs going forward. Members also welcomed a revision that IMR cases are charged on a case-by-case basis rather than the current daily rate.

Following the presentation the discussion centred on several key points:

- **Time difference between paper-based and face-to-face assessments:** It was explained that the time required depends on the complexity of the case.
- **Decision-making process for assessment type:** The claimant, not the doctor, can decide whether the assessment will be face-to-face or paper based.
- **Duration of an assessment:** Assessments typically last about an hour. In order to retain the current SMPs, it was recommended that case rates are revised in line with current market rate.
- **Funding responsibility:** While the Independent Medical Referees (IMRs) are managed by the Department of Justice (DOJ), it is the Board that pays both SMP and IMR rates under current legislation.
- **Challenges in recruiting medical practitioners:** The T/Director of PPIB noted that ongoing SMP recruitment has yet to attract any eligible applications.
- **SMPs' time commitment:** Doctors who work for NIPB do so part-time.
- **Standardized rates:** There was a suggestion to emphasize case-based pricing to the Department, ensuring rates reflect the work required.
- **Impact of proposed cost changes on the budget:** Costs are projected to increase as a result of the new standardised rate.

Following discussion Members **NOTED** the correspondence and **AGREED** to proposals to increase SMP and IMR rates in line with current market rate and outlined that in the interest of parity, there should be a standardised rate for both SMPs and IMRs going forward. Members also welcomed a revision that IMR cases are charged on a case-by-case basis rather than the current daily rate.

The Chair welcomed the Chief Operating Officer (COO) and the Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) Corporate Services to the meeting.

6.2 PSNI Finance (including verbal update on Recovery Business case)

6.2.1 PSNI Finance Report

The ACO Corporate Services presented Members with the monthly PSNI Finance Report as at the end of August 2024 noting that expenditure for the first five months of the financial year follows projections in relation to an overall funding gap of £54m for 2024-25, as previously advised.

The ACO Corporate Services provided a summary of financial performance which included an overview of pay/ non pay costs, overtime, and business cases under development.

The presentation and subsequent discussion focused on the following points:

- **Projected Financial Pressure:** The PSNI is facing a projected financial pressure of £37 million for the current year. This pressure, could quickly rise to over £100 million next year if the current £37 million deficit, is adjusted for the £23 million in year funding recently received and approximate £40 million of pay related costs are all factored in.
- **Recruitment Costs:** Recruiting 150 new officers would cost around an additional £8 million in 2025-26.
- **Overtime Costs:** There was a £2.6 million overspend on overtime in the first three months, exacerbated by the parading season and recent race related riots.
- **Pay Costs and Flat Settlements:** A major part of the funding gap is due to pay costs, as the PSNI has faced flat budget settlements whilst

costs continue to rise. PSNI is struggling to maintain the same level of activity while facing these financial pressures.

- **Accommodation Costs:** An overspend on accommodation is due to not having enough budget allocated initially, coupled with increased costs for utilities like fuel and rates.

On this point a Member requested that PSNI provide a high level comparison of the overall accommodation budget/spend over the last 5 years, with the main reasons for any variances. **AP4**

- **Police Pay:** There are two key pay elements. The incremental progression, which is deemed contractual, has been approved and will be paid from September. However, the broader pay award that uplifts scales is still awaiting ministerial approval. The affordability aspect of this decision could be influenced by the potential Barnett consequential that might follow the Autumn Budget.

The Police Staff pay award is also unresolved, as they are tied into NICS negotiations. The total increased pay costs for the year are around £40 million.

- **Depreciation and Structural Challenges:** The ring-fenced pressure from depreciation indicates potential challenges in asset management. PSNI is working on resolving the underlying budget issues and work continues around the auditing of asset disposals as part of the strategy moving forward.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

6.2.2 PSNI Resource Plan

The ACO Corporate Services presented Members with the PSNI Resource Plan update 2024-25 providing details of the budget spend to date and highlighting the ongoing pressures facing PSNI.

The ACO Corporate Services covered the following key points:

- **Delayed budget:** The PSNI received its budget late in May, and it was quickly revised in July during in-year monitoring. The PSNI is in a similar financial situation as last year, facing a significant gap that will need to be managed.
- **Pay and cost assumptions:** Pay assumptions are reflected in the draft budget, with overtime flat. Some unexpected costs, such as those related to the data breach, are also impacting the budget.
- **Exclusions and unexpected costs:** There are no provisions for legacy compensation cases or unexpected public order incidents, such as the recent race riots, which immediately cost £3 million without any financial resilience for such events.
- **Budget gap:** The initial budget is £896 million, with a gap of £239 million. After adjusting for certain provisions like holiday pay, data breaches, and depreciation, the gap underlying reduces to £54 million. PSNI has made savings of £20 million in costs, leaving a residual gap of £34 million.
- **Cost-cutting challenges:** Reductions, such as managed services for enquiry offices, saved only £0.6 million, illustrating the difficulty in achieving significant savings whilst balancing the impact such reductions can cause.
- **Officer and staff increases:** PSNI was encouraged by the Department of Justice to bid for a moderate increase of 145 officers and 40-50 staff, but out of necessity, the budget is based on maintaining current staffing levels with no growth.

- **Capital spend:** The capital budget was cut from £63 million to £53 million.
- **Financial pressures:** Pay costs have increased by £37 million (from £620 million to £657 million), while non-pay costs rose by £8 million. Despite some relief from June monitoring, PSNI still faces a £34 million shortfall, primarily around pay, and has limited options for further reductions
- **Fixed costs:** It was highlighted that 70% of the budget is fixed, 29% considered operationally essential, and only 1% variable which makes finding additional savings challenging.

Following the presentation the discussion focused on the following points:

- **Legacy compensation funding:** While discussions around securing additional funding for legacy compensation are ongoing, there is no certainty about how much will be provided to address these pressures.
- **Data breach and holiday pay compensation:** The ACO of Corporate Services explained that liability has been accepted for the data breach, but the compensation amount is yet to be determined. The mediation process and the construction of business cases were detailed, highlighting potential difficulties in securing funding for both the data breach and holiday pay compensation claims this year.
- **PSNI's relationship with the Department of Justice (DOJ):** In response to a question about the relationship with the DOJ the Chief Operating Officer (COO) noted that despite multiple ongoing business cases, the engagement with the DOJ is positive and PSNI is continuing to work with the DOJ to progress these cases.
- **Utilities, fuel purchasing, and cost-saving measures:** The ACO Corporate Services explained that the savings of £4 million in utilities mentioned in the Resource Plan will primarily come from changes in gas and electricity prices, which were high when projections were

initially made.

Following a question from a Member it was explained that fuel for PSNI is purchased through the NICS (Northern Ireland Civil Service) contract, which is also used by other government bodies.

Following discussion Members **AGREED** to recommend to the Board that the PSNI Resource Plan is **NOTED**, and the Committee will continue to monitor how the remaining Gap of £34m is being addressed.

6.2.3 PSNI Briefing on the Annual Accounts and Pension Accounts

The ACO Corporate Services presented Members with a briefing on the PSNI Main Accounts and Pension Accounts and highlighted that these had been presented and prepared on time with an unqualified audited opinion.

Detail was given that the Auditor General had drawn attention to the uncertainty around the data breach estimates and without qualifying the report brought an emphasis to this issue.

On the Annual Accounts a spend of £1 billion was reported and it was highlighted that PSNI assets are currently less than their liabilities leaving the balance sheet in negative equity. It was emphasised that the broader strain on PSNI budgets caused by provisions for Holiday Pay, Data Breach and Injury on Duty awards are now filtering through to the financial reports that are required for public accountability.

On the Pension Accounts the ACO Corporate Services reported that the balance sheet has a liability of £7 billion and highlighted that there was 17,000 pensioners currently in payment compared to 6300 current officers

on payroll highlighting the significant costs associated with pensioners.

Members **NOTED** the updated and thanked the ACO Corporate Services for his contribution and he left the meeting.

The Committee welcomed the Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) Strategic Planning and Transformation, the Head of Transformation and the Head of Estates to the meeting.

6.3 Transformation & Estates Strategy Update (including PSNI station closures)

The ACO for Strategic Planning and Transformation provided Members with an update on PSNI's transformation progress, focusing on four key ambitions: public sector ethos, IT modernization, estate renewal, and workforce modernization.

It was noted that progress is being impacted by financial deficits, security threats, a shrinking workforce, increasing demand, and internal priorities and culture.

Detail was given that PSNI's service operating model is structured into three phases: survival, recovery, and optimization, which requires increased headcount and budget. A comprehensive process is underway to map the current model, including resource distribution, functional analysis, benchmarking with Home Office data, and engaging all PSNI departments.

The presentation also highlighted the following areas:

- **Call Grading:** Emphasizing the need for better management and prioritization of officer responses, ensuring that officers attend the most critical calls.
- **Speeding Up the Justice Process:** Focusing on faster decisions, such as no file decisions, restorative justice, and community

resolution notices, to streamline legal proceedings.

- **Technical Advances:** Highlighting the potential of voice detection, AI, and digital file processing to improve efficiency. PSNI also discussed using platforms like Skype and WebEx for remote reporting and public communication.
- **Resources:** Looking at increasing the number of officers on the front line by reducing administrative duties.

Members then raised the following matters with the team from PSNI:

- **Use of WebEx for appropriate call types:** PSNI reported that prioritizing calls with WebEx has shown to be effective, allowing some cases to be handled remotely with evidence sent online.
- **Officers currently in admin roles:** A concern was raised about the number of officers in admin roles rather than front line duties.

On this point PSNI said that it was mindful of rebalancing.

- **101 call wait times:** The 4-minute average wait time for non-emergency calls is seen as too long.

On this PSNI said it is exploring technological solutions, including AI.

- **Legal Fees for Above Delegated Authority Requests:**

On this point PSNI stated it is reviewing its legal model around these.

Following the presentation Members requested that a summary of the paper going to PSNI's SMB is presented to the Committee at a future date. **AP5**

The Head of Estates then provided an update on plans for the Police

College development, specifically focusing on the Kinnegar site.

It was highlighted that this secure site, valued at £4.9 million, offers opportunities for expansion, utilizing existing buildings and contributing to estate rationalization.

Detail was given that several site disposals are projected to generate £3.8 million in capital receipts for 2024/25. These include sites in Desertcreat, Warrenpoint, Castlederg, and York Road.

On the Warrenpoint site it was stated that this is moving to an open-market sale after failing to sell through internal processes, aligning with public sector asset disposal policies.

Following the presentation discussion focused on the following points:

- **Lessons from Desertcreat:** The main takeaway from the Desertcreat purchase was the importance of collaboration between partner agencies. Although the situations differ, inter-agency coordination was highlighted as crucial.
- **Site Rationalization and Consolidation:** The PSNI plans to bring various operations, such as those at Steeple, Garnerville, and short term envisage use by Seapark MT, to a single site, enhancing efficiency. This consolidation would potentially lead to the disposal of current sites like Hollywood and Knocknagoney. Moving the headquarters to this site is still under consideration.

On this point a Member requested an update on plans for the Police Museum and PSNI agreed to provide a further update at a later date. **AP6**

- **Site Conversion:** The Kinnegar site if purchased will be converted for policing use. Discussions are ongoing about infrastructure support, including transport accessibility (train, bus, road) to the new

site.

- **Flood and Contamination Concerns:** Flooding could require elevating certain buildings by 800mm, though not all. Contamination, including asbestos, can be managed.
- **Planning and Other Public Sector Interest:** PSNI does not have planning exemptions, and other public sector bodies are also interested in the site. The site is valued at £4.9 million for 54 acres, seen as good value for money.
- **Future Steps:** By March, PSNI must prove their intent entering contract to purchase the site. The Board's agreement in principle is requested for the site acquisition.

Following discussion Members requested a future paper be brought to the Committee including the proposed use of the Kinnegar site in the short and medium term, what other PSNI sites are being considered for closure to move to the Kinnegar Site, a high-level view of the funding proposals, and a timeframe should the site be purchased. **AP7**

In relation to Warrenpoint PSNI station – Members were **CONTENT** with it going for sale on the open market.

Members **NOTED** the update provided and thanked the Chief Operating Officer, ACO People and Organisational Development, the Head of Transformation and the Head of Estates for their contributions and they left the meeting.

6.4 PSNI update on Attendance Management/OHW services/Sickness Absence Review Recommendations.

The Director of Occupational Health and Wellbeing and a Police Official provided Members with an overview of Occupational Health & Wellbeing and outlined the following points:

- **System Update:** OHW plans to improve its IT infrastructure.
- **Modernising Duty Adjustments:** Focus on updating terminology, creating a role adjustments portal, and considering private healthcare options.
- **Ill Health Retirement (IHR) Review:** A review of IHR processes will be led by OHW.
- **Mental Health Services:** Exploring strategies to reduce waiting times and develop a proactive Mental Health Strategy.

Pressure Points:

- **Mental Health Services:** OHW is already addressing mental health with initiatives like the Wellbeing & Trauma Resilience Plans and Wellbeing Hub. However, the priority for 2024/25 is a more proactive Mental Health Strategy.
- **Ill Health Retirement (IHR) Services** - No specific improvement strategies have been outlined yet.
- **Duty Adjustments** - OHW is collaborating with HR to improve the management of duty adjustments within the workforce. However, the implementation will require further investment.
- **OHW Referrals** - referrals peaked at 9613 in 2022-2023 but are projected to decrease to 6700 in 2024-2025. Despite this, demand remains high, particularly for mental health and musculoskeletal services.
- **Waiting Times** - long waiting times remain a major issue, with the average waiting time from referral to assessment at 21 days. Mental health services average 8.6 days, while musculoskeletal services take 35.3 days, impacting officer well-being and delaying return to work.
- **Proactive Approach** - OHW is shifting towards a proactive

"prevention first" model, with mental health champions trained in peer support and suicide prevention.

Members raised the following matters with the team from PSNI:

- **Waiting Times for Support:** There are lengthy waiting times for higher-level mental health services such as CBT, face-to-face counselling, and clinical psychology. However, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers 24/7 support, or 6 sessions of counselling. Musculoskeletal issues receive faster attention, with Seapark Physiotherapy providing an initial assessment within 7 days.
- **Extended Counselling Sessions:** For mental health treatment, the number of counselling sessions can be extended beyond the initial 6, depending on the individual's symptoms, potentially reaching up to 18 sessions for clinical psychology. However, budget constraints affect the number of people who can be treated.
- **Feedback on External Providers:** Staff experiences with external organizations are challenging to integrate due to PSNI's concerns over clinical supervision and qualifications of external providers. Without sufficient control or access to these, PSNI does not feel confident in signposting staff to them.
- **Rationalization of Categories:** PSNI reviewed and reduced the number of support categories and indicated there is no need to differentiate between officers and staff for this purpose.
- **Duty Adjustments:** There are generally three types of duty adjustments:
 1. **Recuperative:** Typically up to 3 months.
 2. **Long-term Temporary:** For individuals awaiting primary care or an operation.
 3. **Permanent:** Reserved for cases where the Disability

Discrimination Act (DDA) applies.

- **Implementation of Corporate Development Review Recommendations:** Some changes have been made, but others are delayed due to the slow upgrade of the computer system. This upgrade is expected to be completed soon.
- **Medical Records and External Providers:** PSNI expressed concerns about signposting to external providers due to challenges in sharing medical records. If individuals self-refer, external providers are not entitled to access PSNI records, and likewise PSNI face difficulties if required to request records from primary care providers.

Members **NOTED** the update provided and thanked the Chief Operating Officer, ACO People and Organisational Development, The Director of OHW and a Police Official for their contributions and they left the meeting

6.5 PSNI Above Delegated Authority requests

A Board official briefed the committee on three Above Delegated Authority (ADA) requests from PSNI.

Members noted that each of the 3 cases under consideration related to proposed settlements for compensation claims made against the Chief Constable and considered the background detail provided by PSNI in respect of each case, noting the legal advice provided and rationale for reaching a settlement in each of these cases.

In respect of 2 of the 3 cases, Members were content to recommend the Board approve the proposed compensation amounts (including projected legal fee amounts). However, in the third case, the Committee had queries in respect of the evidence base of the Plaintiff to support, and PSNI to

defend the case. As such, the Committee considered that in this instance they wished to seek further information from PSNI ahead of making any recommendation to the Board.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** to:

- **RECOMMEND** the Board approves **2 of the 3** the ADA requests, and
- That further information to address Members' queries on the third ADA request should be sought from PSNI. **AP8**

Members then had a general discussion in relation to the legal fees associated with ADA requests and requested PSNI provide details on how the reasonableness of legal fees associated with cases is decided and whether there is a mechanism for testing the amount claimed for legal fees in a case. **AP9**

6.6 PSNI Written update on South Armagh Review Recommendations

The Director of Resources provided Members with a written update on progress to implement the 9 recommendations which sit with the Resources Committee from the South Armagh Review Report.

Members **NOTED** the update and **AGREED** that all recommendations except recommendation 6 are now complete.

Committee will continue to receive 6 monthly updates on Recommendation 6 relating to the Estate.

6.7 NIPB Overview of Legal Cases

Members then received an update from the Chief Executive on the legal cases that the Board is currently engaged in and is making financial provision for.

Members **NOTED** the update provided and **AGREED** that an annual submission would be provided to the Committee.

7. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

8. COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES / OPPORTUNITIES

None

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday 24 October 2024** at James House.

The meeting ended at 2.10pm

CHAIR

RESOURCES DIRECTORATE

OCTOBER 2024