

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD
HELD ON THURSDAY 19 MARCH 2020 AT 1.30PM IN WATERSIDE TOWER,
CLARENDON DOCK.**

PRESENT:

Mrs Anne Connolly (Chair)
Ms Deborah Watters (Vice-Chair)

(1) Mr John Blair
Mr Tom Buchanan

(2) Mr Trevor Clarke
Prof Brice Dickson
Mr Doug Garrett
Mrs Dolores Kelly
Mr Gerry Kelly
Ms Liz Kimmins
Mr Sean Lynch
Mr Colm McKenna
Mr Mervyn Storey

ABSENT: Mr Alan Chambers

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

(3) Mr Simon Byrne, Chief Constable
(3) Superintendent John McCaughan,
Command Secretariat

**OFFICIALS
IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mrs Amanda Stewart, Chief Executive
Mr Adrian McNamee, Director of Partnership
Ms Jenny Passmore, Director of Performance
Ms Aislinn, McGuckin, T/Director of Police
Administration
Three Board Officials

- (1) Items 1 to 3 (left at 2.25pm and returned at 2.34pm)**
**(2) Items 1 to 3 (left at 1.45pm and returned at 1.46pm. Left at 2.40pm and
returned at 2.46pm)**
(3) Item 2 only

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mrs Joanne Bunting, Mr Tom Frawley, Dr Paul Nolan and Mrs Wendy Osborne.

2. PSNI PLANNING AND CONTINGENCIES FOR CORONAVIRUS

The Chair thanked the Chief Constable for attending the meeting to brief Members about the PSNI's plans and contingencies for Covid-19 (Coronavirus).

The Chief Constable updated Members on the resignation of T/ Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) George Clarke with effect from 18 March 2020 and noted that consideration was being given to how to fill the vacancy following the recent restructure that had been agreed to the PSNI's Service Executive Board.

The Chief Constable updated Members on the plans in place to deal with Covid-19 including:

- A robust command and control process with ACC Alan Todd appointed Gold Commander.
- The PSNI's collaboration with An Garda Síochána and Police Scotland.
- PSNI's preparedness in dealing with a loss of staff due to self-isolation and illness.
- Review of the PSNI's Human Resources policies including illness policies and engagement with NIPSA and the Police Federation.
- Mitigating actions taken to date by the PSNI to deal with Covid-19 including the deployment of vehicles to deal with Covid-19 specific incidents.

- Pressing for police officers to be able to avail Covid-19 testing that is being made available to other frontline staff.
- The resources available to the PSNI's to allow flexibility to the service to meet the demands posed by Covid-19.

The Chief Constable also noted that he had instructed that spit and bite guards be used within Custody Suites during the Covid-19 period. The Chief Constable noted that a specific instruction had been issued stating that this was a time bound direction which would be subject to ongoing monitoring and assessment. The Chief Constable noted that he recognised the sensitivity of the issue and the discussions that had been had with Members on the issue previously and that he wanted to continue to engage with Members. The Chief Constable noted that all staff would be trained on how to use the spit and bite guards prior to use. This training is to be provided by way of a short instruction video.

It was:

AGREED:

- That Spite and Bite Guards would be introduced into Custody Suites until the end of the current COVID-19 crisis.
- That the Chief Constable would provide regular updates to the Board on their usage.
- The Board's Human Rights Advisor would view the CCTV footage of any such usages.

During discussions, Members raised the following issues with the Chief Constable:

- The use of 'real time testing' for frontline staff including police officers. The Chief Constable updated Members on a meeting he had had with the Northern Ireland Executive about obtaining tests for police officers

but noted that he was considering other options to acquire the means to conduct front line testing.

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) available to officers. The Chief Constable noted that while the PSNI held some stock of PPE including masks, he wanted to ensure a further supply and consideration was underway in this regard.
- The logistics of deploying the military within Northern Ireland during the Covid-19 period if required. The Chief Constable noted that there were various options in place to request assistance including Mutual Aid before the military was considered, but should the military be required a protocol was in place to allow support to be requested and the deployed military would come under the Chief Constable's direct control.
- The potential impact of Covid-19 on the PSNI recruitment campaign. The Chief Constable noted that this was under consideration with the PSNI's recruitment partner.

3. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair of the Partnership Committee noted that at the Partnership Committee meeting held earlier that day the Committee had considered the Independent Custody Visitor Scheme and had agreed to recommend to the Board that the Scheme be suspended during Covid-19. Following discussion, Members:

RESOLVED

- To approve that the Independent Custody Visitor Scheme be suspended until further notice.

The meeting concluded at 2.50pm

Corporate Services

Date: March 2020

Chair

DRAFT