

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD
HELD ON THURSDAY 3 JUNE 2021 AT 9.30 AM IN WATERSIDE TOWER,
CLARENDON DOCK AND VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE FACILITY**

PRESENT:

- Mr Doug Garrett Chair
- Dr Tom Frawley Vice-Chair*
- Mr Michael Atkinson
- Mr John Blair MLA*
- Mr Tom Buchanan MLA
- (1) Ms Joanne Bunting MLA
- Mr Trevor Clarke MLA
- Dr Janet Gray
- Mr Edgar Jardine
- Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA*
- Mr Gerry Kelly MLA
- Ms Liz Kimmins MLA*
- Mr Sean Lynch MLA*
- (2) Mr Colm McKenna
- Mr Frank McManus*
- Ms Carmel McKinney*
- Mr Mike Nesbitt MLA
- Mr Mervyn Storey MLA
- Ms Deirdre Toner

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

- (3) Mr Simon Byrne, Chief Constable
- (3) Mr Mark Hamilton, Deputy Chief Constable
- (3) Ms Pamela McCreedy, Chief Operating Officer
- (3) Mr Mark McEwan, Assistant Chief Constable
- (3) Superintendent John McCaughan, Command Secretariat

**NATIONAL CRIME AGENCY
IN ATTENDANCE:**

- (4) Dame Lynne Owens, Director General*
- (4) One Staff Member*

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

- Mrs Amanda Stewart, Chief Executive
- Ms Aislinn McGuckin, T/Director of Police Administration
- Mr Adrian McNamee, Director of Performance
- Ms Jenny Passmore, Director of Resources

Ms Dympna Thornton, Director of Partnership
Three Board Officials

**NORTHERN IRELAND
POLICING BOARD HUMAN
RIGHTS ADVISOR IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr John Wadham, Human Rights Advisor*

*Attended meeting by video conference facility

- (1) Part item 6 to end (Joined meeting at 9.50am).
- (2) Part item 6 to end (Joined meeting at 9.40am).
- (3) Items 10 and 11.
- (4) Item 11.

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

The Board agreed the Agenda for the meeting.

No one declared any items they wished to raise under 'Any Other Business'.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

**3. DRAFT MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETINGS HELD ON 1 APRIL 2021, 6
MAY 2021 AND 17 MAY 2021**

The Chair noted that following receipt of feedback the draft minutes of the Board meeting held on 1 April 2021 had been amended and were presented for the Board to approve. The minutes of the Board meeting held on 6 May 2021 were also presented for the Board to approve. The minutes of the Board

Meeting held on 17 May 2021 would be brought to the Board Meeting on 1 July 2021 for approval.

It was **RESOLVED**:-

- That the amended minutes of the Board meeting held on 1 April 2021 be approved.
- That the minutes of the Board meeting held on 6 May 2021 be approved.

RATIFICATION OF BOARD SUB-GROUP MINUTES

Policing Plan Review Working Group Minutes 8 March 2021

The minutes of the Policing Plan Review Working Group, a sub Group of the Board, had met on 8 March 2021 and the minutes were presented for the Board to approve.

It was **RESOLVED**:-

- That the minutes of the Policing Plan Review Working Group held on 8 March 2021 be approved.

4 BOARD ACTION LOG

Updates as detailed within the Action Log from the Board meeting held on **6 May 2021** were noted in addition to the following verbal updates provided by the Chief Executive and the additional information received from the PSNI included at agenda item 4.1:

Action Point 1

It was agreed that this action may be closed as the minutes had been actioned under agenda item 3.

Updates as detailed within the Action Log from the Board meeting held on **4 February 2021** were noted in addition to the following verbal updates provided by the Chief Executive:

Action Point 1

The Chair had discussed the PSNI's Operation Yurta Lessons Learned Report being prepared by Senior Counsel with the Chief Constable and an interim report would be brought to the Board for consideration on 1 July 2021 with the full report to be made available at a later date.

Updates as detailed within the Action Log from the Board meeting held on **2/3 October 2019** were noted in addition to the following verbal updates provided by the Chief Executive:

Action Point 2

The Board Effectiveness Review would be discussed at the Board Away Day scheduled during July 2021.

5. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

The Chair presented a report which advised Members of:

- The Chair's engagements, including meetings held by teleconference and video conference facilities during the period between 7 May and 3 June 2021.
- A list of correspondence received by the Chair during the period between 30 April and 3 June 2021.
- A list of correspondence issued by the Chair during the period between 6 May and 3 June 2021.

The Chair noted that he and the Chief Executive had met with the PSNI Chief Operating Officer (COO) Pamela McCready to discuss the appointment of an Interim Director of People and Organisational Development and the role was being advertised with Interchange on a six month secondment basis while the Board progressed the recruitment competition to appoint a candidate on a permanent basis. The Chair further noted that discussions were ongoing with a number of Executive Search Agencies in relation to the recruitment competition.

The Chair updated the Board on the Minister of Justice's decision to offer three Independent Board Members an extension to their terms of appointment on the Board which were due to originally end in December 2021. The Commissioner for Public Appointments had agreed with the Minister's decision to extend the terms of appointment by eight months until 31 July 2022 and all three Members, Mr Colm McKenna, Mr Tom Frawley and the Board Chair Mr Doug Garrett, had accepted the extension to their terms of appointment.

The Chair noted that an interim report received from the Police Ombudsman on the PSNI's introduction of spit and bite guards had been made available as part of the meeting papers and would be considered by the Performance Committee at its meeting in June 2021.

In response to a Member's question about the PSNI's Review of Policing in South Armagh and when the Report would be made available to the Board, it was noted that the Report would be made available during the Board's Away Day in July 2021 when the Chief Constable would brief Members on it.

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Members noted a report and related verbal overview provided by the Board's Chief Executive. The Chief Executive provided an update on a number of issues including PSNI Chief Officer Recruitment and an Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) recruitment competition would launch in December 2021 but in advance of the competition Resources Committee were considering research on barriers to ACC Recruitment.

The Chief Executive also updated the Board on the Police Remuneration Review Body oral evidence session held on 26 May 2021 which she and the Director of Resources had attended.

The Chief Executive further noted that the development of the Policing Plan Survey questions was being progressed in conjunction with Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) colleagues and it would be launched later in 2021. In response to a Member's query, it was agreed that the Policing Plan Survey Questions would be submitted to the June meeting of the Partnership Committee. **(AP1)**

The Chief Executive updated Members on an upcoming Volunteer Recognition Event to recognise the contribution of the Board's Independent Custody Visitors and Independent Community Observers.

The Chief Executive provided an update in relation to processing of Freedom of Information requests and Subject Access Requests (SARs) received and that it was anticipated that the introduction of the Troubles Related Pensions Scheme may increase the number of SARs received by the Board as some applicant's to the Scheme may wish to obtain copies of the information held by the Board in relation to their Ill Health Retirement or Injury on Duty (IOD) award applications.

Member discussed a number of issues including:

- The Board's plans to acknowledge the 20th anniversary of the PSNI and accountability mechanisms. The Chief Executive noted Partnership Committee would be considering this matter further.
- The IOD Tripartite Working Group with the Department of Justice (DoJ). The T/Director of Police Administration noted that engagement with DoJ Officials was ongoing but that it was anticipated that legislation may be introduced in early 2022.
- Succession planning within the PSNI. The Chief Executive noted that the Resources Committee were giving consideration of barriers to ACC recruitment. It was agreed that a research report completed by Deloitte on Barriers to Recruitment would be circulated to all Members. **(AP2)**

The Board noted the draft Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021 and that the final Annual Report and Financial Statements would be tabled at the Board meeting on 1 July 2021.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

7.1 Performance Committee 13 May 2021

The Board noted the Performance Committee Chair's Report and draft minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2021. The Committee Chair also provided a verbal overview of the material items considered at the meeting which included a briefing from T/ACC Bobby Singleton and Detective Chief Superintendent Anthony McNally on the PSNI's performance against Policing Plan Measures, an update on Stop and Search issues, and consideration of the recommendations identified in the Board's Thematic Review of the PSNI's Handling of COVID-19.

7.2 Resources Committee 19 May 2021

The Board noted the Resources Committee Chair's Report and draft minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2021. The Committee Chair also provided a verbal update on matters considered at the meeting which included an update on research undertaken by Heads Together on PSNI Sick Absence, PSNI Learning and Development and the Police College, and the updated PSNI 2021-22 Resource Plan which the Committee were recommending that the Board approve.

It was **RESOLVED:**

- On the recommendation of the Resources Committee, the Board approved the updated PSNI 2021-22 Resource Plan. Officials agreed to advise the PSNI that the updated Resource Plan had been approved. **(AP3)**

7.3 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee 19 May 2021

The Board noted the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Chair's Report and draft minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2021 and the Committee Chair also provided a verbal update on matters considered at the meeting which included Internal Audit's Annual Opinion on the Board's internal control and governance framework which was 'satisfactory', consideration of the draft Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021 and the Committee Effectiveness Review. The Committee Chair also updated the Board on the Committee's private meetings with internal and external audit representatives.

7.4 Partnership Committee 20 May 2021

The Board noted the Partnership Committee Chair's Report and draft minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2021. The Committee Chair also provided a

verbal update on matters considered at the meeting including the Committee Effectiveness Review and the Independent Custody Visitors Annual Report which would be considered by the Board later in the meeting.

8. BOARD BUSINESS

8.1 National Crime Agency Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 Report 2020-21

The Director of Performance presented a paper which considered the National Crime Agency's (NCA's) performance and activity in Northern Ireland during the periods October 2020 to December 2020 and January 2021 to March 2021. The Board further noted the NCA's National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime. The Board noted the Report and National Strategic Assessment which would both be referred to in further detail during the private meeting with the NCA Director General and Chief Constable.

8.2 Independent Custody Visitors Report 2020-21

The Director of Partnership presented a paper which requested that the Board, on the recommendation of the Partnership Committee, approve for publication the Board's 2020-21 Independent Custody Visitors Annual Report.

Members discussed the support, training and guidance available to volunteers, and commended the volunteers for their commitment.

It was **RESOLVED:**

- On the recommendation of the Partnership Committee, that the 2020-21 Independent Custody Visitors Annual Report be approved for publication on the Board's website. **(AP4)**

8.3 Minister of Justice's Stocktake on Policing Oversight

The Board noted a paper about the Minister of Justice's stocktake of policing accountability arrangements which had been delayed because of the impact of COVID-19 but would go ahead in Autumn 2021. The Chief Executive presented a related verbal overview noting that paper was an initial discussion document intended to inform the Board's response to the Stocktake. The Chair's Advisory Group had met in February 2021 to discuss the Stocktake would involve a number of other partners including the Police Ombudsman. A meeting between the Board and Minister of Justice was being arranged and Members were asked to provide feedback on the paper ahead of meeting with the Minister of Justice.

9. KEY ISSUES OF PUBLIC INTEREST

The Board noted a paper which detailed recent issues of public interest which were relevant to the Board's areas of work.

10. PRIVATE SESSION WITH THE CHIEF CONSTABLE INCLUDING CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT

The Chair welcomed the Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) Mark Hamilton, Pamela McCreedy, (COO) and ACC Mark McEwan to the meeting.

The Chief Constable made introductory remarks on a number of topics including the progression of development of officers who were due to complete the College of Policing Strategic Command Course later in 2021, meetings and engagement with the Orange Order as they had announced that local parades would be scheduled on 12 July, and meetings with the Cross Ministerial Group on Bonfires ahead of the summer. The Chief Constable also noted that the PSNI continue to work with the NCA on

dismantling serious and organised crime within Northern Ireland and there had been a number of recent arrests and drug seizures.

During the meeting Members discussed a number of issues including:

- The PSNI's participation in EU Research Projects including the ROXANNE project in Israel and the potential for reputational damage to the PSNI. The DCC noted that PSNI were one of a number police services involved in the EU research projects and that the PSNI were not directly working in Israel. He further noted that at the time of engaging with the project there was a legitimate law enforcement reason but that if the Board had a view on the matter he would be willing to consider it further.
- Recent comments by the Northamptonshire Chief Constable criticising the College of Policing's plans to only recruit university graduates to police services, and whether the Chief Constable may decide to only recruit university graduates to the PSNI. The Chief Constable noted that he was satisfied with the current recruitment process and he wanted to encourage as many people as possible to see the PSNI as a career choice and join the service.

The DCC noted that prior to 2015 there was no pre-requisite qualifications needed to join the PSNI and the issue had been discussed previously with the Board. The Chair noted that Resources Committee was responsible for considering PSNI recruitment in accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference and would continue to give consideration to this issue.

- A recent social media campaign by the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships which also included the PSNI's logo and was unfair to young people. The Chief Constable noted that he would give consideration to the use of the PSNI's logo in the social media campaign.

- The Police Ombudsman's interim report on the rollout and use of spit and bite guards which highlighted that not all officers were trained in their use. The Chief Constable agreed to provide further information on the number of officers trained in the use of spit and bite guards and the deployment of the spit and bite guards.

The Chief Constable also noted that every time a spit and bite guard was deployed the officer's Body Worn Video (BWV) was referred to the Police Ombudsman for oversight and all activity captured on the BWV was reviewed by the Police Ombudsman.

- The PSNI's budgetary pressures and the impact this may have on crime investigations and Neighbourhood Policing. The Chief Constable noted that the COO was working on resourcing matters and the COO provided an update on planned staff and officer recruitment during 2021.

ACC McEwan also provided an update on operational activity to fight serious and organised crime noting that recruitment of detectives was ongoing and that the PSNI worked in partnership with the NCA to bring together capabilities to fight crime.

- The Public Prosecution Service's recent decision not to prosecute anyone for breaches of the COVID-19 Regulations when attending Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests in June 2020. The DCC noted that he had completed a number of media interviews in the preceding days and had apologised for the PSNI's policing operation around the protests. The DCC further noted that the PSNI had engaged with the DoJ around fines issued to BLM protestors but the legislation offered no appeal mechanism except through the Court and T/ACC Singleton was chairing a Gold Group to progress the matter further.
- In response to a Member's question about whether COVID-19 'hot spot' risk assessments had been progressed, it was noted that ACC

Todd had engaged with both The Executive Officer and Department of Health.

- The increase in crimes against officers and staff in PSNI stations, and against other emergency response services. The Chief Constable noted that the PSNI had a Nine Point Plan to support staff and agreed to the share it with the Board.
- The Chief Constable's engagement with the Orange Order in advance of the summer parading season. The Chief Constable noted that the PSNI would engage with organisers across the community to ensure events were peaceful.

The Chair thanked the Chief Constable, DCC, COO and ACC McEwan for their private briefing to the Board.

11. PRIVATE SESSION WITH THE CHIEF CONSTABLE AND NATIONAL CRIME AGENCY DIRECTOR GENERAL

The Chair welcomed Dame Lynne Owens, NCA Director General, to the meeting who provided introductory comments on the NCAs activity including the publication of the National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) and an overview of recent operational activity by the NCA including arrests, drug seizures and work to protect vulnerable people including children.

During the meeting, Members discussed a range of issues with the Director General including:

- The NCA's focus on high impact and serious crime by targeting moderate and major disruptions which have a bigger impact on serious and organised crime.
- The extent of the threat to children in Northern Ireland from online child sexual abuse and the collective response needed to respond to the issue. The Director General noted that while the threat to children in

Northern Ireland was same as across the UK, law enforcement agencies had to work in tandem with other agencies education partners to protect children online. The Director General further noted that there was a role for technology companies in tackling this type of crime as well as working with law enforcement partners to disrupt illegal SOC activity on dark web. The Director General noted that while the NCA had received additional funding to fight online child sexual abuse, further work was needed particularly by the technology companies.

- The dangers posed by the dark web and actions the NCA were taking to address it. The Director General noted that there was a global effort to disrupt the dark web and remove it from operation. The Director General further noted that there was an open invitation for all Board Members to visit the NCA's Cyber Crime Centre to view their capabilities first hand.
- An update on the tools and their effectiveness available to the NCA following the UK's withdrawal from the EU. The Director General provided an update on the tools available but noted that the impact of COVID-19 on the movement on people had meant that the full impact of the UK's withdrawal from the EU and its impact on NCA activity was still to be seen.
- The NCA's need for specialist capabilities in many areas including Bitcoin and online crime and a bid for Resource funding was being progressed to allow capability to be developed in many areas.

The Chair thanked the Director General, Chief Constable, DCC, COO and ACC McEwan for their attendance.

12. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

12.1 Issues Arising from Committees

There were no issues arising from recent Committee meetings for the Board's attention.

12.2 Committee Written Questions and Responses

The Board noted the response provided by the Chief Constable to one question received from the Partnership Committee.

12.3 Individual Members' Written Questions and Responses

The Board noted the responses provided by the Chief Constable to Members individual questions.

13. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

Members noted the issues that the Chair would be commenting on within the opening statement at the public Board Meeting, and that a press briefing would be held with the Chief Constable following the public Board Meeting.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was conducted.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair noted that the Board should provisionally hold Wednesday 30 June 2021 to meet with the Minister of Justice and arrangements would be confirmed as soon as possible.

The next Board Meeting would be Thursday 1 July 2021 at 9.30am.

The meeting closed at 12.35pm.

The private meeting closed and the Board moved into public session at 12.50pm which was held by a video conference facility and livestreamed. A verbatim recording of the Board meeting in public is available on the Board's YouTube page @nipolicingboard

Corporate Services

Date: June 2021

Chair