

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD
HELD ON THURSDAY 4 MARCH 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*
(1) Mr Tom Buchanan MLA*
(1) Mr Trevor Clarke MLA*
Dr Janet Gray*
Mr Edgar Jardine*
Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA*
Mr Gerry Kelly MLA*
Ms Liz Kimmins MLA*
Mr Seán Lynch MLA*
Mr Colm McKenna*
Mr Frank McManus*
Ms Carmel McKinney*
Mr Mike Nesbitt MLA*
Mr Mervyn Storey MLA*

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

(2) Mr Simon Byrne, Chief Constable*
(2) Mr Mark Hamilton, Deputy Chief Constable*
(2) Ms Pamela McCreedy, Chief Operating Officer*
(2) Superintendent John McCaughan, Command Secretariat*
(2) One PSNI 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**

Mr John Wadham, Human Rights Advisor*

**RIGHTS ADVISOR IN
ATTENDANCE:**

*Attended meeting by video conference facility

- (1) **Part item 6 to end (Joined meeting at 10.05am)**
- (2) **Item 10 only**

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Ms Deirdre Toner and it was noted that both Mr John Blair MLA and Mrs Joanne Bunting MLA would be late to the meeting.

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

The Chair noted that Mr Mike Nesbitt MLA had previously declared a conflict of interest in relation to Operation Yurta (the investigation by Durham Constabulary into the alleged theft of material from the Police Ombudsman's office and the subsequent arrest of two journalists), but that the Board were not being asked at the meeting to make any decisions about Operation Yurta at the meeting. No other conflicts of interest were declared.

3. DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 FEBRUARY 2021

It was **RESOLVED**:-

- That the minutes of the Board meeting held on 4 February 2021 be approved.

4 BOARD ACTION LOG

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 Chief Executive noted that the Chair's Advisory Group had met on 15 February 2021 and agreed to ask the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) to further develop the Operation Yurta Terms of Reference and the correspondence was included within the Chair's Report to the Board at agenda item 5.

Action Point 2

The Chief Executive noted that the PSNI had provided a response to the whistleblowing issue that had been raised by a PSNI contractor which was included at agenda item 4.1 for Members information, and the PSNI's Whistleblowing Policy had also been circulated to Members.

Members discussed the response received from the PSNI and expressed concern that the issue had not been fully addressed and it was agreed that the Chief Executive would follow-up with the PSNI regarding Members' concerns about the anonymous whistleblowing correspondence in respect of a PSNI contractor. **(AP1)**

Action Point 4

The Chief Executive noted that the issue in respect of the number of PSNI officers on duty adjustments had been incorporated into an existing piece of Board research on PSNI sick absence which is being progressed by the Resources Committee. It was agreed this action may be closed.

Updates as detailed within the Action Log from the Board meeting held on 3 December 2020 were noted in addition to the following verbal updates provided by the Chief Executive:

Action Point 1

The proposed stocktake by the Minister of Justice of policing accountability arrangements was discussed by the Chair's Advisory Group on 15 February 2021 and the Minister is due to meet with the Board in May or June 2021. Further information will be provided to the Board in advance of the meeting with the Minister of Justice.

Action Point 2

The Chief Executive proposed that this action be closed as it had been superseded by Action Point 1 from the Board Meeting on 4 February 2021.

In response to a Member's question about the Operation Kenova governance arrangements, it was noted that the Board Vice-Chair and DCC are due to discuss the issue and further information will be provided to the Board at its next meeting on 1 April 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 4 February 2021 and 4 March 2021;
- A list of correspondence received by the Chair during the period between 27 January 2021 to 1 March 2021, and;
- A list of correspondence issued by the Chair during the period between 28 January 2021 and 1 March 2021.

The Chair noted that Mrs Joanne Bunting MLA had been appointed to the Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross Foundation and congratulated her on this appointment.

5.1 Chair's Advisory Group Meeting 15 February 2021

The Chair updated Members on the meeting of the Chair's Advisory Group held on 15 February 2021 noting that while the meeting allowed for discussion, the issues addressed during the meeting will come back to the Board and Committees in the coming months for further discussions.

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Members noted a report and related verbal synopsis provided by the Board's Chief Executive. Some issues addressed included an update on PSNI Human Resources matters including the appointment of Ms Pamela McCreedy, PSNI Chief Operating Officer who took up post on 1 March 2021 and the progression of the appointment of a Temporary Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) as a result of ACC Gray's resignation with effect from 10 March 2021. The Chief Executive noted that following ACC Gray's resignation there would be two substantive vacancies at ACC level within the PSNI Service Executive Team (SET). She advised Members that, in order to attract applications from the widest possible pool of candidates, these posts would be advertised in December 2021 following the completion of the upcoming Police National Assessment Centre and Strategic Command Course. Members discussed the Chief Officer appointment process and requested the PSNI provide a written briefing on the mandatory eligibility requirements for Chief Officer prospective applicants to include an overview of the Police National Assessment Centre process and Strategic Command Course both of this must be completed by candidates wishing to make applications at the ACC and above ranks. **(AP2)**.

The Chief Executive provided an update on the audit of a Policing and Community and Safety Partnership (PCSP) by the Board's internal audit team and it was agreed that the audit Terms of Reference would be circulated to all Members for information. **(AP3)**

The Chief Executive asked Members to note the correspondence received from the Department of Justice (DoJ) Permanent Secretary providing an update on the Independent Medical Referee process further to correspondence previously issued by the Chief Executive in respect of the process.

In response to a Member's question regarding the Board's 2021-22 Resource Plan and the unfunded pressures noted within the Plan, the Chief Executive advised that the DoJ were aware of the unfunded pressures relating to the Board's accommodation move to James House later in 2021. Members noted that the Board's 2021-2022 Resource Plan would be considered later in the meeting,

Members discussed the Minister of Justice's correspondence to the Justice Committee Clerk on 19 January 2021 regarding the funding of Support Hubs beyond 2021-22. It was noted that Support Hubs were important to the work of PCSPs and that the Partnership Committee continued to monitor the situation.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

7.1 Performance Committee 11 February 2021

The Board noted the Performance Committee Chair's Report providing an overview of matters considered at the Performance Committee on 11 February 2021. These included a briefing from the Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable (DCC), to which all Board Members were invited, on the events which had taken place on the Ormeau Road on 5 February 2021. The Board noted that the Police Ombudsman has commenced an investigation into the 5 February 2021 events. The Committee Chair further

noted that during the meeting the Committee also received an update on the PSNI's Code of Ethics and Notifiable Membership.

7.2 Resources Committee 17 February 2021

The Board noted the Resources Committee Chair's Report providing an overview of matters considered at the Committee meeting held on 17 February 2021. These included briefings from the PSNI Director of Information and Communications on the development of the PSNI's Digital Strategy and also from the Director of Occupational Health and Welfare (OHW) on the work of the OHW Branch.

7.3 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee 17 February 2021

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) Chair updated Members on the ARAC meeting of 17 February 2021 during which the Committee considered the proposed risk appetite for the risks documented on the Board's Corporate Risk Register (CRR). Members noted that this had taken place ahead of the Risk Management Workshop on 25 February 2021 to which all Board Members were invited. The ARAC Chair further advised that the Board had subsequently agreed its risk appetite in respect of each of the risks documented on the CRR at the Risk Management Workshop on 25 February 2021.

7.4 Partnership Committee 18 February 2021

The Board noted the Partnership Committee Chair's Report that provided an overview of matters considered at the meeting on 18 February 2021 including a briefing from ACC Barbara Gray and Chief Superintendent John McVea on Serious and Organised Crime and the attendance of the Independent

Reporting Commission and Tackling Paramilitarism Programme Team at the meeting.

8. BOARD BUSINESS

8.1 NIPB Resource Plan 2021-22

The Director of Resources presented a paper asking the Board to approve the Board's 2021-22 Resource Plan further to the recommendation made by the Resources Committee who had considered the draft Resource Plan at their meeting on 17 February 2021.

The paper included an overview of a number of assumptions, including unfunded pressures, detailed within the Resource Plan.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The Northern Ireland Policing Board 2021—22 Resource Plan be approved.

8.2 Updated NIPB Business Plan 2021-22

The Director of Resources presented a paper providing an overview of the Board's Annual Business Plan for 2021-2022 for Board approval.

The Director of Resources noted that the new Annual Business Plan was for year 2 of the Board's Corporate Plan 2020-23 and built upon the progress made during the current 2020-21 Annual Business Plan. Members noted that if approved by the Board and further to the Board's Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM), the plan would be issued to the Minister of Justice for formal approval. In response to a Member's question about the development of a Framework to assess the PSNI's compliance with the

Human Rights Act 1998, the Director of Performance noted that a draft Framework would be brought to the Performance Committee in April 2021 for consideration.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The Northern Ireland Policing Board Annual Business Plan 2021-22 be approved and that correspondence be issued seeking formal approval of the Annual Business Plan 2021-22 from the Minister of Justice.. **(AP4)**

8.3 HMIC PEEL Inspection 2020-21

The Director of Performance presented a paper which asked the Board to provide feedback on the draft Terms of Reference for the Police Efficiency Effectiveness and Legitimacy (PEEL) inspection of the PSNI conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) who had been engaged by the DoJ. During discussions Members noted that all UK Police Services were subject to PEEL Inspections by HMIC and requested that specific reference to crime being under reported within Northern Ireland in comparison to other parts of the UK be included in the Terms of Reference and the Director of Performance agreed to provide this feedback to HMICFRS.

8.4 Draft Response to the Consultation on the Programme for Government Draft Outcomes Framework

The Director of Partnership presented a paper which asked the Board, on the recommendation of the Partnership Committee, to approve the draft consultation response, detailed at Annex A of the presented paper, on the Programme of Government Draft Outcomes Framework.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The draft consultation response on behalf of the Board on the Programme of Government Draft Outcomes Framework be approved and the correspondence be issued to the Executive Office Programme for Government Team. **(AP5)**

8.5 Update on the Policing Plan Review Working Group

The Board Vice-Chair (also Chair of the Working Group) updated the Board on the work of the Policing Plan Review Working Group (PPRWG) which had been established in November 2020 with the purpose of reviewing the 2020-25 Policing Plan and 2020-21 Annual Performance Plan, and proposing a new 2021-22 Performance Plan. It was noted that in considering a proposed 2021-22 Annual Performance Plan the PPRWG had established three sub-groups to consider the Policing Plan Outcomes in further detail. The Board Vice-Chair noted that the proposed 2021-22 Annual Performance Plan would be brought to the Board's next meeting on 1 April 2021 for approval.

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, DCC Hamilton and Ms Pamela McCreedy, Chief Operating Officer to the meeting.

Ms McCreedy noted that it was her first Board Meeting having commenced her role on 1 March 2021 and that she looked forward to working with the Board as a Member of the PSNI SET.

The Chief Constable provided an update on the continued policing response to COVID-19, engagement with stakeholders following the events on the Ormeau Road on 5 February 2021, recent arrests as part of Operation Arbacia (the ongoing investigation into the gathering of a large crowd in the Pitt Park area of Belfast on 2 February 2021 contrary to COVID-19 Regulations), and the £23 million funding gap in the PSNI's draft 2021-22 Budget.

The Chief Constable also updated Members on recent events, including issues relating to house parties in the Holylands area of Belfast contrary to COVID-19 Regulations. The Chief Constable noted, with the approach of both St Patricks Day and the Easter holidays, he was of the view that a multi-agency response is required in relation to issues pertaining to the Holylands area and that this was not just a policing issue.

The Chief Constable updated Members on the portfolio changes of the ACCs as a consequence of the departure of ACC Gray on 10 March 2021. The Board Chair noted that while ACC Gray was not in attendance at the meeting, he wanted to formally record his and all Board Members appreciation of her and her work while with the PSNI, and wished her well in her new role with the Metropolitan Police Service.

The DCC provided the Board with an update on Operation Yurta including a response regarding the recent media reports of blank interview tapes having been returned to the journalists' representatives. He acknowledged that this had been an embarrassing error for the organisation. He provided an explanation as to the reasons and also assurance to Members in relation to the subsequent reissue of the tapes. The DCC noted that he had received the Board's Chair's correspondence relating to the proposed Terms of Reference

for the Lessons Learned review of Operation Yurta to be completed by Senior Counsel, and advised the feedback received from the Board would be reflected in revised Terms of Reference. Members were advised that Senior Counsel's report would be completed and submitted to the Board by June 2021, with the PSNI also completing an internal review and report which would also be made available to the Board.

During the meeting Members discussed various issues with the Chief Constable including:

- The Chief Constable's engagement with the Minister of Justice in relation to the PSNI's draft 2021-22 Budget. The Chief Constable noted that he regularly engaged with the Minister of Justice and DoJ Permanent Secretary about PSNI strategic issues including the budget settlement and that the PSNI had been invited to bid for additional EU Exit funding from the Northern Ireland Office. The Chief Constable noted that in the previous 10 years PSNI officer numbers had fallen from 7500 to current levels of around 6900 officers but that Northern Ireland was the only place within the UK where police officer numbers had declined while the volume of work and the terrorist threat facing officers remained unchanged. The Chief Constable further noted his commitment to the maintaining Neighbourhood Policing Teams in 2021-22 but acknowledged the potential service delivery impact on other policing areas. The Chief Constable advised that a Business Case for a PSNI Strategic Partner was with the DoJ for consideration and the purpose of the Strategic Partner was to give the PSNI the capability in the area of transformation and to assist with the re-profiling of the organisation.
- The Chief Operating Officer provided an update on her engagement with DoJ Officials in regards to the PSNI's 2021-22 budget gap, the Strategic Partner Business Case which requires Department of Finance approval and that work was ongoing in respect of monies that

could potentially be carried forward to the 2021-22 Budget but that further consideration of this would be required by DoJ and DoF

- The Chief Constable and the PSNI's learning from the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) Report published in April 2020 about Reducing Costs within the PSNI which made recommendations in relation to improving the efficiency of the police service. The Chief Constable noted that the service modernisation plan Horizon 2025 included learnings from the NIAO Report and that the DCC was also considering internal project management to assist with the prioritisation of projects.
- Representativeness within the PSNI and promotion of female officers as detailed within the Chief Constable's Report to the Board. It was agreed that the PSNI would provide further information including the number of female officers that had been promoted in 2021 and details on the number of promotions in previous years by way of comparison.

(AP6)

- Actions being taken by the PSNI SET to encourage the progression female officers within the PSNI. The Chief Constable noted that both he and DCC have previously mentored female officers and that Representativeness was a focus of the PSNI's Draft People Strategy and would be a priority for the PSNI director of People and Organisational development on appointment. The DCC noted the potential impact on the future promotion pool if the officer headcount was reduced in 2021-22 because of budget constraints.
- How number of aggravated burglaries within Northern Ireland and it was agreed that further information would be provided to the Board.

(AP6)

- The PSNI's engagement with the National Union of Journalists both within Northern Ireland and the UK about recent online attacks against journalists and the appointment of one central point of contact within the PSNI to deal with all matters affecting journalists.
- The rise in the number of assaults against police officers and the Chief constable's support for longer custodial sentences for these types of

attacks noting that the Northern Ireland's custodial sentences tended to be shorter in comparison to the rest of the UK.

The Chair thanked the Chief Constable, DCC and Chief Operating Officer for attending the meeting.

11. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

11.1 Issues Arising from Committees

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

11.2 Committee Written Questions and Responses

The Board noted the responses provided by the Chief Constable to one question from the Partnership Committees.

11.3 Individual Members' Written Questions and Responses

No questions from individual members had been submitted to the Chief Constable to respond to.

12. 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.

13. 2021 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

The proposed schedule of Board and Committee Meetings from April to June 2021 was noted.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was conducted.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Board meeting would be held on Thursday 1 April 2021.

The meeting closed at 12.25pm.

The private meeting closed and the Board moved into public session at 12.30pm 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: March 2021

Chair