



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA
POLICING AUTHORITY

Minutes of Meeting of the Policing Authority

Date: 28 November 2023

Venue: By Video Conference

Attendance

Authority & Executive: Bob Collins (Chairperson), Elaine Byrne, Deborah Donnelly, Paul Mageean, Donal de Buitléir, Anthony Harbinson, Valerie Judge, Helen Hall (Chief Executive), Aoife Clabby (Secretary), Margaret Tumelty, Karen Shelly.

Garda Síochána: Drew Harris (Commissioner), Anne McMahon (Deputy Commissioner)

Apologies Moling Ryan, Jane Mulcahy

1. Meeting of Members in Private

The Authority did not exercise its option to have a meeting in private.

2. Chairperson's Opening Remarks.

The meeting agenda was approved as drafted. No conflicts of interest were declared by the Members in relation to any of the items for consideration.

In advance of the provision of a briefing by the Commissioner on the public order incident in Dublin on 23 November and the policing response, the Chairperson and Chief Executive provided Members with an update on various contacts and communications that had taken place with the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner in the preceding days.

The Chief Executive apprised Members of her interactions with the Department of Justice, in the context of the Authority's oversight of public order matters in the current year and its oversight of the extent to which the Garda Síochána had implemented the recommendations in the Garda Inspectorate Public Order, commissioned by the Authority and published in 2020.

Members noted a statement issued by the Minister for Justice that had been provided for information. The Chief Executive advised that the review request from the Minister was still awaited. Members considered the intended scope of the review, as outlined in the statement, in the context of the Authority's statutory role and the operational independence of the Garda Commissioner and highlighted some concerns about the feasibility of certain aspects of the work described in the statement.

3. Appointments

Members considered and approved a recommendation from the Public Appointments Service to appoint a candidate to the position of Chief Corporate Officer in the Garda Síochána, at the level of Deputy Commissioner. The Authority was satisfied to appoint the person proposed to the position.

4. Briefing by Garda Commissioner in relation to public order incident in Dublin

The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, Policing and Security joined the meeting. At the outset, the Commissioner expressed his regret that the tragic events that occurred at Parnell Square East, resulting in critical and serious injury, had been overshadowed by the later riots.

The Commissioner then provided the Authority with an overview of the sequence of events that had occurred, following the earlier stabbing incidents that had taken place at Parnell Square East and culminating in violent disorder in Dublin city centre over the course of the 23 November.

The Commissioner provided the Authority with a timeline of developments and the policing response provided over the course of that time. Members were advised of the number of arrests made and the extent and challenge of the on-going investigation into the events that had occurred. The Commissioner enumerated the extent of injuries to Garda members responding to the violent disorder.

Members were advised that a briefing document had been provided by the Commissioner to the Minister for Justice, outlining the Garda Síochána's response to the violent disorder and associated timelines. It was agreed that a copy of this briefing document would be provided to the Authority.

Members then discussed a number of matters with the Commissioner including the scale and violence of the reaction and a consideration of contributory factors; the extent of criminal damage to premises, garda vehicles and public transport; and progress in relation to arrests and investigations. The Authority also sought clarification in relation to the command structure that was in operation as events unfolded and escalated to violent disorder. Members engaged with the Commissioner on organisational capacity and capability to anticipate and provide a policing response to critical incidents. The Commissioner provided Members with a brief summary of the organisation's current capability and stated his intention to review equipment arising from the incident, in addition to the conduct of an overall review of the tactics deployed.

Members sought the Commissioner's assessment of a number of comments in public discourse regarding use of force and whether there was an absence of clarity or an apprehension among Garda members on this matter.

In concluding the meeting, the Authority conveyed its good wishes to those members who had been injured and expressed its appreciation for the bravery and courage of all of the officers who had served on the night of 23 November. The Chairperson advised the Commissioner that it was the Authority's intention to livestream a portion of the meeting on 19 December in order to discuss a number of matters relating to public order policing.

The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, Policing and Security then left the meeting.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_130_01	Provide the Authority with a copy of the briefing document provided to the Minister for Justice.	ASAP	Garda Síochána

5. Other Business

The Chief Executive advised that the reappointment of eligible Members to the Authority was scheduled for consideration by Government in early December.

Members were reminded to complete the self-assessment review of board effectiveness, as required by the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

It was agreed that the Secretary would canvass Members' availability for an additional meeting of the Authority to consider the Ministerial request for review, once received.