



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA
POLICING AUTHORITY

Minutes of Meeting of Garda Organisation Development Committee

Date: 15 January 2019

Venue: 90 North King Street, Dublin 7

Part A – Committee Meeting

Attendance

Authority: Bob Collins (Chair), Valerie Judge, Pat Costello

Secretary: David Pasley

Executive: Helen Hall, Margaret Tumelty, Fiona Larthwell, Aoife Clabby

Apologies: Melanie Pine

1. Closed session – Authority Members only

The standing option to conduct a closed session was not exercised.

2. Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair set out the main themes of the meeting. It was proposed that the Committee should re-consider its terms of reference and the focus of its work for 2019, in the context of the report of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland and the associated Implementation Group, together with the cessation of the Modernisation and Renewal Programme in its current form. It was reiterated from previous meetings that the statutory functions of the Authority remain unchanged and undiminished. The Committee's capacity to make meaningful interventions in the current context, and the nature of future engagement between the Implementation Group and the Authority was also cited as a consideration. Finally, consideration was given to need to avoid duplication of effort for the Garda Síochána in having to provide progress reports to both the Authority and Implementation Group.

3. Committee Focus for 2019

It was suggested that key themes, particularly concerning workforce planning and modernisation, and the key enablers of change could be the focus of the Committee's work. It was also proposed that the Committee should focus on key issues which were highlighted in the series of reports to the Minister on the implementation of recommendations from Changing Policing in Ireland. The Committee reflected on the experience and lessons which it had documented during oversight of the Modernisation and Renewal Programme and proposed that the new Implementation Group may be exposed to the same challenges. It was further proposed that the Committee's continued oversight on enablers may ensure that the Garda Síochána reaches a stage where it can implement and achieve the aims of the Commission on the Future of Policing. Beyond the subject of enablers, the Committee stated their intent to continue their oversight of other key areas such as ethics. Finally, although the requirement to produce quarterly reports on the MRP had been removed, the Committee still wishes to report publicly on significant aspects within its remit.

4. Seventh Report to the Minister

A draft of the Seventh Report to the Minister on Changing Policing in Ireland was discussed. It was proposed that the report should be succinct and focus on the key elements which arose in the previous reports, rather than a count of completed and incomplete recommendations. It was specified that the focus should be on the enablers for implementation of change.

5. Code of Ethics

The Committee discussed the progress report submitted by the Garda Síochána on embedding the Code of Ethics. It was noted that there had not been a significant change since the previous report. It was stated in the progress report the Authority's Ethics Committee had approved scripts for the ethics videos. The Committee confirmed that no such approval had been provided and that the Ethics Committee had only provided some high level comments for consideration regarding the scripts. A number of queries were raised in relation to the number of newly appointed garda staff who have signed the Code of Ethics, a commitment from the Commissioner to issue a letter encouraging members and staff to sign the Code of Ethics and the absence of dates for future ethics workshops.

6. Workforce Modernisation

The December progress report on redeployment and notes from the December workforce planning meeting were discussed, including a planned workforce census and the absence of need assessment or gap analysis in workforce planning.

Part C – Meeting with Garda Síochána Representatives

Attendance

Authority: As above

Garda Síochána: Superintendent Tony O' Donnell, Superintendent Brian Conway, Ms. Mary Fitzsimons, Ms. Monica Collins

7. Closed Session

The standing option to conduct a closed session was not exercised.

8. Code of Ethics Progress Report

The Committee examined the progress report submitted by the Garda Síochána and raised a number of queries. Concerns were expressed about the absence of dates for outstanding ethics training sessions and absence of a completion date for all training. The Garda Síochána representatives outlined a number of challenges which they had faced including attendance issues and the capacity to plan future training, given the competing demand for training from other parts of the organisation. The representatives suggested that they may move from workshops to a seminar based approach in the DMR region for outstanding ethics training. The Committee expressed concern in relation to this proposal and cautioned against such an approach, expressing its belief that all members should receive the same training. Members

expressed the view that a seminar style training, as proposed, while allowing for 'catch up' in terms of numbers trained was not conducive to the discursive format provided by the workshops run to date, which Members believe is required to allow for a thorough understanding of the Code. The Committee requested the provision of a realistic, time-bound sense of when all Garda members and staff will have received ethics training.

The Committee questioned the status of a letter, which was to be issued by the Commissioner highlighting the importance of the Code of the Ethics. The representatives stated that a HQ directive had been drafted but not signed-off. The Committee also queried why so few of the latest intake of Garda staff had signed the Code of Ethics. It was explained that this was because new staff members had not undergone training. The absence of an induction programme for Garda staff was discussed in this regard.

The Committee requested a correction in the progress report, which stated that the Ethics Committee had approved the scripts for the ethics videos which were currently being produced. The Committee stressed that it had provided some high level feedback but had not approved the scripts. It was noted that there was, as yet, no clear timeframe for the release of the ethics video.

The Committee also queried why the Decision Making Model and the Code of Ethics Strategy had not been approved and requested an update on the Cultural Audit.

The Garda Síochána Representatives highlighted a number of advances in training including advances in blended learning, e-learning and the linking of training systems to the roster system. It was noted that the software system linking training to rostering should be in place by year end.

Part C – Meeting with Garda Síochána Representatives

Attendance

Authority: As above

Garda Síochána: Assistant Commissioner Finbarr O'Brien (Northern Region), Mr Alan Mulligan (Acting Executive Director, HRPD), Mr David Gilbride (Executive Director, Strategic Transformation Office), Ms Emer Doyle (Strategic Transformation Office), Inspector Paul Franey (Strategic Transformation Office), Ms Eilis Gilvarry (HRPD), Ms Catherine Heffernan (Policing Authority Liaison Office)

9. Closed Session

The standing option to conduct a closed session was not exercised.

10. MRP and Policing Plan Progress Report

The Committee reflected on its role in the context of the revocation of the request from the Minister to report on the implementation of recommendations from Changing Policing in Ireland. The Committee proposed to Garda representatives that there would be a shift in focus away from pursuing individual recommendations to an emphasis on more significant issues, particularly enablers of change, significant projects, and bottlenecks and barriers to achieving organisational reform. It proposed that these should be the focus of the organisational development aspects of the Policing Plan.

The Committee asked Garda representatives for their views on how the Garda Síochána will approach reporting requirements in the future, in the context of its obligations to the implementation group of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland.

The Garda Síochána representatives stated that while the MRP 'brand' had been wound down, the majority of projects within the MRP are referred to in the implementation plan arising from the Commission's report. A number of priority projects targeted for progress in Year 1 of the implementation plan were highlighted, including human rights, mobility and redeployment. Representatives also expressed their concern that the reporting mechanisms to both the Implementation Group and the Authority were aligned in order to minimise the reporting burden. The expected deployment of a number of major IT projects in 2019 was also reflected upon, as well as ambitious targets for the mobility project and redeployment. It was emphasised that the main projects needed to form part of the policing plan, while ensuring there were not too many active projects.

Representatives acknowledged the challenges experienced in implementing the MRP and stated that this had been reflected on at Senior Leadership Team level. In this regard, it was stated that the senior team would be more central in steering the implementation of recommendations. It was also stated that there were now two programme boards charged with governance of the change programme, having been reduced from four.

The Committee stated that it had no desire to require the Garda Síochána to have separate reporting strands and a version of reporting that meets the needs of the Authority and the Implementation Group seemed eminently sensible and possible. It was estimated that this could be achieved through a well-developed Policing Plan and associated reporting. The Committee proposed that its focus would be on the key enablers and on those elements that had represented a barrier to progress in the MRP and, unaddressed, could equally inhibit the achievement of the intentions of the implementation plan. It was also confirmed that the Authority would no longer be producing a quarterly report to the Minister on the reform programme, but may develop a new report to focus on enablers and other key issues. The Committee advised that this will require further discussion and approval. It emphasised that aspects of organisational renewal were inseparable from the achievement of policing objectives and would continue to be of statutory interest to the Authority. It also stated that although the quarterly reporting to the Minister was no longer required, the Committee would wish to report publicly on aspects of the organisational work that were relevant to the Authority's remit.

The Garda Síochána representatives stated the capacity to deliver the implementation plan was contingent on available resources. It was stated that the Authority's previous reports have been helpful in identifying challenges and enablers in this regard.

A wider discussion was held on the management and ownership of change and views on the challenges experienced in that regard, in the context of such a large, geographically spread organisation, were considered. The Committee welcomed the information and the intentions reflected during the discourse.

11. Redeployment and Workforce Planning Progress Report

The Garda Síochána representatives provided an update on the HR Strategy. It was noted that a draft was scheduled for presentation to the Commissioner on 22nd January. The Committee was further advised that the draft had been subject to consultation with the senior leadership

team, was amended to incorporate views expressed by the Commissioner and various stakeholders and was also aligned to the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland.

The Committee was also informed that 258 Garda members had been redeployed and that the new iteration of the workforce plan had been submitted to the Commissioner. It was reported that resistance to redeployment was perceived to exist among some cohorts within the organisation. Finally, it was stated that a new census of the Garda workforce was to be conducted to identify opportunities for redeployment. It was proposed that the requirement for a census was a reflection on the unsuitability of current management information systems within the organisation.