



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA
POLICING AUTHORITY

Minutes of Meeting of the Policing Authority

Date: 19th August 2020

Venue: By Video Conference

Attendance

Authority: Bob Collins (Chairperson), Pat Costello, Deborah Donnelly, Judith Gillespie, Paul Mageean, Moling Ryan.

Secretary: Aoife Clabby

Staff of the Authority: Helen Hall (Chief Executive), Cormac Keating, David Pasley.

Apologies Valerie Judge, Vicky Conway.

1. Chairperson's Opening Remarks

The meeting agenda was approved, subject to the addition of one item. No conflicts of interest were declared in relation to any of the items for discussion.

The Chairperson briefed the Members on a number of matters that had been the subject of engagement with the Commissioner including new measures announced by government in respect of COVID-19 and its likely impact on the required policing response; recent media coverage in respect of a number of alleged hate crime incidents and other policing matters; and current and future requirements in relation to Garda personnel at senior leadership level.

In relation to the policing of COVID-19, members agreed that, dependent on the measures introduced, the approach to and timing of reports to the Minister on the matter may require review.

2. Policing and Community Safety Bill

The Chairperson addressed a number of issues in relation to the draft General Scheme of the Community Safety Bill and sought Members' views regarding the Authority's approach in response to the consultation process. Members had regard to a number of supporting documents provided and engaged in a detailed and wide-ranging discussion in relation to the desired proposed. In arriving at an agreed approach, the Authority gave consideration to a number of matters including:

- The confidential nature of the consultation process;
- The range of stakeholders engaged in the consultation process, together with the intended audience for receipt of the Authority's submission;
- The Authority's statutory role in the provision of advice to the Minister;
- The existing oversight and envisaged oversight architecture, as detailed in the draft General Scheme;

- The extent and nature of the Authority’s experience of oversight of the Garda Síochána to date and the impact of the Scheme’s provisions on existing arrangements; and
- The Authority’s previous submissions to the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland.

The Authority considered and agreed a number of key themes that would be helpful in underpinning its draft response, including oversight roles, functions and accountabilities, performance monitoring, risk, international comparators and optimal practice, and public policy and evidence in support of change.

It was agreed that these themes would provide the context for a detailed consideration of the specific provisions set out in the draft General Scheme. It was further agreed that it would also be instructive to consider particular matters that had been the subject of intensive oversight by the Authority in the years since its establishment and how such matters might be addressed in practice, having regard to the proposals contained in the draft General Scheme.

Following discussion, it was agreed that a draft submission would be developed for consideration at an additional meeting of the Authority on 2nd September 2020.

3. Garda Síochána Review of Management and Use of Anti-Spit Hoods

Members considered correspondence received, seeking input for a Garda Síochána review of the management and use of anti-spit hoods. It was agreed that a draft response should be developed for consideration at the 2nd September meeting of the Authority. It was further agreed that the response would address a range of matters including the Authority’s previously stated views on the introduction of anti-spit hoods; any pertinent issues arising from the reports prepared for the Minister on policing the COVID-19 pandemic; and a consideration of any emerging evidence for the efficacy of anti-spit hoods in preventing the transmission of COVID-19 .

The Authority was strongly of the view that any consideration by the Garda Síochána for the introduction of anti-spit hoods as part of normal policing equipment would need to be undertaken on a stand-alone basis and would require public consultation .