



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA  
POLICING AUTHORITY

## Minutes of Meeting of the Policing Authority

**Date:** 17th September 2020

**Venue:** By Video Conference

### Attendance

**Authority:** Bob Collins (Chairperson), Pat Costello, Deborah Donnelly, Judith Gillespie, Paul Mageean, Moling Ryan, Valerie Judge, Vicky Conway.

**Secretary:** Aoife Clabby

**Staff of the Authority:** Helen Hall (Chief Executive), Cormac Keating, Margaret Tumelty, David Pasley, Sharon O'Brien.

### 1. Authority Meeting in Private

The option to avail of a meeting in private was not exercised.

### 2. Chairperson's Opening Remarks

The meeting agenda was approved, as drafted. No conflicts of interest were declared in relation to any of the items for discussion. The Chairperson provided the members with an update on Garda HR matters.

### 3. Garda Síochána Annual Report 2019

The Authority was asked to consider the Garda Síochána Annual Report 2019 and to determine what commentary, if any, it wished to provide to the Minister for Justice and Equality regarding the form of the report, further to section 46(1) of the Garda Síochána Act 2005 (as amended).

Members had regard to the substance of the report and previous direction provided by the Authority. It was agreed that many aspects of previous Authority directions issued had now been incorporated and this was to be welcomed. The report was seen as succinct and readable, with a capacity to act as a positive communications tool for a range of audiences, including Garda members and staff. Members welcomed the provision of easily accessible information across a range of areas including human rights and diversity and inclusion.

Members expressed some concern, however, in relation to the treatment of the Policing Plan in the report. Given the statutory provisions in respect of the Plan and the Authority's view of the centrality of the Plan in driving the work of the organisation and linking to the provision of a quality policing service to members of the public, a more comprehensive consideration of the implementation of the Plan and its integration into the body of report would have been welcomed. Further, such an approach would serve to avoid any sense that the Plan was somehow marginal to, or apart from, the business of policing.

Members noted the relative absence of any consideration of the challenges faced by the Garda organisation or any detail in relation to the substantive and critical work being undertaken to introduce significant change. Members would have welcomed further inclusion of these issues in the Annual Report, explicitly linking to the recommendations of 'A Policing Service for the Future'.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the matters raised would be conveyed to the Minister, in accordance with the statutory provisions.

<b>No.</b>	<b>Action point</b>	<b>By Date</b>	<b>By Whom</b>
<b>A_078_01</b>	Correspondence to issue to the Minister, detailing Authority direction on Garda Síochána Annual Report 2019 and correspondence copied to the Commissioner.	ASAP	Chief Executive

#### **4. Draft General Scheme of the Policing and Community Safety Bill**

Members considered a draft submission on the draft General Scheme for the Policing and Community Safety Bill ('the General Scheme'). In facilitating the discussion, the Chairperson sought Members' views in relation to the document structure, tone and focus and whether any issues of substance had been omitted.

Members expressed their broad satisfaction with the draft submission, as circulated. A number of observations were made in relation to the document's structure and some amendments were suggested and agreed.

Members requested further elaboration on the unique nature of the Garda Síochána, as distinct from other public service bodies and the implications arising, in the context of the proposed governance and oversight structures, as set out in the draft General Scheme, and having regard to the provisions of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. Members requested that some further drafting would be undertaken in relation to the area of the appointments of senior staff. It was also agreed that further elaboration was required on the structures proposed for community safety at national and local and the interlinkage between the various agencies referenced.

Members agreed that the submission should also reference the Authority's enduring commitment to independent, robust and strategic oversight as a means to further strengthen public trust and confidence in the police service. The critical importance of a future oversight regime with clear lines of accountability, operating in the public interest, was also strongly emphasised.

The Chairperson requested that any additional observations on the draft submission would be provided through the senior management team and advised that a final draft would be tabled for consideration at the 30<sup>th</sup> September meeting of the Authority.

<b>No.</b>	<b>Action point</b>	<b>By Date</b>	<b>By Whom</b>
<b>A_078_02</b>	Further develop the draft submission on the General Scheme, in line with Authority observations	25/9/2020	Chief Executive