



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA  
POLICING AUTHORITY

## Minutes of Meeting of the Garda Organisation Development Committee

**Date: 14 December 2021**

**Venue: Online Meeting**

### Part A – Committee Meeting

#### Attendance

**Authority:** Paul Mageean (Chair), Valerie Judge, Elaine Byrne, Dónal de Buitléir

**Secretary:** Michal Alfasi-Hanley

**Executive:** Helen Hall (CEO), Cormac Keating, Margaret Tumelty, Sharon O'Brien,

Karen Shelly, Mark Nother, Alexandre Eisenbarth, Sophia Carey, Beth Murphy

**Apologies:** Melanie Pine

#### 1. Closed session – Authority Members only

The Committee did not exercise the standing option to conduct a closed session.

#### 2. Chair's Opening Remarks

2.1 There were no declarations of interest from the members in respect of any of the agenda items.

2.2 No update from previous Authority meeting was provided as all members attending the meeting were present.

#### 3. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting (13<sup>th</sup> October) were approved by the Committee.

3.2 The CEO informed the Committee of a letter to the Minister being drafted regarding supporting the request from the GS to get additional budget for resources, including ICT modernisation. This letter is in addition to the yearly one advising on the required budget, and it has been decided to send it to express the Authority's disappointment from the budget allocated to GS ICT.

Members discussed the need to get a separate 'budget envelopes' to split the business to usual cost of ICT and the development and changes costs.

It was also agreed that the request for additional resources should highlight the savings in term of manpower (for example, the efficiency gain from the Mobility FCN app), but also the risks on Policing from not investing.

### 3.3 Members discussed ongoing GAR requests.

- The Committee agreed that the additional information received from the GS regarding the ‘cost per head’ for Garda members is sufficient and could be used to articulate and calculate the savings that could be brought by investing in Technology, as discussed in the previous agenda item.

The idea of moving budget between subheads was discussed but it is understood that the GS has a limited control over that and it would probably need an approval from DPER.

In light of the additional information provided, it was agreed to close the GAR request. It was agreed to raise this with the GS in Part B of the meeting.

- The Committee noted the receipt of documents on the status of ICT projects and the estimates for 2022, following a GAR request. As the material received was sufficient, it was agreed to close the relevant GAR request.
  - The material received within the GAR request on the reporting of “use of the force” was discussed. It was agreed to discuss why this data is not shared widely and also to ask the GS about the cultural changes needed to get an accurate reporting.
- Since the material received was sufficient, it was agreed to close this GAR request.

Action: GAR requests 692, 735, 741 to be closed.

### 3.4 Documents to note:

- Following a question raised at the October ODC meeting, an update on the Code of Ethics training was provided. The Executive also updated they have requested to attend this training (in observers capacity) and this request is being processed by the GS.
- The Committee discussed concerns about the possibility of using medical issues as a way to discriminate against some people from minority backgrounds during the vetting phase. It was agreed to discuss this with the GS members during part B of the meeting.
- The female participation in Garda promotion competitions was discussed. As the numbers are small, it is hard to make a conclusion. However, it seems that female participation is lower than the male one, but the success rate is higher.

The importance of Women network and the access to senior female managers in an organisation was highlighted as a catalyst for cultural change, a way to boost the confidence of more junior candidates and increase the participation in competition. It was agreed to discuss this with the GS during part B of the meeting.

3.5 The log of action was reviewed and agreement was reached regarding follow-up or closure of GAR requests.

Actions:

GAR request 725 – to request the GS for any available information. If none exists, to request this will be said specifically in the response.

GAR request 682 – to be closed.

GAR request 691 – to be closed.

#### **4. Executive update on oversight activity**

##### *4.1 & 4.2 Quarterly updates on Code of Ethics and Culture:*

- The Executive gave a verbal update on both documents.
- The Committee enquired about the progress on reporting the reasons for not signing the Code of Ethics by some Garda personnel.

It was agreed to discuss this issue with the GS in Part B of the meeting.

- It was agreed to request the GS to provide real-life examples and situations of unacceptable behaviour during the training on the CoE.

##### *4.3 Integrity:*

- The Executive provided a verbal update on the new training on Anti-Corruption that has started and the implementation of the recommendations from the Garda Inspectorate report.
- The Committee was informed that the implementation plan, which is drafted by the GS and the DoJ, will be shared with the Authority once approved and signed off by the Garda Executive.

##### *4.4 International comparison:*

- The Executive presented an infographic on international comparisons of Police statistics across several comparable jurisdictions.
- It was recognised that it was difficult to compare due to several factors and also that the “modernity” of the various police forces and services was not taken into account.

However, while the document has caveats, it was welcomed as useful by the Committee and will need a bit more additional data.

- In addition, the Executive gave an update on the data from the EU on the composition of Police forces.

**Action:** The Executive to update the comparative paper, following the feedback provided.

#### *4.5 Attendance in Policing-related webinars:*

- ‘Global Perspectives on Policing and Legitimacy from the Global City Policing’ - The Executive gave an update on the webinar which discussed the consequences of over and under policing.
- The Diversity and Inclusion in UK Policing webinar from the Royal United Institute - The Executive gave an update on the webinar discussing the topic of diversity and inclusion in UK Policing and the concept of legitimacy.

### **5. Policing Plan Performance Report: September-November 2021**

- The Committee discussed the reports in the context of Part B of the meeting.
- Concerns were raised regarding the significant number of targets at-risk because of dependencies on key enablers. The Executive informed the Committee these targets are unlikely to be met.
- Other concerns were raised as some target regarding critical key enablers such as Finance has been moved to quarterly reporting.
- The Executive informed the Committee that while the Public Attitude Survey has been completed, the GS is now analysing the numbers and has not started reporting on it yet.
- Finally, the issue with GISC capacity and the impact of data quality was discussed. This has been on the GS Risk Register since 2016.
- The Executive asked the Committee for the main points they would like to consider in the context of the upcoming End-of Year assessment of Policing Performance. Some positive initiatives were highlighted such as the ICT planning started last year and the commencement of similar initiatives in Finance and HR.

The Committee stressed the importance of fixing the key enablers as failing to do so would cause failure on Policing.

HR, ICT and GISC capacity were mentioned as critical enablers needing attention.

The risks on specific areas of policing such as Child Sexual Abuse, Cybercrime, Economic crime and the management of Sex Offenders was cited as major sources of concerns.

## **6. ICT**

- The Executive provided a briefing paper on ICT and it was decided that it will be discussed in detail at the next ODC meeting.

## **7. Garda Training**

- The Executive proposed area of engagement with the GS for part B of the meeting.
- It was agreed that several topics will be discussed, such as the placement of Probation Garda early in the stations, the impact on Garda Tutors and Managers, the governance of training in the GS, the role of the Expert Review Group and the progress on the recruitment of the training lead.

## **Part B – Meeting with Garda Síochána Representatives**

### **Attendance**

**Authority:** As per Part A above

**Garda Síochána:** Joseph Nugent, CAO; Shawna Coxon, Deputy Commissioner Strategy, Governance and Performance; Patrick Clavin, Assistant Commissioner Governance and Accountability; Chief Superintendent Johanna O’Leary, Garda Anti-Corruption Unit; Ms. Deirdre Morris, PO, Strategic Transformation Office; D/Superintendent Aidan McCarthy, Garda Anti-Corruption Unit; Garda Niamh Keogh, GACU (technical support for presentation); Ms. Yvonne Cooke, Director of HR; Gráinne Shortall, AP, PALO

**Apologies:** Chief Superintendent Pat Murray

## **8. Closed session**

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

- The Committee enquired about the progress on analysing the reasons for Garda personnel not signing the code of Ethics. While the Garda Ethics and Culture Bureau was not present at the meeting, DC Coxon said that initial analysis seems to indicate that the majority of non-signers are not at work at the moment because of sick leave or other types of leave.

Action: DC Coxon to confirm with the Garda Ethics and Culture Bureau reasons for not signing and revert to the Committee with an update.

- The Committee asked for more information about the level of female participation in Garda Competitions and gave example of the establishment of female support networks and groups in other departments. These groups were set up to encourage and support women, but also boost the confidence of the female applicants. The results were very positive in increasing female participation.

The GS representatives said a women network exists in the organisation. HR, as part of the Diversity Strategy, is working on identifying the cultural blockers in a male designed organisation. This work is not only restricted to promotions but also includes the composition of the governance boards in the GS.

HR is supporting female participation by offering pre-interview and pre-promotion preparations and assignment of mentors.

The Committee recognised that small actions could have big impact and questioned the GS about taking into consideration the impact of child-birth and the recognition of co-parenting when assigning Garda members to new positions and locations.

The GS representatives indicated that this is part of the ongoing work, they have a backfill system for maternity leave for some grades (such as CO) but not for Sergeant for instance.

Action: Yvonne Cooke, Director of HR, to review the issue of backfill for maternity leave at some units and the potential effect on female promotion and revert to the Committee with an update.

- The Committee asked the GS representatives if they progressed on the use of real life examples of good and bad behaviours to support the anti-corruption training. The GS

representatives confirmed the training on Anti-Corruption contains real-life examples from the Scottish Police.

Action: The GS to consider the inclusion of acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours in ethics training based on examples of real cases. Historical cases or those from other jurisdictions could be considered where there is concern regarding ongoing Garda investigations.

## **9. Policing Plan Performance: September 2021 – November 2021**

- The Committee asked the GS to provide examples of improvement or dividends from investment in technology, similar to the gains in efficiency and man-hours seen with the introduction of the FCN app, in order to help the Authority to make a case for an increase in budget.

Additionally, the GS were advised to reflect on a balance between recruitment costs and ICT investment by using this gains in efficiency.

The GS reported they are working on showcasing the efficiency it has been asked to provide and will be in a position to share with the Authority a document containing a list of projects in the next couple of months.

Action: The GS to provide a list/document containing detail/quantification of projects that have created considerable savings, for example FCN.

- The Committee asked whether there is scope to recruit less members (following on the plan to recruit 800 members and 400 staff) and allocate more funds to ICT. The GS representatives said that since the organisation is continuing to work towards the 15,000 target, this is not a possible option.
- The Committee asked if there was a lot of resistance with the introduction of the Anti-Corruption Unit. The GS explained that the training was designed to demystify what corruption is and that more seemingly mundane actions can be corruption. This may help changing the culture where it is hard to accept for some members that there is corruption in the organisation.
- The Committee expressed concerns regarding the Policing Plan targets that will not be achieved, all of which due to the key enablers this Committee is dealing with. The GS

said that some of those targets are in fact not within the GS remit and are outside of its control. The project owners will have to identify these dependencies in the 2022 Policing Plan to get a better picture. The GS also mentioned that COVID-19 had an effect on many of the key enablers, therefore there is a need to think of doing things differently and to have a plan B.

- The Committee expressed concerns about the issue of filling vacancies in GISC as this issue predated COVID-19 and is a significant risk to data quality. The GS representatives mentioned the location as one of the reasons.
- The GS representatives mentioned significant achievements in the three year plan such as the ICT prioritisation, RDMS, IMS and CAD2, but also challenges such as the recruitment. The GS reported that the process for recruitment of specialist positions can be time consuming. It is unlikely that the GS will get new entrants before Q3. Also, delays in approving new regulations is delaying the Sergeant and Inspector competition.
- The Committee indicated that the Work Force planning should help to identify resources issues but should also take into account these dependencies. There needs to be a clear plan to resources, identify the obstacles and try to find workarounds. In addition, the GS should ensure that DPER is aware of the impact of not getting the right resources on Policing.

## **10. Garda Training**

- The Committee questioned Garda representatives on potential issues with Garda probationers being assigned early to stations, as meetings held by the Executive with some Garda tutors revealed some challenges in this area. It was advised to the GS to consider a discussion with these tutors and considering their feedback.
- The GS acknowledged that there were issues but they are manageable. The focus is to ensure that the probationers are learning and behaving the right way in the organisation and that they produce quality files. It was mentioned that the shortage of Sergeants is having a significant impact on managing the new recruits and that the probationer training is currently under review.



- The GS representative reported that they are working on a hybrid model to offer a range of locations for different roles.
- The Committee mentioned anecdotal reports that some Probationers are experiencing difficulties with the current training. It was agreed that a deeper conversation was needed around training at the next meeting as the Training Plan 2022 will be issued by then.

Action: A comprehensive discussion around training, to include risks associated with delays in training and prioritisation, to take place at the next ODC meeting.

- The Committee questioned about the work of the Expert Review Group and its results. It was agreed that the GS will share with the Authority the report of the findings of the Expert Review Group.

Action: The GS to share with the Authority the report of the findings of the Expert Review Group.

## **11. GACU – Demonstration of new training modules on LMS**

- The GS representatives presented the new training modules to the Committee.
- This is a key component of blended learning and is reinforced with internal communications such as Newsbeat and screensavers.
- It is composed of 5 modules, 4 of which are completed and available and the 5<sup>th</sup> currently being developed.
- The training is mandatory for all Garda personnel and they have three months to complete it.
- GACU follow up on completion rates.
- Senior Management is required to complete modules 1 to 3 before attending briefings.
- It was reported that within 6 weeks, 6000 Garda personnel have completed the training.
- The GS explained this is an ongoing process, not just a 'one-off' and there is more training coming in the future, such as the training for Anti-Corruption Unit Liaison Officers.
- The Committee welcomed the quality of the modules presented and enquired about any resistance encountered in the organisation.
- The GS representative explained there was a need for a new language around anti-corruption, as the implication of possibility of corruption in the organisation makes

people feeling judged and taking it personally. There is also a reinforced messaging that corruption doesn't imply that there is a criminal aspect attached to it. So far, the feedback on the training has been positive.

- The Committee stressed the importance of ensuring that this is followed up with the Tutors and Trainees once they are deployed in Garda stations.
- The GS mentioned the importance of getting the feedback from the Unions and Associations and it is crucial to have them on board to introduce the new policies. There is also a need to build trust in the organisation to interact with the ACU team. While the access to the service is confidential at the moment, it has been shown in other jurisdictions that people come forward in a non-confidential way once trust is established.