



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA
POLICING AUTHORITY

Minutes of Meeting of the Policing Authority

Date: 25 March 2021

Venue: By Video Conference

Part A – Authority Meeting

Attendance

Authority: Bob Collins (Chairperson), Shalom Binchy, Elaine Byrne, Donal de Buitléir, Deborah Donnelly, Valerie Judge (items 1-11), Paul Mageean, Moling Ryan.

Apologies: Stephen Martin

Secretary: Aoife Clabby

Staff of the Authority: Helen Hall (Chief Executive), Margaret Tumelty, Cormac Keating, Clare Kelly (items 5, 9, 11, 13), Sharon O’Brien (item 8), David Pasley (items 10, 12).

1. Meeting of Members in private

The Authority exercised 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 in relation to any of the items for consideration. Members noted a number of items of correspondence.

The Chairperson provided Members with an update on a number of matters including:

- Recent engagement with the Secretary General, Department of Justice on a range of issues. Members noted the likely timeframe for consideration of the Heads of the Policing and Community Safety Authority Bill by government and were apprised of the arrangements being put in place for the duration of the Minister for Justice’s maternity leave.
- Engagement with the Chairperson of the Garda Síochána Audit Committee, Professor Niamh Brennan. Members noted the shared sense of expectation on the part of the Authority and the Department of Justice in respect of role of the Audit Committee, as articulated by Professor Brennan. Members considered the Authority’s statutory role in the appointment of members to the Garda Síochána Audit Committee. In light of the recent appointment of two Deputy Commissioners, the Authority recalled its decision in 2020 that, having regard to all the relevant circumstances, the Deputy Commissioner with Governance responsibility should be the person appointed to fulfil the requirements of Section 44 (2) (a). The Chairperson had spoken to the Commissioner and the Chief Administration Officer at that time. Following discussion, it was agreed that the decision would be given effect by the appointment of Deputy Shawna Coxon as a member of the Garda Síochána Audit Committee on a date to be determined by the Chairperson as soon as practicable following her taking up her new role.

- The imminent formal receipt, by government, of the Garda Inspectorate report ‘Countering the Threat of Internal Corruption’. The Chief Executive advised that an advance copy of an associated press release had been provided and that the report would be uploaded as a late paper, on its publication.
- The status of the Garda workforce vis-à-vis the proposed COVID-19 vaccination programme. It was agreed that the matter merited engagement with the Commissioner in Part B of the meeting.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_089_01	Raise the issue of GS AC membership with the Commissioner and the CAO.	ASAP	Chairperson
A_089_02	Appoint DC Shawna Coxon as a member of the GS Audit Committee, effective as soon as practicable following her taking up position.	ASAP	Secretary

3. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meetings held on 25 February and 9 March were approved and cleared for publication. The Log of Actions was noted and proposals to close specified actions were approved. The Chief Executive advised that there had been a number of positive developments in relation to the timeliness of receipt of information from the Garda Síochána. In particular, approved policies and directives have been cleared to be provided directly by the Liaison Office to the Authority. Members were also advised that an escalation procedure was in operation within the Garda Síochána to address overdue information requests and that this was yielding benefits.

Members noted material received through the Garda Actions Register. In this context disappointment was expressed at the content and nature of one of the items received, namely the instruction provided to Assistant Commissioners for the handling of complaints relating to the Final Report of the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes.

4. Chief Executive’s Report

The Chief Executive’s report was taken as read and further updates were provided to Members on a number of matters in the context of the report, as follows:

- That the Authority’s 13th assessment of policing performance during COVID-19 was scheduled for publication in mid-April and that the Executive had been in attendance at a number of checkpoints, in support of this and other oversight work.
- The Chief Executive had observed certain elements of the planning and execution of the policing plan for the Dublin Metropolitan Region for St. Patrick’s Day and provided Members with a verbal briefing. Members discussed the Chief Executive’s observations from a human rights perspective and noted that a review of the plan and its execution was being undertaken by the Garda Síochána.
- A planned meeting on 26 March regarding the roll-out of the Garda Síochána Operating Model and that an additional, ‘first principles’ briefing could also be provided to new Authority members, if required.
- Revisions to the 2021 Business Plan were highlighted, in particular the development of a more focussed approach to key projects.

- The Chief Executive highlighted the intention to revise the approach to Executive reporting on the Policing Plan to both the Policing Strategy and Performance and Organisation Development Committees. Members welcomed the changes proposed and agreed that the approach to reporting to the Committees would also be included for consideration at the May meeting, as part of the review of ways of working.
- The Chief Executive advised that, further to correspondence issued to GSOC regarding complaints data on those in Garda custody, engagement was anticipated at an early date.

Members noted the public consultation on draft legislation to update the Mental Health Act 2001 and suggested that the intended scope of the proposed submission could valuably reflect the Authority's discussions on the CPT report findings regarding use of force on people detained under mental health legislation.

Members discussed the proposal to use a consultation software tool as an additional element in the process to develop policing priorities for 2022 and considered what additional value the measure would bring to the consultation process. Members noted the capacity for the consultation tool to broaden the base of engagement on the policing priorities and the potential value in this regard in the context of the Authority's statutory obligation to promote awareness of policing matters. It was agreed that the relative effectiveness of the tool as a consultation mechanism would be considered at the conclusion of the consultation process. Following discussion, the Authority was satisfied to approve the use of the software tool.

Members noted items in the monthly correspondence report and approved proposals to refer specific items, on an anonymised basis, to the Commissioner.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_089_03	Include approach to reporting to the Committees as part of the agenda item on ways of working at the May Authority meeting	May 2021	Secretary
A_089_04	Review the effectiveness of consultation software at the conclusion of the consultation on policing priorities.	Q4 2021	Chief Executive
A_089_05	Provide specified correspondence, on an anonymised basis, to the Commissioner	Immediate	Chief Executive

5. Audit, Governance and Risk

Members considered the monthly report on risk, in accordance with the Authority's Risk Management Policy. The Committee Chair advised that there had been a consideration of risks to effective relationships and that an additional mitigation relating to the use of social media by Authority members and staff had now been added to the Risk Register.

The Committee Chair then presented the Audit Committee's Annual Report 2020 to the Authority and provided an overview of the work of the Committee in 2020 and the priorities for 2021.

The Authority noted the report's findings and commended the Committee's approach to audit and risk and the supporting work of the Executive.

6. Committee Updates

6.1. Garda Appointments Quality Assurance and Selection Governance Committee

The Committee had not met since the last Authority meeting.

6.2. Garda Organisation Development Committee (ODC)

The Committee Chair advised that a preparatory meeting with new members of the Committee had been organised and that the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled to take place on 13 April.

6.3. Policing Strategy and Performance Committee (PSPC)

The Committee Chair updated Members in relation to the meeting of the Committee that had taken place on 16 March and of engagement with the Garda Síochána on a number of matters, in particular:

- A presentation received from Garda representatives on the roll-out of the Schengen Information System. The Committee Chair advised that discussion on the item had also encompassed information-sharing arrangements in place with the PSNI and UK police services since Brexit and that further engagement with the Garda Síochána to review the operation of the system was planned for later in the year.
- The demands of responding to COVID-19, including the impact of the redeployment of Garda members from specialist units and training in order to police the pandemic and plans to revert to original duties.
- Commitments provided by Garda representatives to provide the Committee with further detail in relation to the increase of searches of the person, as well as additional information on the adequacy of custody arrangements in the context COVID-19.
- Discussion in relation to detection figures and the contributing factors outlined by Garda representatives as to their decline.
- Discussion in relation to cybercrime and the governance structures corresponding to the establishment of cybercrime hubs in the regions.
- Engagement on public order and a consideration of the capability, capacity and policy approach to public order policing. The Committee Chair advised that assurance had been provided that the policy approach aligned with the Garda Síochána Decision Making Model and addressed the recommendations of the Garda Inspectorate report on Public Order Policing, commissioned by the Authority and published in 2020.

The Committee Chair also advised that the centrality of the Policing Plan to the Committee's oversight had been emphasised to Garda representatives, including plans to assess performance through the lenses of human rights, ethics, diversity, and strategic resource management.

Members discussed a number of matters related to the approach to oversight of detections and noted that a number of strands of existing activity in the business plan, coupled with monthly interrogation of the figures provided by the Garda Síochána, had the capacity to identify emerging trends and issues meriting follow-up.

7. Draft Criminal Justice Sectoral Strategy 2021-2023

Members considered the draft Criminal Justice Strategy 2021-2023 and a paper outlining proposed areas for inclusion in any Authority response. Noting that this was the first such strategy for the criminal justice sector, welcoming its challenging ambition and having regard to the process undertaken to develop it, the Authority made a number of observations in addition to those proposed. In particular, the Authority highlighted the requirement to articulate measures to ensure a fairer criminal justice sector; further consideration of the purpose and effect of the criminal justice sector and each of its agencies; a broader consideration of diversity to include the demands of a changing society and how the criminal justice sector will respond; and a strengthening of the strategy in relation to the area of human rights and actions to be taken to vindicate those rights for individuals. The Authority noted the volume of strategic priorities and associated actions and expressed a degree of reservation in relation to how the achievement of the strategy will be evaluated.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_089_06	Submit Authority response on draft Criminal Justice Strategy 2021-2023	ASAP	Chief Executive

8. Garda Síochána Appointments

The Secretary briefed members on the outcome of the clearance process in respect of a candidate on the Superintendent panel. Members considered the outcomes of the clearance process and appointed the candidate, with effect from the date of taking up their position, as assigned by the Garda Commissioner.

The Authority considered and was satisfied to approve a request received to appoint a temporary acting Principal Officer position as Data Protection Officer in the Garda Síochána. Members noted that the temporary appointment was for a period of three months or until such time as a permanent appointment is made.

Members considered the Candidate Information Booklet for a Principal Officer vacancy as Head of Estate Management. While noting that the Authority did not have a role in approving such booklets, the Chief Executive advised that any observations or commentary are considered by the Garda Síochána in the context of the Authority's statutory role in respect of appointments. In that regard, the Authority noted the marked improvement in the quality and consistency of the booklet submitted.

The Chief Executive provided Members with an update on the approach to the development of Situational Judgement Tests for the next Superintendent competition. Members noted that proposals to undertake the competition would be brought to the April Authority meeting for consideration.

Members noted that the position of Human Resources Director in the Garda Síochána was scheduled to be advertised on Friday 9 April.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Action point</i>	<i>By Date</i>	<i>By Whom</i>
A_089_07	Notify the successful inspector of their appointment to Superintendent	Immediate	Chief Executive
A_089_08	Notify GS CAO of approval of the temporary PO Data Protection Officer	Immediate	Chief Executive

9. Draft Annual Report of the Policing Authority 2020

Members considered a revised draft Annual Report of the Policing Authority 2020. The Chief Executive highlighted a small number of matters requiring adjustment prior to the report's finalisation. It was agreed that any additional Authority observations would be provided to the Executive by close of business 26 March.

10. Garda Síochána Code of Ethics

At the outset of the agenda item, Members were provided with the context for the external advice sought in respect of the Garda Síochána Code of Ethics, including a consideration of what changes, if any, would be appropriate to ensure that the Code is comprehensive in setting out the commitments required of Garda members and staff to ensure that they act in a manner consistent with human rights.

Members gave detailed consideration to the advice received and the options proposed. In a comprehensive, wide-ranging discussion, Members addressed a number of matters including the extent to which the existing Code has been embedded to date and the impact of any change to the content and thrust of the Code at this juncture; a consideration of the current legislative impediments to the proposals made; and the future obligation on the Policing and Community Safety Authority to establish a Code, as detailed in the draft Heads of Bill. Members also considered the extent to which the Code of Ethics had been integrated into various types of training and its stated centrality as part of the Garda Síochána Decision Making Model.

Following discussion, it was agreed that there should be no substantive change to the Garda Síochána Code of Ethics at this time. It was further agreed that, in light of the valuable and rich material presented in the advice received about the interaction of policing and human rights, further consideration should be given to how the material can be utilised in engagements with the Commissioner.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Action point</i>	<i>By Date</i>	<i>By Whom</i>
A_089_09	Give further consideration to how Code of Ethics advice can be utilised in engagements with the Commissioner	Q3	Authority

11. Format of the Garda Síochána Annual Report 2020

At the outset of the item, the Chief Executive apprised Members of engagements that had taken place with the Chairperson of the Garda Síochána Audit Committee and with the Director of Communications on the format for the Garda Síochána Annual Report 2020. Having regard to the statutory provisions in respect of the matter and directions provided in previous years provided, the Authority was satisfied to approve the scope of the direction proposed for 2020. In addition to the matters proposed, it was agreed that direction should issue in respect of financial reporting, in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State bodies.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Action point</i>	<i>By Date</i>	<i>By Whom</i>
A_089_10	Issue Authority direction to the Commissioner on the format for the Garda Síochána Annual Report, in accordance with the function to do so under the Act.	ASAP	Chief Executive

12. Oversight of Policing during COVID-19

Members had regard to a range of documents in support of this agenda item, including a Garda Síochána report evaluating the management and use of anti-spit hoods. The Chairperson sought Members' views on the evaluation and a number of observations arising from the report's findings were highlighted. While noting the detailed nature of the review and the extent of consultation undertaken, Members expressed concern that the approach to the review and its consequent findings appeared to be based on an underlying assumption that anti-spit hoods would continue to be retained and utilised. Consequently, Members believed that the scope of the review was not established in a way that would facilitate an objective consideration of the retention of anti-spit hoods, having regard to health and human rights concerns.

Members discussed the context for the introduction of anti-spit hoods during the COVID-19 pandemic and the Authority's stated position on their use and discontinuation at a defined point in time. Members also considered the potential impact of the retention of anti-spit hoods on perceptions of the Garda Síochána as a human rights based service with a community policing ethos. It was agreed that the observations and concerns discussed would be raised with the Commissioner in Part B of the meeting.

Members discussed the COVID-19 vaccination programme and discussed the policy approach to the vaccination of different public sector cohorts, having regard to the nature of their duties and the associated risks to themselves and to members of the public. Members considered the potential impact on the efficacy of policing by not prioritising in some appropriate way the vaccination of Garda members and whether to communicate these considerations to the Department of Justice. It was agreed that the matter would be discussed with the Commissioner in Part B of the meeting.

13. Examination of the cancellation of Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) 999, Priority 1 Incidents

In preparation for engagement with Garda representatives on the examination of the cancellation of CAD 999 Priority 1 incidents, Members considered the Terms of Reference for Phase 1 of the examination. Members also had regard to correspondence received from the Minister for Justice, seeking the Authority's independent assessment of the sufficiency of the Garda Síochána actions proposed.

Members made a number of observations in relation to the Phase 1 Terms of Reference and also noted that a review of the appropriateness of current protocols did not appear to be in scope. Having regard to prior engagement with Garda representatives at the 16 December meeting of the Authority and the proposed methodology outlined at that time, Members agreed that it would be helpful to receive an update on progress made to date. It was agreed that these matters would be raised with the Commissioner. The Chairperson advised Members that he would write to the Minister, arising from the outcomes of the engagement and addressing the requests to the Authority.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Action point</i>	<i>By Date</i>	<i>By Whom</i>
A_089_11	Write to the Minister, responding to the request for independent assessment on a range of matters relating to the cancellation of CAD 999 Priority 1 incidents.	ASAP	Chairperson

14. Preparation for Meeting with the Commissioner

Members discussed the agenda for the meeting and agreed the matters to be discussed with the Garda Commissioner and his team.

15. Other Business

There were no matters for discussion under this agenda item.

Documents for Noting by the Authority – March 2021

The following documents were noted by the Authority:

	<i>Document</i>	<i>Action Required</i>
D_89_01	Policing Authority Performance Delivery Agreement with the Department of Justice, 2021	For noting
D_89_02	Policing Authority Assessment of Policing Performance 2020	For noting

Part B – Authority Meeting with the Garda Commissioner in private

Attendance

Authority and Executive: Bob Collins (Chairperson) Shalom Binchy, Elaine Byrne, Dónal deBuitléir, Deborah Donnelly, Paul Mageean, Moling Ryan, Helen Hall (Chief Executive), Margaret Tumelty, Cormac Keating, Aoife Clabby (Secretary)

Apologies Stephen Martin, Valerie Judge

Garda Síochána: Drew Harris (Garda Commissioner), Joe Nugent (Chief Administrative Officer), Anne Marie McMahon (Deputy Commissioner), Kathryn Clifford (Executive Director), Andrew O’Sullivan (Chief Information Officer), Anne Marie Cagney (Assistant Commissioner), Finbarr O’Brien (Assistant Commissioner), Paula Hilman (Assistant Commissioner), Patrick Clavin, (Assistant Commissioner), Alan Mulligan (Acting Executive Director) Gráinne Shortall (Assistant Principal), Ciara Ahern, Public Affairs Co-ordinator.

16. Commissioner’s monthly report to the Authority

At the outset of the agenda item, the Chairperson recorded the Authority’s appreciation to the Commissioner for facilitating attendance, by the Chief Executive, to observe elements of the planning and execution of the policing plan for the Dublin Metropolitan Region for St. Patrick’s Day and noted the valuable insights that this had provided.

Members noted the monthly report to the Authority and engaged with the Commissioner on a number of matters including:

- The evolving situation in respect of COVID-19 in Ireland and the impact on the policing approach adopted by the Garda Síochána. While acknowledging the continuance of a broadly positive engagement with members of the public, the Commissioner highlighted the increased recourse to enforcement during the earlier and current more active phase of the pandemic. Reflecting on the crisis in policing in other jurisdictions and the large-scale, violent protests across a number of EU member states, the Commissioner advised that there had been a number of serious assaults on members of the Garda Síochána at events associated with policing COVID-19 and that a disproportionate number of these had been against female Garda members.
- Safety of women generally and the position of women in the Garda Síochána. Reflecting the Authority’s particular engagement with this issue over the years and in response to Members’ questions addressing the range of incidents of violence against women, the Commissioner outlined his perspective on the reality of violence against women, highlighting that the nature and extent of the problem was not always appreciated in public discourse. The Commissioner shared his views on the appropriate effective policing response. Levels of female representation in the Garda organisation, and across different units and sections, and measures being pursued to address more equal representation were also highlighted.
- Rates of signing of the Garda Code of Ethics and the process undertaken to identify personnel that have not signed. Members noted that through that process the Garda Síochána was seeking to identify reasons for not signing and to address any concerns raised. Members noted that further information in relation to this process would be available in quarter three.

17. HR Related Matters

a. Persons suspended from the Garda Síochána

Members discussed a range of issues with the Commissioner in respect of information provided on the nature and status of the suspension of Garda members including the categories of suspension, factors influencing the time taken to consider individual cases and the intersection of the Garda Síochána suspension process with GSOC investigations.

Members discussed with the Commissioner issues of discretion in determining the category of suspension applied and were apprised of the governance arrangements in place to ensure consistent application of the suspension regulations, noting that this aspect is centrally managed. Members considered a range of issues relating to suspensions for sexual misconduct. The Commissioner highlighted the critical importance, in a predominantly male organisation, of further embedding a culture where inappropriate behaviour is called out. Members sought the Commissioner's views in relation to the potential for patterns of behaviour in particular units or divisions that could ultimately be leading to misconduct.

In concluding the item, the Chairperson advised that this discussion was the commencement of the Authority's consideration of the efficacy of the systems and processes for managing expressions of dissatisfaction about the Garda workforce and was a priority area in 2021.

b. Workforce planning

The Chairperson welcomed receipt of the workforce plan for 2021 and asked the Commissioner for his assessment of emerging need in respect of skills and expertise gaps in the organisation, views on the re-deployment of Garda members and the implications for work assignment and how any such assessment might feed into the next phase of planning. The Commissioner outlined a number of elements influencing decisions in relation to the consideration of business cases and the filling of vacancies. The Commissioner advised that a number of underlying principles associated with the workforce plan required further consideration and development.

18. Garda Síochána Risks and Resources

Members discussed the Garda Síochána submission to the Department of Justice, as part of the National Development Plan 2022-2030 and sought the Commissioner's views on the likely level of capital investment arising. The Authority noted the Commissioner's view that there was a general appreciation of the need to invest in the Garda Síochána estate but that the extent of investment would be influenced by macroeconomic factors. It was also noted that a prioritisation of accommodation requirements had been undertaken, linked to work on the roll-out of the Operating Model.

Members sought clarification on the status of the ICT budget and its capacity to deliver on the level of ambition outlined in the Garda Síochána Information Technology Vision. The Authority was advised that while there had been a net increase in the ICT budget, the financial commitments to the 'business as usual' elements of Garda ICT meant that the available discretionary budget was significantly below that required to deliver the vision outlined.

Members discussed the draft Strategy for Transformational Reform of the Finance Function in the Garda Síochána and asked for an assessment of the timelines for addressing the identified, short-term priorities in the document. The Chief Administrative Officer advised that the report was subject to finalisation by the Joint Working Group on Garda Síochána Resources and, therefore, a definitive timeline could not currently

be provided. Members discussed matters in relation to financial reporting with the Commissioner, in the context of the current legislative framework and of the challenges posed by the existing paper-based system in the Garda Síochána to maximising budgetary accountability. The Commissioner emphasised the importance of demonstrating operational gains for frontline policing in this regard.

19. Examination of the cancellation of Computer Aided Dispatch 999, Priority 1 incidents

The Authority engaged with the Commissioner on a number of aspects of the current phase of examination of the cancellation of CAD 999, Priority 1 incidents including the strands to the examination, the number and nature of calls in scope and the likely timeframe for completion of the current phase of the review. Members discussed the Terms of Reference for the examination and outlined some concerns in respect of their clarity, focus and intent.

The Authority also expressed a two-fold concern in respect of the extent of progress made and the absence of information on whether the issues identified might still be happening. Garda representatives advised that a series of technical and procedural adjustments had been immediately introduced to ensure that the issues identified could no longer happen. Members were also apprised of the scale of the examination of data currently underway. It was agreed that a meeting with the Executive would take place in order to discuss in more detail the issues and concerns highlighted by the Authority.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Action point</i>	<i>By Date</i>	<i>By Whom</i>
A_089_12	Meet with Garda representatives to discuss certain matters in relation to the examination of CAD 999, Priority 1 incidents.	ASAP	Chief Executive

20. Public Order Policing and implementation progress on Garda Inspectorate April 2019 Report

Members discussed the public order incidents that had taken place on 27th February on Grafton Street, Dublin, arising from an anti-lockdown protest that had taken place. The Commissioner advised that an operational review of the day was being undertaken. The Assistant Commissioner, Roads Policing & Community Engagement gave Members an overview of the review's scope and advised that a copy would be provided to the Authority once completed.

Members sought to establish the extent to which preliminary review findings had influenced public order policing plans for St. Patrick's Day. The Commissioner outlined a number of strands of activity feeding into planning for a range of different protests, including the types of intelligence that might inform a policing approach. The Commissioner advised Members that a key objective of the policing of protests was the removal of the risk of violence and of public disorder and further, that the right to protest remained legitimate, if challenging, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The extent to which human rights featured as part of such operational planning was considered.

Members inquired as to the status of the Strategic Threat Risk Assessment (STRA) matrix and its impact on the policing of public order incidents. It was noted that a request by the Authority for a copy of the STRA was still outstanding.

The Authority commended media communications undertaken by the Assistant Commissioner, Dublin Metropolitan Region regarding St. Patrick's Day events and emphasised the important role of communications by Garda representatives on such matters, in generating public awareness and understanding.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Action point</i>	<i>By Date</i>	<i>By Whom</i>
A_089_13	Provide the Authority with a copy of the review of public order incidents on Grafton Street on 27 February.	ASAP	Garda Síochána

21. Other Policing Performance matters

a. Policing Plan 2021

Members discussed a number of matters with the Commissioner in relation to progress against the policing plan to date including:

- The impact of the seizure of drugs on organised crime and on local communities where drug dealing is an expressed concern. The Commissioner provided an assessment of achievements made in this area both in respect of organised crime and low-level drug dealing. The Commissioner acknowledged that the multi-agency effort in supporting and addressing the concerns of local communities affected by drug dealing was not sufficient.
- Falling detection levels and measures being taken to interrogate and address the decline. The Commissioner noted that culturally, an investigative mind-set was strong across all areas of the organisation. He emphasised the importance of implementing the Investigation Management System in order to reduce the administrative burden associated with investigation and the consequential pressure on Garda personnel.

b. Policing during COVID-19

Members noted earlier discussions with the Commissioner on this agenda item.

The Authority sought information from the Commissioner in respect of his engagement with the Department of Justice on the issue of vaccinating Garda members. The Commissioner advised that he had written to the Secretary General of the Department and undertook to provide the Policing Authority with a copy of the correspondence. The Commissioner noted the exceptional resilience of the Garda organisation and the success of the various measures taken to minimise infection.

The Chairperson advised that he would write to the Secretary General, outlining the Authority's concerns regarding the risks associated with policing work and the spread of COVID-19 and support for the speedy vaccination of relevant members of the Garda workforce, in the context of the risks identified.

The Authority acknowledged receipt of the Garda Síochána evaluation of the use of anti-spit hoods and relayed concerns expressed earlier in the meeting in respect of the capacity of the evaluation to meaningfully assist the Commissioner in determining whether to retain anti-spit hoods as a piece of equipment. Highlighting the Authority's previously expressed concerns in respect of the use of anti-spit hoods, Members sought the Commissioner's assurance that their usage was temporary and not long-term in nature. The Commissioner agreed that there should be further discussion with the Authority in respect of a decision as to the continued use of anti-spit hoods.

Members discussed the impact of health regulation fatigue among members of the public and its impact on Garda Síochána relationships with the community. The Commissioner highlighted the combined factors of improving weather, the Easter holiday period and associated commemorative events, in presenting a more challenging environment to police. The Commissioner advised that planning was being undertaken by each regional Assistant Commissioner in this regard.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_089_14	Provide the Policing Authority with a copy of correspondence to Secretary General, Department of Justice, in relation to vaccination of Garda personnel	ASAP	Garda Síochána
A_089_15	Correspond with the Secretary General, Department of Justice, in relation to vaccination of Garda personnel.	ASAP	Chairperson
A_089_16	Further engage with the Commissioner on a decision regarding the continued use of anti-spit hoods.	September	Secretary

22. Other Business

No other matters were raised with the Commissioner under this agenda item.