



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA
POLICING AUTHORITY

Minutes of Meeting of the Garda Organisation Development Committee

Date: 17 April 2023

Venue: 90 North King Street, Dublin 7

Part A – Committee Meeting

Attendance

Authority: Donal De Buitléir (Chair), Elaine Byrne, Valerie Judge

Secretary: Michal Alfasi-Hanley

Executive: Helen Hall (CEO), Cormac Keating, Margaret Tumelty, Mark Nother, David Murphy

Apologies: Aoife Clabby

1. Closed Session

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

2. Chairperson's Opening Remarks

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

3. Consent agenda items

- The minutes of the previous meeting (8 February 2023) were approved. Two comments from the Garda Síochána were addressed.
- The committee Terms of Reference were discussed. It was agreed that the Terms of Reference adequately reflected the ongoing work of the committee, and that it was unnecessary to make changes.
- It was agreed that for the remaining meetings in 2023 the focus of the committee would primarily be on the enabling functions in the GS (finance, HR, ICT, etc.) and on discipline.
- The members discussed the GS response to a GAR request relating to suspensions and the distinction between public-facing roles and non-public-facing roles. It was agreed to further discuss this at part B of the meeting.
- The Garda Síochána Resources Submission to the Committee was discussed. Garda staff retention was identified as an issue of concern.
- A letter submitted by the Commissioner to the Authority in relation to the current roster raised a significant issue in regard to the impact of changing shift patterns on annual leave.

- The Executive reported that sanction has been received from DPER for 75 ICT staff, which is likely to result in a significant monetary saving due to less reliance on contractors.

Part B – Meeting with Garda Síochána Representatives

Attendance

Authority: As per Part A above

Garda Síochána: Yvonne Cooke, Acting Executive Director HRPD; Eimear Bourke, Executive Director, STO; Aeneas Lane, Director of ICT; Jonathan Roberts, Assistant Commissioner, Governance and Accountability; Kathryn Clifford, Executive Director, Finance and Services; Niamh O’Hara, Assistant Principal, PALO.

Apologies: Shawna Coxon, Deputy Commissioner Strategy, Governance and Performance; Joe Nugent, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

6. Closed Session

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

7. Discussion to inform Resources Letter

- The Chair stated that the remaining Committee meetings would focus on enablers (finance, HR, ICT, etc.); information relevant to the drafting of the Resources Letter to the Minister; and matters relating to discipline.
- The GS representatives reported on the expenditure in Q1 of 2023 and noted that there will be additional expenditure related to the state visit of the United States President.
- The estimates process for the cost of recruiting 1,000 extra members will be commencing in June 2023. As part of the process, templates are sent out to units, and business cases prepared.
- The GS further noted that currently an assessment is underway regarding the organisational impact of the PCSA Bill. It is hoped that the impacts will be determined by early May and will feed into the estimates.
- With regard to ICT, it was reported that the ICT budget is fully committed, and a plan is in place for 2023. The Chair suggested that it may be valuable to refer to similar Police Services regarding ICT resources. The GS representatives noted that other Police Services have better HR and Finance Management Systems and that such systems are needed in the GS, for cost, efficiency and quality reasons.
- The Committee and the GS Representatives agreed that improved Management and Information Services is vital to the organisation’s planning and that establishing a HRIS should be prioritised and emphasised in the Resources Letter. The Chair encouraged the GS to provide the Authority with any supporting documents on this.
- In terms of progress in the HRIS, it was noted that the specifications of the proposed tender are not determined yet. Either way, a dedicated project team will need to be established.

- The Committee and the GS representatives discussed the importance of having information regarding Garda members' conduct throughout their career. It was noted that at the moment all information is paper-based and therefore a comprehensive view is not possible. However, it was further noted that procurement of an IT system is currently underway. The Committee noted the importance of integrating such a system with the HRIS.
- An update was provided regarding rosters and the urgent need for an agreed roster to be put in place, which would facilitate Members not working disproportionate hours and also allow the Commissioner to be able to deploy resources to optimally serve the public and enhance community safety. The Committee stressed that this is a significant issue which must be prioritised.

8. Discipline

- The Committee requested clarification on the meaning of 'non-public-facing roles' as described in the GS response to a GAR request in relation to member's whose suspensions were lifted. The GS representatives noted that while the term is not formally defined, the criteria include not engaging with the public and not being involved in the evidence chain. The GS representatives further noted that the Suspension Policy is currently being reviewed. A revised policy was drafted, following assistance from legal advisors and the draft will soon be shared with the Associations. The GS representative noted they currently do not have a timeline for the conclusion of this process. Nonetheless, the Committee commended the GS for the achievements to date in relation to this policy.
- The Committee sought an update in relation to the engagement with the DOJ regarding the new Disciplinary Regulations. The GS representatives noted that a meeting with the DOJ was requested, however no answer received yet.
- Appeal Board - The GS representatives noted that the organisation is facing an ongoing problem in recruiting Board Members, particularly as there is a lack of clarity regarding appropriate pay rates, time commitment, etc.
- Boards of Inquiries - The Committee sought an update in relation to the progress in recruiting and training Superintendents and Chief Superintendents for Internal Boards of Inquiry (following the Fieldfisher recommendations). The GS representatives noted the intention was for training to commence in autumn, and for the Boards to be in place by year end 2023. The Committee queried whether this can be expedited.
- Disciplinary-related data
 - The Committee noted that there is an apparent lack of appropriate data related to disciplinary actions taken against members.
 - When asked about access to breakdown by type of Reg (10, 14, 23), the GS representatives noted that while all Regs 14 and 23 are known (forwarded or made directly to GSOC), this is not the case in relation to Regs 10. The GS representatives further noted that Reg 10s are designed for lower-end disciplinary matters and are an early warning system. The Committee encouraged the GS representatives to request updated data from GSOC in relation to Regs 14 and 23.
 - The Committee noted the high level of discretion a local Garda member has in terms of deciding whether to apply Reg 10 or Reg 14 and expressed concerns in relation to cases in which Reg 10 was applied, while it should have been Reg 14. The GS representatives noted

that in relation to Reg 14, the decision not to proceed with disciplinary actions is made by a Chief Superintendent, so while it is at a local level, it does provide senior oversight.

- The Committee noted the importance of the GS having visibility over the use of Reg 10 and whether some of those could be dealt with as performance issues, rather than discipline. The GS representatives noted that the only performance management system available for the organisation at the moment is the disciplinary one.
- It was agreed to hold a follow-up meeting between the Executive and AC Roberts, in advance of the May Authority meeting.

Part C – Private Meeting (Garda Síochána Representatives leave)

9. Review of meeting and planning for subsequent Committee meeting

- It was noted that there was a clear need for sustained significant investment in IT resources, and that this should be emphasised in the resources letter.
- The next Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 14 September 2023.