



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA
POLICING AUTHORITY

Minutes of Meeting of the Policing Authority

Date: 24 and 25 February 2016

Venue: 90 North King Street, Dublin7, D07 N7CV

PART A – AUTHORITY MEETING (24 February 2016)

Attendance

Authority: Josephine Feehily (Chairperson), Noel Brett, Bob Collins (25th only) Vicky Conway, Pat Costello, Judith Gillespie, Maureen Lynott, Valerie Judge, Moling Ryan.

Secretary: Catherine Pierse

Executive: Helen Hall (Chief Executive), Aileen Healy (25th only)

In attendance for item 11: Noel Waters, Secretary General, John O Callaghan, Assistant Secretary General, Department of Justice and Equality

1. Chairpersons opening remarks

The agenda was approved and no conflicts of interest were declared in relation to any of the matters for discussion.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed and will now be published on the Authority's web-site.

3. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive's report was taken as read and a verbal update was provided on certain financial and HR matters. It was agreed that more detailed reporting would be included in this report as the year progresses and that consideration should be given to the 2017 budgetary planning.

4. Establishment of an Audit and Risk Committee

It was agreed that an Audit and Risk Committee be established with Mr Moling Ryan as chair. Mr Ryan and the Chairperson will develop proposals for getting the Committee up and running.

5. Draft Authority Code of Conduct

Following a number of further minor amendments, the draft Code of Conduct was adopted and its publication on the Authority's web-site was agreed.

6. Proposed Schedule of Meetings

It was decided that due to an unexpected scheduling difficulty for the Garda Commissioner, the public meeting planned for 14 March will now take place on 25 April. It was also decided that the aim will be to hold public meetings as part of the Authority's June, September and November meetings. A

proposed schedule of meeting dates for 2017 was approved with two agreed changes. It was agreed that the list for 2016 would be published on the Authority’s web-site.

7. Appointments Committee Update

The Chair of the Appointments Committee provided an update of meetings held with Garda management and with the Department of Justice and Equality (“the Department”) in relation to Garda and civilian appointments. The Minister for Justice and Equality’s reply to the Chairperson regarding proposals to commence the various appointment sections of the Act was noted.

It was also noted that the recruitment processes to fill the post of Chief Administrative Officer and Assistant Commissioners, Chief Superintendents and Superintendents was already underway, and the expectation is that these will be the last such competitions held under the existing legal regime. The view was expressed that it would be helpful if the Authority were represented at interviews for CAO and AC in an observer capacity

For senior Garda appointments, the Garda Síochána (Promotion) Regulations 2006 (‘Regulations’) need to be amended before the relevant sections of the Act can be commenced to allow the Authority to take on this function. It was agreed that the Executive would make a submission to the Department recommending certain amendments to the Regulations to modernise the process. It was agreed that Authority should confirm that it will be in a position to take on its appointment role by 1 May 2016. In the event of the Department foreseeing a delay in regard to amending the regulations, it is the Authority’s view that priority should be given to Assistant Commissioner appointments.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_002_01	The Chairperson to consult with the relevant authorities regarding the scope for Authority members involvement in the interviews for Chief Administrative Officer and for Assistant Commissioner in an observer capacity	Next meeting	Chairperson
A_002_02	The Executive to make a submission to the Department requesting certain amendments to the Garda Síochána (Promotion) Regulations 2006	Mid March	The Executive

8. Ethics Committee

The Chair of the Ethics Committee set out the process proposed for the development of the Code of Ethics including as much public consultation as possible, bearing in mind the tight statutory timeframes. The Authority agreed with the general direction proposed by the Ethics Committee. It was discussed that it may be appropriate for such consultation in the second half of the year to be combined with other Authority initiatives. It was agreed that the next step was for the Ethics Committee to prepare a consultation paper to invite views from the public and other stakeholders.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_002_03	The Ethics Committee to prepare a public consultation paper inviting views in relation to the preparation of the Code of Ethics	Next meeting	Ethics Committee

9. Policing Strategy and Performance Committee Update

The Chair of the Policing Strategy and Performance Committee advised that there had been a useful exchange of views with the Garda regarding the proposed Strategy Statement, including a briefing on recent public attitudes surveys and the Committee looks forward to working further with the Gardaí in relation to this work. Garda management have agreed to consider further their strategy statement and revert to the Committee in coming weeks with specific measurable outcomes for the Committee's consideration and will provide status updates to the Committee on the components of their performance and accountability framework.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_002_04	The Committee will prepare a draft time-table of the steps required for the preparation of the Garda Síochána policing plan for 2017.	An early meeting	Policing Strategy and Performance Committee

10. Preparation for meeting with Garda Commissioner

The Authority discussed the nature of the discussion it wished to hold with the Garda Commissioner in relation to organised criminal activity and the model or approach to intelligence management in relation to such criminal activity and in this context Deputy Commissioner Ó Cualáin's letter regarding the scope of the discussion was noted. It was agreed that it will not be appropriate to discuss the details of any individual cases. However, into the future there may on occasion be a need to understand a certain level of operational detail in order to fulfil the Authority's role in overseeing the performance of the Garda Síochána of its functions relating to policing services.

11. Meeting with Secretary General, Department of Justice and Equality

The Secretary General welcomed and noted the significance of the establishment of the independent Policing Authority as part of an overall programme of reform in the Justice sector which will be ongoing. He also noted the significance of the decision by Government and Parliament to establish the Authority, and said that he and his staff looked forward to providing the Authority with whatever practical assistance and support it could to enable it to fulfil its statutory role.

The nature of the Policing Authority's oversight role and the meaningful reform it represented was discussed. It was acknowledged that the establishment of the Authority has implications for the Department as well as the Garda and the Authority, which will take some time to be fully appreciated by all concerned. Good will, good open communication at appropriate levels, and relationship building, will be essential to cater for this new environment, as well as an appreciation that all parties are in a process of adjustment to the new reality. Finalising the Governance Framework between the Department and the Authority which is currently at draft stage will be helpful in this regard.

It was agreed that it is appropriate that the Chairperson of the Authority be advised without delay and included in briefings on policing matters arising from certain events and in particular events which have the potential to damage community confidence. It was agreed that the Garda Commissioner's imminent response to the Minister regarding the Garda Inspectorate Report "Changing Policing In Ireland" will be provided to the Authority if necessary, although it would be expected that the Garda Commissioner will do so at the same time as its submission to the Department.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for the comprehensive discussion and noted that the Authority looked forward to a positive and cooperative working relationship with the Department.

12. Strategy Development

The Authority had a very useful series of discussions on the development of its own mission and strategy with a view to setting a strategic direction for the work of the Authority and also to developing a Statement of Strategy for submission in accordance with the Act. The need to take account of a new programme for Government in the Statement of Strategy was noted.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_002_05	An initial draft Strategy Statement reflecting the Authority's deliberations will be prepared for consideration	April meeting	Chairperson and Chief Executive

13 Other business

There was no other business and the meeting was concluded.

PART B – AUTHORITY MEETING WITH THE GARDA COMMISSIONER (24 February 2016)

Attendance

Authority and Executive as above

Garda Síochána: Nóirín O'Sullivan (Commissioner), Dónall O'Cualáin (Deputy Commissioner Strategy & Change Management), John Twomey (Deputy Commissioner Operations), John Keegan (Superintendent), Marie Broderick (Superintendent).

1. Introductions

The Chairperson welcomed the Garda Commissioner and her colleagues and outlined the plan for the meeting.

2. Threat assessment in relation to organised criminal activity and the model or approach to intelligence management in relation to such criminal activity

The Garda Commissioner indicated that she wished to be as forthcoming as possible with the Authority but that there were certain sensitive operational matters (e.g. details of live investigations) that she would not be in a position to discuss. The Garda Commissioner provided an overview and explained the multiple layers to the policing response including: investigative strands, preventative measures, providing reassurance to the public and intelligence gathering. The Garda Commissioner provided an outline of the level of resourcing involved in policing the recent events linked to organised crime, as well as the longer term resources put in place to respond to the threat of organised crime.

The Authority asked about the balance between increasing Garda presence in order to ensure protection of the public and members of victim's families but at the same time not then increasing the level of fear and concern in some communities. The Garda Commissioner said that this was a careful balance to be struck and that where there were armed Garda officers visible on the streets that this was only done because it was considered necessary for the purposes of protection.

The system for gathering information and intelligence and the manner in which this is assessed and actioned was described and discussed

The importance of effective communication to reassure the community was discussed. The Garda Commissioner described the challenge in trying to ensure that the public receive a balanced picture of the level of threat and the corresponding Garda response. The difficulty in sometimes getting media attention for good news was articulated and it was agreed that the public meetings with the Authority may provide an opportunity for this.

3. Approach to rebuilding capacity and capability in the Garda Síochána.

A number of particular areas were discussed including training, civilianisation and the need to fill key leadership positions.

The Garda Commissioner indicated that at the moment considerable focus is going into building up their capacity to meet training needs and demands. Particular areas of focus include investigative interview training, driver training and training on the needs of victims. The need for increased civilianisation in certain key areas such as HR, Finance and business management has also been accepted. The Garda Commissioner expressed the view that there is an urgent need to fill certain key leadership positions and referred to statistics on the current level of staffing at various levels of leadership. The Authority indicated that, as time goes on, it will need to get more detailed information, on matters relating to resourcing so that it could be in a position to advise the Minister on such matters.

The Authority repeated its need to view the complete text of the Commissioner's Transformation Plan as an input to strategy development, performance oversight and capability gaps. The Commissioner advised that it was intended that this would be published within the next few weeks.

The Garda Commissioner advised that she intends to propose the development of an information exchange protocol with the Authority. It was agreed that the Authority would consider this on the basis of a proposal to be developed in the first instance at executive level.

The Commissioner thanked the Authority for agreeing to move the public meeting from March 14 to April 25 meeting to ensure that she can attend.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_002_06	Documents referred to at the meeting to be requested by the Executive and subsequently provided by the Garda Síochána.	Immediate	Executive and Garda Síochána
A_002_07	Authority to consider the Garda proposal for an information protocol on the basis of a developed submission	Immediate	Executive and Garda Síochána

4. Concluding remarks

The Chairperson thanked the Commissioner and her team for their time and contribution to the meeting and asked that the Authority's congratulations be conveyed to the Garda Technical Bureau for achieving an ISO accreditation.