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The Board is an independent body made up of 19 Members to ensure for all the people of Northern Ireland the delivery of an effective, efficient, accountable and impartial police service which will secure the confidence of the whole community by reducing crime and the fear of crime. **Click here** to see the Board membership.

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2015 has been a challenging year and the Board has taken forward a programme of work to make sure its oversight and accountability work has been delivered. Budgets and resources have continued to be a focus of our attention and we have worked with a range of partners to ensure that the safety of our community is prioritised.

This year, policing also underwent further change to align the PSNI to new local government structures. As a result of these changes, the number of Policing and Community Partnerships were reduced and thanks go to the Members of the Partnerships for their contributions.

I would like to thank the Chief Constable and all his officers and staff for their hard work throughout the year. Policing is a tough job; there's no doubt about that and their commitment, often in difficult

circumstances, to deliver good policing to our community is very much appreciated.

I also thank all our Independent Custody Visitors who have carried out over 700 visits to Custody Suites to check on the welfare of detainees. They have helped us deliver an important accountability role and we look forward to welcoming some new faces to this scheme in the New Year.

I thank my Board colleagues for their work on behalf of the community. At a time of

FRONT COVER CAPTION

Members of the Policing Board question the Chief Constable and his team at the December Board meeting.

reducing resources, policing oversight becomes ever more important and I have no doubt that 2016 will bring some new challenges for us all.

Until then, on behalf of Board Members and staff, I wish you all a very peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Anne Connolly
Board Chair



More funding released for PCSPs

Members of the Board's Partnership Committee have welcomed the additional funding released into each of the PCSP budgets.

Members had highlighted their concerns about the impact of the budget reductions made earlier this year. They stressed the significant impact they had on the work of the PCSPs and hope that the partnerships will be able to use the £1.5m to deliver further outcomes across the community.

The Committee has asked each PCSP to take into account issues which impact on the business community and progress initiatives tackling domestic abuse and road safety which the Board has identified as significant areas to be tackled.



Delivering new beginnings in policing

Policing Board Vice Chair Debbie Watters recently outlined the role and contribution of the Board at a recent discussion in the University of Ulster on 'Policing in Northern Ireland: Delivering the New Beginning'.

The book, co written by the former Policing Board Chair Sir Desmond Rea and Robin Masefield, charts the context and impact of the new policing arrangements.

Speaking as part of the discussions, Ms Watters said:

I believe the Board, as a scrutiny body, has established a credible platform for challenge to the police – allowing the community to be confident that there is oversight and accountability – even on the more difficult areas. The Board also has an important advocacy role as it is

charged with ensuring effectiveness and efficiency in policing. In these times of austerity the notion of partnership working becomes all the more critical.

Accountability works and the Board's work, with its political and community representation, delivers confidence. The Board will continue to hold to account, provide support, act as a critical friend and advocate for policing whatever issues arise.

Ms Watters explained that no structure stands the test of time without changing and adapting to the environment adding:

Crime is also changing and we will have to consider how best our policing model in the future will provide protection from the threat of new crimes such as those perpetrated in the virtual world.



Pictured at UUJ are (l-r): Chief Constable George Hamilton, Policing Board Vice Chair Debbie Watters, Robin Masefield (Co-author) and Tim Chapman, Lecturer at UUJ's School of Sociology and Applied Social Studies.

Board Meeting News



Board Members questioning the Chief Constable and his senior team at the December Board Meeting in Public.

At the December Board Meeting in Public Board Chair Anne Connolly's opening remarks focussed on the 'Fresh Start' Agreement. She expressed disappointment that a resolution was not reached on the Historical Investigations Unit (HIU) and the impact this will have for policing moving forward. Supporting the new measures to tackle paramilitary activity, criminality and organised crime set out in the Agreement, she also stressed the need for a strong community and police response. The Agreement has also brought some

additional police funding and this was welcomed by Anne Connolly.

The Chief Constable in his monthly report to Board Members described the 'Fresh Start' Agreement as 'progress towards a safe, confident and peaceful society'. He also assured Board Members that where appropriate the PSNI would play their part in supporting its implementation. However, he expressed his real disappointment at the lack of final agreement on dealing with the past and the significant implications for the PSNI

from both a financial and public confidence perspective.

Outlining the work of the Legacy Investigations Branch (LIB) the Chief Constable explained that the LIB was never designed to be a long term solution to the past, and that following the closure of HET, it should have provided an interim solution until the HIU was formed. He also told Members that the Service Executive Team is currently considering the broader consequences of the lack of agreement on dealing with the past.

Legacy Investigations Branch

The LIB currently has 70 staff including 55 investigators and the current work load includes:

- Bloody Sunday Investigation
- The Military Reaction Force Investigation
- Investigations emanating from the Boston College tapes
- On the Runs Review
- Scoping the investigative requirements / options following the recent Section 35 (5) referrals from the DPP
- 937 incomplete HET cases that will not now transfer to the HIU.

[Continued...](#)

Board Meeting News continued

Questions

Questioned on the 937 incomplete HET cases that will not transfer to the HIU, the Chief Constable told Members that progress could not currently be made on these cases due to the lack of resources available to the LIB. He did however confirm that some reports had been issued to families since the establishment of the Branch.

During the meeting the Chief Constable was asked what steps the PSNI are taking to ensure the perpetrators of Hate Crime are brought to justice and the police plans in place to protect the Muslim community from such attacks, in particular the Syrian Refugees soon to arrive in Northern Ireland. In response George Hamilton assured Members that the Service takes Hate Crime very seriously and acknowledged this was a common concern with the Board. ACC Martin outlined work on investigative standards, policies, communications and

IT in relation to Hate Crime which has been recently undertaken by the PSNI. Whilst it is encouraging that outcomes for this crime have increased from 8.7% to 14.3% in the last year he accepted that there was still work to do to improve on this statistic. ACC Martin also confirmed that a special police team set up in response to recent attacks on Muslims are assisting in plans for the resettlement of 10 families of Syrian refugees due to arrive in Belfast this month.

Questioned on plans to tackle drink/driving in the run up to Christmas, T/ACC Todd confirmed that a campaign has been launched. Reporting that 270 people were detected last year for driving whilst under the influence of alcohol, he also confirmed that 66 people have been killed on our roads since the start of the year. Sadly since the meeting this figure has risen to 67*.

*Figure correct at 7/12/15

Attack on officers condemned

At the Meeting in Public Board Chair Anne Connolly conveyed best wishes to the officers who were involved in a recent gun attack in West Belfast and condemned the perpetrators. Describing the attack as 'callous' the Chief Constable told Members that the protective glass undoubtedly saved their lives. Another chilling reminder of the threat facing officers and staff he also emphasised the danger this recklessness puts on Members of the community.

Questioned on what additional measures had been put in place to protect officers, ACC Martin assured Members that the safety of officers was taken very seriously and a review has been commissioned on the recent attack to capture any learning. While stressing that when a severe threat remains there will be a risk to officers, he vowed that the PSNI will not be deterred from serving the community.

[click here](#) 

to view footage of the December Meeting in Public.

[click here](#) 

to view written answers to Chief Constable Questions.

[click here](#) 

to view the Chief Constable's report to Board Members.

Sharing information internationally



Pictured at the Board's Resources Committee are (l-r): Una Williamson Head of International Programmes, Deputy Chief Constable Drew Harris, Graeme McCammon Chief Executive of NI-CO and Grainne Quinn NI-CO Project Director.

The Board's Resources Committee recently got an overview of the work being carried out by the PSNI and Northern Ireland Co-operation Overseas (NI-CO) to showcase best practice in policing nationally and internationally.

DCC Harris explained the process of seconding police officers and sharing the practices of public order policing in the context of human rights.

Board Members questioned him on the investment made by PSNI in light of resource demands and he outlined the benefits of sharing information internationally and the fact that, because the costs are covered, there is no financial or resource drain on the PSNI. DCC Harris also assured Members that the PSNI apply set criteria when considering requests which allows them to give full

consideration to any requests by 'oppressive regimes' and agreed to share this with the Board.

NI-CO Chief Executive Graeme McCammon also briefed Members on the range of programmes they roll out in about 80 different countries, supporting the delivery of information in areas such as policing, governance, health and education.

The Board regularly hosts international visitors who want to hear about how the policing arrangements were formed and maintained in Northern Ireland and how they can bring that learning to their own government and policing structures.

To learn more about NI-CO,

[click here](#)



Police Officer Training

ACC Mark Hamilton and Head of the Police Training College Supt David Brady attended Resources Committee to give an update on training and development at the Police College. ACC Hamilton said that dependent on funding, 51 new officers would be appointed by September 2016.

Supt Brady outlined to members the range of training available to officers throughout the year such as public order, firearms, traffic and driver training and domestic abuse investigations. He said that learning can be

Between April - August 2015, the Police College ran:

- 1784 courses and
- 68,118 training days

Since 11 May 2014, the student officer programmes delivered:

- 11 courses
- 374 students

both online and simulated – using real life scenarios to illustrate and challenge officers on how decisions should be made - and stressed the importance of technology in keeping officers up to date with relevant information for investigations.

Stop and Search Pilot

The PSNI are running a three month pilot to test how best to collate details on community background during stop and search procedures.

The Policing Board's 2013 Thematic Review on Stop and Search recommended that the PSNI record the community background of all those stopped and searched under the Terrorism

Act 2000 and the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007 to avoid racial or religious profiling.

The PSNI have been working with the Board on how best to collate the information. During the pilot in Derry and Strabane, anyone questioned will be given an equality monitoring card to fill in and return to the PSNI.




Impartial Assessor Gwen Savage gives her report to Partnership Committee.

PCSP recruitment 'Fair, robust, open and transparent'


An Assessor appointed by the Policing Board to scrutinise the recent Independent PCSP Member appointment process has deemed it to be 'fair, robust, open and transparent'.

The Assessor Gwen Savage was asked to scrutinise the competition for openness and effectiveness and ensure that it complied with the DOJ Code of Practice. Ms Savage made 12 recommendations.

She said:

 **The Impartial Assessor is pleased to report that the process to appoint**

independent members to the PCSPs and DPCSPs has been conducted in a manner that is fair, robust, open and transparent and complies with the Code of Practice issued by the Department of Justice in March 2015.

Policing Board members, Policing Board officers, the training provider and HR provider, together with Councillor panellists and Independent Assessors have all contributed to the successful conclusion of this large scale and complicated recruitment process. 

Chair of the Committee Dolores Kelly MLA said:

 **We welcome the report from the Independent Assessor and will build in the recommendations into the next appointment process. There were some extra pressures during this process and I would like to commend all those involved for running such a smooth process and delivering a positive outcome for policing in our community.** 

To view the report, [click here](#) 

Board hosts UN Special Rapporteur

Policing Board Members recently met with the UN Special Rapporteur Señor Pablo de Greiff to assist his investigation into the work of the various authorities in Northern Ireland in relation to 'truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence'. The visit was designed to establish areas of good practice and make recommendations.

Speaking about the meeting, Chair of the Policing Board Anne Connolly said:

"We met with Snr de Greiff as part of the law enforcement element of his visit, highlighting the important accountability mechanisms operated by the Board, the ground breaking work carried out by the Board in relation to human rights in policing and policing transformation and the remaining challenges. He was particularly interested in structures to be put in place in relation to the Historical Investigations Unit."

To view the report of the Special Rapporteur,

[click here](#) 

For more information on the role of the Special Rapporteur,

[click here](#) 

New Custody Visitors wanted

If you were in police Custody, wouldn't you want someone to check on your welfare?

The Policing Board will be looking for new volunteers to join its Custody Visiting teams in January. The volunteers work independently and voluntarily to evaluate conditions people are held in to ensure that those in custody get access to their rights in line with human rights principles and report to the Board. This means the Board gets a truly independent picture of how people are dealt with in custody and helps fulfil one of its key accountability duties.

Between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015, 24,377 people were detained in police custody in Northern Ireland on suspicion of having committed an offence. Over 700 visits across Northern Ireland were carried out by Custody Visitors and their findings can be found on the Policing Board's website.

Independent Custody Visitors must be over 18 years old and have no direct involvement in the criminal justice system such as being employed by the police or the Policing Board. This helps to keep the scheme independent.

Applications for the scheme open on 11th January 2016 and you have until 29th January 2016 to apply.

To hear what current Custody Visitors have to say,

[click here](#) 

To read our leaflet,

[click here](#) 



PCSP Member and TALK participant Roisin Brown.

TALK talk

The 19 young people currently taking part in the year long TALK programme sponsored by the Board, PSNI and the US Consulate have been getting out to PCSPs to talk to them

about how they can best engage with young people. As many of the participants are also PCSP Members, they are ideally placed to share some of their learning and discuss how PCSPs can get better results when engaging with young people.

One of the contributors, Roisin Brown spoke to the Causeway, Coast and Glens PCSP and particularly focused on the need to engage in difficult conversations. She said:

“We were encouraged to engage in difficult conversations by bringing personal experiences to the table, rather than the experiences of designated whole communities. This made engagement authentic and relateable. The other PCSP members found this an insightful way of viewing legacy issues in terms of making progress.”



Trends and patterns in policing

Representatives from the Police Ombudsman's Office (PONI) recently briefed the Board's Performance Committee on the trends and patterns in complaints against PSNI officers during April - September 2015.

Commenting on the latest figures Jonathan Craig MLA, Chair of the Board's Performance Committee said:

Overall these latest statistics on police complaints and allegations are positive. It is also welcome that the targets set in this year's Policing Plan to reduce allegations of Incivility; Oppressive Behaviour; and Failure in duty are well on target.

From discussions it is evident that PONI and the PSNI have developed a good working relationship and are meeting on a regular basis to progress areas of work and resolve issues. This was a very constructive meeting and trends and patterns in police complaints will continue to be monitored by the Committee.

In April - September 2015, the Ombudsman received:

1589 complaints, a reduction of **14.1%** from the same period last year

2,474 allegations - a reduction of **20.6%**

16.7% decrease in allegations of Oppressive Behaviour allegations

25.4% decrease in Failure in Duty allegations

11.3% decrease in allegations of Incivility

94.7% increase in complaints relating to Historic Investigations (from 19 to 37)

To find out more about the statistics collated by the Police Ombudsman,

[click here](#)



Pictured with actors from the Lyric Theatre at the RADAR Centre are Cheryl Lamont (l), Board Vice Chair Debbie Watters (centre), Sue McAllister (2nd right) and ACC Alan Todd (r).

On your RADAR

The RADAR Centre is just about to formally open its doors and to mark the occasion, Board Vice Chair Debbie Watters visited to show her support for their work. Teaming up with partners the Lyric Theatre, the Centre staged a play looking at the journey of a young man in custody for murder and examined the ways things such as domestic abuse and drug use can shape someone's life.

The Centre is due to open in January 2016.

For more information on RADAR,

[click here](#)



We've made the pledge

The Policing Board made its pledge to challenge domestic abuse as part of the Women's Aid 16 day period of activism during November and December.

Speaking about the work the Board can do to tackle domestic abuse, Chair Anne Connolly said:

“ **Issues relating to the police response to domestic abuse and violence are the subject of ongoing discussion with the Chief Constable and his officers.**

It is not acceptable that an incident of domestic abuse is reported to police every 19 minutes creating thousands of victims in our society.

The Board has made its pledge to continue its work to monitor police performance in how victims of domestic abuse are supported. We will do this by including domestic abuse



as a priority in the Policing Plan, engaging with key stakeholders on issues of domestic abuse and supporting awareness of the issues through the Board and the network of Policing and Community Safety Partnerships. ”

Policing Board requests PSNI inspections

The Policing Board has requested the Justice Minister to commission Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) to carry out an inspection of PSNI to assess how efficient and effective the police is at keeping people safe and protecting those who are vulnerable.

Policing Board Chair Anne Connolly said:

“ **It is important that the Board seeks to widen the scope of information in gathers on how effectively and efficiency the PSNI are operating so that we are able to fully monitor and hold the service to account. The inspection is also important into the PSNI's search for cost savings at a time when budgets are being reduced.** ”

The Board has also secured agreement from the Justice Minister for Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland (CJINI) to inspect how PSNI respond to legacy requests. CJINI will take forward a review of legacy issues which the Board

The Criminal Justice Chief Inspector has called for a joint Prosecution Team to address failings in the preparation of files for court and disclosure. To read the report,

[click here](#)

hopes will examine the current process for disclosure of documents by the police to coroners, understand what is affecting the timescales for such disclosure and make recommendations aimed at improving the situation.

Policing Board Chair Anne Connolly said:

“ **The Board had previously agreed the terms of reference for such a review which it will share with CJINI and trusts that this inspection will go some way to addressing community concerns around the operation of the legacy inquest process and system delays.** ”