



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA
POLICING AUTHORITY

New Policing Authority meets for the first time

Policing Authority discusses the Policing Plan 2016 with the Garda Commissioner

At its first meeting yesterday (Thursday 28 January), the Policing Authority identified its business priorities, established some Committees of the Authority to advance its statutory functions and discussed the Policing Plan for 2016 with Garda Commissioner Nóirín O'Sullivan.

The Policing Authority, established with effect from 1 January 2016, is an important part of the Government's overall justice reform programme. The significance of its introduction was emphasised by the Minister for Justice and Equality, Ms. Frances Fitzgerald TD when she paid a courtesy visit to greet the Authority members and staff and to wish them well in their important work.

At their first meeting, Authority members identified immediate business priorities and put arrangements in place to deal with them including:

- Putting the establishment of the Authority on a sound footing by continuing the recruitment of staff, establishing internal processes and procedures and other practical matters;
- Establishing three Committees of the Authority:
 - A Policing Strategy and Performance Committee, chaired by Judith Gillespie, to develop a framework to enable the Authority to fulfil its statutory responsibilities in overseeing Garda performance in relation to policing, including preparation for the next Garda Strategy Statement;
 - A Code of Ethics Committee, chaired by Pat Costello, to develop the Authority's approach to the process of drafting a Garda Code of Ethics and to oversee the preparation of a Code within 12 months;
 - An Appointments Committee, chaired by Valerie Judge, to develop Authority policy and oversee the preparations for the commencement of the legal

provisions which will make the Policing Authority the appointing authority for senior ranks and civilian positions in the Garda Síochána. The Authority is keen to advance this work very quickly.

- Agreeing a schedule of plenary meetings for 2016 and deciding that the Authority's first public meeting will be on 14 March 2016.

Meeting with the Garda Commissioner

The Policing Plan 2016 which was laid before the Oireachtas on 14 January 2016 was the main agenda item for the Authority's first meeting with the Garda Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners. The Authority welcomed the Commissioner's presentation of the Plan. There was very useful discussion and explanation of the processes and inputs to the development of the Plan, during which the Commissioner explained that inputs to the plan were sought from Gardaí, staff, stakeholders and victims' representative groups.

In future, the Policing Plan will be approved by the Authority, which will also be considering policing priorities, resources and performance targets. In this context, members were keen to have a deeper engagement with the Commissioner and her senior team to better understand how the Policing Plan cascades throughout the Garda Síochána and how performance is managed. This work will be taken forward quickly by the Policing Strategy and Performance Committee.

Commissioner O'Sullivan also set out her vision for a much transformed Garda Síochána in the future. The Authority looks forward to overseeing policing performance during that journey and to working with the Garda Síochána towards better policing in Ireland in the interests of the community as a whole.

Speaking after the meeting, Policing Authority Chairperson, Josephine Feehily said:

“Effective policing is crucially important for any society. In order to be effective, it must enjoy a very high standard of public confidence. Our job in the Authority is essentially to enhance public confidence by independently overseeing the performance of the Garda Síochána in relation to policing. There are many aspects to oversight of performance and to enhancing public confidence and Garda accountability needs to be seen in a broad context which recognises those things that work very well as well as those which could work better.

It will take time for the Authority to establish itself fully but we are determined to move as quickly as possible on some critically important changes, such as discussing policing

performance with the Garda Commissioner in public so that citizens can more easily hear about the work being done by the Gardaí, taking responsibility for senior appointments and establishing a Garda Code of Ethics as required by law.

I am privileged to be joined on the Authority by experienced and distinguished colleagues to begin our work. Their commitment and enthusiasm convinces me that we can advance our first set of business priorities quickly.

The Authority conveyed to the Commissioner its appreciation of the work of members Garda Síochána throughout the country and noted that in this week of the anniversary of the death of Garda Adrian Donohoe it was timely to remind ourselves of the risks Gardaí face every day on our behalf and to thank them.”

Ends

Note for Editors:

Background

The Policing Authority has been established as an independent body to oversee the performance of the Garda Síochána in relation to policing services in Ireland. In doing so, it will promote public trust and confidence in policing and help shape policing services to meet the challenges of a modern Ireland.

The Authority was established by the enactment of the Garda Síochána (Policing Authority and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015 on 18 December 2015. It was then formally established on 1 January 2016.

The Chairperson and members of the Authority were selected for appointment following selection processes run by the Public Appointments Service. Authority members are appointed for a term of 3 or 4 years, but may be reappointed for a further term subject to a maximum of 8 years. Members of the Oireachtas or Local Authorities, serving members of the Garda Síochána, GSOC or the Garda Inspectorate are not eligible to be members of the Authority.

The Authority will be supported by a team of core staff headed up by Ms. Helen Hall, who has been appointed as Chief Executive Officer.

Functions of the Authority

The main function of the Authority will be to oversee the performance by the Garda Síochána of its functions relating to policing services. The Policing Authority is established as a statutorily independent body and it is independent in the performance of its functions under the legislation. The Authority's functions include:

- keeping under review the adequacy in the Garda Síochána of:
 - the corporate governance arrangements and structures;
 - the arrangements for the recruitment, training and development of the members and members of the civilian staff;
 - the mechanisms in place for the measurement of performance and accountability of members and civilian staff; and
 - the arrangements for managing and deploying the available resources.

- regular meetings with the Garda Commissioner, at least 4 of which will be held in public each year and broadcast;
- nominating persons for appointment by the Government to the posts of Garda Commissioner and Deputy Garda Commissioner, and recommending their removal in certain circumstances,;
- appointing persons to the ranks of Superintendent, Chief Superintendent and Assistant Commissioner (and removing them for reasons related to policing services);
- determining (with the approval of the Minister) Garda priorities in relation to policing services;
- approving (with the consent of the Minister) the 3 year Garda strategy statement;
- approving (with the consent of the Minister) the annual policing plan;
- establishing a Garda code of ethics;
- promoting and supporting the continuous improvement of policing in the State;
- accounting, as appropriate, to the Public Accounts Committee and to other Oireachtas Committees;
- monitoring, assessing and reporting to the Minister on the measures taken by the Garda Síochána in relation to recommendations made in a report of the Garda Síochána Inspectorate;
- requesting the Garda Síochána Inspectorate and/or the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission to initiate an inspection or inquiry or to examine Garda practices or procedures; and
- exercising the current functions of the Minister in relation to Joint Policing Committees.

Members

- Josephine Feehily is former chairperson of the Revenue Commissioners;
- Noel Brett is the CEO of Banking and Payments Federation Ireland and former CEO of the Road Safety Authority;
- Bob Collins is a former Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and former Director General of RTE;

- Vicky Conway is a lecturer in Law, Dublin City University and former senior Lecturer in Law, Kent Law School;
- Patrick Costello is the CEO of Chartered Accountants Ireland and a former officer in the Defence Forces;
- Judith Gillespie is a Policing and Leadership Adviser and former Deputy Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland;
- Valerie Judge is a Management Consultant specialising in strategic planning, governance, HR, process leadership and change, the Chair of Ruhama, and a former Director of Shared Services in the HSE Eastern Region;
- Maureen Lynott is the former Chair of the Top Level Advisory Committee (TLAC) and the taskforce to establish the Child & Family Agency. Among other roles she has served as Chairperson of Rialto Policing Forum, Ballymun Regeneration and the Homeless Agency;
- Moling Ryan is a Barrister and the former Chief Executive of the Legal Aid Board and Director of Human Resources and Change Management in the Courts Service.