



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA  
POLICING AUTHORITY

**Minutes of Meeting of the Policing Authority**

**Date:** 31 October 2024

**Venue:** The Policing Authority, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, 90 North King Street, Dublin 7.

**Part A – Authority Meeting**

**Attendance**

**Authority:** Elaine Byrne (Chairperson), Anthony Harbinson, Donal de Buitleir, Jane Mulcahy, Deborah Donnelly, Paul Mageean

**Secretary:** Aoife Clabby

**Staff of the Authority:** Helen Hall (Chief Executive), Margaret Tumelty, John Gallagher, Shona Keeshan (note taker)

**1. Authority Members – private session**

The Authority did not exercise 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 by the Members in relation to any of the items for consideration. Correspondence received from the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commissioner (IHREC) relating to engagement by Gardaí with International Protection Applicants who are rough sleeping was noted. It was agreed to discuss this and the matters highlighted by IHREC under item 13 of the agenda

Members were also briefed in relation to contact that was made with the Executive regarding events in Coolock after the September meeting in public. Members were satisfied that the information conveyed has been brought to the Commissioner and that the Authority’s role did not pertain to individual events but rather in relation to thematic and systemic issues arising. Members noted that the future Policing and Community Safety Authority’s role would properly be in the context of the implementation of Inspectorate recommendations in the area of public order and those arising from The Authority’s public order review.

### **3. Consent Agenda Items**

#### **3.1 Minutes of Meeting and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the meetings held on 11 October and 26 September were approved and cleared for publication, including a proposal for minor amendment to the minutes of 26 September, requested by the Garda Síochána.

#### **3.2 Policing Authority and Garda Síochána Actions Logs**

The Logs of Actions were noted and proposals to close a number of actions were approved. The Chief Executive advised that despite having raised with the Commissioner the unsuccessful efforts over the past year to progress the action relating to exploring mechanisms for feedback to the Garda Síochána senior leadership team of thematic issues arising from engagement with stakeholders, the matter had still not been progressed. It was agreed to raise the matter with the Commissioner during part B of the meeting.

### **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, including in relation to:

**National Preventative Mechanisms:** The Chief Executive advised that she had participated in the Irish launch of a Council of Europe new joint action designed to promote the development of effective and resilient National Preventive Mechanisms (NPMs) in Ireland and Cyprus on 22 October. Members noted that a further meeting of the Chief Executives of agencies that will play a role in the multiagency NPM had been held on 25 October and was hosted by IHREC, the NPM Coordinator for Ireland. The Chief Executive described these meetings as productive and noted that while the draft Inspection of Places of Detention Bill was still awaited, the general consensus among the agencies concerned was that there was merit in proceeding to prepare for the introduction of NPMs. The Chief Executive also highlighted that while the PCSA is not a designated NPM in the General Scheme of the Inspection of Places of Detention Bill, it is being considered an integral part of the mechanism due to its powers of inspection in relation to the Garda Síochána.

**Training within the Garda Síochána:** An update was provided on a meeting attended by members of the Executive in Garda Headquarters with the Director of Training and the Acting Executive Director of Human Resources and Performance Development (HRPD). Topics discussed included the revised structure of formation training for new Garda members, the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) infrastructure and its efficacy within divisions, challenges faced, including in relation to member attrition and options being considered to further develop training capacity. Members noted that the training plan for 2025 would be shared with the Authority once complete. The Chief Executive described the meeting as extremely useful, with positive and open engagement on the matters discussed.

**Strategic Human Rights Advisory Committee (SHRAC):** Members noted the summary provided in relation to the latest meeting of the Strategic Human Rights Advisory Committee (SHRAC), which took place on 9 October 2024, including an update on the implementation of the Human Rights Strategy 2022-2024. Members discussed the Human Rights Screening Tool in the context of how the

senior leaders might have assurance that the tool is being implemented proactively. It was noted that the Screening Tool is not currently included as a standing item for discussion at Performance Accountability Framework (PAF) meetings. Members were provided with an overview of the extent to which PAF meetings at various levels in the organisation are utilised from the perspectives of governance and assurance. While noting the increased consistency of tracking organisational performance at such meetings, the opportunity for the Garda Síochána's Internal Audit and Professional Standards functions to bolster the existing accountability and assurance mechanisms was highlighted.

**Meeting with the Central Statistics Office (CSO):** The Chief Executive provided Members with a briefing on a meeting that had taken place between the Executive and the new Director General and senior colleagues of the CSO on 21 October. Members noted that among the items discussed was the continuing challenges relating to the collection of ethnic identifier data and the engagements that had taken place between the CSO and the Garda Síochána on the matter. The absence of legislation to enable the collection of this and other demographic data was noted, including disappointment that the opportunity had not been taken by the Department to include this in the PSCS Act 2024 as had been suggested by the Authority. Members also noted supports and technical assistance that are being provided by the CSO to the wider civil and public service, including secondments of their staff into government departments.

The Chief Executive advised that the meeting had been very constructive, with a number of areas for further engagement identified including possible assistance from the CSO in the area of research and data collection following the transition to the PCSA. Members noted that a follow up meeting will be arranged during the course of 2025.

**Policing and Community Safety Authority budget 2025 allocation:** Members noted the budget 2025 allocation for the PCSA. The Chief Executive advised that matters relating to the establishment of the PCSA Vote and the availability of funding, in the context of the proposed commencement date, was still outstanding and was of concern. Members were further advised that a meeting with senior colleagues in the Department of Justice and the National Share Services Offices was scheduled to take place on the matter on 1 November.

**Garda Síochána budget 2025 allocation:** Members noted that total gross allocation for the Garda Vote in 2025 and the extent of increase in comparison to 2024. Members discussed the target of 1,000 additional recruits per year, announced as part of the budget, noting that even if achieved, when upcoming retirements are taken into account, the total number of Garda members would likely remain static at the current rate of recruitment. The Chief Executive reminded Members of the work being undertaken by a cross-departmental working group, convened by the Department of Justice, to develop recommendations for changes to the recruitment of Garda members, in order to address the shortfall in numbers currently. Members briefly discussed the current recruitment and training processes in places, and the challenges to reach the current intake targets. Members emphasised the importance of work currently being undertaken by the Garda Síochána to streamline recruitment and training processes and highlighted the importance of ensuring that the recruitment process for applicants to the Garda Síochána is as efficient and effective as possible. It was agreed that these matters would be discussed with the Commissioner in part B of the meeting.

**Jury Reform Consultation:** Members considered an invitation from the Department of Justice to agencies, including the Policing Authority, to take part in a consultation on Jury Reform. Following discussion, it was agreed that the subject of this consultation lies outside of the remit of the Authority, and therefore that no submission would be made.

## 5. Committee Updates

### 5.1 Garda Organisation Development Committee

The Committee had not met since the last meeting of the Authority.

### 5.2 Garda Appointments Quality Assurance and Selection Governance Committee

The Committee had not met since the last meeting of the Authority.

### 5.3 Policing Performance and Strategy Committee

The Committee had not met since the last meeting of the Authority.

### 5.4 Audit and Risk Committee

The Committee had not met since the last meeting of the Authority.

## 6. Risk management report

The Authority considered the monthly risk report, provided in accordance with its Risk Management Policy. The Chief Executive advised that the extreme risks arising from the proposed commencement date for the Policing and Community Safety Authority remained unchanged and provided Members with an update on actions being taken to address the risks identified.

## 7. Appointments

Members were presented with the outcomes of the clearance process in respect of the appointment of a candidate to the rank of Chief Superintendent in the Garda Síochána. The Authority was satisfied to appoint the candidate to the rank of Chief Superintendent, with effect from the date on which the candidate takes up the position assigned by the Garda Commissioner.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_143_01	Notify the Commissioner of the appointment of a candidate to the rank of Chief Superintendent in the Garda Síochána and notify the candidate of their appointment.	ASAP	Chief Executive

## 8. Hamilton Report – Garda Síochána Resourcing Plan

Members considered a submission received from the Garda Síochána setting out a plan for a phased increase of resources within the Garda National Economic Crime Bureau (GNECB). The submission arose from the Hamilton Review Group Report (HRG Report) and a recommendation contained in a subsequent Department of Justice Implementation Plan that the Garda Síochána would submit a strategic resourcing plan for the GNECB to the Authority and Department of Justice for approval by Q2 2021.

In considering the submission, Members had regard to the extent of engagement by the Authority with the Garda Síochána and the Department of Justice on the matter since 2021, noting that the Authority has not been in a position to discharge its role in this regard to date, as a comprehensive resourcing plan has not been received from the Garda Síochána. Members were advised that the plan outlining staffing requirements received in May 2024 did not adequately address the ICT, training and accommodation needs of the GNECB currently and did not identify future needs.

Following discussion, it was agreed that an update would be provided to the Department of Justice, setting out the engagement with the Garda Síochána that has occurred to date, highlighting the matters discussed and advising on the Authority’s position in relation to the discharge of its role, as envisaged in the Department’s Implementation Plan. A draft response in this regard was reviewed and approved.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_143_02	Write to the Department of Justice regarding the progress made to implement the Hamilton Review Group Report recommendation regarding Authority approval of a GS resourcing plan for GNECB.	ASAP	Chief Executive

## 9. Policing Performance Assessment – Half Year Report

Members considered the draft Half Year Assessment of Policing Performance 2024, reporting on the Authority’s assessment of the Garda Síochána’s performance during the first half of 2024 and the progress made against the Policing Plan and the Policing Priorities in the year to date. An early draft had been considered by Members at the September meeting and it was noted that feedback provided at that time has been incorporated.

Members were satisfied to approve the finalisation of the Half Year Assessment of Policing Performance 2024 for publication by the Chairperson and Chief Executive, subject to a number of minor edits and amendments.

Arising from their consideration of the half year assessment, Members discussed a number of matters including:

- the roll-out and use of the Garda Síochána’s Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment Tool and the status of a review of the tool;

- the workload and resourcing of Divisional Protective Services Units (DPSUs) and the capacity of the DPSUs to draw on additional resources and expertise through the Divisional Crime Hubs when needed;
- the status of a review of the DPSUs;
- Garda statistics relating to the reporting of sexual crime and an apparent indication that that the proportion of victims who go on to report to the Garda Síochána has fallen;
- the methodologies used to collect data on protest activity; and
- the status of the Public Order Policy.

It was agreed that the matters discussed would be raised with the Commissioner in part B of the meeting.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_143_03	Finalise the half-year Assessment of Policing Performance 2024, in consultation with the Chairperson, and arrange for its publication.	ASAP	Chief Executive

## 10. Policing Plan 2025

Following on from the agreement at the September meeting of the Authority to extend the current Garda Síochána's Strategy of Statement and Policing Plan into 2025, Members considered the Garda Síochána's proposed additional milestones for the Policing Plan for 2025 and made a small number of observations and feedback for minor amendments. It was agreed that the Executive would revert to the Garda Síochána with the Authority's observations. Members were satisfied to approve the Policing Plan 2025, subject to the consent of the Minister for Justice.

Arising from its consideration of the Policing Plan 2025, Members discussed the Garda Síochána's approach to policy development, in particular in relation to the importance of human rights principles being embedded at the start of the policy development process. It was agreed to raise this matter with the Commissioner under agenda item 15.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_143_04	Revert to the Garda Síochána with Authority observations on the Policing Plan for 2025 with a view to its finalisation and submission to the Minister for approval.	ASAP	Chief Executive
A_143_05	Write to the Minister for Justice, seeking her consent to Authority approval of the Policing Plan 2025	ASAP	Chief Executive

## 11. Garda Síochána draft Annual report 2023

The Authority Members considered the Garda Síochána Annual Report 2023, having regard to the direction previously issued in respect of the form of the Annual Report. Members noted that the

format and length of the Report was similar to that of 2022. Members also noted that little had changed in respect of the approach to financial reporting and that more comprehensive reporting would still be highly desirable, in the context of the substantial annual budget allocation to the Garda Síochána. Members agreed that there is a need for the Garda Síochána’s approach to governance reporting to mature. Following discussion, the Authority agreed that the Garda Síochána Annual Report 2023 would be submitted to the Minister, together with a brief commentary on the degree to which it believes the Report has addressed the direction given.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_142_06	Submit the Garda Síochána Annual Report 2023 to the Minister for Justice, together with the Authority’s commentary on its adherence to direction given.	ASAP	Chief Executive

## 12. PSCS Act implementation update

The Chief Executive provided an update to Members in relation to the implementation of the PSCS Act, including work being undertaken by the Executive on the various transition project work streams, with good progress reported as being made and plans updated to reflect the commencement date announced by the Minister.

Members noted the recent announcement of appointments to a number of senior roles created under the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024. The Chief Executive advised that a series of meetings with key stakeholders were being organised in the context of the Act’s commencement and that she had met with the Director Designate of the National Office for Community Safety and was scheduled to meet the Chief Executive of Fiosrú at an early date. Members were also advised that arrangements were being made for the PCSA Chairperson designate to meet the designated members of the PCSA in November and that plans were advancing for induction to take place in early December.

The Chief Executive advised Members that she had further positive engagement with four colleagues joining the PCSA from the Garda Síochána Inspectorate. Arising from this a number of practical ways in which to further embed colleagues had been agreed and implemented in addition to collaborative work already ongoing, and including attendance at senior management team and all staff meetings.

Members noted that discussions in relation to the implementation of the vote structure and payroll for the PCSA were ongoing and remained of concern. A further meeting with senior colleagues in the Department of Justice and the National Share Services Offices was scheduled to take place on the matter on 1 November.

Members considered the impact of the proposed commencement date for the Act on the operations of the Policing Authority. It was agreed that the November meeting of the Authority would be held in private and that the meeting currently scheduled for December would be kept in the calendar for the time being.

**Other Business:**

The Chairperson congratulated Dr Jane Mulcahy on her new role with the Probation Service, and thanked her for her service and commitment to the work of the Authority. Particular mention was made of the expertise and insights provided by Dr Mulcahy in relation to the subject of trauma and trauma informed policing and oversight.

**13. Preparation for meeting with Garda Commissioner**

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

**Documents for Noting by the Authority - October 2024**

The following documents were noted by the Authority Members:

Document		Action Required
D_143_01	2019-2023 Final Report of the Implementation Group on Policing Reform	For noting



## Part B – Authority Meeting with the Garda Commissioner in private

### Attendance:

**Authority and Executive:** Elaine Byrne (Chairperson), Anthony Harbinson, Donal de Buitléir, Jane Mulcahy, Deborah Donnelly, Paul Mageean, Aoife Clabby (Secretary), Helen Hall (Chief Executive), Margaret Tumelty, Shona Keeshan (note taker).

**Garda Síochána:** Drew Harris (Commissioner), Shawna Coxon (Deputy Commissioner), Justin Kelly (Deputy Commissioner), Siobhan Toale (Chief Corporate Officer), Paula Hilman (Assistant Commissioner), Mick McElgunn (Assistant Commissioner), Angela Willis (Assistant Commissioner), Jonathan Roberts (Assistant Commissioner), Niamh O’Hara (Assistant Principal).

At the outset of the meeting, the Chairperson congratulated Deputy Commissioner Justin Kelly on his new role and also congratulated Assistant Commissioner Angela Willis on her new role as Assistant Commissioner with responsibility for Serious and Organised Crime.

Members then discussed a number of matters with the Commissioner and his senior colleagues before engagement on the agenda items, including:

- Recent media coverage that had referenced consideration being given to the deployment of the Defence Forces to prevent the feuds in Drogheda in 2019 and 2020. The Commissioner provided Members with a brief overview of the very limited circumstances where the assistance of the Defence Forces would be considered. With regard to the referenced feud in Drogheda, the Commissioner stated that an appropriate policing response was provided with additional Garda resources deployed as necessary, and that at no time was it considered that the Defence Forces would be called upon for assistance.
- Engagement with the Commissioner in relation to media coverage of Irish organised crime groups and assertions that individuals involved in organised crime may be protected in Dubai or elsewhere in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Commissioner strongly rejected the assertions made in the media. He highlighted the extent to which the Garda Síochána has been proactively developing a positive and productive working relationship with the Dubai Police and that legal due process needs to be respected in individual jurisdictions. He also emphasised the importance of engaging with Interpol’s Red Notice for wanted persons and the success of that process in targeting members of Irish organised crime groups residing in the UAE. Members were provided with a detailed overview of the extent of engagements and co-operation received to date in pursuing organised crime groups both in Ireland and abroad. Members were advised that the recent signing of extradition and mutual legal assistance treaties between Ireland and the UAE had been a welcome development, demonstrating the on-going commitment by international law enforcement agencies and governments to tackle transnational organised crime. The Commissioner stated that this

development would not only assist in relation to the investigation and pursuit of Organised Crime gang members, but would also be of benefit in other situations and in pursuit of persons of interest relating to other crimes.

- A brief update to members on the progression of the investigation into the presumed death and suspected murder of Kyran Durnin, including the timelines involved. The Commissioner and his senior team, and the Authority Members, acknowledged the complexity and sensitivity of this particular case. It was agreed that the Commissioner would provide a written update to the Authority on the case in due course.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_143_07	Provide the Authority with a written update on the Kyran Durnin case	ASAP	Garda Síochána

#### 14. Garda Síochána Strategy and Policing Plans from 2022-2024: progress on delivery and areas of focus for 2025

- a) **Operating Model:** Members engaged with the Commissioner and his senior team on the current status of the rollout of the Operating Model. The Commissioner was asked whether there has been an initial assessment of the impact of the Operating Model on service delivery in these Divisions. He was also asked to outline any processes in place to formally review the roll-out, from the point of view of consistency, comparability across the divisions, and operating within a strong corporate governance framework.

The Deputy Commissioner (Policing Operations) provided Members with an update on the current status of the roll-out, confirming that five remaining Divisions will be rolled out by the end of Q1 2025. In relation to the Divisions which have already moved to the Operating Model, the Deputy Commissioner outlined the iterative process of assessment to date, advising that in the short-term, two aspects would be the focus of a more in-depth review- the Performance Assessment Functional Area (PAFA) and the role of Crime Superintendents. Members noted that the review of the PAFAs was influenced by the impact of the PSCS Act, in particular the associated regulations, on their operation, while the review of the Crime Superintendents' role had been prompted by a consideration of workloads across Divisions.

Members discussed with the Commissioner and his senior colleagues the progress being made on process standardisation and consistency of service delivery across the country, noting that Executive staff had observed a greater degree of consistency being achieved at Performance Accountability Framework (PAF) meetings during recent visits around the country. Members were advised of the need for a balance to be struck between consistency and adapting the Operating Model to unique issues at divisional level and that more work was required in this regard.

The Authority also probed the extent of the impact and contribution of data and technology to improvements to service delivery. Members were apprised of improvements to the type of data being provided to Chief Superintendents at PAF meetings, the impact of the introduction of the Investigation Management System (IMS) and the Roster and Duty Management System (RDMS) on decision-making. There was a discussion then on whether communication on these impacts is reaching frontline Garda members.

The Deputy Commissioner stated while overall the rollout to date of the Operating Model has been successful, it has not been without its challenges, in particular in the context of constrained resources and in arriving at a settled position regarding the interaction between divisions and regions. Consequently, it was acknowledged that it can be difficult for frontline members to have sight of the positive impact of some of the changes made.

Members discussed the introduction of the DPSUs with the Commissioner and raised the issue of resourcing shortages and the effect on service provision. The Commissioner noted the role of the Chief Superintendents in divisional crime hubs to manage caseloads and advised that with an increased standardisation of approaches to investigations, the DPSUs can call on additional resources when needed. However, the shortage of resources in the DPSUs was acknowledged as an ongoing challenge.

Members inquired as to the status of the review of the DPSUs and the review of the Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment Tool. Members were advised that the organisation is moving towards an electronic version of the Assessment Tool that can be used on handheld devices and that its development is high on the priority list.

In concluding discussions on the agenda item, Members sought clarification from the senior Garda team on the reporting of sexual offences and a seeming drop in onward reporting to the Garda Síochána, when compared with recent figures from the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre. Senior Garda representatives provided context to the Members and noted that year on year reporting figures for sexual offences are consistent, but that reporting in this area of crime is being closely monitored.

- b) Conduct and Discipline:** Members asked the Commissioner and his senior colleagues for their assessment of the extent to which any progress has been made in terms of shifting the culture in relation to conduct and discipline, and how this has been observed. Members were provided with an overview of the ways in which the senior Garda leadership believes positive change has been achieved and changes to culture observed. The various ways in which this can be evidenced were outlined to the Members, including a decrease in the number of suspensions year on year, a shift in the reasons for suspension, and the benefits arising from training being provided for senior leaders participating on Appeal Boards. There was acknowledgement of the need for the organisation to be better able to operate along a continuum from effective performance management up to and including the management of gross misconduct. At the core of this ability is the need to continue to ensure public confidence in the Garda Síochána.

The role that the Operating Model has played, in particular the Performance Assurance Functional Areas in each division and Internal Affairs, in strengthening communication and the sharing of expertise was also highlighted. While it was acknowledged that a backlog of suspension cases remains, it was noted that this is often affected by timelines involving external bodies. The approach to the active review of suspensions was outlined in this regard. Members discussed the impact of the introduction of the PSCS Act and new regulations with senior Garda colleagues and it was noted that the extent of work required was considerable.

Members sought and were provided with an update in relation to the extent of progress that can be made on routine drug testing and in-career vetting in 2025, noting the ongoing

requirement for regulations from the Department of Justice in order to further progress matters.

Members asked the Commissioner about the capacity to enhance and strengthen the organisation's relationship with GSOC and whether better use could be made of conduct related data to facilitate and help identify trends in complaints. Members were apprised of the opportunities presented by the PSCS Act to facilitate information sharing between the Garda Síochána and GSOC's successor body, Fiosrú. However, the complexity and challenge of giving effect to the Act's provisions in this regard were highlighted, noting that new processes would take time to bed in. The Commissioner affirmed the Garda Síochána's openness to ensuring a positive, strategic relationship Fiosrú into the future.

Members asked the Garda Senior Leadership Team present how confident they were that there is a standardised, consistent approach to dealing with matters of discipline and misconduct across their areas of responsibility. Members' attention was drawn to the increase in positive outcomes from judicial reviews, as an indication that processes have improved across the board. Assistant Commissioners present provided observations on improvements, including a more proactive approach and greater communication between Chief Superintendents, and evidence of strong, proactive steps being taken by Sergeants, as required, when dealing with discipline and misconduct. However, the need for a learning and effective performance management culture within the organisation that addresses poor performance or standards of behaviour that do not meet the threshold of disciplinary action was also acknowledged by senior Garda representatives.

The outcomes of Appeal Boards were raised, with concern expressed by the Authority that the majority the Commissioner's decisions for dismissal are being overturned. The Commissioner highlighted the need for the rights of victims and public confidence in policing services to be balanced with rights of individuals subject to discipline.

- c) Responding to insights from communities on policing service provision:** The Authority discussed a number of matters relating to the interaction of the Garda Síochána with vulnerable communities. They particularly challenged the Commissioner and his senior colleagues as to whether the organisation is open to listening to and learning from insights provided by those communities. While acknowledging the inherent difficulty in receiving criticism, Members asked whether there is a professional curiosity about the feedback that is provided by different communities.

The Commissioner noted that negative experiences in dealing with the Garda Síochána if un-responded to and unchecked have the capacity to sap public confidence. The importance of maintaining public trust and a professional lens was acknowledged and examples were provided examples of groups that are regularly engaged with, in addition to the various forums, mechanisms and channels for obtaining feedback, both spontaneous and reflective. There was an acknowledgement that internally, reports originating from the formal accountability structures are handled in a different manner to reports from external, academic or third sector organisations.

The Authority emphasised that while feedback from communities on relationships with community police and Juvenile Liaison Officers was largely positive, those same communities have at times reported negative interactions with ordinary members and the drugs units. Members stressed that these communities did not take issue with enforcement activity,

rather it was the manner in which it was being done. Members advised the Commissioner and his senior colleagues that Executive staff had very recently returned to Dublin’s North East Inner City (NEIC) as part of its stakeholder engagement work, and that the feedback from communities was broadly unchanged from the time of the previous visits. The Commissioner acknowledged that some issues had arisen in the areas and highlighted actions taken, including the outcome of a recent court case involving three Garda members stationed within the NEIC.

The Commissioner and his senior colleagues were pressed on whether there is a reluctance among the Garda representative bodies to publicly denounce poor behaviour and criminal misconduct. Members pointed to the example of recent high profile criminal cases against Garda members, and the lack of commentary from the Garda representative bodies on the outcome of these serious cases. Members discussed with the senior Garda colleagues the potential for lack of condemnation of egregious behaviour by serving members to negatively impact public confidence in the organisation.

Members again raised with the Commissioner and his colleagues the fact that the outstanding action to arrange a meeting between relevant Assistant Commissioners and Authority staff to explore mechanisms for feedback to the GS Senior Leadership Team of thematic issues arising from engagement with stakeholders and Garda members had not been progressed. The importance of engaging proactively with the Authority on this issue was emphasised, with disappointment expressed by Members about the lack of progress on this action. The Commissioner and his senior colleagues affirmed their openness to engaging on this topic and committed to arranging the meeting at the earliest opportunity.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_143_08	Commissioner to follow up on the action to arrange a meeting between relevant ACs and Authority staff to explore mechanisms for feedback to GS SLT of thematic issues arising from engagement with stakeholders and GS members.	ASAP	Garda Síochána

### 15. Strategic leadership in the development of strategy and policy

Members expressed a degree of frustration with the delays in response to requests for receipt of policies, including most recently the Public Order policy. The Commissioner was asked whether there is a difficulty within the Garda organisation with the process for policy development. Members observed that many critical operational policies which are yet to be finalised have been years in development. This was noted to be a high risk for the organisation and the Commissioner was asked whether there is a prioritisation process in place for the development and finalisation of such policies.

Members were provided with a brief overview of the current process for policy development and approval and advised that recent work has been undertaken to map out all organisational policies and policy holders to enable their tracking. The Commissioner acknowledged that the process is currently multi-layered and inefficient with too many actors involved at each stage of policy development. The Commissioner observed that the current process can give rise to the development

of a policy that does not reflect the originally commissioned request. The Commissioner also noted the importance of the creation of first principles in respect of operational policies that Garda personnel can work from so that more focus can be concentrated on training and experience. While acknowledging that the process needs to be streamlined and a different model for policy development adopted, the Commissioner also highlighted that consultation with the associations and unions elicits feedback that is useful and offers value.

Members engaged with the Commissioner and senior Garda colleagues on the extent to which policies are human rights proofed. It was confirmed that human rights screening is included at the policy drafting stage, and not just as a review tool. Members referenced the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) as a valuable resource for providing insight into ensuring policy is human rights compliant.

## **16. Governance and risk in the Garda Síochána**

Members discussed the budget for 2025 for the Garda organisation with the Commissioner in the context of an additional €125 million being allocated to the Garda Vote for 2025. The Chief Corporate Officer outlined that due to cost of living increases and the operational costs required to maintain business as usual, this increase in budget would, in effect, be slightly better than net neutral. Members were advised that the allocated budget remained challenging in the context of plans for new or additional work being undertaken.

Members engaged with senior Garda colleagues in relation to measures being taken to streamline the recruitment process, including the parallelisation of parts of the recruitment process such as drugs testing and medical examination, to ensure these elements are completed within the shortest possible timeframe. The positive relationship with, and invaluable assistance, of Public Jobs in ensuring the recruitment process is moving as quickly as possible was acknowledged by senior Garda representatives. Members were also advised that the vetting process is currently being reviewed and discussions are taking place on how this may be accelerated. Senior Garda colleagues observed that the challenges presented by the current job market, and the changing expectations of prospective employees, mean that the Garda Síochána needs to do more to present itself as an attractive proposition for job seekers. The Authority again noted that radical changes to the recruitment process are required if the target of 1,000 new Garda recruits per year is to be achieved.

## **Other Business**

The Chairperson noted that this would be Dr Jane Mulcahy's final meeting with the Authority. The Garda Commissioner thanked Dr Mulcahy for her engagement with Garda colleagues and wished her every success in her new role.