



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA  
POLICING AUTHORITY

**Minutes of Meeting of the Policing Authority**

**Date:** 28 November 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 Buitleur, Deborah Donnelly, Paul Mageean

**Secretary:** Aoife Clabby

**Staff of the Authority:** Helen Hall (Chief Executive), John Gallagher, Michal Alfasi-Hanley (items 4 (a), 9, 10) Karen Shelly (item 12), Aisling O’ Connor.

**1. Authority Members – private session**

The Authority did not exercise its option to have a meeting in private.

**2. Chairperson’s Opening Remarks**

At the outset of the meeting, the Chairperson and Members of the Authority recorded their condolences to Margaret Tumelty, Director of Oversight Delivery, and her family, on the death of her mother.

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.

The Chairperson advised the Authority that she had held individual meetings with the recently designated Members of the forthcoming Policing and Community Safety Authority (PCSA).

The Chairperson also advised that she had met Emily Logan, Police Ombudsman designate of Fiosrú. The Chairperson outlined matters discussed and highlighted the stated desire for the future PCSA and Fiosrú to explore areas where co-operation and information sharing can be enhanced and to build upon existing relationships between the Authority and GSOC. Members noted that the critical importance of civilian oversight and the need for a broader focus on misconduct in the Garda Síochána, in addition to professional standards, had also been discussed.

A number of pieces of correspondence and media contacts received were noted, including a copy of correspondence from the Commissioner to the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors in relation to a revised approach to vetting procedures for new Garda Trainees. Members discussed

the impact of delays in the vetting process on the uptake of training places by prospective candidates, particularly in the context of a competitive employment market. The critical importance of vetting upon entry to the service was considered, in circumstances where in-service vetting does not take place. The need to progress in-service vetting was strongly emphasised by the Authority. It was noted that vetting procedures for Garda Trainees would be discussed with the Commissioner in Part B of the meeting.

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

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

The minutes of the meetings held on 26 September and 31 October were approved and cleared for publication.

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

The Logs of Actions were noted and proposals to close certain actions were approved. Members noted, with disappointment, that responses received from the Garda Síochána in relation to two information requests had been awaited for over two years, in circumstances where the information sought was not complex.

Members noted the response provided in relation to 17 disciplinary actions referenced in the government response to the CPT<sup>1</sup> report related to the ill-treatment of detainees. It was agreed that clarification on the matter would be sought from the Commissioner in Part B of the meeting and that correspondence would issue to the Department of Justice in relation to correction of the public record, if required.

Members considered a response received in respect of the assessment of the safety of custody cells, noting that the clarification provided was helpful and would be a matter to which the PCSA may wish to return, once it is established.

### **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:

**A briefing received from the Garda Síochána regarding the agreed 'Midlands' Roster.** The Chief Executive provided Members with an overview of a meeting with Assistant Commissioner, Southern Region on the new, agreed 'Midlands' Roster. The Chief Executive emphasised the significance of what seemed to be a successful outcome from the negotiation process, in particular in radically reducing the number of official rosters to 12 and in the regularising of roster arrangements. The Chief Executive outlined the implementation and review process for the new roster arrangements, highlighting the manner in which the Midlands roster impacts on Garda visibility, the management of staff on, or returning from, long-term illness and changes to annual leave. The Chief Executive also apprised Members of challenges arising from new roster's implementation, including the impact it

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<sup>1</sup> European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT)

has on Garda members potentially not applying for non-core positions as a result of potential diminution in earnings.

**Meeting with Garda Síochána Executive Director, Legal and Compliance.** The Chief Executive briefed Members on her recent meeting with the Executive Director, Legal and Compliance, including in relation to custody arrangements, the human rights impact assessment for the use of anti-spit hoods and the retention of personal information of individuals by the Garda Síochána. In addition, the Chief Executive advised that the Executive Director was updated on the Authority's work to develop a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the PCSA and the Garda Síochána for the conduct of inspections, in light of the statutory requirement to agree an MOU within three months of the commencement of the PSCS Act. Members noted that the meeting had been constructive and that a further meeting was scheduled for December.

**Internal Audit Procurement Outcomes:** Members considered the outcomes of a procurement process for the selection of an internal audit provider under the Office of Government Procurement's Accounting, Audit and Financial Services Framework. The Authority was satisfied to award the contract to the successful tenderer, Crowleys DFK, as proposed.

**Consultation on draft Regulations, PSCS Act 2024:** Members considered revised drafts of the Conduct Regulations and the Standards of Professional Behaviour Regulations, circulated by the Department of Justice, for the purpose of consultation. Members were provided with a briefing on the revised drafts, including key changes compared to the draft regulations that had been previously circulated for views in April. In considering the proposed revisions, Members had regard to a number of factors including:

- previous engagements with the Commissioner on the challenges arising from the implementation of existing regulations;
- comparability with other professional bodies;
- the consistency and applicability of proposed definitions;
- the unique position of Garda members in light of policing powers; and
- the extent to which principles such as public confidence in policing and a consideration of the reputational damage to policing of certain conduct was being brought to bear in the regulations, as drafted.

Following a detailed and wide-ranging discussion, Members agreed that there were a number of areas of concern arising from the consideration of the draft Conduct Regulations and the draft Standards of Professional Behaviour Regulations. It was agreed that a letter of response to the consultation would be finalised by the Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Chairperson, and submitted to the Department of Justice.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_144_01	Notify Crowleys DFK of the award of contract for the provision of internal audit services to the Policing Authority.	ASAP	Chief Executive
A_144_02	Finalise a response to the consultation on draft Regulations, PSCS Act, in conjunction with the Chairperson, and submit to the Department of Justice.	ASAP	Chief Executive

## 5. Status of the achievement of the Policing Authority Strategy Statement 2022-2024

An assessment of progress against the business plan to the end of year and the status of the achievement of the organisation's Strategy Statement was discussed by Members. Members stated that the extent of work completed to date and strategic objectives achieved was testament to the work of the Executive colleagues and was much appreciated.

## 6. Risk management report

The Authority considered the monthly risk report, provided in accordance with its Risk Management Policy. The Chief Executive advised that arising from the calling of a general election and the resulting dissolution of the Dáil, changes had been made to the risks related to the establishment and funding of the Policing and Community Safety Authority (PCSA).

The Chief Executive provided Members with a detailed overview of the processes and procedures required to enable the commencement of the PSCS Act and the establishment of voted expenditure for the PCSA. She outlined engagements to date with the colleagues in the Department of Justice on the matter. Members considered the implications of the overview provided, in the context of the proposed commencement date and the requirement for continuity of oversight of the Garda Síochána in the period of transition between statutory regimes. Members also discussed the implications should the proposed commencement date be deferred into 2025, in circumstances where Members' terms of office are scheduled to expire on 31 December. Members were advised that a business planning exercise had been conducted for 2025 with a focus on identifying areas requiring sustained oversight. Members noted the challenges in balancing the resources required to establish the PCSA and sustain oversight by the Policing Authority in the face of continuing uncertainty regarding a commencement date. Members expressed a desire for clarity regarding the continued functioning of the existing Authority, having regard to the matters discussed.

## 7. Appointments

Members were presented with the outcomes of the clearance process in respect of the appointment of three candidates to the rank of Chief Superintendent in the Garda Síochána. The Authority was satisfied to appoint two candidates to the rank of Chief Superintendent, with effect from the date on which the candidates take up the positions assigned by the Garda Commissioner.

It was agreed that further clarification would be sought in respect of clearance information provided for a third candidate being considered, prior to making a decision regarding their appointment.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_144_03	Advise the Commissioner of the appointment of two candidates to the rank of Chief Superintendent in the Garda Síochána and advise the candidates of their appointment	Immediate	Chief Executive
A-144_04	Seek further clarification on clearance information provided in respect of a candidate being considered for appointment to the rank of Chief Superintendent	Immediate	Secretary

## 8. PSCS Act implementation update

Members noted the implementation update provided. It was agreed that matters relating to this agenda item had been sufficiently addressed under item 6, Risk Management Report.

## 9. Diversity research

Members considered the final version of the commissioned research report on *'Experiences of Policing amongst Brazilians and People of African Descent in Ireland'*, following copy-editing and proof-reading. Members were satisfied that the revised draft reflected the Authority's feedback. The Chief Executive provided an overview of the next steps toward the report's finalisation and provision to the Commissioner for fact checking. Members noted that it is intended that the report's findings will be discussed at a future meeting of the PCSA, once established, and that publication will coincide with that discussion.

Arising from the experience of commissioning this and other research, Members had a wide ranging discussion in relation to a number of matters including:

- The process for developing terms of reference for the conduct of commissioned research;
- The process and experience of managing research projects by the Executive;
- Consideration of future opportunities to undertake research in-house;
- Issues pertaining to any recommendations arising from commissioned research and the status afforded them by the Authority, in the context of its statutory oversight role; and
- The capacity to strengthen and build relationships with the research community in the wider justice sector. In this regard the Authority note the extent of relationships already established and the opportunities to widen the Authority's research reach in the context of the PCSA's statutory functions.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_144_05	Finalise the commissioned research on the experience of policing by two minority communities in Ireland and provide a copy to the Commissioner for the opportunity to draw attention to factual inaccuracies, if any, in the report.	ASAP	Chief Executive

## **10. Policing performance Q3 report**

Members considered the Quarter 3 policing performance report which had been received from the Garda Síochána on 18 November. Members also had regard to an Executive overview highlighting key trends and items of note for Authority consideration. Members were advised that the Executive had gleaned additional information relevant to policing performance through their attendance at Performance Accountability Framework (PAF) meetings. The Chief Executive advised Members that by the end of the year the Executive will have attended a PAF meeting in almost every division in the country and that a number of themes were emerging as a consequence of this oversight work.

Members discussed the targets, RAG statuses and indicators outlined in the Garda Síochána's Q3 report and considered the seeming reluctance to assign a red, 'will not be achieved', status to targets at this juncture. Members were advised that the matter had been the subject of engagement with senior Garda representatives at the most recent Policing, Strategy and Performance Committee meeting but had not yielded any satisfactory response. Members agreed that a robust reporting system should reasonably be expected to report the non-achievement of targets, having regard to the known resource constraints within the service.

Members considered the status of a number of particular targets at the end of Quarter 3 including those relating to the National Diversity Forum, drug seizures, and the number of suspensions of Garda personnel. Members noted that while the diversity forums appeared to be operating successfully at divisional level, challenges remained in relation to the re-establishment of the national forum. Members noted that the PSCS Act could provide a valuable opportunity to re-consider the forum including its role, function and operation.

Members discussed the mechanisms for reporting the seizure of illicit drugs and it was agreed that it would be more beneficial from the perspective of enabling consistent oversight and public information to report the weight of amounts seized rather than monetary value. It was agreed that the matter would be raised with the Commissioner in Part B of the meeting.

The reduction in the number of Garda members suspended, as outlined in the Commissioner's monthly report, was noted positively by the Members. The role of the anti-corruption unit and the rigour with which ageing cases are reviewed, as previously outlined to the Authority by Assistant Commissioner, Governance and Accountability, was noted. The need to embed the progress made by the Commissioner in this area since his appointment was highlighted. It was agreed that the area of conduct and discipline would continue to be the subject of sustained oversight by the Authority into the future.

Members discussed Garda human resources, in particular vacancies at the ranks of Superintendent and Assistant Commissioner level, in addition to the scheduled completion of the term of office of the Commissioner in 2025. The impact of the continued uncertainty surrounding the commencement date for the PSCS Act which precludes the commencement of recruitment processes for vacancies at the senior ranks up to, and including, the rank of Commissioner was noted with concern by the Authority. The risks to the Garda organisation in this regard were discussed by the Members, in particular when coupled with projected retirements into the future. However, it was acknowledged that the increase in the mandatory retirement age to 62 had been a positive development. Members also discussed the challenges experienced by the Garda Síochána in managing sick leave, and wider issues of recruitment and retention.

**10. Domestic Abuse: An Inspection of the Garda Síochána's approach to prevention, protection, prosecution and victim support. Briefing from Chief Inspector, Garda Síochána Inspectorate**

The Chief Inspector of the Garda Síochána Inspectorate provided Members with a briefing on the inspection of the Garda Síochána's approach to prevention, protection, prosecution and victim support for domestic abuse. Members were advised that the inspection report had been sent to the Minister of Justice in October and that publication was anticipated in early 2025.

The Chief Inspector stated that the detailed report follows victims' journeys from the start of a report to prosecution and was also informed by a public consultation survey. He provided Members with a thematic overview of the findings and recommendations arising from the inspection process.

The Chief Inspector also provided Members with a briefing on the Post Implementation Review (PIR) of a recommendation arising from Crime Investigation Report of 2014, relating to a recommendation regarding the recording details of children under 12 on PULSE intelligence records. Members were apprised of the outcomes of the PIR, noting improvements made by the Garda Síochána in the intervening time. The Chief Inspector advised of the planned publication of the PIR outcomes at an early date.

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

Members discussed the agenda for the meeting and agreed the matters to be discussed.

**Documents for Noting by the Authority – November 2024**

The following documents were noted by the Authority Members:

Document		Action Required
D_144_01	Report of the Garda Síochána Inspectorate: Transnational Organised Crime - A Review of the Structures, Strategies and Processes in the Garda Síochána	For noting
D_144_02	Report of the Garda Síochána Inspectorate: Transnational Organised Crime - A Review of the Structures, Strategies and Processes in the Garda Síochána – Executive Summary	For noting

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

### Attendance:

**Authority and Executive:** Elaine Byrne (Chairperson), Anthony Harbinson, Donal de Buitleur, Deborah Donnelly, Paul Mageean, Helen Hall (Chief Executive), Aoife Clabby (Secretary), Aisling O’ Connor, Michal Alfasi-Hanley (item 17).

**Garda Síochána:** Drew Harris (Commissioner), Shawna Coxon (Deputy Commissioner), Justin Kelly (Deputy Commissioner), Siobhan Toale (Chief Corporate Officer), Paula Hilman (Assistant Commissioner), Angela Willis (Assistant Commissioner), Eimear Bourke (Executive Director), Yvonne Cooke (A/Executive Director), Jonathan Roberts (Assistant Commissioner), Niamh O’Hara (Assistant Principal).

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

- **The Scoping Inquiry into Historical Sexual Abuse in Schools run by religious orders.** The Commissioner advised that he had recently met with the person who led the Scoping Inquiry to better understand how the Garda Síochána can respond to the future work of the Commission of Investigation which is to be established by the Department of Justice. Members were advised that it would be challenging for the Garda Síochána to undertake preparatory work in the absence of Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Commission. The Commissioner advised that correspondence would issue to the Department of Justice, seeking input into the development of ToRs. Members also noted that there had been approximately seven hundred fresh reports to the Garda Síochána, following the publication of the Scoping Inquiry report. The Commissioner outlined the likely scale of the investigative work and associated timeframes for completion, highlighting a number of challenges, including those related to pre-PULSE records and digitisation.
- **An update into the disappearance and suspected murder of Kyran Durnin.** The Commissioner advised that the investigation is ongoing with definite lines of enquiry being followed. It was noted that a significant amount of information had now been made available in support of the investigation, but more information would be needed in order to direct the case further.
- **Recent Seizures.** The Commissioner outlined some recent successes of the Garda Síochána, including an overview of the circumstances of a recent seizure of vehicles from an organised criminal gang in Dublin, conducted in conjunction with the Criminal Assets Bureau. A recent seizure of significant quantities of drugs, and cash and money counting machines was also highlighted.
- **Draft Regulations, PSCS Act.** Members sought the views of the Commissioner and his senior team in relation to the revised draft Conduct Regulations and Standards of Professional Behaviour Regulations recently circulated by the Department of Justice for consultation. The Commissioner advised that a submission on the draft Regulations had been made by the Garda Síochána and outlined its key provisions. Members discussed proposed definitions relating to misconduct and proposed provisions in respect of appeals processes with the Commissioner and his senior colleagues and considered the potential implications for implementation of the regulations. Members also discussed the proposed composition of



the appeal board and the applicable sanctions available through the appeal mechanism. In relation to this matter, the Commissioner emphasised the critical importance of the capacity of the conduct regulations to have due regard to public confidence in policing when a sanction is imposed. The Commissioner further highlighted the value and necessity of considering mitigating and aggravating factors when imposing sanctions for misconduct, linked to the potential impact of the misconduct on public confidence in policing. Members concurred with the Commissioner in this regard.

Members briefly discussed the status of the draft Performance Regulations with the Commissioner, in the context that a revised draft was still under consideration by the Department of Justice.

- **Jurisdictional arrangements in relation to prosecution of serious cases.** The Authority discussed a recent case with the Commissioner in which a young woman was murdered in Belfast, but according to media reports, the suspect is being investigated and prosecuted in the Republic of Ireland. Members were apprised of the legislative framework dating back to 1974 whereby either jurisdiction can try serious matters without recourse to extradition. Members noted that it is for the accused to elect where to have their trial and there have been similar instances where this right has been exercised under legislation. Senior Garda representatives advised that the process can be complex and time consuming, but that the positive relationship between the Garda Síochána and the Police Service of Northern Ireland is helpful in giving the legislation effect.
- **Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) Report 2020.** The Authority sought clarification in relation to a response received to an information request for details as to whether any of the 17 disciplinary actions referenced in the government response to CPT report related to the ill-treatment of detainees. The matter had been the subject of discussion in public in February 2021 and the response received from the Garda Síochána in October 2024 appeared to be at odds with that of the government. In particular, it appeared that three Garda members were subject to disciplinary sanction for breach of discipline concerning abuse of Authority, with one of those related to the ill-treatment of a person in custody. Senior Garda representatives expressed confidence that the recent figures provided were correct. Following discussion, it was agreed that the matter would be confirmed and a correction notification issued to the Department of Justice, if required.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_144_06	To provide confirmation that correction notification has issued to the Department of Justice regarding CPT disciplinary action figures, if required.	ASAP	Garda Síochána

## 12. Governance of entities related to the Garda Síochána

At the outset of the agenda item, the position of the Authority was set out regarding the governance of entities related to the Garda Síochána which has been the subject of engagement since 2021, in particular in relation to assertions of weak financial management and governance of entities. While acknowledging that the Garda Síochána has no direct role in governing these entities, the

Authority re-iterated its concern in relation to the potential reputational damage to the Garda Síochána, by virtue of the provision of funding and staffing in some circumstances.

Members were provided with a presentation, setting out the context, current commitments to related entities, current progress to address issues identified, governance considerations and envisaged next steps.

Members engaged with senior Garda representatives on a number of themes arising from the presentation including in relation to:

- The extent of applicability of governance codes emanating from health and charities regulatory authorities in relation to any of the entities funded or supported through the provision of staff.
- The measures being undertaken to ensure that the management of any funding provided by the Garda Síochána is aligned with DPER circular 13/2014, among other requirements.
- The establishment of a preliminary governance group with the aim of providing an integrated oversight process for related entities.
- External advice and support being provided to review all existing agreements and to provide advice on their revision and enhancement, as required. In addition, Members noted that a review was being undertaken of the membership of the boards of entities and any governance implications for decision making or potential conflicts of interest.
- The allocation of Garda member resources to entities and consideration of risks to the Garda organisation.

In concluding the discussions, Members were provided with an overview of the timeframes for the completion of immediate actions identified and advised that the matters engaged upon would be a point of discussion with the new Board of An Garda Síochána on its establishment.

Authority Members and were provided with an update in relation to the voluntary disclosure made to the Revenue Commissioners in respect of travel and subsistence claims. Members were advised that a working group was meeting regularly to monitor the matter and that a Revenue audit was currently underway. Members noted that further progress would be given consideration following completion of the Revenue audit.

### **13. Garda Síochána Resources**

The Authority had a detailed and wide ranging discussion with the Commissioner and his senior colleagues in relation to human resources, including workforce planning, recruitment and retention. In support of discussions, Members had regard to a costed headcount plan update and financial report provided for consideration.

Members noted the recent budget allocation to the Garda Síochána and discussed projected Garda member numbers by quarter three 2027, as provided in the costed headcount plan. They asked the Commissioner and his senior colleagues for their assessment of the achievability of this target and the actions being taken to try progress these numbers.

The Commissioner advised Members that he was in receipt of a draft report from the Department of Justice's Working Group on Garda member recruitment, which sets out a scheme of action on all

points of the recruitment process with the aim of shortening the period between the time of application and an offer being made to a successful candidate. Members noted that the current time lag can be between 50-60 weeks and the Commissioner's view that a lot could be done to expedite the recruitment process.

The Commissioner advised that the organisation's immediate focus was on getting the 2024 cohort of applicants to commence training on 16 December.

The Commissioner and his senior colleagues discussed the 2025 recruitment campaign with Members. An overview was also provided of work that was being done, in conjunction with publicjobs, to re-shape elements of the recruitment process, having regard to current regulations and the specific responsibilities of both organisations. Measures to promote recruitment competitions in a more targeted manner and to concurrently run elements of the process were also outlined.

Notwithstanding the number of positive measures and initiatives referred to during the course of discussions, the Commissioner acknowledged that significant challenges remain in attaining growth of more than 3,000 members over the course of the next five years. The Commissioner added that achieving this level of growth would also have implications for the Garda estate and the need for increased flexibility in training provision and facilities. Members noted that the organisation remains without any designated tactical training facility in Dublin. The continuing challenge of a competitive employment market was also highlighted, as the organisation is extremely limited in its capacity to offer benefits such as blended working arrangements.

Members then discussed measures being employed and proposals under development to ensure the retention of its existing workforce. The Commissioner and his senior colleagues provided an overview of projected Garda member resignation and retirement levels, departures on civil service mobility or on promotion out of the organisations. Members were advised that resignations had slowed and that there have also been a small number of Garda members returning to the organisation. Members were also advised that the number of leavers among Garda staff was broadly consistent. While noting that public discourse was pointing to a retention challenge, Members concurred with senior Garda representatives that this narrative was not supported by data, as presented.

Arising from this, Members noted that the organisation is placing more focus on trying to understand the causal factors for the departure of Garda personnel, through a combination of data interrogation and exit interviews. Those members who choose to leave cited commute times and family circumstances as the primary reasons for wishing to leave, while reasons for staff departures include remote/hybrid working opportunities, more favourable learning and development opportunities and career development and progression. It was noted that Garda personnel are well regarded in terms of the skills and experience they bring and as such, the Garda Síochána will always experience churn, particularly in a competitive employment market. It was also noted that a significant number of members who voluntarily retire after thirty years' service are happy to do so after a highly rewarding career. Senior Garda representatives advised that careful analysis of causal factors would feed into the organisation's human resources strategy.

Members engaged with the Commissioner on the extent of sick leave in the organisation, which has doubled since COVID-19, and asked if this was a growing concern. The Commissioner and his senior colleagues outlined a series of measures that have been introduced to manage sick leave. Members

also asked the Commissioner about the policies, processes and procedures in place for people on long-term sickness leave and what approach was being adopted to manage their return to work or their exit from the organisation. The Commissioner's senior colleagues apprised Members of the key elements of the multi-pronged approach being adopted, encompassing roster change, case conferencing and increased capacity in occupational health, all of which will begin to be realised in 2025.

It was noted that a revised sickness/absence policy was being piloted in the Eastern Region in order to ascertain what supports are needed to better manage attendance and support individuals on long term sick absence to return to work, or alternatively to facilitate their exit from the organisation, with respect and dignity. Finally, Members also noted that as part of the introduction of the new 'Midlands' roster, a series of reviews had been built in which would include consideration of sick leave absences.

Members then engaged with the Commissioner and his senior colleagues in relation to their assessment of the organisation's training capacity and how HR&PD and the Director of the Training College quality assure the current effectiveness of training provided, both through the College and via the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) schools. Senior Garda colleagues outlined the role of the Director of the Training College and the extent of reach into CPD schools regionally, as well as the strong link between the HR&PD Directorate and the College Director. Members were advised that interlock meetings are already in place to provide assurance in relation to training provided by the CPPD Schools, which are under the direction of each divisional Chief Superintendent. It was further advised that some of the issues that have been raised regarding training quality and upskilling capacity will be addressed with the return of core CPD programmes and operational skills training to the College in 2025. Members discussed the approach to how training is prioritised with senior Garda representatives and were provided with an overview of the yearly planning cycle undertaken by the Training College Director. This involves outreach to the divisions, in addition to consideration of other factors including but not limited to the introduction of new legislation, upcoming events and so forth. The need for agility and an ability to respond quickly to training need, on request, was also highlighted.

#### **14. Effectiveness and consistency of policing across the country**

##### **a) Garda Síochána Operating Model in the context of national and regional structures**

Members engaged with the Commissioner and his senior colleagues in relation to the role that regional offices play in the overall context of the Operating Model. The Commissioner outlined the manner in which the regional structures provide support to operations at divisional level and identify instances where national support or additional resources are required. The Commissioner further outlined the range of specific functions that operate at regional level. He highlighted the role of the regional Assistant Commissioners overseeing the operation of divisions within the regions, moving resources to meet demand, in addition to their strategic role as members of the Senior Leadership Team. The Commissioner noted that the regional structure was in place for four years and is well settled.

Senior colleagues further elaborated on the intersection between divisional, regional and national structures, in the case of serious crimes, where specialist or technical ability might require to be

deployed. Members were advised that the structures in this regard were well embedded and that there was clarity in respect of when specialist supports are required, and instances were cited where sufficient capacity and expertise exists within divisions and specialist units are on call for support is needed.

In terms of the roll-out of the Garda Operating Model to the remaining divisions, Members asked about any mechanisms in place for the exchange of experiences and practice from more established divisions. Members were advised that mechanisms were in place and were provided with a brief overview of how information is shared and roll-out monitored. The importance of post 'go-live' monitoring of divisions and the role of the Strategic Transformation Office in this regard was highlighted.

#### **b) Property Exhibit Management System (PEMS)**

In the context of a number of engagements across the year on the Property Exhibit Management System (PEMS) and its importance to the criminal justice system, Members engaged with the Commissioner on his current level of assurance that the system is working effectively. In outlining work currently being undertaken to address the system's shortcomings, the Commissioner emphasised the role of PEMS in underpinning the management of exhibits. He noted that its security was an essential component in supporting the prevention and detection of crime. He further stated that regardless of value, all items must be treated with the same rigour and protected and that the PEMS policy is unequivocal in this regard.

The Commissioner advised that ongoing work in terms of the policy and process revisions were informed by the Garda Inspectorate's Post-Implementation Review, together with the original Inspectorate's report recommendations on PEMS. The Commissioner also advised that there is continued investment in the PEMS stores. From a governance perspective, the need for increased engagement by the responsible Divisional Superintendents, linking into a national governance framework for PEMS was acknowledged, in addition to training requirements for PEMS Managers. While noting that most of the recommendations from the original Inspectorate Report are progressing, the Commissioner advised that associated ICT work was significant and will progress in 2025. Members were also apprised of the work of an inter-departmental group seeking to enable a link from Forensic Science Ireland systems back into those of the Garda Síochána and it was hoped that progress could be made on this issue early in 2025.

In concluding discussions on this agenda item, Members sought an update in relation to the removal of a significant amount of seized drugs from Carlow Garda station. The Commissioner advised that the investigation continues. The Commissioner also advised that following the incident, a full review was undertaken across the entire Division, the outcomes of which will be applied nationally.

#### **c) Juvenile Diversion and Adult Caution**

Members noted that issues of consistency in the use of juvenile diversion and adult caution had been the subject of engagement between the Authority and the Garda Síochána over many years. Members asked the Commissioner how he assured himself that the system is now working effectively and whether the plans to have annual inspections conducted by the Garda Professional Standards Units had been carried out to prevent a recurrence of issues. Members were advised that a comprehensive assurance framework was now in place to ensure that the failures identified previously could not re-occur, including the establishment of a new dashboard system, a monitoring office and an annual reporting structure, in addition to the discussion of cases at Performance and

Accountability Framework (PAF) meetings. The Commissioner expressed confidence in the system now in place.

There was some confusion with regard to the role of Professional Standards and what work they had done recently on this matter. Given that a commitment had previously been given to the Authority that annual assurance checks would be conducted by Professional Standards, it was agreed that a detailed overview of the process of managing and monitoring juvenile diversion and adult cautions and the assurance mechanisms now in place would be provided to the Authority and discussed at a future meeting.

**d) Status of key outstanding policing policies (public order, victims, firearms, use of force, high speed pursuit)**

Members asked the Commissioner for updates on the status of a number of policies that have been outstanding for a considerable amount of time and are not yet finalised. Members were advised that the Victims’ Policy was nearing completion; that the Firearms Policy, encompassing issue, carriage and use, and the Spontaneous Pursuit Policy were both scheduled for approval by the Garda Executive in the coming weeks; and that the Use of Force Policy had been human rights screened and was currently under consideration by the organisation’s Policy, Governance and Coordination unit. Members were advised that the Public Order Policy had been published on the Garda Portal earlier in the day and that a copy would be provided to the Authority. Members were also advised that the policy relating to Domestic Abuse was at an earlier stage in the policy development process and has gone to the representative associations for consultation, with feedback anticipated by year end.

While acknowledging the progress made in respect of the various policies, the Authority also noted with concern the protracted timelines associated with the development and introduction of key operational policing policies, noting for example that the request to be provided with a copy of the Firearms Policy dated back to 2018.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
<b>A_144_07</b>	Provide the Authority with a detailed overview of the processes in place to manage and monitor juvenile diversions and adult cautions and the assurance mechanisms now in place.	ASAP	Garda Síochána

**15. Public Order**

The Authority asked about the Commissioner about rationale underpinning the decision to publish photos of 99 persons of interest, arising from investigations into the serious public disorder that had occurred in Dublin on 23 November 2023. The Commissioner advised that the investigation had involved the examination of 19,000 hours of CCTV footage whereby a number of suspects had been identified. The Commissioner further advised Members that once this line of inquiry had been exhausted, the decision was taken to seek the support of the public, and that appropriate advice had taken in relation to the organisation’s obligations around the privacy of individuals. Members noted that following appropriate risk assessment, a decision was taken to publish the photos. The Commissioner provided Members with an overview of the response received from the public

including a high level of nominations of individuals' identities. Members noted that the processing of nominations from the public was underway. The Commissioner expressed satisfaction with the public response and acknowledged the significant work that had been undertaken to identify suspects up until that point.

## **16. Policing Performance**

### **a) Garda Síochána National Policing Plan Performance Report: Quarter Three**

At the outset of discussion on the agenda item, Members commended the performance of the Gardaí Síochána in the year to date, noting the extent of achievements across a range of policing areas and in spite of continuing resource challenges.

Members engaged with the Commissioner and his senior colleagues on the RAG status of actions contained in the National Policing Plan and the anticipated outturn by year end. It was acknowledged that approximately half of the actions will have a red status of 'not achieved'. In that context, Members sought to understand why this anticipated result had not been more clearly signalled in the Q3 report. A number of factors were highlighted by senior Garda colleagues in this regard, in particular the need to build a greater understanding across the organisation of the value of more accurate, realistic reporting and an acceptance of the value of stating 'not achieved', in particular in the context of the pressure on resources. Members also queried whether the 'assessment of confidence in delivery' measured will again be included in future quarterly reports and it was agreed that the matter would be reflected upon.

Members were informed that the roll-out of the Garda Operating Model is working towards completion. While significant strides have been made, five divisions remain under the district model and work to move toward the functional area structures will continue into 2025.

Members noted that both the quarterly report on the achievement of the National Policing Plan and the Strategy Statement are designed to be outcome focussed and that the Garda Public Attitudes Survey is one such outcome measure. However, it was noted that 2022 survey are still referenced in the performance report. Members were advised that the outcomes of the 2023 Public Attitudes Survey would be published in the coming weeks and furthermore, that a procurement process was underway in order to facilitate the delivery of a more regular, dynamic survey with more up to date information. In that regard, Members raised again the issue of whether questions might be included in the survey to measure instances where individuals experience unacceptable behaviour from Garda members. It was agreed that Authority correspondence that had previously issued to the Commissioner on the matter, including a request further to section 27 of the Garda Síochána Act, would be re-sent to the Commissioner for his consideration. Members also noted that further to its statutory provisions, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) could be in a position to support and advise on developing a survey question to capture this experience in a way that is statistically valid.

Members engaged with the Commissioner on the detection rates for domestic and sexual abuse, as published by the CSO, and enquired whether the Garda Síochána outcomes project was having any impact on detection rates. The Commissioner advised that the organisation is gaining deeper insights into victim-offender relationships as a result of the outcomes project. While acknowledging that detection rates are not as high as might be desired, the Commissioner noted that detection rates in Ireland compare favourably on an international basis. The Commissioner also noted that

there are a range of reasons why victims no longer wish to pursue prosecution and that Ireland replicates the UK regarding the type of case disposals that occur, over and above detection disposals.

Members asked the Commissioner if further work had been undertaken to address the overcorrection that had occurred in relation to the cancellation of 999 calls and if there was an increased degree of caution being demonstrated by call handlers. Members were advised that the number of calls outstanding had reduced and the process of call cancellation, or 'resolution without dispatch', was proactively managed by control room supervisors. Members noted that associated policy had been updated to further outline the capacity of call handlers to cancel calls and that through a combination of policy updates, training and feedback, the situation in relation to call resolution without dispatch had significantly improved. Members engaged with senior Garda representatives on the intersection between regional control rooms and divisions in respect of call handling and respective roles and responsibilities in relation to each. Members were advised that the introduction of GardaSAFE to replace the old CAD system has been critical in empowering people to make decisions and the significant work of ICT has contributed positively to improvements.

Members asked the Commissioner about the status of the review of the Divisional Protective Services Units and whether the review work undertaken to date had found any emerging themes. It was agreed that the review would be the subject of further engagement with the Authority.

Members discussed the findings of a recent Women's Aid survey with the Commissioner and his senior colleagues. The Commissioner noted the survey's finding that there is still a significant proportion of women who do not report incidents to the Garda Síochána.

It was noted that there tends to be a spike in incidents of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence at this time of year and in that context, the Commissioner and senior colleagues highlighted its "16 Days of Action" campaign and plans in place in that regard.

Members also discussed the recent trend of some young men demonstrating increasingly misogynistic views and the implications for the Garda organisation in terms of service provision and its own internal operations. In this regard, the importance of a robust recruitment process and vetting, including in-career vetting, was highlighted. The Commissioner noted that as a large organisation, it is not immune to poor behaviours and that personnel may be victims or perpetrators of domestic, sexual or gender-based violence, about which the organisation is not aware. The need to support personnel and be increasingly vigilant in this area was acknowledged.

#### **b) Key issues arising from the Authority's half-year assessment report**

Members asked the Commissioner for any observations in relation to the Authority's draft half-year Assessment of Policing Performance. A number of observations and suggestions to support factual accuracy were provided for the Authority's consideration, prior to the report's finalisation and publication.

Arising from the discussions in respect of the half-year report, Members discussed available data in relation to member suspensions, in particular those of a longer duration. Senior Garda representatives outlined a number of reasons underpinning lengthy suspensions. Members proposed that there would be merit in the inclusion of such contextual information in future monthly reports of the Commissioner to the Authority.



## **17. Other Business**

Members requested that in future reporting, it would be helpful if the Garda Síochána could provide information in relation to drug seizures by weight rather than by monetary value. It was agreed that information in tabular format would be provided to the Authority in this regard.