Final Report
to the Garda Commissioner

From The Advisory Group on Garda Management and Leadership Development

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1. **Final Report to Commissioner from The Advisory Group on Garda Management and Leadership Development**

*For Commissioner Noel Conroy*

We are gratified that the Commissioner should have accepted the thrust of our interim report, and that the Minister, in also approving, has provided the resources for the implementation of some of the main recommendations.

We particularly welcome the announcement of the appointment of an additional Deputy Commissioner (Change Management), which was recommended by the Garda Act Implementation Group. He should be the prime agent in driving, within the force, the changes in organisation, structure and culture required to implement the provisions of the Garda Act.

We also welcome the prompt approval by the Minister of the seven senior civilian appointments we recommended.

We recommend that the appointment of Chief Administrative Officer be made first so that he/she can be involved in the selection of the other senior civilian staff, and in the determination of specific roles and responsibilities.

We would make an exception in the case of the civilian Director of Communications. Given the importance of maintaining communications with the media, the general public, and internally with the membership at a time of rapid change, this post should be filled urgently.

We are pleased to learn that as this report was being finalised, these two posts were publicly and widely advertised and that the process is now in train to make the appointments.

There is much to be said for the appointment of a civilian with relevant experience in change management to the post at Assistant Commissioner level directly responsible to the Deputy Commissioner for strategy. Strategy in this context does not refer to policing per se, but the strategy of how to effect change in large organisations. In this, the Garda would benefit from the experience of a person who had been involved in a similar process in the private or wider public sector.

In this report we wish to comment on:

- The urgent need to begin the process of appointing a successor to Commissioner Conroy;
- The importance of clarifying roles and of a precise delineation of responsibilities;
- The importance of empowering and resourcing the regional commands as the main engine of delivery;
- The imperative need to make the best use of skilled and trained Gardaí by increased civilianisation; and
- The importance of the HR function for training, development, performance management and succession planning.
2. Garda Commissioner

There is one overriding issue, which is becoming more urgent as time passes. That is the pending retirement early in November of this year of the current Commissioner and the identification and appointment of a successor. It is imperative that the process of filling this crucial post should begin as early as possible.

We raised this matter earlier in the year and we understand the reasons why it was thought undesirable to begin the process until after a general election in the early summer. This means in effect that little progress will be made before the end of June, at a difficult time of year for recruitment, which will make it extremely difficult to complete the process in the sort of timetable we have in mind. We urged therefore that as much preparatory work as possible be put in train before the election.

The recruitment should be structured to ensure that internal candidates with relevant experience from the rank of Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner and Chief Superintendent are encouraged to apply. Given the international standing of the post and its importance at a time when the Garda needs an exceptional quality of leadership the search process should extend internationally, and the post should be advertised widely in international police journals.

This does not in any way predicate the appointment of an external candidate but it does ensure that the successful candidate would have been tested against international standards in police leadership.

We recommend that, as in the case of the recent appointment of a Deputy Commissioner, there should be a Board appointed under the Public Appointments Service, chaired by a person of standing and clear independence and including at least one person with senior command experience in a police service other than an Garda Síochána, which would supervise the process and produce a list of three names of qualified candidates for consideration by the Government.

Commissioner Conroy has initiated and spearheaded an ambitious and far-reaching programme of change for An Garda Síochána.

It is important that his vision of where the force is going should be communicated to his successor and that he should guide his successor during the critical induction period. For this reason we recommend the practise which is common in the private sector of identifying the successor well in advance of the retirement of the Chief Officer, and allowing a generous period of overlap. This emphasises the need for an early start to identify his successor.
3. **Senior Civilian Posts**

The Government decision to approve the seven senior civilian appointments recommended in our previous Report and that of the Garda Inspectorate is a most important development. Appointments should be made as soon as possible consistent with an open and wide ranging recruitment process.

The new post of Chief Administrative Officer at Deputy Commissioner level is crucial, and should be filled by a person of wide experience at senior level in a large organisation which has undergone considerable change. The sort of experience required is more likely to have been gained in the private sector. This may require some flexibility in the structuring of the rewards package in order to attract the quality of person required. The CAO should be located along with the Deputy Commissioners in close proximity to the Commissioner, and his/her senior civilian staff should also be located at Headquarters. This and the other posts should be properly accommodated and supported from the time of appointment.

We also recommend that the appointment of the Chief Administrative Officer be made first so that he/she can be involved in the selection of the other senior civilian staff, and in the determination of specific roles and responsibilities. We would make an exception in the case of the civilian Director of Communications. Given the importance of maintaining communications with the media, the general public, and internally with the membership at a time of rapid change, this post should be filled urgently.
4. Governance

As a senior management team is being assembled and structures put in place to enable the Commissioner to discharge leadership and accountability roles, it is important that roles, authorities and relationships should be spelled out clearly, that delegation downwards through the organisation should be matched with accountability upwards, that there should be performance measurement and appraisal at all levels and that proper arrangements are made for training and staff development to prepare them for their new or changed roles.

The Garda Síochána Act 2005 imposed changes on the Garda and on the Department in its relationship with the Force. The change in the Accounting Officer function was predicated on a redefinition of previous roles and relationships. The changes in roles and relationships create challenges for both the Garda and the Department and any ambiguity leaves scope for confusion and ineffectiveness.

In the corporate world the authority given to a Board by shareholders would be covered by the Memorandum/Articles of Association/Companies Acts. Current best practice in corporate governance would require that the authority delegated from a Board to a Chief Executive would be documented and that key roles and responsibilities and accountability arrangements would also be clearly set out and documented. The Board, which would comprise mainly non-executive directors, should add to and endorse the strategic direction of the entity and provide oversight judgment and guidance. The Commissioner's role is analogous to that of a Chief Executive. Normal practice and procedure would then be that the Chief Executive would in turn delegate authority to senior management by defining their roles and responsibilities and setting them objectives including benchmarks against which performance would be assessed.

Reliance would not be placed solely on the founding legislation (Memorandum/Articles of Association/Companies Acts) to achieve this.

Some benefits of this practice are: ensuring that key people in the organisation understand what is required of them, aligning their behaviour with the organisation’s strategy avoiding duplication but ensuring coordination and joint ownership of objectives where appropriate and allowing their performance to be fairly measured. It also facilitates control over the organisation’s assets and allows risk to be mitigated by proper segregation of duties.

We have observed that in relation to An Garda Síochána, reliance does seem to be placed solely on legislation and statute. This leads to the following issues:

- Some requirements of the Garda Commissioner, such as his role and responsibility as Accounting Officer, need to be clearly specified and understood, in terms relevant to the structure of an Garda Síochána;
- The respective roles of the Garda Commissioner and the Secretary General of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform in relation to the operation of An Garda Síochána (and any other interface between the Department and the Force) should be clearly set out in accessible documents;
It is equally important that:

- The authority delegated to the Deputy and Assistant Commissioners is documented within the Force;
- Individual roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and annual objectives are set, and subject to review, within the Force;
- Specific performance indicators for objectives have benchmarks against which performance can be assessed; and
- Accountability and assurance arrangements within the senior levels and throughout the force are specified.

Lack of clarity leads to inefficiencies and overlap between the Force and the Department, undermines the ability of the Garda Commissioner to lead and implement change, makes less effective the decentralisation of management of operations to the regions and makes it difficult to focus and direct the resources within the Force and to have an effective performance management and assessment system.

We recommend that documentation of the delegated authorities and roles and responsibilities be developed as a matter of urgency to bring An Garda Síochána into line with best corporate governance standards. To commence this work, the following should be done:

- Document the specific requirements of the Accounting Officer role in An Garda Síochána
- Set out the respective roles and responsibilities of the Minister, Department and the Garda Commissioner in relation to the operation of the Force; including the interface, if any, between other officers in the Department and the Force, and a formal process for escalation of information about specific investigations and incidents;
- Formally define the authority being delegated by the Garda Commissioner to those officers directly reporting to him, and in turn to their direct reports, to ensure that adequate power is being given to the regional operations;
- Develop and implement a practice and formal procedure to define individual roles and responsibilities throughout the organisation to facilitate objective setting and performance measurement and assessment against agreed benchmarks; and
- Conduct an audit to ensure that financial authorities (such as expenditure approval) are delegated in a manner which ensures proper segregation of duties and controls, mirrors the roles and responsibilities of the individuals involved, and allows for effective and efficient operation and procurement.

The structures proposed for the Executive Board, comprising the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and CAO should provide the basis for strong and coherent strategic and operational leadership. Current concepts of corporate governance in the private sector and the wider Public Sector would also require informed non-Executive input in formulating the strategic direction and in ensuring that the governance structure in place is appropriate and functioning effectively.
As signalled in our last report, we have considered how best to provide for an element of challenge and scrutiny at strategic management level by the introduction of non-Executive Directors from the private sector, who would bring their own experience and expertise to the table at critical points in the annual planning, budgetary and review cycle and whose perspective and experience would leaven the generally public service background and experience of the executive directors.

We suggest that not more than three persons selected for their experience of management, strategic planning and human resource management in large and complex organisations in the private sector should join the Garda Commissioner, Deputy Commissioners and Chief Administrative Officer as non-Executive Directors forming a Review Board which might meet quarterly, or as appropriate, to consider Annual Policing plans, budgeting, allocation of resources, target setting and review.

The non-Executive Directors would be expected to familiarise themselves in general terms in the work of the organisation, and to be given the information and the facilities to enable them to do so. They would not become involved in operational matters. They are there, not because of a knowledge of policing or in any representative capacity but because of the experience they would bring of budgeting, resource allocation, the setting of targets and review of strategic performance. One of the non-Executive Directors should chair the Audit Committee; another might take a special interest in training, development and leadership.

This would not in any way conflict with the accountability of the Commissioner through the Minister to the Oireachtas for the general control, management and operational efficiency of an Garda Síochána.

We were glad to learn, as this report was being finalised, that provision had been made in the Criminal Justice Act 2007 (amending the Garda Síochána Act 2005) to legislate for such non-Executive Directors.
5. Regional Structure

We welcome the acceptance by Commissioner and Minister of the recommendation of the Garda Inspectorate (also made in our interim report) to devolve operational responsibility to six Regional Assistant Commissioners.

The form of delegation of policing functions is a matter for the Garda Inspectorate, but we reiterate that devolution makes sense in management terms also. It is important that the delegation of operational responsibility is matched by the devolution of financial and administrative responsibility and resources also.

It is important that regional Assistant Commissioners should be supported by financial and HR managers with an appropriate level of professional training and expertise. While it is important to achieve change as soon as possible, it is important too to ensure that people are properly trained and resourced before new responsibilities are thrust upon them. It also requires the adoption of assurance arrangements appropriate to the new structures.

The creation of six functioning operational units (and further devolution of functions and responsibilities within them) will facilitate the development of performance measurement systems, will help staff development, will create opportunities for training and development, for the operation of proper appraisal systems, for comparisons between regions and for intelligence based policing both regionally and nationally. It should also open up the field for promotion for more senior posts and facilitate succession planning.
6. Civilianisation

The immediate recruitment of 300 civilian staff to release an equivalent number of Gardaí for operational duties and to provide more visible policing on the streets is welcomed as a start to a process of more vigorous civilianisation.

We welcome the decision to appoint a Civilianisation Oversight Board to monitor implementation. They should be encouraged to regard the present target of 300 as a starting point and search for other opportunities to release trained Gardaí for uniformed duty by the recruitment of more civilians, or by outsourcing non-core functions. The announced recruitment of additional Gardaí should not in any way lessen the pressure for civilisation.

By any international standards the ratio of civilian to attested staff in an Garda Síochána is remarkably low. The aim should be to bring civilianisation to at least the average level of comparable forces in the UK, USA or Canada. The number required to do so is evidently much greater than 300.

A report in 2001 which recommended the civilianisation of about 500 posts estimated that it cost then between €15,000 and €20,000 a year more to employ a Garda to do work which did not require Garda skills and which could be as well, or more efficiently done by civilians. This report was approved with an implementation plan extending over 21 years with the main benefits falling in the last years and the conversion of posts depending on retirement on grounds of age. This would be regarded as risible in most private sector organisations, where the time required would be much more like 21 months.

This is the sort of target the implementation group should have in mind. We recommend that their brief should be extended urgently to include a rigorous scrutiny of all existing posts in appropriate areas with the presumption that those where an attested officer could be released should be civilianised.
7. **Training, Leadership Development and Succession Planning**

Our terms of reference required us to consider and advise on training, leadership development and succession planning. As these are key aspects of the role of the Human Resources ("HR") function, which reports to the new Chief Administrative Officer, we also comment on this expanded role.

7.1 **The Role of the HR function**

The greatest asset of an Garda Síochána lies in the membership. More than 75% of expenditure is on people, and it is important that that this asset is conserved, developed and motivated.

We reiterate the recommendation in our last report to amalgamate the two personnel departments so that attested and civilian staff are managed as a single work force under the control of the Commissioner. This should be done without delay. It should be recognised that the introduction of additional civilian staff will bring different HR challenges, particularly as the rate of turnover in this group is likely to be higher than it has been in the Force to date.

We also take this opportunity to re-emphasise the crucial importance of the role of the new civilian Director of Human Resources, as part of the Chief Administrative Officer’s team and the importance of filling this post quickly with a person of proven experience, energy and enthusiasm.

This person will have the responsibility of developing a strategy for training and development for both uniformed and civilian staff, for ensuring that training is adequately resourced and effectively delivered, that an Garda Síochána is a learning organisation, that promotion and appraisal systems are transparent and fair and are accepted as such by members at all levels, whether uniformed or civilian. We would expect the Director to take a personal interest in leadership development and succession planning and that he/she would participate in many of the more important promotion boards. It is because of the importance we attach to this function that we have suggested that one of the civilian non-executive members of the Review Board we propose in Section four should take a particular interest in the HR function and in the operation of promotion boards and succession planning.
7.2 Training

Training for all the staff, whether uniformed or civilian should (subject to the reservation expressed below) fall within the remit of the HR Director, as an important element in Human Resource Management.

Police training, the acquisition of the professional skills required, the legal, ethical and human-rights dimension, we leave to the Garda Inspectorate. Where we wish to comment is on the elements of management training required, particularly for those assuming senior management or command posts.

There is also, however, a need to develop adequate training and support for those in first-line supervisory posts and in middle management. These are crucial people in any large organisation. It is all the more important in the Garda at a time of rapid change and accelerated recruitment to maintain a proper numerical ratio between these supervisory grades and probationer and post-probationer entrants and to provide adequate training and senior management support. Specific management training should be provided for all those entering senior command positions. This can be provided partly in house, or partly or wholly bought in from outside educational institutions or agencies. There is advantage, too, in individual officers being sent on relevant courses in recognised business schools, and potential senior officers should experience, at some time in their career, a period of training, or working in a non-police environment.

It is important that whatever training is provided, whether in house or externally sourced, or in an outside institution, should be rigorously reviewed and assessed both for quality of outcome and value for money.

It needs to be remembered too that an increasingly high proportion of recruits enter the Garda College with a primary degree, and others acquire a degree during training. These will require a somewhat different style of management to the traditional recruit if they are to be stimulated and kept motivated in what is, for the Garda, as for the rest of society, a rapidly changing world.

That said, officers and staff at all levels should be encouraged to upgrade their qualifications by relevant degree level or other courses, and should be facilitated and funded in doing so. Success should be recognised financially and where appropriate by promotion.

Since training is the motor of change in large organisations it is important that the Deputy Commissioner Change Management should have a clear view of the support he needs from the training agencies. This will require a close liaison with the Director of Human Resources who should ultimately take responsibility for the provision of all training.

This would see the Deputy Commissioner not as a provider of training with responsibility for the Garda College but as a consumer with service level agreements with providers whether internal or external. This would enable him to exercise quality control, to prescribe desired outcomes and to ensure relevance of the training provided to the strategic needs of the organisation, and value for money.

However in a transitional period, until the capacity of the HR functions has been fully developed (including performance measurement and appraisal) responsibility for training should rest with the Deputy Commissioner/ Strategy in order to provide him with the leverage required to effect change in the organisation at all levels.
7.3 Leadership Development

We greatly favour early spotting of potential talent and of identifying a cadre of future potential leaders. It is important that an organisation the size of An Garda Síochána should develop and produce those who will lead the organisation in future generations. This process would not give anyone a guarantee of promotion or preferment, but provide opportunity for those with the ability, and the ambition, to take it. It is designed to capitalise on the human resources within the organisation and to ensure continuity of leadership. These would involve the identification of promising young talent, of both genders and all ethnic backgrounds, who should be given the opportunity to serve in a range of challenging posts in order to acquire the range of skills, experience and knowledge necessary in a senior post. They would all have a good grounding in the basic elements of policing, especially in working close to and with the community, but they would also gain experience in financial management, in strategic planning and policy making, and in the management of people.

Bright young people at an early stage in their careers should be given the opportunity to work as personal assistants to senior officers from whom they can learn by observation. They should also be used in working parties and task-groups where rank is less important than knowledge, experience or enthusiasm and they should, at appropriate stages in their careers, be exposed to relevant training or work experience whether in an Garda, with another police service or in the private or wider public sector.

It is important that this process is managed fairly and objectively, with no taint of favouritism, and in a way that does not demotivate the many in stimulating the few. It should be the direct and personal responsibility of the new civilian Director of Human Resources.

At senior levels in the private sector, it is not uncommon for executives to have a personal coach. This could be appropriate, too, at some senior levels in the Garda, for a Commissioner, or Regional Assistant Commissioners, where command can often be a lonely place, and for the Deputy Commissioner for Change Management. It can only work, where the officer himself/herself sees the value and has confidence in the coach in what is very much a personal and confidential relationship, and requests it. We believe such requests, if made, should be accommodated.

7.4 Performance measurement and enhancement

Underpinning all this is the need for an effective system of performance measurement and enhancement. This is an essential tool of management in any large organisation, both in providing for accountability and assurance in getting the best out of people in a highly labour-intensive operation.

Performance measurement would set challenging but achievable targets for the organisation as a whole, for divisions and units, and for individual officers and civilian staff. It would provide benchmarks against which achievement, or lack of it, can be gauged, and it would enable the performance and the potential of individuals to be appraised against objective standards, and it would help in determining training and other staff development needs.

Performance enhancement should follow from the appraisal of performance. It should enable the achievement of potential and identify any steps required to bring that about. Some of the steps will be within the control of the individual; others may require additional training, coaching and encouragement or in some cases relocation either for development or to get a better alignment of capability and job demands. The implementation of such a system would require significant investment in the skills of appraisers.
7.5 Succession Planning

We see the need for a systematic approach to succession planning and for a strategic approach to training and staff development which would spot potential talent early, which would ensure the more rapid progress of younger people to the more senior posts, and which would seek to address the under representation at senior levels of women and minority ethnic groups.

Succession planning is not a means of picking people for jobs, it is a process, which ensures that by training and the development of potential, there is a sufficient pool of able and experienced officers to provide continuity in management and direction, and competition for promotion to posts at every grade. In part this is caused by entry at a single recruitment level, by progression through the ranks mainly by seniority, and by people moving in a single cohort through the grades.

We have already referred to the problem of too many senior officers retiring at the same time. This causes a void in leadership, a lack of continuity, the loss of corporate memory and valuable experience. With a single recruitment point, people tend to move through the ranks in cohorts, and, given the average time spent in each rank, to be in their fifties before becoming Assistant Commissioners.

It would be good for the organisation to broaden the age range in senior ranks, and to get younger, enthusiastic, energetic people, with fresh ideas, into senior positions much earlier. This could be facilitated by allowing exceptional candidates from time to time to skip a grade on the promotional ladder. As they move through the ranks, an appraisal and reporting system should also begin to identify leadership potential and to identify a cadre of possible senior officers. These should be given a range of postings (including placements outside the State) in various aspects of policing which, it must always be remembered, is the core and primary function of the organisation, the opportunity to gain experience in other police services, and also exposure to strategic planning, finance and human resource management.
8. Conclusion

Our terms of reference asked us to suggest methods of developing strong management and leadership skills in An Garda Síochána, of promoting a culture of accountability, performance management, of developing human resource management, succession planning, civilian recruitment and training.

We believe that in this and our previous report we have covered this ground. All the elements of the remit hang together and all are interconnected. All are aspects of human resource management.

This is a subject to which we keep returning. It is important to realise that potential of the organisation by developing accountability and improving the performance of individuals at all levels. Sworn officers and civilians form a single workforce and should be managed at such.

We do not, however, forget that the core function of the organisation is policing: safeguarding society, making Ireland a safer place for its citizens, preventing crime and bringing criminals to justice. In all this every member has a contribution to make, and the success of the organisation will be measured against performance, outputs and outcomes in providing this vital service.

With this report we believe we have discharged our remit. We have indicated to the Commissioner and the Minister how we think roles and responsibilities can be clarified, and how systems might be developed to provide for accountability, training and development and succession planning. None of this is holy writ, but we have, we hope, pointed a way forward to those who will be appointed to senior managerial and command positions. The sooner they are appointed and allowed to get on with the job the better.

We have also seen the appointment, which we warmly welcome, of the new Deputy Commissioner for Change Management. It falls to this officer to drive forward and to implement the programme of change, which Commissioner Conroy has initiated, and to which we hope we have contributed.

It is important that he is given the necessary support through the early appointment of the senior civilian Managers required of the new structure, by the allocation of resources and support especially in the area of communication training and human resources, and most, of all, the commitment and visible support of senior management.

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