

Interim Report to the Garda Commissioner

from

The Advisory Group on Garda Management and
Leadership Development

October 2006

Interim Report to Commissioner

9th October, 2006

1. We were asked by the Minister to provide advice to the Garda Commissioner in order to help him in
 - developing strong management and leadership skills in an Garda Siochana;
 - promoting a culture of accountability and performance management;
 - developing human resource management;
 - succession planning at senior levels;
 - developing specialist skills through civilian recruitment and the training of serving officers;
 - generally enhancing the provision of training at all levels.
2. We have had very open and useful discussions with the Commissioner and the Garda Inspectorate, and we take into account the earlier report of the Implementation Review Group and the recommendations related to management, training and accountability in the reports of the Morris tribunal. Our role is confined to advice on management and not in relation to policing (except to the extent that this is the core function of the organisation). Advice on professional policing matters we see as the province of the Garda Inspectorate, with whom we will keep closely in touch.
3. We make this early interim report both because of the urgency required in the change programme, and the importance we attach to putting structures in place which will facilitate this process.
4. As in all change programmes, there are issues requiring attention in the short term, and other problems which can only be tackled in the medium and longer term.
5. The most immediate problem arises from the imminent retirement of a significant cadre of senior officers, including the Commissioner, a Deputy Commissioner and 4 Assistant Commissioners within the next two years.
6. The responses to both the short and long-term problems are also time-related, but even for those which require a longer time to bear fruit, a start should be made by putting in place the structures within which strategic change may be effected. There can also be a mutually reinforcing interaction between the different elements in our terms of reference.
7. • Strengthening the capacity of HR management is an important priority in an organisation which is highly labour-intensive, where the human capital is the principle asset, where motivation and commitment are essential, and where there is a continuing need to capitalise on the reserves of skill,

experience and professional knowledge which have been accumulated over the years.

- Civilianisation will release trained Gardai for professional police work appropriate to sworn officers; it will ensure that jobs are staffed at the appropriate level of skill, proficiency and experience, and will introduce new blood through the recruitment of specialists.
 - The devolution of responsibility downwards through the organisation will contribute to succession planning, to accountability and to performance measurement.
8. We are glad to note that the Commissioner is already moving in the direction of devolution to regional level and to civilianisation, and wishes to move further along these lines. He is also concerned to maintain high professional policing standards and to improve communications. The recommendations we make in this interim report are intended to help him achieve his objectives.
9. **Top Management**
A pre-requisite for progress, in our opinion, is to get the top structure right. The present structure of a management group of 15 meeting monthly should be replaced by a more tightly knit and focused executive group meeting weekly under the chairmanship of the Commissioner this would provide strategic leadership, drive change, allocate resources, set targets, monitor performance and maintain professional standards and managerial efficiency. It would also free the Commissioner of much of the day-to-day detail and leave him free for the strategic task of leading the organisation through a period of rapid change.
10. • Our preferred top structure would comprise a Board of Management, meeting weekly, Chaired by the Commissioner with three Deputy Commissioners (one of whom would be a civilian with appropriate experience of finance, HR or change-management in large private or public sector organisations) We wish to give further consideration to the possibility of providing a review and challenge capacity within the Board at crucial stages in the annual planning cycle by the introduction of two or three persons with relevant experience at a senior level in the private and wider public sector. We will return to this issue in a later report.
- One D/C would have responsibility for operations, one for strategic change-management, and one (the civilian, non-attested) for resource management, support services and general administration. Detailed proposals for the realignment of roles and responsibilities in place of the present structures should be developed in consultation with the Garda Inspectorate
 - Support services should be brought together under this D/C with civilian Directors of Finance, HR, ICT and Forensic Support with appropriate experience in their particular fields.
 - There is a need, within the structure, for a Director of Communications, a civilian appointment, responsible both for external relations and the press-office function, and, importantly, for internal communication with members at

all ranks and grades. Both sworn and civilian, and for an A/C responsible for professional standards both should report directly to the Commissioner.

- 11
 - The additional Deputy Commissioner post to drive and manage changes required by the 2005 Act, which was recommended in the Implementation Group report of Dec 2005, is long overdue and should be filled as a matter of urgency. Given that 6 of the existing 11 A/Cs will retire within the next 3 years, we recommend that this post should be tawled at Chief Superintendent level also in order to give a wider field of choice.
 - Consideration will also need to be given to the short term training needs of the successful candidate before taking up the job.

Devolution

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 - A key element in more transparently accountable Management is the maximum delegation of operational responsibility to the Assistant Commissioners heading the regions. This group should form the engine room of the organisation, driving performance responsible to the commissioner through the D/C Ops.
 - Their role would include the management of delegated resources of money and manpower, allocation to sub-units, contributing to the planning process, and accountability to the Commissioner for the achievement of the levels of performance required by strategic plans.
 - They should be appropriately supported by civilian staff, including specialists in finance, HR and analysis.
 - This would begin to set a framework for target setting and performance management and would enable benchmarks to be set and comparisons to be drawn across the regions.

Training

- 13 Training has been described as ‘The engine that drives change’ in a large police organisation. It requires both a clear strategy and adequate resources. We have had preliminary discussions with the A/ C and the current Head of HR, and will return to this issue in subsequent reports.

Civilianisation

14.
 - Many of the new jobs now emerging in support roles require skills, training and experience not generally provided to police recruits. Most police forces are now recruiting civilian specialists as analysts and scene of crime officers as well as in finance, HR, ICT and forensic support. This often has the added advantage of bringing in new blood at various levels, new ideas and a wider experience.

- The accelerated recruitment of civilians to many clerical-type jobs currently performed by uniformed officers would enhance the overall effectiveness of the force by releasing sworn Gardai for deployment on the streets, and in the professional police work for which they were recruited and trained.
- Both sworn and non-sworn members should be managed as a single labour force since all are on the staff of the Commissioner. It would be a mistake, in our view, to provide separate, parallel HR management systems for sworn and civilian staff. Steps which appear to have been taken in this direction should be reversed.
- We understand that some wider civil service manpower policies make it difficult to civilianise posts in the Garda or to recruit civilians to fill newly created posts. This is a case of one policy inhibiting another aimed at achieving change in the Garda Siochana, a greater Garda presence on the streets and greater efficiency and effectiveness in the use of public money. We recommend that this be looked at urgently.

Succession Planning

15.
 - That we address the subject of succession planning does not mean that we wish to become in any way involved in the normal processes of appointment and promotion in an Garda Siochana. These must continue to be conducted under the appropriate regulations and agreed procedures. We do, however, support the proposals in the Act which provide for a majority of outside members on recruitment and promotion boards
 - Succession planning does not involve picking people for particular jobs or for preferential treatment. Succession planning is a process by which an organisation attempts to foresee its manpower needs, and tries to ensure, for example, that the continuity of operations and the efficiency of the organisation are not compromised by too many senior officers retiring simultaneously, and that organisational memory is not lost. It should also ensure that people are given the range of training and experience which will equip them for the responsibilities of the next rank, and that where appointments are made, there is a sufficient supply of qualified and experienced candidates to ensure a real choice. By developing a skill-pool and a cadre of experienced, well-trained and motivated people with leadership potential, the future health of the organisation is thus assured.
 - It will be important, to ensure that this cadre of future leaders is exposed to modern management theories and practices as well as to the development of their professional policing capabilities. This is a subject to which, along with the wider issues of training and staff-development which we will return to in later reports.
16.
 - An immediate short-term problem arises in the retirement within the next year of the Commissioner and a Deputy Commissioner. The latter post, if our earlier recommendations are accepted, would be filled by a civilian with appropriate experience. This appointment should be made in the context of the restructuring

of the Board which we recommend and the regrouping of responsibilities. It should, ideally, be made in time to allow a reasonable hand-over period. It is important that the Government, when the time comes, should have a choice of names from which to appoint the next Commissioner, given the importance of the task, the public standing of the office, the qualities needed to provide leadership for a force and the imperative to drive forward a programme of change which will extend over years. We are now turning our attention to this, but endorse the recommendation of the Implementation Group report that, in order to provide a wider field, and to benchmark the appointment against best international standards, the post should be advertised internationally. (As should the new civilian post of D/C support services).

- 17 We will return to this issue in future reports, and also to the wider issues of training at all levels, empowerment leadership development, strategic planning and performance measurement.

In summary

We Recommend:

18. • The creation of a Board of Management comprising the Commissioner and three D/Cs (one of whom, a civilian) would be responsible for support services element
- Devolution of the maximum level of operational responsibility to the Regional A/Cs
 - The maximum degree of civilianisation in order to fill specialist posts including the D/C responsible for support services and to release sworn members for uniformed or other specifically policing duties.
 - The widening of the trawl for the D/C (Change Management), in the first place, to include Chief Superintendents.

Signed by:

Senator Maurice Hayes

For Maurice Hayes, Emer Daly, Maurice Keane, Michael Mulreany

Copied to Minister