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Record of meeting

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TITLE	Operation Kenova Governance Board held 9 <sup>th</sup> January 2024 via Teams		
SUMMARY	Record of discussions and recommendations made by the Board predominately about the publication of the Interim Report		
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**Minutes of Meeting held via Teams**

**9th January 2024**

**Present**

Iain Livingstone – IL (Chair)

Bertha McDougall – BM

Monica McWilliams – MMW

Rev. Harold Good – HG

Fr. Martin Magill – MM

Andy Mortimer - AM

Russ Walker – RW

David Old – DO

Liam O'Brien – LO'B

**Minutes**

Sharon Dutton

**Apologies**

None recorded

**Agenda**

1. Introduction / Minutes of previous meeting
2. Position of Chair
3. Declarations of Interests
4. Interim Report Update
5. DOPPNi Update
6. Operation Denton and NIO Transitional arrangements
7. ICRIR engagement
8. AOB / Date of next meeting TBA



## 1. Introduction /Minutes of Previous Meeting

**Chair (IL)** opened the meeting and apologised for the late start due to a technical problem with Teams. Stated that primarily the meeting was to discuss the possible response from the media once the Interim Report was published.

**(IL)** introduced David Old, Head of Communications for Bedfordshire Police who will be assisting in the media management of the publication of the Interim Report.

Regarding the minutes of the last meeting, **(BM)** asked for corrections to be made regarding CC Boutcher being Interim Chief Constable of PSNI at the time. **(MMW)** asked if corrections sent via email had been made.

**(IL)** Confirmed that we would ensure these changes were made and the minutes re-circulated.

## 2. Position of Chair

A discussion took place as to whether there would be a potential conflict of interest with **(IL)** remaining as chair of the Governance Board, given his new role as OIOC. The other members agreed that as they were not in a position to carry out the role themselves and, given the relatively short term remaining on Op Kenova, **(IL)** should continue as chair, as CC Boutcher had at the beginning of the inquiry.

**(IL)** confirmed that he was happy to continue in the role.

**(MMW)** stated that as the publication date for the Interim report draws nearer there is a requirement that members be kept updated on any relevant developments in that regard. **(AM)** confirmed that a strategic update section would be added to the weekly media briefing that is circulated to members.

## 3. Declaration of Interests

None recorded.

## 4. Interim Report Update

**(IL)** explained that PSNI had still not made a final determination about the publication of the Interim Report. A meeting is due to take place on the 10<sup>th</sup> January, led by Temporary DCC Todd, as CC Boutcher has recused himself from the process.

A discussion took place as to the potential consequences of PSNI making the decision not to publish the Interim Report or being leaked prior to circulation date.

Members expressed concerns that they hadn't as yet received a copy of the Interim Report submitted to PSNI. In particular they were unsighted on which Member amendments had been accepted and included in Mr Boutcher's submission to the PSNI.

**(IL)** confirmed that Mr Boutcher had accepted some of the Board Members proposed amendments.

**(IL)** confirmed that once PSNI have made their decision, Board Members would be provided with a copy, along with members of other Kenova steering groups in advance of any future publication date.



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(DO) explained his role in assisting manage this process. His main considerations at present are the physical environment where the launch will take place and anticipating/managing potential issues arising from the content of the Report.

The strategic objectives of the Media Strategy are to maintain the trust of victims' families, stakeholders and the wider community and to maintain confidence in the integrity of Op Kenova with particular emphasis on its operational independence and effectiveness.

A meeting is to be convened for all media to be at one place along with CC Boutcher, representatives from PSNI, Sir Iain, stakeholders and victim support groups.

Potential questions from journalists would be considered. Members asked (DO) the best way to respond to any approach by the press. It was agreed that he would provide a narrative that could be adapted by Board Members to deal with any such eventuality.

It was agreed that victims/families would be represented by Op Kenova Victim Focus Group.

Potential venues for the launch were discussed and Board Members provided suggestions.

Members reiterated that it was incumbent on Op Kenova to manage the date of publication of the report so it didn't clash with any significant anniversary.

## **5. DOPPNi**

(IL) advised on the current situation regarding the case files submitted by Op Kenova and how following a death earlier in the year, 'no prosecution' decision letters had been sent out to a number of families. A decision on a small number of 'Stakeknife' cases and Op Turma still awaits.

## **6. Operation Denton Update**

(IL) stated that good progress was being made on Op Denton and completion of the initial key findings that will help to shape the final report. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

## **7. ICRIR Update**

(IL) stated that a positive meeting had taken place before Christmas with their Commissioner of Investigations to discuss the relationship between ICRIR and Op Kenova This will have to be carefully managed as Kenova work is still ongoing.

## **8. AOB:**

(IL) thanked everyone for their observations and helpful comments and confirmed that potential dates for an imminent face to face meeting before the end of January would be circulated to Members for consideration.

(MMW) advised that she will be out of the Country and would therefore attend remotely.