

16 May 2017

The Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality, Ms Frances Fitzgerald TD, has today announced the membership of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland.

The chair of the Commission, as agreed by Government on 9 May 2017, will be Ms Kathleen O'Toole. The other members will be Ms Noeline Blackwell, Mr Conor Brady, Dr Johnny Connolly, Dr Vicky Conway, Mr Tim Dalton, Sir Peter Fahy, Dr Eddie Molloy, Ms Tonita Murray, Dr Antonio Oftelie, Professor Donncha O'Connell, and Ms Helen Ryan.

Crucially the Commission may bring forward immediate proposals and rolling recommendations for implementation, that it considers are required to be addressed in the short-term, in advance of its final report.

Speaking following today's Government meeting, where the final terms of reference for the Commission were also approved, the Tánaiste said: ***"These terms of reference for the Commission of the Future of Policing in Ireland encompass all functions carried out by An Garda Síochána including community safety, state security and immigration, and also the full range of bodies that have a role in providing oversight and accountability including the three statutory bodies, but also my Department and the Government. They provide for a comprehensive examination of all aspects of policing in Ireland.***

"The individuals who make up the Commission have impressive track records in their respective fields. The membership seeks to strike the right balance between domestic and international perspectives and between academic, operational policing, community and victims' perspectives, change management, governance and indeed Government experience. These are people of the highest calibre and will bring the necessary diversity of thought and expertise to the task.

"Issues which have arisen - many historic, some contemporary - mean the time is right for a fundamental examination of all aspects of policing in this state. This is an opportunity to stand back and examine how we are to be policed as we approach the centenary of the establishment of An Garda Síochána. At the same time the crucial work of day-to-day policing and oversight continues.

"This includes an extensive programme of reform underway in An Garda Síochána based on the reports of the Garda Inspectorate and under the independent oversight of the Policing Authority. These reforms, which affect all aspects of the administration and operation of An Garda Síochána, must not be impeded or delayed in any way by the establishment of the Commission.

"I am determined to continue shining a light to uncover bad practices and issues that must be resolved. The establishment of the Policing Authority means that we now have, among other things, an independent body to oversee the implementation of the reform programme in An Garda Síochána and specifically the agreed recommendations of the Inspectorate Report 'Changing Policing in Ireland'. Since the beginning of this year the independent Authority has been making appointments to senior positions in An Garda Síochána.

"The current reform must continue relentlessly. The work of the oversight bodies must continue and the Government's support for An Garda Síochána by providing the necessary resources for recruitment and investment will continue.

"It is clear from recent events that systemic issues which have emerged require the establishment of this expert group on policing to report in a timely way on the further changes now necessary to meet the requirements of a modern police force."

The Tánaiste expressed her appreciation of the willingness on the part of the Chair and the members to become involved in what is a hugely important task that is of relevance to every citizen of the State.

The Commission will report by September 2018.