



Mr. Charlie Flanagan, TD
Minister for Justice and Equality
Department of Justice and Equality
51 St. Stephens Green
Dublin 2
D02 HK52

Dear Minister ,

The Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland has discussed the recent retirement of the Garda Commissioner and I am writing to you with the unanimous support of my colleagues.

We believe that it would be a serious mistake to proceed with the selection of a new Garda Commissioner until this Commission has produced its report on the transformation of national policing arrangements.

We are still at an early stage in our consultative process and it is too early to predict what our eventual recommendations will be, but we can say without doubt that they will significantly affect the future role and responsibilities of the Commissioner of An Garda Síochána, and the management structure of the organisation s/he heads. Our consultations to date on the design of a transformational policing framework have identified issues around governance, accountability, the role of policing and the current powers and responsibilities of the Commissioner which would suggest a need for very significant changes, including legislation.

This clearly has implications for the search and selection process for the next Commissioner. We are strongly of the view that the selection process for a new Commissioner should begin only when the future policing arrangements, including partnerships with other government agencies, and the role of the Commissioner within these arrangements, become clear. It would not be possible in advance of that to draw up job specifications for the position, nor would it be realistic to expect credible candidates to come forward in the absence of clarity about what the job will entail.

Moreover, we believe that there is an immediate need for a much enhanced capacity within An Garda Síochána for implementing change. We are struck by the large backlog of sensible recommendations, from the Inspectorate and others, and the very slow pace of action on them. Both the Policing Authority and An Garda Síochána have made it clear to us that a key problem is capacity to effect change within the organisation. The

recently published third quarterly report from the Policing Authority also highlights a current capacity gap in prioritising recommendations for implementation.

We welcome the recent appointment of a new Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation. This is an important step forward. However, we strongly recommend that more needs to be done as a matter of urgency to provide technical assistance and support to the Acting Commissioner and build the capacity of the wider management team so that accelerated progress on reform can go forward now, notwithstanding the delay in selecting a new Commissioner.

We shall be happy to advise on the kind of capacity building we have in mind. Such steps would of course be without prejudice to further management changes that might be made in due course by an incoming Commissioner who will undoubtedly need latitude to select a new Command Team. They will also lay the groundwork for transformational change to follow quickly after our report is produced.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathleen O'Toole', written in a cursive style.

Kathleen O'Toole
Chairperson
Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland

22September 2017