

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF THE JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS, MERCHANT'S QUAY, ON FRIDAY, 11TH OCTOBER, 2019 AT 11.30 A.M.

IN THE CHAIR:	Councillor Adam Teskey
MEMBERS:	Councillors B. Collins, Costelloe, Hartigan, Keary, O'Brien, O'Donoghue, Slattery and Talukder
OIREACHTAS MEMBERS :	Jan O'Sullivan, T.D., Niall Collins, T.D., Maurice Quinlivan, T.D., Tom Neville, T.D. and Senator Maria Byrne
GARDA NOMINATIONS :	Chief Superintendent (Mr. G. Roche), Superintendent (Mr. J. Ryan), Superintendent (Mr. D. O'Connor), Superintendent (Ms. A. Magner), Superintendent (Mr. B. Sugrue), Sergeant (Mr. T. Minitier), Senior Crime & Policing Analyst, (Ms. L. Breen)
OFFICIALS :	Chief Executive (Dr. P. Daly), Senior Executive Officer (Mr. P. Clune), Administrative Officer (Ms. F. McCormack), Staff Officer (Ms. L. Creamer)
OTHERS :	Councillor K. Sheahan

1. Election of Chairperson

The Chief Executive welcomed the Elected Members and Members of An Garda Síochána to the meeting. He then requested nominations for the position of Chairperson.

It was proposed by Councillor Talukder, seconded by Councillor B. Collins and agreed to elect Councillor Adam Teskey as Chairperson of the Joint Policing Committee.

2. Update on Joint Policing Membership

The A/Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services, Governance and Customer Services, stated the PPN are in the process of being constituted and will be in place within the next few months.

3. Adoption of Minutes

Circulated, copy of Minutes of Joint Policing Committee Meeting held on 10th May, 2019.

Proposed by Councillor Hartigan
Seconded by Councillor O'Sullivan

4. Dates for JPC Meetings

It was agreed that the next Meeting would be held on Friday, 13th December at 10.00 a.m.

The A/Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services, Governance and Customer Services, agreed to revert to Members with dates for meetings in 2020.

5. Overview on Crime Statistics

The Senior Crime and Policing Analyst then gave a brief overview on statistics under the following headings for Limerick City and County :

- Property Crime
- Crimes against persons
- Traffic Crimes
- Assaults
- Traffic Policing
- Collisions and Lifesaver Offences

She stated that overall crime was down 10% compared to last year, crime against persons was down 4%, assaults were down 2% and minor assaults were down 8%.

The Chief Superintendent replied to Members queries as follows :

He referred to the serious drugs problem in the country and the Garda resources tackling this problem and stated that the number of Gardai put into this area has increased in the last year. He said a lot of focus is being placed on individuals who are making money from the sale and supply of drugs. Operations are ongoing all the time and he referred specifically to Operation Shannonside which was set up due to information received and is focused particularly in regeneration areas. Gardai receive information from a variety of sources and surveillance is involved in most cases. He assured Members that the detection and prosecution for drugs offences is at the high end of his priorities.

He stated that Gardai engage in a combined approach with other agencies in tackling the epidemic of drugs. He accepted that drugs is a big issue in universities, however, pointed out that it is not just young people who are using drugs, it is now part of the social scene unfortunately. He stated that a Community Co-Ordinator's Office has been established in Roxboro Garda Station where information can be given confidentially by phone or e mail. He added that he cannot comment on individual cases. He informed members that revised legislation is required to deal with re-offenders of crime.

Members expressed concern at children turning up at school under the influence of drugs and suggested that something be done in Schools to address this problem. Protection monies are also paid to criminals on building sites which is not exclusive to Dublin and suggested that the Gardai canvas the Construction Industry to see how this can be addressed. Members also referred to the increased number of breakins to cars and shops in the city centre and other areas occurring during daylight hours, however, in some instances, due to the lack of Garda resources, such breakins cannot be dealt with immediately.

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated that calls where violence is involved are prioritised and dealt with immediately. He agreed with Members that there is a high percentage of breakins to shops, however, CCTV in Limerick is very useful in investigating serious crime. He pointed out that, in all instances, Gardai have to observe GDPR. He added that the Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB) is also used where necessary. The issue of building sites is ongoing and needs to be addressed at national level.

6. Garda Divisional Policing Model

The Chief Superintendent gave a Presentation on the new Garda Divisional Policing Model. The new model now has four regions instead of the previous six. As announced by Commissioner Drew Harris on 10th October, 2019, the first phase of implementation at divisional level will begin in five divisions: Limerick, Galway, Cork City, Dublin South Central and Meath/Westmeath. He stated that Limerick is a large division that is already at the desired scale for the new Operating Model.

He stated that the objective of the new Policing Model is to :

- Professionalise services to support operational policing;
- Increase visibility to enable greater community engagement and to promote public safety;
- Improve performance and accountability by strengthening governance, leadership and supervision;

In reply to Members queries, the Chief Superintendent stated that it is too early to comment on this new model as it is in the very early stages of being set up.

7. Garda Resources

The Chief Superintendent outlined the Garda Resources per district.

He stated that additional staff had to be put into the Victims Unit, Professional Services Unit and traffic as he is trying to expand the role of traffic. However, the Courts in Mulgrave Street has taken up additional resources. The number of court sittings has increased substantially and Gardai are required for the Custody Suites also. He pointed out that up to twenty Gardai could be involved in cases at the Courts and added that no additional resources has been provided for this service. Seven extra Reserves have been recruited bringing the total to sixteen now. In reply to Members, he said that the Army cannot be brought in to replace the Gardai in the Courts but added that the Prison Service are there also.

8. Operation Shannonside

The Chief Superintendent stated that on 1st July, 2019 a new operation titled 'Operation Shannonside' commenced in Limerick City North and South Districts to tackle anti social behaviour and drug dealing/use in Regeneration and other areas within the city. This came about from meetings with Community groups through the Paul Partnership during the summer. He stated that as part of the operation high visibility proactive policing patrols and checkpoints were introduced involving the Community Policing Unit, Roads Policing Unit, Divisional Drugs Unit and supported by District Detective Units and regular uniform units. He pointed out that between 1st July 2019 and 8th October 2019 a total of 696 incidents were recorded.

9. Crime Task Force

The Chief Superintendent stated that a Crime Task Force was formed on 9th September 2019 to investigate serious burglaries and robberies. Members were presented with the number of Crime Task Force Incidents under the various headings during the period from 9th September 2019 to 8th October, 2019.

10. Question submitted by Councillor Murphy:

“I will ask at the next Meeting for an update on concerns expressed to me about the possibility of anti social behaviour occurring again this year at the Ferry car park in Castleconnell”.

Superintendent Sugrue stated that he had spoken to Councillor Murphy on 8th October, 2019 and confirmed that extra resources would be supplied to the playground/car park area in Castleconnell during Halloween to prevent further escalation of anti social behaviour.

11. Question submitted to Deputy Niall Collins:

“I will ask at the next Meeting for details of the number of text alerts that have been sent out to each text alert group in each Garda District in the Limerick Garda Division in years 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 to date and the reason why some groups are not receiving any or very few text alerts”.

The Chief Superintendent stated that there are fifty two Community Alert/Text Alert Groups in the Limerick Garda Division including a Cross District Group named Morning Star Group which covers County Limerick and North Kerry of Milk Truck Drivers established by Gardai in Bruff in 2018. He added that the volume of texts sent to various groups depended on crime or issues in a specific area. He gave Members a breakdown of the number of Garda Text Alerts per district.

Supt. Magner said the text alert system was very advantageous in the county to report suspicious vehicles in areas and also in reporting missing persons. She stressed the importance that Groups ensure they have enough credit to use the system. A new text alert system will be set up shortly in Kilmeedy. She pointed out that the cost per text alert is €10 so it is important not to overuse it. She added that anybody interested in setting up a text alert system in their area should contact the Gardai.

The Chairman informed Members that queries in relation to Speed Limit Review would be looked at.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed : _____

Date : _____