

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF THE JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS, MERCHANT'S QUAY, ON FRIDAY, 21ST FEBRUARY, 2020 AT 10.00 A.M.

IN THE CHAIR :	Councillor A. Teskey
MEMBERS :	Councillors B. Collins, J. Costelloe, S. Keary, S. Kiely, M. Murphy, E. O'Brien, M. Ryan, K. Sheahan, C. Sheehan and A. Talukder
OIREACTHAS MEMBERS :	N. Collins, T.D. and M. Quinlivan, T.D.
GARDA NOMINATIONS :	Chief Superintendent (Mr. G. Roche), Superintendent (Brian Sugrue), Superintendent (Mr. D. O'Connor), Inspector (Mr. O. Kennedy), Senior Crime & Policing Analyst (Ms. L. Breen), Senior Intelligence Analyst (Ms. L. Collins), Detective Garda (Mr. D. O'Halloran), Community Engagement Co-Ordinator Ms. G. Sheahan, Sergeant (Ms. C. Dee)
OFFICIALS :	Chief Executive (Dr. P. Daly), Senior Executive Officer (Mr. J. Clune), Administrative Officer (Mr. P. Malone), Administrative Officer (Mr. S. Hayes), Administrative Officer (Ms. F. McCormack) and Staff Officer (Ms. L. Creamer)
OTHERS :	Mr. K. O'Donnell, T.D.
APOLOGIES :	Senator Maria Byrne

Prior to the business proper of the meeting, Councillor A. Teskey congratulated the Oireachtas Members on their recent election and said he looked forward to working with them in the future.

1. Minutes

Circulated, copy of Minutes of Joint Policing Committee Meeting held on 12th December, 2019 :

Proposed by Councillor B. Collins
Seconded by N. Collins, T.D.

2. Update from Chief Superintendent

The Chief Superintendent also congratulated the recently elected Oireachtas Members and assured them of An Garda Síochána's co-operation in the future.

The Chief Superintendent stated that An Garda Síochána has a statutory obligation to develop a Strategy Statement every three years. An Garda Síochána's mission, objectives, strategies and expected outputs/outcomes are set out in the Strategy Statement. He outlined the mission and strategy 2019 – 2021. He stated that, as Chief Superintendent, he wanted the Joint Policing Committee input as An Garda Síochána's Policing Plan is to reflect Limerick issues and what goals it hoped to achieve. He said it was his aim that the Limerick Division Policing Plan would be a Policing Plan for all internal and external stakeholders. He outlined the Garda Decision making Model.

He stated that since early 2019 senior Garda Management have been liaising with senior officials in Limerick City and County Council in respect of issues of extortion/intimidation at building sites by companies and in recent months there has been four charges attributed for this crime type. He pointed out that, at present, An Garda Síochána has no outstanding complaint, however, if any member of the JPC was aware of/or have any evidence regarding extortion/intimidation at building sites, he asked them to bring it to the attention of An Garda Síochána immediately for investigation.

3. Presentation by Ms. Grace O'Sheahan on the Role of The Community Policing Co-Ordinator

Ms. O'Sheahan stated that her role is :

- Dealing with correspondence
- Multi layer contact point
- Manage stakeholder data base
- Engage with community led organisations and initiatives
- Newsletters (Prospected)
- Support Divisional Management Team
- Provide information tools for events etc.
- Attend meetings where necessary
- Co-Ordinate with Community Engagement Inspector / Other S.M.

Inspector Ollie Kennedy informed Members of the new Community Policing 15 seater mini bus. He thanked Limerick City and County Council for it's support and significant financial contribution towards this mini bus. The mini bus will be incorporated into the Limerick Garda fleet and the running costs of same will be covered by An Garda Síochána. This mini bus will benefit all community groups e.g. youth groups, elderly groups, clubs, schools, sporting organisations etc. This will allow Gardai to engage with local community groups and foster existing strong links within the community. He thanked the Chief Superintendent for his determination in ensuring this came to fruition.

The Chief Superintendent thanked the Council for it's contribution also and stated that this bus will be used for community purposes. He paid tribute to Inspector Kennedy for his efforts in relation to this project.

Members welcomed this mini bus and asked that it's use be evenly balanced between city and county community purposes.

4. Presentation by Detective Garda Declan O'Halloran, Divisional Drugs Unit

Detective Garda Declan O'Halloran outlined the Drugs Statistics 2019 as follows :

Sale / Supply –	City 156 and County 16
MDA Warrants for Division	236
MDA Searches for Division	2,687
Simple Possession	City 560 and County 45

He added that seven warrants were executed yielding the seizure in total of €410,160 believed to be the proceeds of drug dealing and three warrants were executed yielding the seizure of three loaded firearms and accompanying firearms components.

He stated that the Divisional Drug Squad led an operation targeting sale/supply of crack cocaine in the northside of the city on 8th January 2020. As a result of this operation four persons were arrested and detained under Drug Trafficking legislation and four persons were charged and are before the courts. He listed the monetary value of the various drugs seized.

He also gave an overview of drugs statistics for 2020 for the Limerick division and the values of sale/supply of the controlled substances seized to date in 2020. He outlined the differences between crack cocaine and cocaine.

The Chief Superintendent stated that since September there is a deliberate input of drugs into the market by individuals in the city and is focused directly at the most vulnerable in our society. A lot of work is being done by An Garda Síochána with the Mid Western Task Force to monitor how big this problem is. The drug addicts are presenting in a lot worse physical and mental state due to the availability of crack cocaine. A multi agency approach is needed to address this problem and all are working hard with communities and various forums. In September the Garda Strategy was put in place. A lot of work is being done to contain the drugs problem. Intelligence led high impact operation was carried out that included all agencies which yielded results. As a result Exclusion Orders were sought and Gardai liaised with the Council in relation to Tenancy Agreements. He added that the operation is still ongoing. He said he is determined to get on top of this problem and stated that he has increased staffing in the Drugs Unit by 50%. He asked Members to inform the Gardai about any issues that come to their attention.

The Chief Superintendent replied to Members queries as follows :

Gardaí can stop a car and test for drugs if they have reasonable grounds for suspicion e.g. smell, intelligence, previous history.

He acknowledged that drugs is a problem in the county areas as well as the city and stated that he is putting in extra resources into the county areas as part of the new operating model. He intends growing this and said it will be part of the new community policing in areas. He said the Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB) are working hard to combat the problem of drugs and all information received is sent to CAB. He referred to the mental and physical problems that arise from the use of drugs, the effects of which will be seen down the road. He confirmed that An Garda Síochána has a Schools Programme which involves Gardaí going into primary schools and speaking to students about various items and drug use would be broadly discussed. However, he said the Department of Education has made it clear that this is their responsibility but added the Gardaí are happy to help. He confirmed that there is a dog in the Drugs Unit in Limerick who is trained in drug detection and public order. He stated that drugs can show up in your system three weeks after use and it was important to make people aware of this. He added that medicated drugs must also be taken into consideration when testing. He said community information and involvement is invaluable in combatting the drugs problem. He added that the problem of drugs is not just in Limerick, it is a national problem.

He said that increased garda resources will be in place in the county within the next few days along with Drugs Unit. The Gardaí carry out operations in licensed premises to check for underage drinking and drug testing can also be carried out here. However, he said the onus is on the owners of licensed premises to take appropriate steps to ensure there are no drugs being sold or used on their premises. He said under the new Garda operating model the whole county will be based in Newcastle West, however, this will not affect the policing in the east of the county and services will not change. The purpose is to strengthen community engagement. He said he would have figures on the number of ASBOS issued for the next meeting. Also applications are being made to the Courts for Exclusion Orders and tenancies are also taken into consideration in relation to combating drugs.

The Chief Executive informed members that regular meetings occur with the Gardaí and measures in relation to a joint approach in tackling the drugs issue is one of the critical items that is discussed.

5. Presentation by Mr. Seamus Hayes, Housing Service Officer, on Community Sustainment/Estate Management

The Housing Service Officer gave a detailed presentation on Community Sustainment / Estate Management.

He replied to Members queries as follows :

There are four Community Sustainment Officers and the Unit has a team based approach with the aim of encouraging and supporting members of the community to engage with the Council and other agencies and to become actively involved and acquire a sense of ownership of their estates.

This is a service where trust is established and maintained through good communication and all information received is dealt with confidentially.

Allegations of criminal behaviour are a matter for investigation in the first instance by An Garda Síochána who is the Council's key partner in trying to curb anti social behaviour. Many issues can be resolved by talking to people, however, in more serious cases a series of measures may apply ranging from verbal warnings, to written warnings, to statutory written warnings and ultimately issuing of proceedings in District Court. Court application may be for repossession of house or issuing of excluding order against offenders.

He added that Council tenants are obliged to keep children under control. However, any issues in relation to children are dealt with by Tusla.

He stated that tenants housed under HAP or RAS are not the responsibility of the Council.

6. Question submitted by Councillor Michael Murphy:

"I will ask at the next Meeting, as an aid to policing within the city centre, do CCTV cameras continue to be monitored at Henry Street Garda Station and has there been any reduction in the level of monitoring in the past year".

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated that staff in this area has been reduced, however cameras can be tracked and manipulated.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed : _____
Councillor Adam Teskey, Chairman

Date : _____