

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF THE JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS, MERCHANT'S QUAY ON THURSDAY, 12TH DECEMBER, 2019 AT 2.00 P.M.

IN THE CHAIR :	Councillor A. Teskey
MEMBERS :	Councillors B. Collins, J. Collins, J. Costelloe, L. Galvin, S. Keary, S. Kiely, M. Murphy, E. O'Brien, C. Sheehan and A. Talukder
OIREACHTAS MEMBERS :	M. Quinlivan, T.D., T. Neville and Senator M. 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), Senior Crime & Policing Analyst (Ms. L. Breen)
OFFICIALS :	Chief Executive (Dr. P. Daly), Director of Service (Ms. C. Curley), Head of Digital Strategy (Dr. M. Bilauca), Senior Executive Officer (Mr. P. Clune), Administrative Officer (Mr. S. Hayes), Administrative Officer (Ms. F. McCormack), Staff Officer, (Ms. L. Creamer)
OTHERS :	Garda Commissioner, Drew Harris Ms. J. Fehily, Chairperson, The Policing Authority Senator K. O'Donnell and Councillor K. Sheahan
APOLOGIES :	J. O'Sullivan, T.D., N. Collins, T.D., W. O'Dea, Min. Patrick O'Donovan, Senator P. Gavin, Tom Neville, T.D., Councillor M. Ryan, Councillor R. O'Donoghue

1. Minutes

Circulated, copy of Minutes of Joint Policing Committee Meeting held on 11th October, 2019 :

Proposed by Councillor A. Talukder

Seconded by Councillor S. Kiely

In reply to M. Quinlivan, T.D., the Chief Superintendent confirmed that, in future, he will circulate the crime statistics which are presented at Joint Policing Committee Meetings after the meeting. He stressed that statistics given are provisional and constantly change.

2. Address by Ms. Josephine Feehily, Chairperson, The Policing Authority

Ms. Feehily stated that her term as Chairperson of the Policing Authority comes to an end on 31st December 2019. She thanked Members for their kind invitation to address the meeting and said she was anxious to fulfil the invitation before she went out of office. She stated that she was the designated Chair for the last five years during which time she oversaw the performance of An Garda Síochána. She stressed the importance of feedback from members of the public and said that An Garda Síochána cannot do its job without community support. She also stated that transparency is

very important to ensure the public has confidence in it's policing system and if there is public confidence then there is community support. She welcomed the fact that the PPN members of the Joint Policing Committee would be in place shortly and stressed that it is important to consider how victims of crime are related to and dealt with and this needs to be addressed in the future. She thanked the Chairman and Members for the opportunity to address them at the meeting.

The Chairman and Members thanked Ms. Feehily for her address and wished her the very best of luck in her future endeavours.

It was proposed by Councillor S. Keary and seconded by Senator M. Byrne that Councillor L. Galvin take the Chair for a few minutes at 2.45 p.m.

3. To Receive Presentation by Dr. Mihai Bilauca, Head of Digital Strategy and to approve CCTV Policy

Councillor A. Teskey returned to the meeting and took the Chair.

The Head of Digital Strategy gave a presentation on the Draft CCTV Policy for Limerick City and County.

It was proposed by Councillor S. Keary, seconded by Senator M. Byrne and unanimously agreed to approve CCTV Policy.

In reply to Members queries the Head of Digital Strategy replied as follows :

- Prosecutions where CCTV footage was used are presently underway and no cases have been struck out to date due to data protection.
- Funding so far has been for hinterland projects and is based on crime levels. He added that CCTV can also be used for covert surveillance which has been done and is still being used.
- The retention of CCTV footage for 28 days is as per the guidelines issued by the Data Protection Office and is what is operated throughout the country. This can be extended but would need a strong case in order to do so.
- Public consultation with people from the local community takes place prior to installation of CCTV cameras.
- CCTV can be used to review tenancies in relation to anti social behaviour.
- Most of the CCTV cameras are monitored in Moyross and stated that he would issue an invite to all the members of the Joint Policing Committee to visit the surveillance office in Moyross.
- Update of the CCTV Policy in one year's time would be put on the Draft Works Programme.

4. To receive update from Chief Superintendent

The Chief Superintendent stated that policing of Limerick is challenging, however, the number of serious incidents is lower than in previous years. Some road accidents can be linked to the use of drugs so road policing is particularly important. A Christmas roads campaign would be in progress.

He added that the number of drug testing is increasing all the time, most of which comes from mobile patrols. More people are trained and becoming more proficient in drug detection and Limerick will have the highest number of staff in the traffic unit in the country. He appealed to everybody to take care over the Christmas period and appealed to the public representatives to reiterate this within their communities. He stated that the Garda Youth Awards took place on 21st November, 219 and there were ten award winners.

The Senior Crime and Policing Analyst then gave a brief overview on statistics under the following:

- Property crime – down 7% compared with same period in the Division last year;
- Non aggravated burglary – down 15% compared with same period in the Division last year;
- Crime against the Person – down 3% compared with same period in the Division last year;
- Overall assaults – same as last year
- Proactive policing measures
- Recent community events

5. Update from The Garda Commissioner, Drew Harris on the Garda Operating Model

The Garda Commissioner, Drew Harris, thanked the Chairman and Members for their warm welcome. He confirmed that the Limerick Garda Division will be one of the first in the country to fully implement the new policing model which is being rolled out nationwide. He stated that the current district led model will be replaced with a divisional model which, it was hoped, would lead to a greater amount of gardai being assigned to front line duties. He stated that community policing would be at the centre of the new model once it was rolled out and should result in a more effective and efficient police service for Limerick. He added that the implementation process began last week and it was expected the new model would be in place before the end of the year.

Mr. Harris informed members that the new model, which is based on international best practice, would allow for more specialism locally, particularly in relation to vulnerable victims and cyber crime. For the first time a duty inspector would be rostered twenty four hours a day while the number of inspectors and sergeants was set to increase in the coming weeks. A Detective Inspector was being appointed to the Protective Services Unit and a Detective Superintendent will be responsible for the investigation of serious crime across the division. He pointed out that the new model will improve the policing service that is provided in Limerick and provide more specialism in terms of both protecting the public from crimes against the vulnerable and the investigation of serious crime and also a concentration on community policing through community engagement hubs. He stated that Henry Street Garda Station would remain the divisional headquarters and two community engagement hubs would be established, one for the city and one for the county. He stated that under the new model, every garda division in the country will be 'operationally autonomous' subject to compliance with some national guidelines and policies and will be rolled out on a phased basis.

Commissioner Harris said that Gardai must respond accordingly to tackle drug gangs who, it's claimed, are using children to distribute their illegal product. He added that he recognises what a scourge this is on local communities in respect of drug dealing and in particular street level dealing and said that the Gardai are determined to combat that. However, he said he believed the gangs methods of maintaining fear has not caused a negative impact on the Garda's relationship with communities, which is a relationship largely built upon the flow of information from sources on the ground, because people can see the work that is being done by An Garda Síochána. He stated that Gardai are committed to policing critical neighbourhoods which require a strong policing presence so that people can live without the fear of crime and the fear of these gangsters and their behaviour.

Commissioner Harris replied to Members queries as follows :

- Go Save vans were under utilised and could be more effective and should be in accident black spots, he said to give details of locations to Chief Superintendent Roche. He said that there are more than 164 speed detection devices and Gardai themselves have mobile detection devices. These can scan licence plates also and work well in the detection of speeding. There are constant technology advances all of which are used successfully.
- There will be 160 promotions in Limerick before Christmas and the number of sergeants is growing which will make a significant difference to combating crime.
- The Gardaí have a commitment to Community Policing Framework and a lot of cross agency work was being done in some areas.
- The proposed new model is in existence for twenty years and is used in New Zealand, Denmark and parts of Australia, it involves less bureaucracy and is therefore more successful.
- Garda resources are being used to provide security in Courthouses and transfer of prisoners. There are a number of elements in the 'Commission on Future Policing' Report about removing Gardaí from non core police duties and that includes security at court buildings.
- 575 Gardaí are already assigned to front line duties and the overall number has to grow by another 700. Next year's budget reflects such growth.
- He stated that he wished to maintain existing Garda Stations and to repopulate stations that are only open once a week. He said he was mindful of population growth but that it was a matter for divisional and regional areas.
- It is important to build relationships and develop trust with people living in our communities who are from other areas of the world. 2,000 Garda Reserves will be recruited within the next two years some of whom will be from more diverse communities.
- Limerick has a critical need for community policing and this is recognised at national level. Intimidation is very prevalent and complaints which were made have been successfully brought through the courts system. He stated that it is doing a community an injustice by not reporting crime and trust in the policing system was very important.
- A lot of work was being done throughout the country in tackling the drugs epidemic with increased detection and targeting of gangland drug dealers. It is very much an enforcement function and stressed the importance of education.
- He assured Members that additional Gardaí would be deployed to Limerick for the Christmas period and traffic issues at the Crescent Shopping Centre would be addressed.

- There is ongoing commitment to policing rural areas and the importance of local Gardaí living in the area was recognised. Some stations have living quarters, however, the Commissioner said he was not sure if Gardaí posted to an area would live in such quarters. It was important that Gardaí make an impact in areas and to be particularly active at nighttime in the prevention and detection of crime.
- There are more Garda staff now than ever before and frontline Gardaí have increased. The demand on the Gardaí is becoming more complex and demanding. He agreed in relation to visibility of Gardaí in areas to improve quality of life for the public.
- He assured Members that Limerick will receive it's fair share of the increased resources adding that the increased population will be taken into consideration in relation to new Garda stations. He added that small villages and towns have grown in population also and garda resources will have to grow also in these areas.

The Chairman thanked Commissioner Harris for addressing the Joint Policing Committee.

Commissioner Harris left the meeting at this stage.

6. Question submitted by Senator M. Byrne:

"In light of the allocation of €81 million for 700 new Garda recruits in Budget 2020, I ask Garda Commissioner Drew Harris when will the 26 Gardaí in the Henry Street Policing Division that have been promoted to higher ranks be replaced".

Of the 26 promoted to date Limerick has received 24 and all competitions have not yet concluded. Since the last JPC Meeting 6 Gardai have been promoted to Sergeant, two have been retained in the Division and an additional six has been received which saw an increase of 2 sergeants.

7. Notice of Motion submitted by Senator M. Byrne:

"I will move at the December 2019 Meeting of Limerick City and County Council Joint Policing Committee that this Committee will call on the Garda Commissioner Drew Harris to provide a full time Garda Station in the vicinity of Castletroy to serve the policing needs of the wider Limerick East Community".

The Chief Superintendent stated that the Garda Commissioner is looking at the provision of new Garda Stations throughout the country and a decision on same will be based on population growth. The priority at present is to have Castleconnell Garda Station fit for purpose. No funding has been allocated for a new garda station in Castletroy.

8. Notice of Motion submitted by Senator M. Byrne:

"I am calling on the Chief Superintendent to make sure that there will be sufficient Gardaí on patrol on the streets of Limerick City over the Christmas shopping period to ensure that shoppers can go about their business without any hassle or fear".

As previously mentioned Operation Open City was up and running throughout the city and in Newcastle West for the Christmas period. In addition to Operation Open City, Operation Meirle and the Community Policing Units, special emphases has been placed on maximising resources on unit cross overs. This will ensure more Gardai are on the streets at critical times thus ensuring higher visibility and a greater presence. Overtime was incurred throughout the Christmas Period to ensure greater visibility.

9. Notice of Motion submitted by Senator M. Byrne:

“I am calling on the Chief Superintendent to install a Garda CCTV camera on Upper Henry Street to deter anti social behaviour in the area.

The Head of Digital Strategy to communicate with Senator M. Byrne on this matter.

10. Question submitted by Councillor L. Galvin:

“I will ask at the next JPC that a full review be taken out on the locations of the Go Safe Vans within our county”.

The Commissioner stated that he was not aware of individual cases and stated that the Go Safe Vans are not operated by An Garda Siochana. However, he said if any Member had any specific individual cases then to submit details to the Chief Superintendent who would then have them reviewed.

11. Question submitted by Councillor L. Galvin:

“I will ask at the next JPC for a detailed update on Abbeyfeale Garda Station :

- Why Abbeyfeale haven’t a Garda Sergeant;
- How many Garda are stationed at the Station;
- How many of these are specifically for road policing”.

The Chief Superintendent replied as follows :

Abbeyfeale Garda Station Resources	
Sergeants	1 Sergeant to start in Abbeyfeale Garda Station on 24 th February 2020
Uniform Gardaí	5 Members fully operational and 1 Community Policing
Divisional Roads Policing Unit	6 (2 non effective long term following RTC on duty) Divisional Resource that is based out of Abbeyfeale Garda Station
Plain Clothes Crime Office	1
Garda Staff	1

He added that there is a newly appointed Sergeant, Sergeant Rosaleen O’Connor, attached to Abbeyfeale Garda Station starting the week of 24th February, 2020.

12. Question submitted by Maurice Quinlivan, T.D.:

“I will ask at the next Meeting what plans are in place to put a proper policing operation in Limerick City centre during the Christmas/New Year period”.

Members asked that more Gardaí be allocated to the Market Quarter to address anti social behaviour in the area.

Superintendent Sugrue stated that there is a large increase in the number of Gardai in the city centre with thirty two probational Gardaí allocated.

13. Question submitted by Maurice Quinlivan, T.D.:

“I will ask the Commissioner if he has any plans to expand the Criminal Assets Bureau operation in Limerick in terms of additional staff and resources”.

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated that 2019 has been the most successful year and there has been tremendous co-operation from CAB in Limerick. There are eleven Gardaí trained in this area with three more in the process of being trained.

14. Question submitted by Councillor J. Costelloe :

“Can I ask the Commissioner, are An Garda Síochána looking into the setting up of a cold case unit in the Limerick Division given the number of unsolved murders in the division, and if so, is there a timeline for same”.

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated that he could not comment on individual cases which are still live. Pier Reviews are taking place on a number of ongoing cases which is a long and detailed process. He added that the Team is fully trained locally and once cases reach a certain criteria they are sent to the Review Team.

15. Question submitted by Councillor J. Costelloe :

“I will ask at the next meeting, following the recent announcement of 32 probationer Gardaí to the Limerick Division for the festive period, can the Commisioner please answer the following:

1. How many of these Gardaí will be permanently stationed in Limerick after Christmas Eve
And
2. Why is this initiative not in place until the New Year. I am sure the extra numbers would be welcomed by the Superintendent for major nights like St. Stephen’s Night and New Year’s Eve”.

Members asked that all the Presentations given at this meeting would be circulated to them.

Dates for Meetings in 2020

It was unanimously agreed to hold the Joint Policing Committee Meetings in 2020 on the following dates at 10.00 a.m.:

Friday, 21st February, 2020

Friday, 15th May, 2020

Friday, 4th September, 2020

Friday, 6th November, 2020

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed : _____
Cllr. Adam Teskey, Chairman

Date : _____