

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF THE JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DOORADOYLE, ON FRIDAY, 2ND OCTOBER, 2020 AT 10.00 A.M.

IN THE CHAIR :	Councillor A. Teskey
MEMBERS :	Councillors B. Collins, J. Collins, J. Costelloe, L. Galvin, S. Hartigan, S. Keary, S. Kiely, M. Murphy, J. O'Donoghue, C. Sheehan and A. Talukder
OIREACHTAS MEMBERS :	M. Quinlivan, T.D., N. Collins, T.D., K. O'Donnell, T.D. and R. O'Donoghue, T.D.
COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES :	Ms. D. Dunne, ADAPT Ms. B. Hayes, Environ. Trust Ireland
GARDA NOMINATIONS :	Chief Superintendent (Mr. G. Roche), Superintendent (Mr. B. Sugrue), Superintendent (Ms. A. Magner), Senior Intelligence Analyst (Ms. L. Collins), Crime Prevention Officer (Sgt. B. Leetch)
OFFICIALS :	Chief Executive (Mr. P. Daly), A/Senior Executive Officer (Mr. J. Clune, Staff Officer (Ms. L. Creamer)
OTHERS :	Mr. J. O'Neill, Property Marking Ireland
APOLOGIES :	Councillors E. O'Brien, M. Ryan and K. Sheahan

The Chairman welcomed the two new Community Representatives, Ms. D. Dunne and Ms. B. Hayes, who had recently been appointed through the PPN on the Joint Policing Committee.

1. Minutes

Circulated, copy of Minutes of Joint Policing Committee Meeting held on 24th July, 2020 :

Proposed by Councillor S. Kiely
Seconded by Councillor L. Galvin

2. Update from Chief Superintendent

The Chief Superintendent stated that Covid 19 remains a high risk issue in Limerick city and county. He stated that Operation Freshers Week is underway at present in University of Limerick and the Gardaí are working closely with the authorities and the President of UL to prevent an escalation of Covid 19 figures amongst the student population. He said the message should be prevention and not lockdown.

3. Overview on Crime Statistics from Senior Crime and Policing Analyst

Ms. L. Collins gave a brief statistical overview of current crime statistics.

The Chief Superintendent stated that there has been an increase in drug use with 175 people presently before the Courts. He said that there is a very worrying trend nationally in relation to cannabis sweets but that cocaine is the drug choice of use for socializing across the spectrum. He added that there has been a reduction in the number of burglaries and that there is a new strategy in place to target known offenders who are dealt with very comprehensively. He pointed out that 90% of the extra resources from Templemore which were brought in to police the city and county have now returned to Templemore.

The Chief Superintendent replied to Members queries as follows :

The Gardai would welcome any additional resources to help in the policing of Covid, however, said people should be encouraged to comply with restrictions and to act with maturity and observe the general rules when it comes to reducing the spread of the virus.

He confirmed that there has been no pedestrian fatalities so far this year. He added that the number of drug driving offences had increased due to the increased number of Garda checkpoints.

He confirmed that additional resources will be put in to the Bruff area to deal with increase in burglaries and thefts and additional resources had been put into community policing.

He stated that the Gardaí are putting in huge resources to address the problem of crack cocaine which is becoming more prevalent. He stated that there has been significant high profile drug seizures this year and there is a constant focus on targeting drug criminals. He stated that a multi facet approach with all relevant organisations is taken in addressing the increase in the use of recreational drugs. He added that a lot of cases are adjourned in the courts and despite seven courts sitting in Limerick at present, trials are backed up until 2022.

He stated that there is large scale compliance with covid regulations amongst the wet pubs, however, any licensed premises in breach of the guidelines will be brought before the courts.

He stated that drug driving offences are increasing all the time. The machine for detecting drug driving is a bigger and more complex machine and takes up to fifteen minutes to process. He added that Limerick presently have five of these machines but more are required.

He informed Members that the total value of drugs seized between January and September 2020 was €1,639,434 with cash seized totaling €263,163. He confirmed that there were 6 fatal collisions this year to date and 28 serious injury collisions.

Superintendent Magner confirmed that a new garda station in Newcastle West had been approved and will have a sergeant and three Gardai. She agreed to work closely with the community and Gardai.

In reply to Members, the Chief Executive stated that traffic and litter wardens are Enforcement Officers and work under certain legislative powers and could not be redeployed to police non compliance with covid regulations. However, he would revert if there were different practices in Galway or other local authorities.

Presentation on Policing Plan, University of Limerick Academic Year 2020/2021

Superintendent Sugrue gave Presentation on The Policing Plan at The University of Limerick. He informed Members that approximately 16,500 students attend University of Limerick and an Annual Policing Plan had been compiled for 'Fresher's Week'. He added that planning for the return of students this year commenced in July 2020 with many meetings between An Garda Síochána and the University of Limerick.

In reply to Members queries, Superintendent Sugrue stated that An Garda Síochána and University of Limerick are working together in a collaborative way with the community. He stated that consultation had taken place with landlords, residents of Castletroy and UL Student Union and added that there are beat patrols throughout the University of Limerick with Senior UL Management.

It was proposed by Councillor Galvin, seconded by Councillor Sheehan and agreed to approve the following Motion :

'That in light of the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic that the Joint Policing Committee request the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to appoint and provide funding for Covid Officers throughout the country to assist An Garda Síochána in ensuring compliance with Covid 19 restrictions'.

Members referred to unprovoked attacks in the Market area, Cruises Street and O'Connell Street and asked that plans be put in place to police these areas more.

4. Correspondence

Letter of acknowledgement received from Minister for Justice and Equality stating that the allocation of all Garda resources, including personnel and equipment for specific policing duties is solely a matter for the Garda Commissioner and his management team and that the Minister has no direct role in this regard. It stated that enforcement of road traffic legislation is also a matter for the Commissioner and is beyond the Minister's remit. It added that the capital budget for An Garda Síochána has been significantly increased to €116.5 million in 2020 and the Government remains committed to ensuring that An Garda Síochána have the necessary resources to tackle all forms of criminality in our communities.

5. Presentation from Sgt. B. Leetch, Limerick Division, Crime Prevention Officer and Mr. James O'Neill, Property Marking Ireland, seeking funding for a Telesis Property Marking Machine for Limerick.

Sgt. Leetch and Mr. James O'Neill outlined the many benefits of Property Marking and outlined to Members how it worked adding that It was up and running in eighteen local authorities to date and these areas have seen a 20 – 25% reduction in theft and property crime.

Members requested that the presentation on Property Marking be circulated to each of the Municipal Districts.

6. Question submitted by Councillor Conor Sheehan (referred from Metropolitan District Meeting held on 21st September, 2020)

“I will ask at the next Meeting how many people were prosecuted for animal cruelty in the last year”.

The Chief Superintendent stated that there have been no prosecutions this year to date.

It was agreed to take Item Nos. 7, 10 and 11 together.

7. Question submitted by Councillor Conor Sheehan

“I will ask at the next Meeting for an update on the policing plan for The Limerick City North Electoral Area of Limerick for Halloween 2020”.

10. Question submitted by Maurice Quinlivan, T.D.

“I will ask at the next Meeting if Members can be updated on any strategy that is in place, similar to Operation Tombola in Dublin, to deal with the misuse of bangers and fireworks for the Halloween period”.

11. Question submitted by Councillor John Costelloe

“I will ask at the next Meeting what plans have the Gardaí in place for the forthcoming Halloween festivities”.

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated that there is a comprehensive Policing Plan for the Mayorstone sub district for Moyross, St. Mary’s Park, Kileely, Thomondgate and Caherdavin as well as a Henry Street Policing Plan which is focused on the city centre, Garryowen and Castletroy. He stated that Roxboro Road have a policing plan focusing on areas of each of it’s sub districts and will focus on Southill, Janesboro, Kennedy Park, Rathbane, Ballinacurra Weston, Raheen and Dooradoyle. He added that there will be additional Gardaí brought in on overtime to ensure an increased level of high visibility, public order patrols and checkpoints for the Halloween period and that Operational Tombola is the National Plan that each Division is required to implement.

8. Question submitted by Councillor Conor Sheehan

“I will ask at the next Meeting for an update on the additional measures put in place to deal with anti social behavior over the summer in Garryowen”.

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated that there were additional patrols and that there is an operational order currently in place. He added that an additional Community Garda is being assigned to Garryowen on a full time basis and that Gardaí are liaising with Mr. Pat McDermott, LCCC, in relation to providing statistics to support his application for CCTV in the Garryowen area.

9. Question submitted by Maurice Quinlivan, T.D.

“I will ask at the next Meeting if the data can be provided regarding the incidents of reported domestic violence for the period of March to August of this year ? Can a comparison be provided for the same period in 2019 ?”.

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated that he could not give out domestic violence figures for operational reasons, however, added that the number of cases this year was up by 12% compared to the same period in 2019.

12. Question submitted by Councillor John Costelloe

“I will ask at the next Meeting what precautions and protections in relation to Covid 19 have been implemented for Gardaí when transferring prisoners to and from Mulgrave Street Court House”.

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated that the Irish Prison Service are doing remand and court transfers and that prisoners being transported to Mulgrave Street by Gardaí do so in line with Public Health Guidelines. He stated that PPE equipment has been provided to Gardaí to facilitate the safe transportation of prisoners, if required.

13. Question submitted by Councillor John O’Donoghue

“I will ask at the next Meeting the following in relation to the use of sulkies on public roads especially around safety for both horse / passenger, cyclists, pedestrians and motorists :

- Is there a legal age to be in charge of both horse and/or carriage?
- Is there a requirement for safety equipment i.e. helmet/high vis etc. for the passenger ?
- Is there a requirement for safety equipment i.e. horse shoes, knee and hoof pads, etc., for the horse?
- Is there a requirement for the carriage to have any lighting, indicators, reflectors, roll bar or safety cage?
- Does the carriage require brakes ?
- Is there a requirement for insurance ?
- What is the position surrounding sulkies hampering the free flow of traffic on our public roads?”.

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated the following :

- Over 16 years of age is the legal age to be in charge of both horse and/or carriage;
- No requirement for safety equipment for the passenger, however must be sober;
- No requirement for safety equipment for the horse;
- No requirement for the carriage to have any lighting, indicators, reflectors, roll bar or safety cage;
- As the carriage is not a vehicle there is no requirement for it to have brakes;
- No requirement for insurance;
- People operating sulkies can be prosecuted, it’s a Limerick Bye Law”.

14. Question submitted by Kieran O’Donnell, T.D.

“I will ask at the next Meeting for an update on Garda numbers in Limerick pre covid 19 to present day with reference to Community Gardaí, Garda Staff Programme and Gardaí engaged in non core court duties and it’s impact on frontline policing”.

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated that there were 602 members and 68 Garda staff pre covid and currently there are 599 members and 81 Garda staff (down 3 Garda Members and up 13 Garda staff). He stated that there had been an increase of three Gardaí to the Roxboro Road Community Policing Unit and that there had been an increase of two Gardaí to Mayorstone Community Policing with an additional two Community Gardaí to the Henry Street unit in the coming days.

15. Question submitted by Kieran O'Donnell, T.D.

"I will ask at the next Meeting for an overview of available testing equipment for drug driving held by Gardai in Limerick and whether requests have been made for further detection equipment to Garda Headquarters/Department of Justice".

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated that there are currently four available mobile testing equipment for drug driving and one static machine in Limerick but that an application had been made for a further six additional machines.

16. Question submitted by Kieran O'Donnell, T.D.

"I will ask at the next Meeting if the Chief Superintendent has given consideration to submitting a business case for new Garda Stations in Castletroy and Dooradoyle as part of Garda Capital Plan 2021 onwards".

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated that the Castletroy / Annacotty area is policed by Henry Street Garda Station and Castleconnell Garda Station. He said he had been in contact with the Office of Public Works with regard to the refurbishment of Castleconnell Garda Station and the long term issues with Castletroy. He stated that the priority was to ensure proper accommodation and office space for the Garda members stationed in Castleconnell and that once the works had been carried out he would then assess the resourcing of Castleconnell Garda Station.

17. Question submitted by Kieran O'Donnell, T.D.

"I will ask at the next Meeting for a breakdown of detected drink / drug driving statistics for Limerick over the last year".

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated that there were 128 driving while intoxicated offences and 121 drug driving offences.

18. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Conor Sheehan

"I will move at the next Meeting of Limerick Joint Policing Committee that the Superintendent/Chief Superintendent review the CCTV in Garryowen with a view to installing additional cameras at this location".

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated that CCTV is the remit of Limerick City and County Council but added that he would fully support any initiatives to install additional CCTV in the Division. He added that Inspector Sandra Heelan had been designated to liaise directly with the Council and had commenced the process of gathering statistics to support an application by Limerick City and County Council and the Garda Commissioner for the installation of cameras in the Garryowen area.

19 Any other business

The Chairman stated that Standing Orders for the JPC were presently being compiled and would be submitted to the next meeting for consideration and approval and added that they will be circulated prior to the meeting for Members consideration.

He stated that Members can submit a maximum of two Questions and two Notices of Motion each for future JPC Meetings.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Joint Policing Committee be held on Friday, 4th December, 2020 at 10.00 a.m.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed : _____
Councillor Adam Teskey, Chairman

Date: _____