

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE HELD ON 5TH MARCH, 2021 AT 10.00 A.M.

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| IN THE CHAIR : | Councillor A. Teskey |
| MEMBERS : | Councillors B. Collins, J. Collins, J. Costelloe, L. Galvin, S. Hartigan, S. Keary, S. Kiely, M. Murphy, E. O'Brien, J. O'Donoghue, M. Ryan, K. Sheahan, C. Sheehan, A. Talukder, M. Collins, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, O. O'Sullivan and S. Novak Uí Chonchúir |
| OIREACHTAS MEMBERS : | M. Quinlivan, T.D., N. Collins, T.D., B. Leddin, T.D., and K. O'Donnell, T.D. |
| PPN SECTORAL NOMINEES : | Dr. B. Hayes, Mr. C. Flynn, Ms. S. Johnston and Mr. J. Slattery |
| GARDA NOMINATIONS : | Chief Superintendent (Mr. G. Roche), Superintendent (Mr. B. Sugrue), Assistant Principal (Ms. L. Breen), Senior Analyst (Ms. L. Collins), Inspector (Mr. B. O'Grady) |
| OFFICIALS : | Chief Executive (Mr. P. Daly), A/Senior Executive Officer (Mr. J. Clune), Communications Officer (Mr. D. Tierney) Administrative Officer (Mr. M. Leahy), A/Administrative Officer (Mr. P. Williams), Staff Officer (Ms. L. Creamer) |
| OTHERS : | Mr. M. Nother, Administrative Officer, The Policing Authority |
| APOLOGIES : | R. O'Donoghue, T.D. and Ms. D. Dunne |

It was agreed to take Items 17 and 18 at the commencement of the Meeting as Councillor L. Galvin had to leave the meeting.

17. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Liam Galvin

"I will move at the next Meeting that a joint operation between the Council and the Gardaí take place to tackle the scourge of illegal dumping in our county (particularly Rooska)".

Councillor Galvin outlined the extent of the illegal dumping at Rooska and asked that the installation of CCTV be considered at this location in Rooska.

In reply, the Chief Superintendent referred to the Litter Pollution Act 1997 and the Waste Management Act 1996 as amended. In March 2020 there was a finding that the Litter Pollution Act 1997, the Waste Management Act 1996 and the Local Government Act 2001 do not provide a lawful basis for use of CCTV to detect litter offences. The Data Protection Commission comprehensively considered these Acts and found that they do not regulate the processing of personal data as is required by the Law Enforcement Directive, as transposed by the Data Protection Act 2018. He stated that the issue around admissibility of CCTV could be detrimental to prosecution and result in significant fines to the Council for breaches.

18. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Liam Galvin

"I will move at the next Meeting that this meeting call on the Minister for Justice to enact legislation or amend current legislation, as necessary, to put the onus on parents of children under 16 who are gathering / loitering in public areas and engaging in anti social behaviour, to be responsible for their children. I would recommend that sanctions be imposed on parents whose children are engaging in such behaviour by means of fines and that these fines would be recovered by way of attachment of earnings, if applicable".

The Motion was proposed by Councillor L. Galvin, seconded by Councillor S. Keary and agreed.

The Chief Superintendent stated that he fully recognizes the challenges with young people gathering in groups but, similar to covid enforceability, the policing of young persons has different processes and policies which are centred upon protectionism and enhanced rights.

He stated that children suspected of a breach of the criminal law is governed by the Children Act, 2001 which was amended by the Criminal Justice Act 2006, the Children (Amendment) Act 2015 and other Acts. The age of criminal responsibility – Section 52 of the Children Act 2001 as amended by Section 129 of the Criminal Justice Act 2006. In October 2006 the age of criminal responsibility rose from seven years of age to twelve years of age. This means that children who have not reached the age of 12 years cannot be charged or arrested for ordinary offences with certain exceptions (Offences suitable for Central Criminal Court). Section 130 of the Criminal Justice Act 2006 places an onus on the Gardaí to take a child under 12 years of age to his/her parents or guardian, where they have reasonable grounds for believing that the child has committed a criminal offence. However, no formal Garda action is permitted without parents or guardian present.

Where a child under 14 years of age is arrested for an offence, no further proceedings can be taken without the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions. Where there are concerns for the safety and welfare of a child the Gardaí have mandated responsibilities to make formal referrals to TUSLA and relevant state Agency.

Options where criminal offence occurred Children aged 12-17

- Garda Youth Diversion Programme (on foot of formal complainant or Garda intercept offence)
- Anti Social Behaviour Warnings (consistent behaviour)
- Contact with parents – appropriate action in low % of cases

1. Minutes

Circulated, copy of Minutes of Joint Policing Committee held on 4th December, 2020 :

Proposed by Councillor L. Galvin

Seconded by Councillor A. Talukder

2. Update from Chief Superintendent

The Chief Superintendent stated that drug activity is very high with drugs for personal use up 29%, however, possession of drugs for sale/supply is down 13% in the division. The Gardaí have made a number of very significant detections with a lot of people prosecuted and many more going before the courts. Property Crime and non aggravated burglary is down in all areas within the division. Crimes against the person and overall assaults are also down. The Gardaí continue to police people moving outside 5 kms from their home with 972 covid 19 fixed penalty notices issued.

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

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

4. Presentation from Inspector Brendan O'Grady on the control of horses

Inspector O'Grady stated that the Council is the lead agency in the control of horses and the Gardaí and Veterinary Officials are there to assist. He stated all horses in Ireland must be properly identified and have a passport, be licenced if in a 'Control Area' and be microchipped.

He stated that an authorised person or a member of the Garda Síochána may seize and detain any horse that the person or member has reason to suspect is :

- A stray horse
- Causing a nuisance
- Not under adequate control
- Posing a danger to persons or property
- Posing a threat to the health and welfare of persons or other animals
- Being kept in a control area without a horse licence
- Not identifiable or capable of identification as may be required by Section 28
- In or being kept or ridden or driven in an area contrary to any bye laws made under Section 47

In 2019 109 horses were seized at a cost of 72,859 and 128 horses were seized in 2020 at a cost of €144,588. For the months of January and February this year a total of 22 horses have been seized. Only one horse was put down in 2020, all other horses were rehomed.

In reply to Members queries, Inspector O'Grady stated that the present legislation in relation to the control of horses is adequate, however, pointed out that funding is the issue. He stated that it is the Council's decision who to award the contract for the seizure of horses to, however, the present contractor is very efficient. He added that landowners have a duty to fence their land if keeping horses and if an accident occurs it is the responsibility of the landowner. In reply to Members concerns about horses in the racecourse he confirmed that he would speak to the owners of these horses and outline their responsibilities.

Members acknowledged that there is a horse problem in the suburbs of the city, however, pointed out that there is also an issue in Askeaton and asked the Gardaí to address the issue here also. Members expressed concern that horses are being put in to unsecured land where the title of the property can be difficult to determine and are then claiming ownership of these patches of land. A Working Group need to be set up with Council Officials and the Department of Agriculture Officials to address this problem and suggested that an Animal Welfare Officer be appointed. Members welcomed the success of the morning seizures and acknowledged the work carried out by Inspector O'Grady and the Gardaí. They referred to the success of the Youth Academy in Moyross and said they would welcome the rollout of a similar project in the southside of the city. Members acknowledged that owners of land also need to be protected and added that anybody keeping animals should have the land or property to keep them in.

The Members congratulated the Council and the Gardaí for the work they are doing in addressing the horse issue in the city.

5. Update from Superintendent Sugrue on addressing anti social behaviour in Johnsgate Village

Inspector Sugrue stated that a Policing Plan was rolled out to address anti social behaviour in Johnsgate Village and Garryowen and as a result the level of calls and crimes in these areas have dropped significantly. He said there is only a small number of people causing problems in Johnsgate Village and pointed out that some of the houses there are privately rented . He stated that CCTV would help in addressing crime in these areas and said the Gardaí will continue to monitor the situation.

Members pointed out that the residents in Johnsgate Village have welcomed the Garda intervention in addressing anti social behaviour there and appreciate all the work they are doing. They asked that the Gardaí liaise with the business people in the area to reassure them.

6. Approve JPC Standing Orders

It was proposed by Councillor M. Ryan, seconded by Councillor S. Kiely and unanimously agreed to approve JPC Standing Orders 2021.

The A/Senior Executive Officer stated that if Members have any observations or amendments to the Standing Orders to inform him accordingly.

7. Question submitted by Councillor Sasa Novak Uí Chonchúir (referred from Local Electoral Area Briefing held on 11th January, 2021)

"I will ask at the next Meeting what action An Garda Síochána is taking to address the issue of cars parking on footpaths throughout the city thereby obstructing pedestrians"

In reply the Chief Superintendent stated that offences of parking vehicles on a footpath may be dealt with by way of issuing a Fixed Charge Notice. Parking offence Fixed Charge Notices 333 LCN for 2020. At present 'Operation Meirle' is ongoing in the city centre which is an operation where Members of An Garda Síochána are detailed for beat patrol in the city centre on a daily basis to target all aspects of anti social behaviour and all other matters that require Garda attention including illegally parked vehicles on footpaths. He added the Divisional Roads Policing Unit are also tasked with enforcing road traffic legislation and patrol the city on a daily basis. He acknowledged that Limerick City and County Council's Traffic Management Section employ Traffic Wardens who also enforce parking bye laws and regulations in Limerick city centre. He stated that to date there has been four instances of MPVs detained for causing obstruction to footpaths.

8. Question submitted by Councillor Sean Hartigan

"I will ask at the next Meeting what measures have been taken to enforce level 5 travel restrictions On the student population in Milford Grange, Plassey Grove, Elm Park and neighbouring estates".

The Chief Superintendent confirmed that Operation 'Fanacht' is ongoing nationwide and at present a significant policing operation is ongoing in respect of the University of Limerick and it's environs. The objectives of this operation are :

- To ensure compliance with Health Act legislation and regulations;

- To provide a high visibility policing presence in the area;
- To target anti social behaviour in the area;
- To enforce Road Traffic Legislation;
- To target the sale, supply and possession of drugs;
- To target criminal activity in the area;

The Chief Superintendent stated that Operation activities include :

- High visibility community policing beat and mobile patrols;
- Mountain Bike Patrols;
- Divisional Drug and Crime Unit Patrols;
- Divisional Dog Unit Patrols;
- MIT and Covid Regulation Enforcement Checkpoints;
- Significant consultation and co-operation with the stakeholders including the University of Limerick,
- Community and Resident Associations, Limerick City and County Council and the Students Union.

He stated that this Operation is subject to an ongoing review and all necessary resources are being assigned to ensure the objectives of the operation are achieved. He added that six additional Gardaí are patrolling the Castletroy area and 972 on the spot fines have been issued and a number of people have been arrested for drug offences. He pointed out that only a small number of people attending University of Limerick are not complying with covid regulations with other people coming into the area for such gatherings.

The Chief Executive stated that the Council's Enforcement Team have been out in Castletroy issuing fines for litter, illegal bin services, disposal of waste and the Council is also tackling landlords in the area who are not registered with the PRTB. He stated he has spoken to the President of UL in relation to the matter and added that it was not just students who were congregating in Castletroy. He said the Council will continue to work closely with the Gardaí in addressing the problem.

Members thanked the Chief Superintendent for his updates on the Garda operations and welcomed the targeted response to parties and people congregating in the Castletroy area. They congratulated the Chief Superintendent and the Gardaí on their operations in addressing crime not just in Castletroy but throughout the city and county and wished him every success in future operations. They also congratulated the Chief Executive and his staff who are working closely with the Gardaí in an effective manner during a very difficult time.

In reply to Members queries in relation to the feasibility of installing CCTV in College Court, the Chief Superintendent pointed out that College Court is a private estate and a business case would have to be made for the CCTV and then there would be the issue of monitoring of same, however, he agreed to discuss with the Council.

9. Question submitted by Councillor Conor Sheehan

"I will ask at the next Meeting if the CCTV cameras on the Park Canal and Shannon Fields are monitored".

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated that these CCTV cameras are not monitored live but footage can be downloaded if necessary. He added that they are not controlled by Moyross and pointed out that specific targeted patrols have recently been established to target anti social behaviour on the walkways and footpaths on the Canal and River Shannon Banks. This includes regular beat and mountain bike patrols by the Gardaí from Henry Street and Mayorstone Park.

10. Question submitted by Councillor Conor Sheehan

"I will ask at the next Meeting for an update on the number of fines issued for Covid 19 breaches in the Metropolitan area of Limerick broken down by electoral area".

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated that a breakdown of number of fines issued for Covid 19 breaches in the Metropolitan area of Limerick is not available per electoral area. The Fixed Penalty Notice total is updated each Friday and is available on Garda.ie with the current list up to 25th February, 2021. He added that the highest number of Covid 19 related fines issued in the southern region – 3038 with 972 issued in Limerick.

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

"I will ask at the next Meeting for an update on :

- Limerick Division's strategy on knife crime and statistics on the possession of offensive weapons such as knives over the last year;*
- Drug driving offences in Limerick, statistics for the year to date and on the roll out of newly acquired testing equipment;*
- Limerick Division's drugs strategy and what additional resources are required to address ongoing issues in the city".*

The Chief Superintendent replied as follows :

Limerick Division's strategy on knife crime and statistics on the possession of offensive weapons such as knives over the last year:

- 'Operation Soteria' is an anti crime strategy. The focus is on the prevention of assaults and associated crimes throughout Limerick city and county;
- Knives seized in the Limerick Division – 2019 was 74 and 2020 was 86;

Drug driving offences in Limerick – statistics for the year to date and on the roll out of newly acquired testing equipment:

- 32 arrests to date this year for drug driving;
- 4 additional drug testing machines were rolled out. Two of them had previously been static in stations, these machines were mobilised during Q4 of 2020. Two additional machines were allocated to the Division and went to Henry Street and Roxboro respectively in early January;

- 7 machines in total – 6 mobile, 1 static in Bruff;

Limerick Division's drugs strategy and what additional resources are required to address ongoing issues in the city:

Includes investigation of drugs offences, prosecution and prevention, collaboration with CAB regarding money laundering as well as the Drugs Task Force and consultation with the Council regarding environmental issues;

Addition of Drugs Unit in the County – 4 in there to date

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

"I will ask at the next Meeting for an update on :

Current Garda numbers in Limerick Divisions as compared to this time last year together with the new Garda recruits assigned to the Limerick Division over the past year;

Submissions from the Limerick Garda Division to the forthcoming Garda Building and Refurbishment Capital Programme for 2022 and the inclusion of plans for new Garda Stations in Castletroy/Annacotty and Dooradoyle/Raheen/Mungret".

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated that this information is available on the Garda Website and the following are the statistics as on 31st January, 2021 :

| C/Supt. | Supt. | Inspect. | Sergt. | Gda. | Total |
|----------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1 | 5 | 16 | 74 | 505 | 601 |

He stated that since January 2020 the Limerick Division has benefitted from the allocation of 37 new Garda Recruit students (as well as one student member that resigned). Of these 31 were attested before transfer to Limerick but remain probationer Gardaí.

The following are the 2020 statistics which again are available on the Garda website :

| C/Supt. | Supt | Inspect. | Sergt. | Gda. | Total |
|----------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1 | 5 | 18 | 74 | 503 | 601 |

The Chief Superintendent stated that the proposal for the new Garda Station in Castletroy/Annacotty for Garda Building and Refurbishment Capital Programme 2022 – 2030 has been submitted to the Commissioner for consideration of inclusion in this Scheme. He added there are revised plans in line with new Operating Model and requirements to enhance same for Newcastle West.

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

"I will ask at the next Meeting, while I welcome the sight of checkpoints at St. Mary's Park, are these checkpoints a Covid 19 action or a response to the known drug dealing occurring within the estate ? Have the Gardaí been in contact with Limerick City and County Council with regards to the derelict

houses that are allegedly used to store drugs ? Are there any intentions to investigate these abandoned premises ?”.

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated that further to additional checkpoints in St. Mary's Park, 'Operation Copóg', which is a newly established operation, will commence on Monday, 8th March, 2021. This operation will detail three further members to policing in the St. Mary's Park area, this is in addition to the Community Garda already based in the area. The four members will be tasked with the following :

- Engaging and supporting the Community;
- Engaging with all stakeholders;
- Performing high visibility patrols and checkpoints;
- Targeting anti social behaviour;
- Targeting the sale, supply and possession of drugs in the area;
- This new operation will be supported by the following:
 - Divisional Drugs Unit
 - Crime Units
 - Divisional Dog Unit
 - Armed Support Unit
 - Regular Units
 - Roads Policing Unit

In response to the question posed the Chief Superintendent stated that established checkpoints in the area will continue to target criminal activity and deal with any breaches detected in relation to Covid 19 regulations and traffic offences. Gardaí will continue to liaise with Limerick City and County Council in respect of properties in St. Mary's Park which are owned by the Council. He confirmed if information is obtained in respect of any particular residence or site, these are being actioned on a regular basis by An Garda Síochána which has resulted in numerous operations being conducted resulting in seizures of drugs, cash and other items and the arrest and prosecution of numerous offenders.

The Chief Executive stated that a dedicated task group in conjunction with the Gardaí has been set up to address the issue of drugs in St. Mary's Park. Tenancy enforcement and building projects are some of the things being addressed adding that the protection of Council staff is paramount. He confirmed that the Council is also working with the PRTB in relation to unregistered rental properties where tenants are involved in the use or sale and supply of drugs.

Members congratulated the Chief Superintendent and Gardaí on the work they are carrying out in dealing with the sale of drugs in the St. Mary's Park area of the city and pointed out that residents in the area have expressed their gratitude to the Gardaí for all their efforts in addressing this problem. There has been a very positive feedback to the operation. Members pointed out that the demolition of houses need to be speeded up as this is a contributing factor to the drugs issue.

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

“I will ask at the next Meeting for data with regards to Garda response times to calls from the public and also how many call outs had the force in Limerick to make in relation to stray, wandering and maltreated horses”.

The Chief Superintendent stated that data in respect of Garda response times to calls from the public is unavailable. He said the following are the number of call outs the Gardaí had in Limerick in relation to stray, wandering and maltreated horses :

JANUARY 2021 – 33 CALLOUTS

Mayorstone - 24

0 Control of Horses

24 Attention & Complaints

Henry Street (Childers Road and Bloodmill Road) – 2

0 Control of Horses

2 Attention & Complaints

Roxboro Road – 7

1 Control of Horses

6 Attention & Complaints

FEBRUARY 2021 – 35 CALLOUTS

Mayorstone – 12

5 Control of Horses

7 Attention & Complaints

Henry Street (Castletroy area) – 7

0 Control of Horses

7 Attention & Complaints

Roxboro Road – 16

0 Control of Horses

16 Attention & Complaints

MARCH 2021 (TO 03.03.2021) – 2

Mayorstone – 3

1 Control of Horses

2 Attention & Complaints

Henry Street – 0

Roxboro Road – 1

0 Control of Horses

1 Attention & Complaints

The Chief Superintendent confirmed there were 128 seizures in 2020 and 1 seizure in January 2021 and 21 seizures in February 2021.

15. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Conor Sheehan

"I will move at the next Meeting that the Joint Policing Committee ask the Chief Superintendent to put in place a specific policing operation to combat the rise in anti social behaviour along the Canal Bank and Island Bank in Limerick city".

This Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor C. Sheehan, seconded by Councillor J. Costelloe and agreed.

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated that specific targeted patrols have recently been established to target anti social behaviour on the walkways and footpaths on the Canal and River Shannon Banks. This includes regular beat and mountain bike patrols by Gardaí from Henry Street and Mayorstone Park.

16. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Conor Sheehan

"I will move at the next Meeting that the Joint Policing Committee write to the Minister for Justice and The Garda Commissioner to seek the installation of CCTV cameras in Garryowen and Johnsgate Village".

This Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Conor Sheehan, seconded by Councillor. J. Costelloe and agreed.

The Chief Superintendent stated that Limerick City and County Council were provided with Garda statistics in relation to these areas in support of any application that is made regarding CCTV.

In reply, the A/Senior Executive Officer stated that there is a procedure set out in Limerick City and County Council CCTV Policy which is approved by the Joint Policing Committee for the installation of new cameras. If this Notice of Motion is approved then the process can be initiated. He pointed out, however, that there is no provision in the current budget for additional CCTV in Limerick.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed : _____
Councillor Adam Teskey, Chairman

Date : _____