

# **MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT ONLINE MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF NEWCASTLE WEST JOINT POLICING SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 3<sup>RD</sup> MARCH, 2021, AT 12 NOON.**

**PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:** Councillor F. Foley, Cathaoirleach.

## **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Councillors Collins, Galvin, Ruddle, Scanlan and Sheahan.

## **OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Director, Community Development Directorate (Mr. G. Daly), Senior Executive Engineer, West Division (Mr. G. O'Connor), Meetings Administrator, Newcastle West (Ms. M. Corbett), Executive Engineer, Roads (Mr. P. Vallely), Clerical Officer, Newcastle West (Ms. A. Lenihan)

Superintendent A. Magner, Inspector A. Lacey, Inspector J. Flanagan, Detective Sergeant M. Reidy, Sergeant N. Barry, Sergeant R. O'Connor, T. Hannafin C.O.

At the outset, Councillor Foley welcomed everyone in attendance to the Online Meeting of the Newcastle West Joint Policing Sub Committee.

The Cathaoirleach then proceeded with the Meeting by confirming all the Attendees present.

## **1. Adoption of Minutes**

Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Policing Sub Committee Meeting of the Municipal District of Newcastle West held on 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2020.

Proposed by: Councillor Galvin

Seconded by: Councillor Ruddle

And Resolved:

"That, the draft Minutes, as circulated, be taken as read and adopted and signed".

## **2. Policing Issues in the District**

Superintendent Magner gave an update to the Members on policing issues in the District and the current situation with regard to policing during the Covid 19 pandemic. She referred to the reduction in crime statistics in 2020 and the associated Covid 19 Regulations which were in place which may have attributed to a reduction in crime.

She noted the cases which the Gardai have dealt with including burglaries, property crime, thefts, criminal damage, assaults, public order offences, drink and drugs, animal welfare and illegal dumping.

She referred to the decrease in the incidents of burglaries, property crime, theft from shop and person, crime against person, assault causing harm, minor assaults, public order offences but stated there was an increase in domestic violence incidents. She noted a significant increase in drug related offences particularly in the incidents of Section 15 Drugs for Sale offences. She also made reference to the newly established District Drugs Unit which is very successful and confirmed that two additional Gardai have been assigned to the unit.

She also referred to the importance of the assistance of members of the public in the reporting of crime.

Superintendent Magner stated that the number of thefts from mechanically propelled vehicles, especially from vehicles parked in scenic areas had increased. She stressed the importance of members of the public ensuring that their vehicles are securely locked at all times and valuables not left on display. She stated that the Crime Prevention Officer is also working in this area and she referred to the Text Alert System.

Detective Sergeant Reidy referred to the investigation of all serious crime in the District. He referred to the decrease in burglaries in the District and stated that the establishment of the National DNA Database had been hugely beneficial in dealing with crime.

He referred to the District Drugs Unit which is in operation and to the significant increase in cannabis growing houses in the District. Detective Sergeant Reidy also made reference to an increase in the drug driving detection and noted the increase in the detection of drug driving in the 30 – 40 age group.

He also made reference to theft from shops which has resulted in prosecutions and also stated that there is an increase in the incidents of theft of catalytic converters. He stated that the incidents of the theft of chainsaws continues to rise and stressed the importance of property owners having the serial number of the property recorded. He also noted a significant increase in the incidents of fraud and economic crimes in the District and made reference to student personal and bank details being used in these incidents. He referred to the puppy trade industry where puppies are being stolen and then sold on for financial gain.

The Superintendent referred to the significant aspects of policing which involved increased risk during the Covid 19 pandemic and acknowledged the excellent work of the Gardaí in this regard. She also thanked the local community and voluntary groups for their assistance during the Covid 19 pandemic. She referred to the significant Covid 19 breaches and the high

detection rates in the District. She stated that charity work had unfortunately ceased during the Covid 19 restrictions.

Inspector Lacey referred to enforceability of restrictions during the Covid 19 pandemic and gave an overview of policing matters during this period.

He stated that of the 11,000 offences recorded nationally, one third of these offences occurred in the southern region. He referred to the impacts that Covid 19 is having on policing with mandatory checkpoints in place, work practices changed, changes in custody practices, absenteeism, and working from home in place. He also made reference to antisocial behaviour among young persons during the Covid 19 pandemic. He also noted children and in the U12 age group where the Gardaí have limited powers of enforcement.

The Cathaoirleach and Members complimented the Superintendent on the comprehensive overview of the current situation within the District.

The Members referred to a number of items including the location of Go Safe Vans, Timeframe for provision of new Garda Station for Newcastle West, Covid-19, Drugs, Illegal dumping, anti social behavior among young people during the Covid 19 pandemic and a discussion followed in relation to these matters.

On a query from the Members on the location of Go Safe Vans, the Superintendent stated that the location of Go Safe Vans is a matter for the Road Safety Authority and the National Roads Policing but suggested the possibility of having a representative attend a future Meeting of the JPC to discuss the location of Go Safe Vans in the District.

The Members expressed the need for urgency on the provision of a Garda Station for Newcastle West and in replying, the Superintendent stated the provision of a Garda Station for Newcastle West is a high priority and that discussions are ongoing in relation to this matter.

In replying to the issue of illegal dumping, Inspector Lacey stated that a Liaison Officer has been appointed in the District and engagement is ongoing with Coillte in relation to the matter of illegal dumping. He also raised the issue of GDPR breaches around CCTV being used for the purpose of dealing with incidents of illegal dumping.

In replying to the Members concerns in relation to anti social behavior among young people, the Superintendent referred to the limited powers the Gardaí have in dealing with the U12 age group but stated that engagement in the community would commence again when the restrictions are lifted.

The Director, on behalf of Management and Staff of the Council acknowledged the assistance and ongoing support of the Gardaí in the District at all times and especially during the current Covid 19 pandemic.

At this point, Councillor Scanlan left the Meeting.

Prior to conclusion of the Meeting, the Superintendent also welcomed Sergeant N. Barry to the Meeting who has replaced Sergeant G. Thompson. She also referred to Garda C. Healy who has commenced working in her new role in the District.

This concluded the Meeting.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cathaoirleach**

**Dated:** \_\_\_\_\_