

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF THE JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DOORADOYLE, ON FRIDAY, 24TH JULY, 2020 AT 2.30 P.M.

IN THE CHAIR :	Councillor A. Teskey
MEMBERS :	Councillors B. Collins, J. Collins, J. Costelloe, S. Hartigan, S. Keary, S. Kiely, M. Murphy, J. O'Donoghue, M. Ryan, K. Sheahan, C. Sheehan and A. Talukder
GARDA NOMINATIONS :	Chief Superintendent (Mr. G. Roche), Superintendent (Mr. B. Sugrue), Superintendent (Mr. D. O'Connor), Superintendent (Mr. J. Ryan), Superintendent (Ms. A. Magner), Senior Crime and Policing Analyst (Ms. L. Breen), Senior Intelligence Analyst (Ms. L. Collins), Inspector (Ms. S. Heelan), Inspector (Mr. O. Kennedy) And Sergeant (Ms. C. Dee)
OFFICIALS :	Deputy Chief Executive (Mr. S. Coughlan), Director of Service (Ms. A. Duke), Head of Digital Services (Mr. M. Bilauca), A/Administrative Officer (Mr. P. Williams), Staff Officer (Ms. L. Creamer)
OTHERS :	Ms. K. Shelly, Assistant Principle, The Policing Authority
APOLOGIES :	Councillor M. Collins, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor E. O'Brien, Deputy B. Leddin, T.D., Deputy K. O'Donnell, T.D., Deputy R. O'Donoghue, T.D. and Deputy M. Quinlivan, T.D.

Prior to the business proper of the Meeting, Councillor Teskey proposed a vote of sympathy to the family, friends and colleagues of the late Detective Garda Colm Horkan who was tragically killed in the line of duty. Members stood in silence for one minute as a mark of respect.

Councillor Teskey congratulated Garda Moroney and all involved in the organization of the Drive in Bingo event which was held in The Woodlands House Hotel, Adare in aid of Pieta House and Milford Hospice and which raised a considerable amount of money. He also commended the Gardai on the excellent work they did during the Covid-19 pandemic to date.

Councillor Teskey welcomed Ms. K. Shelly, Principle, The Policing Authority, to the meeting.

1. Minutes

Circulated, copy of Minutes of Joint Policing Committee Meeting held on 21st February, 2020 :

Proposed by Councillor S. Kiely

Seconded by Councillor J. Costelloe

2. Update from Chief Superintendent

The Chief Superintendent thanked Members for their vote of sympathy on the death of Garda Colm Horkan.

He stated that various plans were set out to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic but thankfully some did not have to be implemented. A lot of changes were made to assist in the pandemic with staff coming from Templemore to help in the policing of the city and county and also a lot of probationers came who were very enthusiastic in the carrying out of their duties. The reaction to policing and the implementation of the regulations was very positive. Extra patrol cars were received from Policing Headquarters. Limerick was the first to implement the Community Initiative, which was a joint venture between Community Groups, The Gardaí and Limerick City and County Council and received very positive feedback also and highlighted the co-operation and goodwill that is out there. During Covid-19 there was 80% less traffic, a drop in all areas of crime, however, drug use, domestic violence and alcohol abuse increased. There was very little Covid-19 outbreak in the prisons and the Courts closed down, however, these are now up and running again. He stated that Limerick did very well in dealing with Covid-19 emergency and the outbreaks in Limerick were much less than other areas of the country. A second surge of the pandemic may come later in the year and this will have to be addressed then.

3. Overview on Crime Statistics from Senior Intelligence Analyst

Ms. L. Collins gave a brief statistical overview of current position as of 1st July 2020 for the following:

- Covid-19 related activity and domestic abuse
- Property Crime at a Divisional Level (broken down by District)
 - Additional attention afforded to burglary
- Crime against the person at a Divisional Level (broken down by Districts)
 - Additional attention afforded to assault
- Proactive Policing Measures
 - Includes possession of drugs, sale of drugs, firearms and offensive weapons
- Traffic – Fatalities/Serious injuries figures YTD
 - Drink and drug driving offences
 - Life saver offences
- Drug Seizures 2020 – Type and value

The Chief Superintendent stated that there was a reduction in the number of lifesaver offences – speeding, no seat belts and use of mobile phones. The number of drink driving offences did not change despite the reduced number of drivers on the road. Drug driving offences was up by 58%. A lot of work was done in relation to drugs and cash seized and which was focused on areas and individuals who are part of major organized crime operations. He pointed out that these are not normal times so the figures reflect this, however, it shows where we can concentrate on going forward.

It was proposed by Councillor K. Sheahan, seconded by Councillor C. Sheehan and unanimously agreed to approve the following Notice of Motion :

“That Limerick City and County Council write to the Minister for Justice and Equality requesting additional and more relevant equipment for Gardai for drug related driving detection”.

It was proposed by Councillor S. Kiely, seconded by Councillor M. Murphy and unanimously agreed to approve the following Notice of Motion :

“That Limerick City and County Council write to the Minister for Justice requesting that Garda resources should not be used for transfer of prisoners”.

In reply to Members queries, the Chief Superintendent stated that the additional Gardai and new recruits from Templemore will be going back there and will not be assigned to Limerick on a permanent basis. At present four unit rosters are operating instead of five unit rosters and this is being looked at to see if it is feasible to continue this going forward. Apart from specialist units, staff work four days of twelve hour shifts and then do four days rest which is working very well.

4. Update on Garda Operating Model

The Chief Superintendent stated that the Limerick Garda Division was one of the first in the country to implement the new policing model which is being rolled out nationwide. Limerick is now in the first phase of this new policing model and is making a lot of progress. He stated that the original district led model has been replaced with a divisional model which has led to a greater amount of gardai being assigned to front line duties. Community policing is at the centre of the new model which will result in a more effective and efficient police service for Limerick.

He stated that Henry Street Garda Station is remaining as the divisional headquarters with two community engagement hubs, one for the city and one for the county. A lot of functions are now gone into Henry Street instead of being at district level including finance, however, staffing remains as is in the Districts. There are two Community Engagement Superintendents and a case was made for a third which was successful. Performance assurance is the next phase. Superintendents in each district now engage directly with the communities and a new Superintendent position has been created who deals with crime only. It is hoped to have the vast majority of the new policing model in place by the end of the year.

5. Limerick Joint Policing Committee Annual Report 2019.

The Limerick Joint Policing Committee Annual Report 2019 was noted.

6. Consultation on CCTV in accordance with Section 38 of the Garda Siochana Act 2005

Mihai Bilauca, Head of Digital Strategy, led a consultation with the Members present in regards to CCTV in Limerick City. Mr Bilauca referred to the Limerick Joint Policing Committee Strategy 2016 – 2021 – Strategic Theme 2 – “To review coverage, monitoring and maintenance of CCTV for it’s effectiveness and efficiency; extend and develop CCTV Schemes especially in the hinterland of the city and combine CCTV with other aspects of crime prevention”.

He outlined Progress 2017 to 2020 as follows :

Limerick Joint Policing Committee Strategy 2016 – 2021

Limerick CCTV Policy approved (2019)

GDPR Compliance (2018)

Limerick Hinterlands Project – 14 communities (2017/2020)

Limerick City CCTV – Significant upgrades (2019)

New Community CCTV Monitoring Centre – MCEC (2019)

Extensive community consultations and support (2017/2019)

Communications: Website published (2019)

He stated that 1,587 hours of CCTV was downloaded between January to May 2020 with 429 CCTV cameras across the city and county.

Mr. Bilauca outlined the following Limerick City CCTV operations which were noted by the members:

32 CCTV cameras in St. Mary's Park
27 CCTV cameras in Thomondgate/Kileely/Ballynanty
57 CCTV cameras in Moyross
73 CCTV cameras in Southside (2009)
58 CCTV cameras in Southside
21 CCTV cameras in various other city locations
268 TOTAL

He referred to the next steps in the CCTV process as follows :

- Implement DPC Audit Recommendations
- System Improvement : Strategic & Operational
- Limerick CCTV Strategy

Inspector Sandra Heelan informed Members that the benefit of CCTV in areas where it is operating is enormous - communities feel safer, senior citizens are more confident in their homes and people are more confident when walking in their own areas.

The Head of Digital Strategy replied to Members queries as follows :

- Current legislation states that the local authorities have to be the data controller in respect of CCTV and it would require a change in legislation to amend this at national level.
- He is aware that there has been operational issues with CCTV over the last twelve months with reports of CCTV not working satisfactorily in some areas. He assured Members that all the cameras have now been checked to ensure all are functioning correctly and a maintenance programme has been put in place to check all the cameras on a regular basis.
- The same rules and policy applies for cameras in Henry Street as it does for CCTV cameras anywhere else in the city and county.
- GDPR does not interfere with using CCTV coverage in prosecution cases and footage can be used for crime detection. The same policy applies everywhere.
- The current CCTV system needs to be outlined for noting at today's meeting and then a consultation process can commence for the identification of additional locations.

Councillor K. Sheahan suggested that a PR exercise be carried out between the Council and the Gardai informing the public sufficiently about CCTV cameras and what they can achieve.

Councillor C. Sheehan asked to explore the possibility of having the CCTV cameras at Hibernian Villas (which only face one way) be configured to provide for a larger view of that area.

In reply, the Head of Digital Strategy pointed out that some cameras are focused so as not to invade people's privacy, however, he agreed to follow up on the query.

In reply to Members, the Chief Superintendent stated that from a Garda perspective this item needs to be approved as soon as possible and then it goes to the Commissioner. He added that every CCTV

camera is invaluable in investigations and prosecutions. He said he was very happy with the set up and service of the CCTV.

Councillor Teskey said that any councillor who had questions in relation to the GDPR aspects of CCTV should put them in writing and submit for next Council Meeting.

Councillor Teskey asked the Head of Digital Strategy to give the presentation on CCTV to each of the Municipal Districts and the Metropolitan District Meetings. He also requested that a road map of where this matter goes from here and CCTV project times lines be circulated to all councillors.

Covid-19 Community Response Centre Limerick Division

At this point, Inspector O. Kennedy asked if he could give a short presentation in relation to the Covid-19 Community Response Centre Limerick Division. The Chair approved of the request.

Inspector Kennedy stated that the initiative in Limerick was the first in the country led by Chief Executive, Limerick City and County Council and Divisional Officer, A.G.S. and was launched on 27th March 2020 in partnership with Limerick GAA and other Groups/Volunteer Groups. It was established to co-ordinate the volunteer effort to support the vulnerable, elderly and cocooning. Over 1,000 volunteers across the city and county came on board with over 100 deployed to the call centre at Munster GAA Headquarters, Castletroy. Two Liaison Inspectors for Community Engagement were engaged within the Division in the Management Committee with the Council and is the only centre with two Garda Sergeants on site full time.

A Freephone number and e mail address was operated from 8.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. each day at the start of Covid-19 and then the hours were revised to 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. All call centre volunteers received a full induction briefing from the Sergeant and also the HSE provided training in relation to dealing with callers with mental health and other issues. The call centre operations evolved to deal with new situations as they arose. There was in excess of 2,600 calls and 250 e mails received and actioned. Going forward the Council has a direct link to A.G.S. for issues which continue to arise.

Councillor Teskey commended and thanked all involved in the Community Response Initiative adding that this is the first trusted point of contact for members of the public. He said this is a great way to interact with the public in a positive and worthwhile manner.

It was proposed by Councillor K. Sheahan, seconded by Councillor O'Donoghue and unanimously agreed to extend a vote of congratulations and gratitude to all frontline workers.

It was proposed by Councillor Costelloe, seconded by Councillor C. Sheehan and unanimously agreed to propose a vote of congratulations to Linda Ledger, Manager and all at St. Munchin's Community Centre, Kileely, for the excellent work they are doing in the area and in particular to the wonderful achievement of the Centre in delivering 50,000 hot meals to the community since January of this year.

7. Issues in relation to Scramblers, Quads and Electronic Scooters

The following issues were addressed:

Clarification of Powers of An Garda Siochana under Section 41 Road Traffic Act 1994

The Chief Superintendent outlined to Members Section 41 Road Traffic Act 1994, as amended.

Details of activities/number of seizures under the Act in the last twelve months

The Chief Superintendent stated that the total number of vehicles seized pursuant to Section 41 Road Traffic Act as amended for the Limerick Division was 1704.

The total seizures in respect of scramblers, quad bikes, electric scooters and mini motorbikes between 22nd July 2019 and 22nd July 2020 was 32.

Proposed Action Plan for the next twelve months

The Chief Superintendent stated that an operation is currently underway targeting the unlawful use of quad bikes and scramblers in the Henry Street District. This operation began in June and is broken down into a number of stages. A similar operation is underway in the Roxboro Road District again targeting the unlawful use of quad bikes and scramblers. Following the completion of these operations a review will take place to ensure a proactive approach is taken going forward. Further operations are an option depending on the success of the original operation and level of offending.

What are the consequences for underage users when scramblers are seized/consequences for those over 18 when scramblers are seized ?

The Chief Superintendent stated that there is no difference to the penalties faced by someone over or under the age of eighteen once they have reached the age of criminal responsibility. The only difference is that a person under the age of eighteen may receive the benefit of being accepted into the Garda Youth Division Programme as opposed to being prosecuted before the courts. The exact consequences will depend on the offence for which the offending vehicle was seized. The routine offences are for no tax/insurance or no driving licence. These offences are summary matters and are dealt with in the District Court.

Clarification that Byelaws are not required in relation to scramblers/electric scooters

The Chief Superintendent stated that it is his understanding that, while there is no specific mention of scramblers or quad bikes in the Byelaws, they would be included by way of 'vehicles' or 'motor vehicles'. The locations to which the Byelaws are applicable will need to be examined to ascertain if any recommendations can be made. He stated that it is his understanding also that the Byelaws refer to specifically named parks, as a result of which would mean that common areas belonging to the Council, in areas such as Ballynanty and Moyross, would not be covered under the Byelaws. This is something that is currently under review and will be confirmed at next JPC Meeting. He pointed out that, under the current operation this week, there has been two searches, three vehicles seized and a further arrest today. This operation is ongoing and a lot of CCTV has been gathered and is currently being analysed.

Councillor Kiely asked the Council to clarify the information given at the Metropolitan District Special Meeting held on 13th July 2020 in relation to scramblers and whether bye laws are required to be amended.

In reply to Members queries, the Chief Superintendent stated that it would be very welcome if there was a law limiting the sale of quad bikes and scooters but unfortunately there is none at present. He added that a Warrant would be required if seizing a vehicle in private property. He appealed to the public to report any incidents to the Gardai.

Councillor Teskey expressed concern at the increase in the theft of dogs in reply, to which the Chief Superintendent stated that a lot of work has been done by the Gardai in relation to this matter which has had good success. He appealed to the public for their help in addressing this matter also.

8. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Sarah Kiely

"In light of the Covid-19 Mobility Plan to reopen Limerick city centre extra resources are badly needed to install confidence to the general public, can resources be allocated to have foot and cycle patrols in the city especially at the new parklet at O'Connell Street and surrounds ?"

The Chief Superintendent stated that there are currently additional Sergeants and Gardai who are conducting beat duty and supplementing the Community Policing Units. The current change of roster has reduced five units down to four which has resulted in a greater presence and higher visibility on the street. Very positive feedback on the interaction of the Gardai with the public has been received. There is a commitment to ensure that there will be a presence on the city streets but at times it will fluctuate. Operation Meirle will continue which ensures more Gardai on our streets at critical times thus ensuring higher visibility and a greater presence.

9. Question submitted by Councillor Catherine Slattery

"I am requesting a report on the number of speeding fines issued on Hyde road in the last two years and the number of fatalities in the last 10 years"

The Chief Superintendent stated that all speeding offences are FCPN offences with the result that it is not possible to obtain the requested information from the Pulse System. There has been five fatalities on Hyde Road over the past ten years, 2 of which were as a result of a fatal RFC on 15th March, 2016, two as a result of a fatal RFC on 26th June 2020 and one as a result of a homicide involving an mpv on 1st July 2019.

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

"How many drug raids have been carried out in the Limerick Garda District to date this year ? Can an estimate value of drugs be provided in the response ? Can the response include a breakdown of drug type (Opioids, Cocaine, Cannabis, etc.)?"

The Chief Superintendent issued the following reply which refers to the period 1st January 2020 to 30th June 2020 :

Section 26 Warrants	195
Total value of drugs seized	€1,239,131
Cannabis	€ 382,355
Cannabis Resin	€ 455
Heroin	€ 86,675
Crack Cocaine	€ 15,240
Cocaine	€ 686,825
MDMA	€ 8,560
Alprazolam	€ 18,606
Acid	€ 350
Amphetamine	€ 40,035
Ketamine	€ 30
Cash seized	€ 140,438

11. Question submitted by Councillor John Costelloe

“Has there been an increase in domestic violence in Limerick during Covid-19? Has the lack of appropriate accommodation hindered you in carrying out your duty, protecting those affected by domestic violence?”.

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated that between the period January to June this year there has been an increase of 9% in the Division. From Week 13 to Week 29 of 2020 there has been an increase of 18% in the Division. These figures include breach of Interim Barring Order, breach of Protection Order, breach of Barring Order, breach of Safety Order, domestic dispute – no offence disclosed, breach of Emergency Barring Order and any incident with Domestic M.O. He added that the Gardai have not experienced any difficulties with regard to accommodation for domestic violence victims (Adapt House etc.).

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

“I am requesting an update from Chief Superintendent Gerard Roche on planned refurbishment works in respect of Castleconnell Garda Station”.

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated that the refurbishment of Castleconnell Garda Station is subject to the Budget of Estate Management and something which he is actively trying to secure funding for.

It was agreed that the next JPC Meeting would be held on Friday, 2nd October, 2020.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed : _____
Councillor Adam Teskey, Chairman

Date : _____