

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE LIMERICK JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 4<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2022**

<b>IN THE CHAIR :</b>	Councillor A. Teskey
<b>MEMBERS :</b>	Councillors E. O'Brien, J. O'Donoghue, S. Hartigan, C. Sheehan, J. Collins, A. Talukder, S. Keary, K. Sheahan, B. Collins, M. Ryan and S. Kiely
<b>OIREACHTAS MEMBERS :</b>	M. Quinlivan, T.D.
<b>PPN SECTORAL NOMINEES :</b>	D. Dunne, Dr. B. Hayes, J. Slattery and F. Dennison
<b>GARDA NOMINATIONS :</b>	Acting Chief Superintendent (Mr. B. Sugrue), Superintendent (Mr. D. O'Connor), Inspector (Mr. P. Sutton), Inspector (Ms. S. Healy), Senior Intelligence Analyst (Ms. L. Collins)
<b>OFFICIALS :</b>	Chief Executive (Mr. P. Daly), Director of Service (Mr. J. Delaney), Head of Information Systems, Digital Strategy (Mr. A. Dooley), Senior Executive Officer (Ms. L. Flannery), Data Protection Officer (Ms. D. Quinn), Senior Staff Officer (Ms. A. Foley), Staff Officer (Ms. L. Creamer)
<b>APOLOGIES :</b>	Mr. G. Roche, Chief Superintendent, Superintendent P. Reidy, Superintendent A. Magner, R. O'Donoghue, T.D., Ms. S. Johnson, Mr. C. Flynn and Mr. M. Leahy, Administrative Officer

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The Chairman proposed that a vote of sympathy be extended to the wife and family of the late Ben O'Sullivan.

Members stood in silence for one minute as a mark of respect.

**1. MINUTES**

Circulated, copy of Minutes of Joint Policing Committee Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2021 :

Proposed by Councillor S. Kiely  
Seconded by Councillor A. Talukder

**2. UPDATE FROM ACTING CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT**

The Acting Chief Superintendent thanked the Chairman and Members for passing a vote of sympathy to the wife and family of the late Ben O'Sullivan. Ben was a wonderful member of An Garda Siochana who will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

He stated that the economy is now recovering after nearly two years of covid and welcomed the reopening of businesses and said the Gardaí will do all it can to support the businesses in line with Government guidelines. He said that there is a significant increase in some of the crime statistics since the lifting of restrictions. He said that there is a significant policing plan in place for the St. Patrick's Day Parade celebrations and outlined that Garda rates had now almost returned to normal. At the peak of Covid he pointed out that up to 150 policing staff were out sick which put extreme pressure on the other Gardaí.. He indicated that the deterrent factor of CCTV cameras cannot be overstated and are a very important tool in dealing with crime.

In reply to the Chairman, the Acting Chief Superintendent stated that the Gardaí will respond as required and take any necessary steps to address the vandalism and other issues since the start of the war on the Ukraine at Aughinish Alumina which is Russian owned.

### **3. OVERVIEW OF CRIME STATISTICS FROM SENIOR CRIME AND POLICING ANALYST**

Ms. L. Collins, Senior Crime and Policing Analyst gave a brief statistical overview of current crime statistics.

Copy of presentation would be circulated to Members after the meeting.

The Acting Chief Superintendent referred to the 23 non aggravated burglaries for Henry Street that took place in 2021 compared to 43 for January and February this year. However, he pointed out that it is trending lower than average compared to previous years.

M. Quinlivan, T.D., requested that the crime statistics for 2019, 2020 and 2021 be circulated to Members if not too big a job.

### **4. CONSULTATION ON COMMUNITY CCTV SCHEMES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 38 OF THE GARDA SÍOCHANA ACT 2005**

Presentation was given by Inspector Sandra Heelan and Alan Dooley, Head of Information Systems, Digital Strategy, on community CCTV schemes.

The Chairman referred to the importance of CCTV cameras in the hinterlands in addressing crime and vandalism adding that each camera is worth two gardai on the beat. He enquired if the Council are maintaining the cameras.

In reply, the Head of Information Systems stated that the Council is looking at each individual camera and assessing if it is deemed necessary and if so then the Council is maintaining that camera. He stated that the Council does not have a legal basis for the traffic cameras and this resulted in the DPC fine. Traffic management cameras are paused for the moment across the city and county.

He stated that a legal basis is being sought for CCTV in Limerick – Northside, Southside, Canal and River Bank, Hinterland and the Council must ensure that the cameras are necessary, justified and proportionate. A Data Protection Impact Assessment must be conducted and a public consultation for each grouping.

The Chairman asked that he be informed of the locations where cameras are being removed.

Inspector Heelan stated that for any member of An Garda Síochána to get access to CCTV cameras they must get a form signed by their Superintendent prior to seeking access to the CCTV coverage from Moyross Centre.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Data Protection Officer advised that homeowners must abide by legislation when erecting CCTV cameras at their properties that covers a public space. She added that anybody living in a Council-owned property who wants to erect external cameras must get permission from the Council.

Councillor Keary expressed concern that CCTV cameras are not monitored or maintained on a regular basis. In his opinion, the cameras should be monitored at the centre on a 24hr/7 days per week basis by a member of the Gardaí and not by an ordinary civilian.

In reply, the Acting Chief Superintendent stated that the Garda Commissioner's preferred strategy is to have as many Gardaí as possible active and visible on the streets. He confirmed the current level of staffing would not accommodate Gardaí monitoring cameras on a 24/7 basis.

The Head of Information Systems stated that the civilians who monitor the CCTV cameras in the Monitoring Centre are highly trained employees who conduct their day to day operations in a secure and supervised environment and works very well.

Councillor K. Sheahan supported Councillor Keary adding that cameras appear not to be working on a regular basis and there needs to be an accountable maintenance programme in place.

In reply, the Head of Information Systems stated that the Council has to ensure appropriate crime statistics to justify the necessity for a CCTV camera in a particular location. He said he is very confident that the Council will gain the Garda Commissioner's approval by 12<sup>th</sup> April for the installation and operation of CCTV for the sole or primary purpose of securing public order and safety in public places by facilitating the deterrence, prevention, detection and prosecution of offences. He expects that 376 cameras will be approved excluding traffic calming cameras.

He stated that the decision was made to pause the monitoring of the hinterland cameras. A robust maintenance programme is in place and the Council has been piloting a maintenance reporting tool in the Adare Rathkeale District. Maintenance of cameras is ongoing and repairs are conducted once faults are reported or issues identified.

Councillor Keary, supported by the Chairman, said that there should be a CCTV camera at every bottle bank to prevent people dumping rubbish at these locations. He referred specifically to the bottle bank adjacent to the Council local area office in Rathkeale.

The Acting Chief Superintendent stated that, unlike courts, it would not be possible to go back and retrospectively prosecute for past litter offences. He stated that any cameras not authorized by the Garda Commissioner will have to be turned off. He stated that the approval of the Joint Policing Committee is required before sending the application to the Garda Commissioner for approval and he stressed that time was of the essence.

It was proposed by Councillor Teskey and seconded by Councillor Keary to approve the presentation delivered by Alan Dooley, Head of Digital Services and Inspector Sandra Heelan, An Garda Síochána, which sought the approval of the Committee for the use of Community CCTV cameras for the following schemes : Northside, Southside, Hinterland and 'Canal and River Bank'.

The Chairman asked if any member of the Committee wanted to formally oppose the approval and no response was received.

The Acting Chief Superintendent sought clarification that the proposal was carried. Approval for the CCTV schemes was confirmed by the Chairman.

## **5. CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence.

## **6. Question submitted by Maurice Quinlivan, T.D. :**

*'I will ask at the next meeting for an update on the ongoing An Garda Síochána Garda and Limerick Council operation 'Operation Copóg' in the St. Mary's Park area and if there have been any targeted raids in the period since the last meeting of the Joint Policing Committee Meeting'.*

In reply the Acting Chief Superintendent stated that Gardai are continuing to liaise with Limerick City and County Council in relation to St Mary's Park and are working together in areas including tenancy enforcement, exploring enforcement options to deal with specific addresses being used to deal drugs, and continuing to support the Regeneration programme.

Since the last Joint Policing Committee Meeting held on the 17th December 2021 there have been a number of search operations in St. Mary's Park.

- Six (6) premises were searched under warrant pursuant to Section 26 Misuse of Drugs Act 1977
- Two (2) individuals were found in possession of controlled drugs for sale/supply
- 62 persons were searched pursuant to Section 23 Misuse of Drugs Act 1977
- Eight (8) individuals were found in possession of controlled drugs for their personal use
- Eight (8) vehicles were seized under Section 41 Road Traffic Act
- Two (2) stolen vehicles were recovered with three suspects arrested and charged.
- One (1) case of Money Laundering was detected with a quantity of cash, believed to be the proceeds of drug dealing, seized.
- Prosecutions have also been initiated against individuals for the sale/supply of controlled drugs, following DPP directions in respect of seizures of drugs during previous search operations.

Maurice Quinlivan, T.D., acknowledged the good work being done by the Gardaí and the Council in addressing the situation in St. Mary's Park. He stated that failure of the operation is determined by one property which is still operating on a 24/7 basis. Shortly after police close down the operation it is back up and running again within a very short time.

The Acting Superintendent assured Deputy Quinlivan that additional policing forces have been allocated to the St. Mary's Park area and there has been a lot of collaboration between the Gardaí and Limerick City and County Council. He added that there had been a lot of success within the last week in dealing with the matter.

#### **7. Question submitted by Maurice Quinlivan, T.D. :**

*'I will ask at the next meeting for an update regarding the proposed pilot 24/7 Multi-agency Mental Health De-Escalation Team in Limerick, due to commence in 2022, outlining the proposed commencement date and the number of Gardaí that are being trained to partake in the pilot.'*

In reply, the Acting Chief Superintendent stated that as part of the Policing Service for the Future (A.P.S.F.F.) Plan, the Limerick Garda Division has been identified as a pilot location for the implementation of Divisional Crisis Intervention Teams which will be called Community Access Support Teams (C.A.S.T.)

An Garda Síochána and the HSE have formed a steering group and are collaborating to deliver this project. The operational vision for the pilot project is at an advanced stage. There is no confirmed commencement date for the launch of the pilot of Community Access Support Teams (C.A.S.T.) in Limerick.

No Garda training has taken place yet, but it is envisaged that a percentage of front line Gardaí will receive specialist training. He stated that Chief Superintendent Roche himself was leading the Garda side of this project.

#### **8. Question submitted by Councillor Conor Sheehan :**

*'I will ask at the next meeting of the Joint Policing Committee what measures, if any, have been taken to ensure the safety of women in public spaces following the tragic death of Ashling Murphy.'*

In reply, the Superintendent stated that the statutory function of An Garda Síochána includes providing policing services with the objective of protecting life, preventing crime, and investigating crime to bring criminals to justice. Gardai patrol public spaces to deter crime and reassure the public, and where evidence permits, Gardai prosecute criminals who pose a threat to women and other members of society.

It must be said that women are at a substantially higher risk in their homes from intimate partners than they are from strangers. According to statistics released by Women's Aid, one in four women in Ireland who have been in a relationship have been abused by a current or former partner. Research by Women's Aid on the 236 cases of Femicide committed between 1996 and 2020 found that almost nine (87%) in ten victims of femicide knew their killer.

Gardai have significantly improved the organisational response to domestic violence since the start of Covid through Operation Faoiseamh, which started on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020. This operation commenced with Gardai initiating contact with every victim of Domestic Violence, and continued through to the enforcement of court orders, and the prosecution of offenders.

In conjunction with Operation Faoiseamh, Gardai in Limerick commenced Operation Sabhailte in December 2020. This initiative is targeted at high risk victims of domestic violence, and Gardai work with the support of Adapt House. Garda Domestic Violence Liaison Officers developed strong working relationships with various stakeholders in support of victims of domestic violence in Limerick. There is an emphasis on ensuring the welfare and safety of victims of domestic violence, and providing them with support when they are deciding on engaging with the criminal justice system. To date the Garda Domestic Violence Liaison Officers have engaged with over fifty victims of domestic violence who are assessed as being at high risk. An Garda Síochána will continue to reach out and make contact with victims to provide reassurance, support and to offer the assistance of local and specialised resources.

Gardai also closely monitor registered sex offenders and work closely with other agencies to mitigate the risk from these individuals.

The Limerick Garda Crime Prevention Officer, Sergeant Ber Leetch provides safety advice during in person presentations, in podcasts for the third level student population, in media releases, and during her local weekly radio slots.

Ms Noeline Blackhall, Chief Executive of the Dublin Rape Crisis Network when discussing this same issue stated *"You can't have CCTV everywhere and if you do, it has to be monitored - you can only monitor so much."* There are significant Data Protection issues to overcome when introducing CCTV schemes and it would not be proportionate, or desirable, to have every inch of public space monitored by CCTV.

In answering this question he stated that he was conscious that it is the male gender that poses the greatest threat to the safety of women in public spaces, and even more frequently in private homes. The threat to the safety of women is societal in nature, and there are no quick fixes.

He stated that the Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence is currently at draft stage. The Department has worked with The National Women's Council of Ireland, and Safe Ireland to develop this strategy. The third National Strategy is structured around the four (4) pillars or goals of the Istanbul Convention on violence against women: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Co-ordinated policies. The final strategy will be accompanied by a detailed action plan setting out how the aims under each pillar will be achieved. The Department of Justice is inviting members of the public to give their views on the objectives and the framework for action set out in this draft strategy. I have provided links below to the draft third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence and the survey I have referred to.

He said he would welcome any recommendations from the Joint Policing Committee as to what can be done to improve the safety of women in public spaces. Section 36 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005 sets out that of the function of the JPC is to “*serve as a forum for consultations, discussions and recommendations*” and to “*advise the local authority ... and An Garda Síochána on how they might best perform their functions ... to improve the safety and quality of life and to prevent crime ... within the area.*”

Link to the draft National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence  
[https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjeuZW51Kr2AhXQVsAKHXB\\_D9oQFnoECCYQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.gov.ie%2F216213%2F3626d86d-3618-416c-b8d5-5a65beec60a1.pdf&usg=AOvVaw2SKrmhNjDfPwXlBShCf-vB](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjeuZW51Kr2AhXQVsAKHXB_D9oQFnoECCYQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.gov.ie%2F216213%2F3626d86d-3618-416c-b8d5-5a65beec60a1.pdf&usg=AOvVaw2SKrmhNjDfPwXlBShCf-vB)

Link to survey for public views on objectives in the draft National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence:

[https://justiceiresurveys.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_0BTXaI9JMGUXK6i](https://justiceiresurveys.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0BTXaI9JMGUXK6i)

Councillor Kiely encouraged anybody who are experiencing domestic abuse to come forward and report it to the Gardaí. She asked that a list of the names of the community gardaí in each area of the city be circulated to the Members.

The Chairman stated that the next Meeting of the Joint Policing Committee was scheduled to take place at 10.00 a.m., on Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2022.

The Chairman proposed a Minutes Silence for the people of Ukraine who are suffering so much in the war with Russia.

All Members stood in silence for one minute.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_  
Councillor Adam Teskey

Date : \_\_\_\_\_