

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF MEETING OF LIMERICK JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DOORADOYLE AND ONLINE ON FRIDAY, 2ND JUNE, 2023 AT 10.00 A.M.

IN THE CHAIR :	Councillor A. Teskey
MEMBERS :	Councillors B. Collins, J. Collins, T. Collopy, S. Hartigan, S. Keary, M. Murphy, E. O'Brien, J. O'Donoghue, K. Sheahan and A. Talukder
OIREACHTAS MEMBERS :	B. Leddin, T.D.
PPN SECTORAL NOMINEES :	Ms. D. Dunne, Dr. B. Hayes and Mr. J. Slattery
GARDA NOMINATIONS :	Chief Superintendent (Mr. D. Smart), Superintendent (Mr. A. Lacey), Superintendent (Ms. J. O'Brien), Senior Crime and Policing Analyst (Ms. L. Collins)
OFFICIALS :	Chief Executive (Dr. P. Daly), Senior Executive Officer (Ms. L. Flannery), Administrative Officer (Mr. M. Leahy), Senior Staff Officer (Ms. A. Foley), Staff Officer (Ms. L. Creamer)
APOLOGIES :	Mr. N. Collins, T.D and Mr. R. O'Donoghue, T.D.

At the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman expressed his support for the Garda Member who is facing investigation in relation to an incident in which three men were killed in a collision on the N7 in Dublin on 7th July, 2021. He proposed that the Minister for Justice and the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission be written to on the matter, voicing their concern, stressing the importance of political support for this Garda Member, and requesting that the matter be reviewed.

Councillor K. Sheahan seconded the proposal and it was unanimously agreed and supported.

Councillor K. Sheahan expressed concern at the behaviour of some individuals who recently broke into camper vans and set one on fire in Askeaton. Tourists are very important to the town and he said this kind of behaviour could not be tolerated. He asked the Chief Superintendent to follow up on this matter.

Councillor S. Keary referred to parking on double yellow lines in Adare at the corner of Black Abbey Road, thereby blocking driveways and Avenues. There are bollards there but extra needs to be done and requested additional policing to address this issue, particularly at weekends.

Chief Superintendent Smart agreed to flag these issues raised by the JPC members with his team.

1. MINUTES

Circulated, copy of Minutes of Joint Policing Committee Meeting held on 3rd March, 2023:

Proposed by Councillor J. O'Donoghue
Seconded by Councillor S. Keary

2. UPDATE FROM CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT

The Chief Superintendent stated that he would answer any queries after the presentation from the Senior Crime and Policing Analyst.

3. OVERVIEW ON 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.

The Chief Superintendent referred to the proactive measures the Gardaí are taking in relation to addressing the drugs issues adding that overall searches within the division is up 4%. He added that the possession of drugs for personal use is up 42% and possession for sale/supply is up 43% in the year to date. He said a lot of proactive work is being done by the Gardaí in addressing the drugs problem and the focus is to target those individuals who are making money from the sale and supply of same.

Councillor Keary expressed concern at young people who are driving tractors and using their mobile phones at the same time. This is a busy time of the year with the large number of tractors and machines on the road and all should be fitted with hands free units.

The Chief Superintendent shared Councillor Keary's concerns and confirmed that the Gardaí will be focusing on this issue during this busy time.

In reply to a query from Councillor O'Donoghue, the Chief Superintendent stated that he feels Bruff and Newcastle West Garda Stations are adequately staffed to address criminality in their areas. However, he would always welcome additional Gardaí and he added that the next batch of new recruits would be coming out of Templemore at the end of July.

Councillor Talukder stated that people are parking illegally in the taxi rank in Sarsfield Street and asked that the Gardaí police this better. He asked that the number of parking tickets issued for cars parking illegally in this taxi rank be submitted to next meeting. In reply, the Chief Superintendent confirmed that the Gardaí do police this and pointed out that parking tickets are no longer put on windscreens. He stated that over two hundred and thirty parking tickets have been issued so far this year in relation to illegal parking in taxi ranks and bus lanes.

4. UPDATE FROM CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT ON NEW BODY WORN CAMERAS

The Chief Superintendent stated that Minister Harris has asked that no presentations be given in relation to the new body worn cameras until such time as the Department of Justice signs off on the legislation. He added that the legislation has not progressed as far as it was hoped yet.

It was proposed by Councillor Keary, seconded by the Chairman, Councillor Teskey and unanimously agreed that a letter be sent to Minister Harris highlighting the importance of legislation being progressed in relation to the new body worn cameras. They stressed the importance of these cameras in the fight against crime and supporting An Garda Síochána in potentially using information from these cameras in prosecutions.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

Submitted letter from the Office of the Minister for Justice acknowledging receipt of correspondence dated 23rd March, 2023 regarding an invitation to the Minister to revisit Rathkeale town.

Submitted letter of reply from the Office of the Minister for Justice in relation to the Resolution from JPC Meeting held on 3rd March, 2023 regarding reviewing and possibly changing the laws around uninvited person(s) entering private lands for any reason, including recreational purposes, without the prior knowledge and consent of the landowner.

6. QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MAURICE QUINLIVAN, T.D.

"I will ask at the next Meeting for an update regarding what actions are being taken to address the misuse of scrambler motorbikes in Limerick, especially in the city centre, urban estates and public green areas across both Limerick city and county".

RESPONSE

The Chief Superintendent confirmed that in March 2023 Operation Scrambler was established to proactively provide a high visibility presence to combat the movement of scramblers and quads on the roads, and to minimise disruption, in the Limerick City North Community Engagement area.

The areas of concern were Moyross, Kileely, Thomondgate, St. Mary's Park, Canal Bank, Lock Quay, Shannon Fields and the River Shannon Walkways.

Over a four-week period, 122 proactive high visibility patrols were conducted.

Additional members have received mountain bike training with more due to be trained in the coming months. Where resources allow, trained members will be detailed on mountain bikes to patrol the Canal Banks and other areas of concern in the Limerick City North Community Engagement area.

A further operation is currently in development with a view to a more long-term approach to tackling the issues surrounding the use of scramblers and quad bikes in areas of concern throughout the Limerick City North Community Engagement area.

7. QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MAURICE QUINLIVQN, T.D.

"I will ask at the next Meeting for an update regarding the number of Community Gardaí operating in Limerick city per area and what plans are in place to increase these numbers".

RESPONSE

The below table displays the number of community policing Gardaí and Sergeants for the Limerick City area. There is also one Inspector over Community Policing for this area.

	<i>Gardaí</i>	<i>Sergeants</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Henry Street</i>	9	1	10
<i>Mayorstone Park</i>	9	1	10
<i>Roxboro Road</i>	7	1	8
<i>Total</i>	25	3	28

Under the new Garda Operating Model there are three dedicated Community Engagement Functional Areas in the Limerick Division each led by a Superintendent, which provides a stronger focus on Community Policing and the delivery of a robust policing service locally.

The number of members attached to the dedicated Community Policing Units is continuously under review and with the allocation of further resources consideration will be given to strengthening existing units. Resource allocation within AGS is based on the allocation of probationer Gardaí to the divisions over the next 12-24 months.

As a result local District officers are not in a position to decide on increases in the number of community policing members in their functional areas currently or make plans for such increases in the future without knowledge of allocation numbers.

The current resources and volume of calls to service are not conducive to the deployment of Gardaí from core units to non-core community policing units.

8. NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR SEAN HARTIGAN

"I will move at the next Meeting that action is taken to tackle the scourge of illegal scramblers on the riverside path from The Lock to the University of Limerick".

Cllr. Hartigan stated that the Notice of Motion be amended to read Locke Quay, not The Lock.

The amended Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor S. Hartigan, seconded by Councillor S. Keary and unanimously agreed.

While welcoming the Gardaí on bicycles, Councillor Hartigan stated that more policing is required. Operators of illegal scramblers are intimidating and harassing members of the public on the riverside path with drug taking, drinking and anti-social behaviour taking place there.

The Chief Superintendent referred to his reply to Question 6 above. He added that there are a number of operations, including Operation Croí and plain-clothes Gardaí taking place to address this problem. He added that if Gardaí are attending a traffic accident or some other urgent matter, they could not leave the scene to address issues elsewhere. However, he confirmed that every effort will be made to address any reported issues on the riverside path with illegal scramblers and he added that legislation is currently before the Dail to address the problem of scrambler bikes.

9. NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR SEAN HARTIGAN

"I will move at the next Meeting that action be taken to deal with speeding on the Castleconnell to Montpellier Road"

The Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Sean Hartigan, seconded by Councillor Azad Talukder and unanimously agreed.

The Chief Superintendent agreed that this issue would be monitored by An Garda Síochána.

10. NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY MAURICE QUINLIVAN, T.D.

"I will move at the next meeting for the creation of an action plan, similar to Operation Copóg, to target the ongoing drug dealing and associated crime in the Weston and Prospect areas of Limerick City".

As Maurice Quinlivan, T.D., was not present at the Meeting it was agreed to defer this item.

11. NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY MAURICE QUINLIVAN, T.D.

"I will move at the next meeting for the provision of additional Garda resources in the city centre".

As Maurice Quinlivan, T.D., was not present at the Meeting it was agreed to defer this item.

12. NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR JOHN O'DONOGHUE

"I will move at the next meeting that all Go Safe vans have the speed limit in which they are operating in, displayed on the vehicle or at an appropriate distance of not more than 100 m from the vehicle in either direction".

The Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor J. O'Donoghue, seconded by Councillor A. Teskey and unanimously agreed.

Councillor Keary stated that Go Safe vans should also be used on Regional Roads and referred especially to the Rathkeale to Askeaton Road, which is very dangerous for road users and residents.

The Chairman pointed out that he met with the Head of the Policing Unit who agreed to carry out checks on this road.

Councillor K. Sheahan expressed concern at the speed and driving behaviour on the Adare to Askeaton Road.

The Chairman stated that speeding on rural and regional roads is a problem, however, it is not possible to have a Guard on each road and drivers have to take responsibility for their driving.

It was proposed by Councillor A. Teskey, seconded by Councillor A. Talukder and unanimously agreed to write to the Minister for Justice and the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage requesting that proposals be formalised to offer an alternative to penalty points for driver misbehaviour, such alternative to be for drivers to attend A Driver Awareness Course.

Councillor O'Donoghue requested that Go Safe Vans be set up on the Croom to Ballingarry Road adding that the results of the speed survey carried out there were shocking.

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated that the Go Safe vans are managed by a private company and the locations picked are usually accident black spots but vans also had to be parked safely at locations. However, specific areas can be requested and he agreed to follow up on this matter. He also confirmed that the number of accidents have reduced and driver behaviour is altering.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman stated that the next Meeting would take place on Friday, 22nd September, 2023 at 10.00 a.m.

The Chairman convened the remainder of the Meeting "In Committee" to discuss an issue raised by Cllr Collopy.

Signed: _____
Councillor Adam Teskey, Chairman

Date: _____