

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF NEWCASTLE WEST JOINT POLICING SUB COMMITTEE HELD IN ÁRAS WILLIAM SMITH OBRIEN, NEWCASTLE WEST, CO. LIMERICK, ON WEDNESDAY, 6TH SEPTEMBER, 2023, AT 12.00 NOON.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR: Councillor T. Ruddle.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors Collins, Foley, Galvin, Scanlan and Sheahan.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Director, Community, Tourism and Culture (Mr. G. Daly), Meetings Administrator, Newcastle West (Mr. M. Curran), Executive Engineer, Roads (Mr. P. Vallely), Clerical Officer, Newcastle West (Ms. A. Lenihan).

Superintendent O. Kennedy, Inspector B. Manton, Detective Sergeant M. Reidy, Sergeant D. Cummins.

APOLOGIES:

Senior Executive Engineer, Newcastle West (Mr. J. Sheehan).

At the outset of the Meeting, the Cathaoirleach and the other Members welcomed Superintendent Kennedy to his first meeting of the Newcastle West Joint Policing Sub Committee and wished him well on his new appointment.

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 10th February, 2023.

Proposed by: Councillor Foley
Seconded by: Councillor Scanlan
And Resolved:

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

2. Policing Issues in the District

The Superintendent commenced by thanking the Council for the invitation to attend the Newcastle West Joint Policing Sub Committee Meeting and gave an update on policing issues within the District. He noted the cases which the Gardaí have dealt with including public order offences, burglaries, theft, fraud, road traffic accidents, assaults, drink and drug offences.

He noted a decrease in burglaries in the District while incidents of burglaries in other Districts has increased. He noted a slight increase in unauthorised theft of vehicle and also an increase in theft from vehicle. He referred to a slight increase in theft from shop compared to the same period last year and where a number of detections have been sought in this area.

He referred to an increase in criminal damage incidents. The Superintendent outlined the number of assaults causing harm and the number of minor assaults which had increased slightly. He made reference to the number of public order offences which has seen an increase year to date and where more proactive action is being taken by the Gardaí in this matter.

The Superintendent made reference to incidents of drink driving which has increased and to where the Gardaí are more proactive in this area.

He outlined the statistics in relation to the possession of drugs for sale/supply and personal use year to date and to the Divisional Drugs Unit which is in operation in dealing with the detection of drugs, sale and supply. He stated that a number of detections have been sought over the last number of weeks which are to be brought before the courts.

The Superintendent gave an overview of the number of fatal Road Traffic Accidents which have sadly occurred in the District this year and expressed sympathies to the families concerned. He also acknowledged the excellent work of the emergency services and first responders. He made reference to the Lifesaver Project and to the education which is ongoing in our schools to improve road safety awareness. He referred to the number of checkpoints carried out and to the number of checkpoints recorded on the pulse system.

The Members welcomed the Superintendent to the District and referred to a number of matters including the incidents which took place on Halloween night in Newcastle West last year, Garda patrols in the District, e-scooters on footpaths, drug detection, safety of Gardaí, update on new District Garda Headquarters in Newcastle West, use of Abbeyfeale Garda Station, Speed Limits, Community policing, burglaries, protection of Council property and telephone lines at Newcastle West Garda Station.

In response to queries raised by the Members, the Superintendent stated that a robust operation has been put in place for Halloween this year. Sergeant Cummins briefed the Members on the plan to be put in place over the Halloween period. He stated that the Gardaí will enact a local plan under the nationwide Operation Tombolo which is focused on the prevention and detection of the sale of fireworks and associated public order and anti-social behaviour issues during the

Halloween period. He stated that resources will be made available which will include one inspector, two sergeants and twelve gardaí. He stated that there will be six mobile patrol units and two gardaí on high visibility beat patrols in Newcastle West and hot spots have also been identified. Detective Sergeant Reidy also stated that a number of individuals have been charged with serious offences and are before the courts in relation to what occurred last Halloween in Newcastle West.

The Superintendent referred to the Regional Garda Control Centre in Cork which is a new caller aided dispatch system to respond to calls for service from the public. The Inspector also stated that an ability still exists to contact the local gardaí and the local connection has been retained. He also referred to the importance of dialling 999 in the event of an emergency.

The Superintendent gave an update to the Members on a new District Garda Headquarters in Newcastle West. He stated that a tender for demolition is to issue shortly and that it is hoped a tender to build will issue before Christmas with a build tender to be awarded in approximately Q1 2024. It is also anticipated that a commencement of build will take place in Q2 2024.

Following a query raised on the use of e-scooters, the Superintendent stated that e-scooters are being used by young person's U-18 and one needs to be cognisant of public safety when following a person using an e-scooter. He also stated that Members of the Gardaí are constantly engaging with young people and parents on this matter. Sergeant Cummins also referred to an incident which took place recently with an e-scooter where an investigation is ongoing and a result is expected shortly.

In response to a request on a meeting with the Community Guard, the Superintendent stated that a Meeting with the Community Guard can be arranged.

The Superintendent reassured the Members that all major incidents are fully investigated and all resources are being engaged for significant issues. He also stated that discussions have taken place with the Chief Superintendent with regard to obtaining as much resources as possible to ensure visibility and presence and to provide the best policing service to the people of Limerick. The Superintendent referred to changes to Garda rosters which would see Gardaí move from a four to a five unit roster in November.

The Cathaoirleach and Members acknowledged the work of An Garda Síochána and thanked the Superintendent and the Gardaí on the overview of policing matters in the District.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed: _____

Cathaoirleach

Dated: _____