

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF MEETING OF LIMERICK JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DOORADOYLE AND ONLINE ON FRIDAY, 1ST MARCH, 2024 AT 10.00 A.M.

IN THE CHAIR :	Councillor A. Teskey
COUNCILLORS :	Councillors J. Collins, T. Collopy, S. Hartigan, S. Keary, M. Murphy, E. O'Brien, J. O'Donoghue, J. Sheehan, K. Sheahan, C. Sheehan and A. Talukder
OIREACHTAS MEMBERS :	M. Quinlivan, T.D., N. Collins, T.D. and Minister K. O'Donnell
GARDA NOMINATIONS :	Chief Superintendent (Mr. D. Smart), Superintendent (Mr. A. Lacey), Superintendent (Mr. O. Kennedy), Acting Superintendent (Mr. S. Davern), Information Technology, Garda Headquarters (Mr. T. Willoughby) and Senior Crime and Policing Analyst (Ms. L. Collins)
COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES :	Ms. D. Dunne (ADAPT) and Mr. J. Slattery, North Star Family Support Project
OFFICIALS :	Chief Executive (Dr. P. Daly), Senior Executive Officer (Ms. L. Flannery) and Staff Officer (Ms. L. Creamer)
POLICING AUTHORITY :	Ms. A. O'Connor
APOLOGIES :	Councillor G. Mitchell, Mayor, Superintendent (Mr. Paul Reidy), Administrative Officer (Mr. M. Leahy) and Ms. K. Shelly, Policing Authority

1. MINUTES

Circulated, copy of Minutes of Joint Policing Committee Meeting held on 8th December, 2023 :

Proposed by Councillor S. Keary
Seconded by Minister K. O'Donnell

The Chairman confirmed that the next JPC Meeting was scheduled to take place on 7th June, 2024. As this is the day of the Local Elections and the Election of the Directly Elected Mayor, it was unanimously agreed that the next meeting would take place instead on Friday, 26th April, 2024 at 10.00 a.m.

The Chairman welcomed Ms. A. O'Connor from the Policing Authority to the meeting. However, he also outlined his objection to the upcoming changes to Joint Policing Committees structures, adding that he believed that the proposed changes may deplete the role of Councillors.

2. UPDATE FROM CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT

The Chief Superintendent referred to the recent significant drugs seizure worth €21m in Foynes and he acknowledged the work done by members of An Garda Síochána in this case. He pointed out that all courts were operating recently so this had a significant impact on trial lists and dealing with cases faster. He referred to a significant new initiative between the Gardaí and Limerick City and County Council, which was launched recently, entitled 'Think Before you Park'. The aim of this initiative is to inspire motorists to reflect on the repercussions of obstructive parking, which can pose challenges for various road users including people with disabilities, cyclists, parents pushing buggies and other pedestrians. He also referred to

Mobility No Insurance App, which was launched in Limerick recently. Thirty cars were seized in the first two weeks of its launch. He informed Members that the Operational Life Saver Education, which was initially launched in Limerick, is now being rolled out nationwide. He informed Members that there were three fatalities on Limerick roads since the start of this year.

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.

In reply to Minister Kieran O'Donnell, the Chief Superintendent stated that the reason proactive searches and domestic abuse cases were down was not a resource issue. Garda Members are very busy and respond to a very large number of calls on a daily basis.

In reply to Members concerns regarding safety on the Castletroy Greenway, Superintendent Lacey stated that this is a live investigation so does not want to comment too much on the matter. He added that young people are involved and the Gardaí were working very closely with the Council in relation to CCTV in the area. However, he noted that there is a large population and a number of schools in the area. He referred to the fine imposed on Limerick City and County Council in relation to CCTV, and the various factors involved in the installation of CCTV e.g. public consultation, data protection, mapping and signage and controller agreements, etc. The application must also go before the Data Protection officer and the Garda Commissioner. He stressed that he would not agree with the local community policing the Greenway but that he would instead look at putting extra patrols on the Greenway and will continue to monitor the situation going forward. He also stated that the Gardaí could support the community with text alert and liaising with Residents Associations.

The Chief Executive stated that the Greenway is one of the most successful Greenways in the country and is designed to have a very strong passive surveillance with lighting every twenty meters. He confirmed that the Council is presently going through the process for CCTV and will be put out to public consultation as soon as possible.

The Chairman asked that the same level of response be given in relation to the Limerick Greenway in West Limerick as a number of small issues have also occurred there. The biggest problem with this Greenway is that it is not lit and requested that consideration be given to providing lighting here, which would result in the Greenway being used much more.

In reply to Members queries, the Chief Superintendent stated that there has been no increased burglaries because of removing some of the hedging and trees along the Limerick-Foyne Railway line. He stated that he had a meeting with Irish Rail who agreed to monitor the situation. He stated that Limerick was the first division to use the new legislation in relation to the seizure of scramblers and that the results have been very positive overall.

Mr. M. Quinlivan, T.D. requested that a presentation/update be given on CCTV at the next JPC meeting.

In reply to Members concerns regarding reduced Garda numbers and resources for patrolling Greenways and suburban areas, the Chief Superintendent stated that the next group of new recruits are due out from Templemore on 20th March, 2024 and he has requested at least thirty new recruits for Limerick. He said he will do all he can to ensure Limerick gets these additional vital resources. He

stated that Limerick has received a number of new Garda pedal bikes, however, no update in relation to e bikes. A new app has also been launched which identifies vehicles that have no insurance. It also identifies vehicles that have no tax or valid NCT. He confirmed that even though crime has increased in Bruff, because the figures are so low, the increase in crime in the Bruff area is very low. One of the major issues in this area is cars driving off without paying for petrol / diesel. He agreed to follow up on the Neighbourhood Watch in Castleconnell.

It was proposed by Cllr. C. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. Teskey, Chairman and unanimously agreed that the Committee write to the Minister for Justice formally requesting that an additional thirty (30) Gardaí be allocated to Limerick from the next batch of new recruits from Templemore Garda College.

Cllr. Sheehan also asked Minister O'Donnell to use his good offices to follow up on this request also.

Acting Superintendent Davern said he was aware of complaints regarding issues in the Peoples Park and surrounding areas, however, these issues are not all being reported. The Gardaí did a number of operations there and there have been ongoing searches, also patrols have been increased. He said he was liaising in a particular way with residents in Vizes Court regarding anti-social behaviour occurring there. There is a very close relationship with Community Policing and parks staff. He said he would not be in favour of closing gates in the Peoples Park.

Members expressed concern at the increase in car thefts in Currabullaun and was informed by Superintendent Lacey that Operation Disruption was launched last week in Castletroy and Corbally to address this matter. A new Community Garda has also been appointed in Mayorstone.

Cllr. C. Sheehan stated that all cars should be fitted with an immobiliser to reduce the number of car thefts. He specifically referred to Japanese imported cars which are not fitted with an immobiliser and said car dealers should not be allowed sell these cars without having one fitted.

Cllr. Keary stated that parents should be made responsible in relation to minors driving cars and that severe penalties should be issued in respect of same. He commended the Gardaí in Newcastle West who dealt with an issue of a car overtaking him recently, which had been driven by two fifteen year old individuals.

Cllr. C. Sheehan expressed concern at drug dealing and anti-social behaviour taking place under the bridge at Pa Healy Road. More lighting is required under the bridge. The Chief Superintendent confirmed he was aware of the issue.

Superintendent Kennedy informed Members that there has been an increase of one Garda Member to the Rathkeale area and another to the Adare area.

In reply to Cllr. Keary, the Chief Superintendent stated that it is everyone's personal responsibility not to buy stolen goods. The Gardaí monitor the situation but people also need to be aware that, by buying stolen goods, they are supporting criminality. He appealed to the public to buy products from reputable traders. He also promoted property marking, which greatly assists Gardaí when stolen goods are retrieved.

Cllrs. Teskey and Keary voiced their concern at people calling to houses asking if they wanted tarmacadam done as they had some left over from local road works in the area, and they asked that the Council issue a statement informing Members of the public about this, and urging them not to entertain such people.

In reply to Cllr. Teskey, Chairman, Superintendent Kennedy confirmed that the present garda stations in Adare and Rathkeale are not manned as all Gardaí are out on the beat. However, the garda station in Newcastle West is manned.

Superintendent Kennedy stated that the Gardaí have partaken in a number of initiatives with the R.S.A and lifesaver programmes. Engagement is also taking place with Youth Diversion Projects. Gardaí are also going to schools regularly highlighting the dangers of driving irresponsibly.

4. PRESENTATION BY MR. TIM WILLOUGHBY, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, GARDA HEADQUARTERS, ON BODY WORN CAMERAS

Mr. Tim Willoughby gave a presentation to the meeting.

He stated that legislation is now in place in relation to body worn cameras. The plan is for 600 cameras overall with 200 cameras allocated to Limerick. He indicated that they were going live in June this year and confirmed that every uniformed Guard in Henry Street will have such cameras.

Members welcomed the body worn cameras and thanked Mr. Willoughby for his presentation.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

Reply e-mail from Private Secretary to the Minister for Justice regarding Community Policing Units. He confirmed that the claim being made about disbandment was unsubstantiated. He stated in such letter that the Garda Commissioner is responsible under Section 26 of the Garda Síochana Act 2005 (as amended) for the management and administration of Garda business, including the recruitment and training of Garda members and staff. Under Section 33 of the Act, the Commissioner determines the distribution and stationing of the Garda Síochana throughout the state. The Minister has no role in these independent functions and is unable to seek to direct, influence or otherwise intervene with the Commissioner in relation to the deployment of Garda Resources. The Minister is assured, however, that no established units are being considered for disbandment by the Commissioner.

Reply e-mail acknowledging correspondence sent to the Commissioner and indicating that it has been forwarded to the Office of Assistant Commissioner Southern Region for direct reply.

Reply e-mail from Assistant Commissioner, Southern Region, indicating that our correspondence has been forwarded to the Office of the Divisional Officer, Limerick, who has operational responsibility for all policing matters in Limerick and stating that a member has been requested to liaise with the Council in addressing the matter raised in correspondence.

E mails from Waterford Council and Fingal Council acknowledging receipt of Resolution adopted at Limerick Joint Policing Committee Meeting held on 8th December, 2023, that the Commissioner be written to voicing the Council's opposition to proposals to disband dedicated community policing.

6. QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR AZAD TALUKDER

"I will ask at the next Meeting of the Joint Policing Committee if additional resources can be directed to the Immigration Office at Henry Street Garda Station to reduce the waiting time as this is causing undue hardship to people and their families".

In reply to Councillor Talukder, the Chief Superintendent stated that there is a marked increase in the Limerick Division in the demand for Immigration services. To combat this an extra member of An Garda Síochána started in the Immigration Office in January 2024 to assist with the increase. An internal review has been conducted and as a result, a competition to increase the Immigration Office with a further Immigration Officer is currently ongoing. This will result in two additional Immigration Officers being added to the unit, which should make a significant difference in reducing current waiting times.

There is an online system for booking an appointment namely; Limerick.Registration@garda.ie. This allows for communication directly between the Immigration Office and the Applicant who will schedule the next available appointment based on the date the application was received.

7. QUESTION SUBMITTED BY DEPUTY MAURICE QUINLIVAN, T.D.

"I will ask at the next Meeting of the Joint Policing Committee what steps are being taken to combat the sale and supply of drugs in the Kings Island area, which has seen an increase in such behaviour in recent weeks".

In reply, the Chief Superintendent stated that at present the Limerick Divisional Drugs Unit are actively targeting persons involved in the sale/supply of cocaine/heroin within the Limerick Division. At present, there is a number of live operations in place targeting the sale/supply of cocaine/heroin in Limerick City. The Limerick Divisional Drugs Unit will continue to target areas of concern in the coming weeks where the sale/supply of crack cocaine and heroin is an issue.

There has been a number of successful prosecutions and a number are still pending which are because of co-operation with the Criminal Assets Bureau. These prosecutions, some of which were through Operation Coronation, have resulted in large quantities of cash, property and luxury items and assets being seized. A number of high profile individuals have been taken before the Special Criminal Court which has resulted in a number of positive outcomes.

Operation Feabhsaigh, under the direction of Superintendent Lacey, was initiated in September 2023. It's two key priorities- Enforcement and Crime Prevention Kings Islands Historic Quarter - Sale and Supply of Drugs/Open Drug Use/Chronic Anti-Social Behaviour/Aggressive Begging/Crime in St Marys Park. It was also committed to having a visible beat presence during the Limerick Regeneration Demolition Project.

This operation was very successful and consequently in recent weeks Superintendent Lacey has engaged with residents and Representative Groups from Kings Island St Mary's Park and the Traders Association. As a result of this engagement Limerick City North Community Engagement & Crime Functional Area are preparing an application to relaunch Op Feabhsaigh in a similar format as seen in 2023. It's aim again is to confront and challenge the issue of drugs and anti-social behaviour which worked very successfully in the past.

8. QUESTION SUBMITTED BY DEPUTY MAURICE QUINLIVAN, T.D.

"I will ask at the next Meeting of the Joint Policing Committee, in relation to the issue of wandering and stray horses in urban areas, what is the number of seizures for non-compliance with horse chipping guidelines and the number of horses destroyed in Limerick in 2023 and to date in 2024".

In reply, the Chief Superintendent referred to below table in regards to the seizures of Horses throughout 2023 in the Limerick Division per functional area adding that these were primarily seized for being stray and wandering in public places as well as targeted operations in St Mary's Park, Moyross and Southill. He stated that the numbers of horses destroyed in Limerick in 2023 and to date in 2024 is a matter for the veterinary section of Limerick City and County Council as An Garda Síochána has no role in regards to the destruction of horses or recording of same.

TABLE 1 SEIZURE OF HORSES LIMERICK DIVISION 2023

	LK CE LCN	LK CE LCS	LK County	Total
January	2	2	0	4
February	6	3	1	10
March	2	0	0	2
April	6	0	0	6
May	2	0	0	2
June	2	0	0	2
July	1	0	0	1
August	3	0	0	3
September	4	0	0	4
October	7	3	0	10
November	1	2	1	4
December	4	10	1	15
Total	40	20	3	63

In 2024 we continue to be Pro-active with 17 horses seized in the Limerick City South Community Engagement area on the 21st February 2024 and two operations held in the Limerick City North Community Engagement Area in the last week alone.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed : _____
Councillor Adam Teskey, Chairman

Date : _____

