



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA
POLICING AUTHORITY

**Seventh Report to the Minister in response to the request under
Section 117A (2) of the Garda Síochána Act 2005**

**Monitoring and assessment of the measures taken by the Garda
Síochána to implement recommendations of the Garda
Inspectorate Report “Changing Policing in Ireland”**

February 2019



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1. Context

This is the seventh and final in a particular series of reports from the Authority focused on monitoring and assessing the progress made by the Garda Síochána in implementing the recommendations of the Garda Inspectorate's report *'Changing Policing in Ireland'*. These reports were produced in response to a formal Ministerial request of July 2016, made under section 117(a) of the Garda Síochána Act. In the period since the 6th report to the Minister, the Report of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland has been published and accepted by the Government. The Department of Justice and Equality wrote to the Authority on 31 December 2018 to confirm that the High Level Implementation Plan *"A Policing Service for the Future"* supersedes the Garda Síochána's Modernisation and Renewal Programme and is in effect the plan for reform of the Garda Síochána and policing generally over the next four years. Having regard to the plan and the structures in place to drive its implementation, the Minister has revoked the request made to the Authority under section 117(A).

In this context, this final report places an emphasis on presenting a summary of the key observations emerging from the Authority's oversight of the progress made. The Authority considers that the learning emanating from its oversight is significant and relevant, and in particular demonstrates the importance of persistent independent evaluation to evidence real change. We hope that this report will prove useful to both the Garda Síochána and also the Implementation Group on Policing Reform which is charged with overseeing the Government Decision of 18 December 2018.

2. Background

Published in 2015, the Garda Inspectorate Report *'Changing Policing in Ireland'* identified many of the areas for reform in the Garda Síochána and developed a suite of recommendations to address these. It contained 80 recommendations with a further 163 sub-headings addressing a myriad of organisational and operational issues including, but not limited to, the organisational structure, deployment practices, governance, human resources, finance and ICT. The majority of these recommendations were adopted and enshrined in Government Decision S20193F in July 2016. While some were subject to modifications following consultation with the then Garda Commissioner, the document provided the impetus for arguably the largest change programme in the history of the Garda Síochána. Coinciding with the decision to implement the report's recommendations was the decision by Government to expand the Garda Síochána's workforce.

Earlier that year the Garda Síochána had developed earlier the Modernisation and Renewal Programme, which represented an important and positive intervention by the Garda Síochána. It was the expression of a clear commitment to change and renewal. The Modernisation and Renewal Programme was identified by the Minister as the vehicle for the implementation of the Government Decision and *Changing Policing in Ireland* recommendations. The Programme also had regard to some of the many other recommendations made to the Garda Síochána over the years.

While this is the final report under the specific Ministerial request made in 2016, the majority of recommendations in *Changing Policing in Ireland* are still outstanding and remain relevant. The Authority is committed to meeting its statutory obligation to oversee Garda performance and insofar

as much of the work to be completed under the Government’s policing reform programme directly impacts on Garda performance and the service provided to the community, the Authority will continue its statutory functions by monitoring, assessing and reporting on the progress made in a number of key priority areas, as appropriate.

3. Essential Enablers of Change

From the outset, the Authority recognised the complexity and scale of the Garda Síochána change programme and identified six priority areas for organisation development on which it would focus its evaluation. These were important areas that the Authority continues to regard as essential enablers of change within the Garda Síochána. These are:

- Composition and structure of the Garda Workforce
- Garda Resource Deployment
- Supervision
- Data Quality
- Victims and
- Culture.

In monitoring and assessing the implementation of recommendations, particular focus was placed on the achievement of recommendations related to these six priority areas as those which most impact on the service delivered to the community and on the Garda Síochána’s capacity to deliver. The focus in the Authority’s evaluation and reporting was not simply a mechanistic or bureaucratic question of whether the Inspectorate’s recommendations were implemented but a more fundamental one of assessing whether that implementation was achieving their intent and realising the benefits of the recommendations as a whole for the organisation and for the public.

4. Key observations

This short report does not attempt to repeat all the findings arising in each of the Authority’s previous reports to the Minister on the implementation of the Modernisation and Renewal Programme. The passage of time has done little to diminish the relevance of those findings and they remain urgent, not least now in light of the impending implementation of A Policing Service for the future. The remainder of this report sets out at a high level the key points of learning that the Authority believes will continue to impact on the ability of the Garda Síochána to effect the change and deliver on ‘*A Policing Service for the Future*’.

While these lessons and observations are expanded on in the remainder of this report, in brief they are that:

- Pockets of the Garda Síochána have demonstrated a real appetite for change with significant levels of personal commitment and drive to the achievement of some recommendations evident. One example is the establishment of a Risk Management Office and the embedding of a risk management process across the organisation.
- Verification of the progress being made by the Garda Síochána needs to be independent, intrusive and persistent. It is critical that any evaluation undertaken moves beyond monitoring the achievement of project milestones to actually evidencing and assessing the outputs and outcomes of activity. It has been the Authority's experience that this is crucial in order to assess whether the intent and benefits of any recommendations are being realised and to understand the impact the change effort is actually having on the policing service offered to the community.
- In instances where the Garda Síochána has consulted and involved stakeholder organisations, in aspects of the Modernisation and Renewal programme, the benefits or potential benefits are evident.
- While they need to be developed further, there have been particular positives emerging for Victims from the work done in areas such as the Protective Services Units and the Victims' Services Offices
- Some projects which are potentially transformational if properly embedded, are due to be delivered during 2019, including ICT initiatives such as the Investigation Management System.
- The absence of a strategic vision for the organisation in key areas has bedevilled the implementation of change. There is still no settled view articulated as to what the expanded Garda Síochána workforce will look like, how it will be recruited, trained, organised and how best it can be effective for the community. The Garda Síochána needs to articulate what will be the outcomes of change for the policing service provided in addition to the outputs and milestones of a project process.
- 3rd Party recommendations are accepted quickly by the Garda Síochána with little assessment as to the feasibility of their achievement. This has led to the Garda Síochána repeatedly over-promising and under delivering.
- Change efforts to date have failed to acknowledge the current state of readiness and ability to the organisation to undertake a change process. Planning has proceeded absent sufficient consideration of organisational capacity.
- Insufficient attention has been and continues to be given to the key enablers of change – HR, ICT, Accommodation, Training and Finance – to the extent that they need to become the first and main focus of the change effort itself. A continued failure to tackle capacity in these areas will inhibit the success of any planned change.

- Planning has been siloed which has resulted in an inability to assess the overall resource demand, identify interdependencies and prioritise.
- Governance has been siloed with no single coherent view available to the Commissioner of the quantum of work being undertaken and the progress being made for the organisation as opposed to within an individual project lifecycle. There has been insufficient focus on outcomes, with outputs and milestones being regarded as ends in themselves.
- Contestability for resources and subsequent decision-making has not been informed by organisational prioritisation or corporate risk.
- A costed annual policing plan as the expression of the organisation's priorities in any one year is needed within which the commitments being given to organisational development would be articulated. This would give comfort that the full resource requirements have been assessed, understood and secured or alternatively that choices have been made.
- Change has not 'landed' at the front line. The rich data provided in the culture audit evidenced a scepticism toward the Modernisation and Renewal Programme and can inform future change efforts.
- The Garda Síochána has devoted huge resources to the implementation of the Modernisation and Renewal Programme and this has yielded significant levels of activity. Those close to the centre of the organisation and involved in this activity understandably have a sense that work directed at changing the organisation is happening, and constantly. The frontline feel disconnected from this work and despite efforts by the centre to communicate the work being undertaken, in the absence of tangible outcomes for Garda Members, Staff and Reserve this has not been effective.

5. Lessons Learned

5.1 The need for a considered response to 3rd Party Recommendations

The Garda Síochána has been the recipient of a huge number of recommendations emanating from the Garda Inspectorate, tribunals and reviews.

The majority of the recommendations from Changing Policing in Ireland are still outstanding. When these were enshrined in a Government Decision, they were placed on top of the recommendations falling out of the Inspectorate's Crime report, earlier Inspectorate reports and the various other reports that have identified shortcomings or areas of improvement for the Garda Síochána. There has also been additional reports since, with associated recommendations. Combined, these create a

myriad of recommendations and a significant workload. Furthermore, many of these reports are considered without reference to one another potentially allowing for recommendations to overrule or even conflict with prior recommendations.

These recommendations are typically accepted over many years, too quickly, with in some cases, an indication that some modification will be required. In many cases a clear articulation of what the modifications are remains unclarified within the organisation.

These recommendations are characterised as being externally driven. They are not arising from any felt need within the organisation itself or even if there has been an articulation internally it had not gathered sufficient momentum to culminate in action. This impacts on the sense of ownership of the recommendation as to whether it is something that the organisation is galvanised behind, understanding the benefits to be realised.

Recommendations are accepted absent an assessment of the scope, scale, cost and feasibility of implementing the recommendation. The existing environment and current state of the organisation in terms of capacity has been largely ignored in the planning process.

The approach taken to implementation has seen little regard as to whether the enablers are in place, be they information systems, IT, people, skills, accommodation or the financial resources. Such a scoping would have allowed a realistic assessment of the recommendations in Changing Policing in Ireland to understand what was the antecedent work needed. It would have identified the interdependencies between recommendations and the resulting prioritisation that is required.

The Authority has seen the outcome of the confused chronology of decision making which has taken place – namely a lot of hard work and activity that is undermined by the absence of basic enablers. It has also resulted in a programmatic approach to change, which conceives of success as the achievement of project milestones across a multitude of projects, all running simultaneously, and until recently, unweighted in importance. The products of that project process - the outputs - become an end in themselves rather than the achievement of an outcome for policing.

The Changing Policing in Ireland recommendations were retrofitted to the Modernisation and Renewal Programme as the vehicle for change, but the requisite planning was not undertaken to consider that fit and the cost and the feasibility of its achievement. A cursory glance at the monthly reports provided to the Authority over the last two years evidence that HR, IT, Finance and Accommodation are repeatedly cited across the full range of projects as the inhibitors to progress. These areas that became referred to as the enablers of change - HR, IT, Finance, Accommodation – would more appropriately have been identified as the required focus of the change effort if an initial assessment and planning had been undertaken. These have not yet been addressed at any strategic level, and piecemeal solutions across individual projects will continue to hamper any future effort to effect meaningful change in the organisation.

5.2 The need for a strategic vision and related strategies

The Authority has, in its reports, acknowledged the work that has been undertaken by the Garda Síochána - there have been significant levels of activity and reporting and some successes. It has also highlighted however, the lack of a strategic vision that articulates what the outcome of this work will be rather than a description of the outputs and activity.

The absence of a HR Strategy has been consistently highlighted by the Authority as something that has negatively impacted on the organisation. There has been no framework to guide a demand analysis, an assessment of skills gaps or the business needs. The Government Decision of July 2016 made provision for a significant increase in the size and composition of the workforce. There has not been any articulation of how the organisation will leverage those resources to deliver a more effective policing service. There has been no re-imagining of how a Garda, Garda Staff member and Garda Reservist might best perform their respective roles in order to exhaust the potential for complementarity envisaged in the Government Decision. Civilianisation has been hampered by the lack of an understanding or consensus within the organisation as to the roles, purpose and value of Garda Staff. There is a similar situation with the Garda Reserve.

While numerically at least, the Garda Síochána can point to its success in recruiting 800 new Gardaí a year as permitted by the Government Decision, there are a number of questions arising as to the impact of the approach that has been taken by the organisation. The recruitment of such large numbers absorbed training capacity, which took its toll on the organisation's ability to provide other much needed training to existing members. This is precisely at a time when the Modernisation and Renewal Programme placed unprecedented training demands on the organisation, necessary for the successful implementation of IT projects that it believes will deliver huge benefits for the organisation. The supervisory demand resulting from large numbers of new recruits entering stations may have impacted on the quality of supervision provided to new recruits but also to existing Garda members. The impact of this may not be immediately felt but is likely to have had an impact.

The development of a HR Strategy and a Training Strategy for the organisation would have required a moment of pause to assess what the augmentation of the workforce might mean for the service that could be provided to the community - what it would look like and the implications, benefits, impacts and risks of any resulting approach taken. This would then have informed the approach to recruitment, diversity, training and supervision. It would have provided an important foundation or touchstone that would have informed the prioritisation of resources, time and management attention but also set out a road map for existing members to understand the end point to which the change effort was directed. The absence of a workforce plan that articulates the organisation's understanding of its current and future needs has also beleaguered progress.

The pressing need for a comprehensive training or learning and development strategy is not just about the identification of needs and the prioritisation of those needs. It is also about why and how training is done. An overreliance on a centralised model of training delivery with associated financial and abstraction costs impedes the organisation's ability to be responsive to those needs.

These strategies – along with an agreed strategy on Diversity, Community Policing, IT and the Garda Reserve – need to be prioritised as the context for subsequent decision-making. Their absence during a period of accelerated recruitment and training has been a missed opportunity for the organisation to understand how best it could leverage that recruitment to deliver better policing.

5.3 The need for integrated Planning

Planning was not integrated and the planning focus was on individual projects. For example, projects such as the Divisional Model would have been better supported had the Roster and Duty Management

System been in place and if a framework for Community Policing had been agreed and articulated. Instead, these and numerous other large projects proceeded in isolation, ignoring the reality that there were interdependencies between these projects and also that projects would reach similar stages of completion at the same time. As a result significant IT projects, largely developed in isolation from one another, are ready for deployment simultaneously which removes any capacity for the Garda Síochána to be agile or responsive to other projects which might have been deployed quickly and delivered impact for the those on the frontline of the organisation, for example the Mobility Project. Furthermore, this concurrent completion of isolated projects has in turn caused a bottleneck in the organisation's capacity to deliver, particularly in respect of training .

5.4 Prioritisation

The Modernisation and Renewal Programme as the stated vehicle for the implementation of Changing Policing in Ireland was a large change programme and early and coherent prioritisation would have assisted in identifying what were the most urgent actions to be undertaken. Some prioritisation was undertaken in 2018 but this was with regard to what projects would be prioritised to receive support from the Strategic Transformation Office.

5.5 Costing change

Costings were identified for each project along with the project's accommodation and HR needs but these were not reviewed in concert until very recently to ascertain the realism of the total resources committed to by the organisation in these individual plans. Project owners who had assumed that approval of a project plan meant that the requested resources had also been approved soon found out that this was not the case. Some within the organisation chose to bypass the formal project route offered by the STO and in some cases secured what they needed from the organisation. A costed policing plan as the articulation of the organisation's priorities and commitment to delivery in any one year must include the organisational development work to be undertaken, and its impact on resources and policing outcomes. This will give a coherent view of the total resource demand being made of the organisation and a sense that it can be delivered.

5.6 Governance

There was a siloed and project based approach to governance that saw some of the recommendations come under the Strategic Transformation Office and others assigned to named individuals. The Governance Boards set up under the STO processes were, from the Authority's perspective, more akin to reporting mechanisms with little authority or a sense of challenge. Despite having common membership, the Boards did not appear to the Authority to deliver coherent governance of the whole programme. There was no single point that had a full, informed view of the quantum of work, quantum of demand and an understanding of how it all fitted together. Contestability for resources was decided in an ad hoc manner in the absence of any coherent view as to what was the total demand. Corporate risk did not appear to inform decision-making with regard to prioritisation and resource allocation in any meaningful way. The lack of a costed policing plan also meant that there was little sense as to what resources were required to deliver on day-to-day operations, that might then have given some sense as to what remained to support the change effort. Rather, the siloed governance resulted, at times, in the allocation of resources to those who shouted loudest rather than any organisational consideration of what would best deliver for the organisation. It also meant that

there was no unitary sense of performance against the change programme beyond a commentary on individual projects.

5.7 Culture

The culture of the organisation is the environment in which change succeeds or fails. A supportive culture can be built through trust. The Authority found little evidence to suggest that the Modernisation and Renewal Programme as an organisational change effort had landed with the bulk of the organisation or created that trust. This is despite a range of communication initiatives by the Strategic Transformation Office. Certainly, within stations Gardaí expressed cynicism and scepticism as to whether the Modernisation and Renewal Programme would deliver any change that might impact on their day to day work. Key concerns, they believe, have been repeatedly expressed around fleet, accommodation, equipment and uniforms and have gone unheeded. The Authority has noted that there is a need for more effective communication between Garda Headquarters and the regional and divisional leadership. Specifically, there is a need for a greater understanding and acceptance of the managerial responsibility at regional and divisional level, to both implement and take a full share of accountability for organisational change. This has not always been evident.

The outcomes of the Culture Audit sets out a moment in time view of cultural attitudes in the organisation. Future change efforts would be foolish to ignore the rich data contained in the audit. There needs to be a cultural impetus to change behaviours and attitudes, this would be assisted by the articulation of the 'to be' culture – a description of the optimum culture for the Garda Síochána. This in turn allows for the identification of the desired behaviours that would support such a culture and those that do not. A consideration of culture could usefully be mainstreamed across any and all change actions taken to sense check whether the approach to individual projects serves to reinforce or challenge the basis for negative attitudes. Prioritisation of change effort should include cultural impact as a criteria to ensure that there is some early delivery of benefits on the ground.

6. Conclusion

The Modernisation and Renewal Programme was ambitious and an important expression by the Garda Síochána of its intent to modernise the organisation and deliver better policing for the community through implementing the recommendations of the Garda Inspectorate's report '*Changing Policing in Ireland*'. However, the Authority's persistent oversight of this area and subsequent series of reports to the Minister identified weaknesses in the execution of the reform programme, which inhibited progress and resulted in the majority of the recommendations in '*Changing Policing in Ireland*' remaining outstanding and still relevant.

This programme has now been replaced by the Government's policing reform programme with different specifications and demands. However, the main findings from the Authority's seven reports on the Modernisation and Renewal Programme remain relevant and urgent. These include the need for a considered response to 3rd party recommendations, strategic vision, integrated planning, prioritisation, costing, governance and culture that speaks to the conditions and foundations by which reform may be addressed. However, verification of the implementation of change and ongoing assessment of actual roll out with evidence of achievement is fundamental.