

2017

Westmeath Joint Policing Committee Annual Report



Introduction:

Westmeath Joint Policing Committee (JPC) is a partnership between Westmeath County Council, An Garda Síochána and the Community. The membership comprises of senior Local Authority Officers, senior Garda Officers, Elected Representatives, Oireachtas Members and Representatives of Community & Voluntary groups.

The Westmeath Joint Policing Committee is intended to be a forum for discussion and a means of building confidence, trust and safety in the county. In doing this, the Westmeath JPC seeks to prioritise key community policing policy issues and identify initiatives which will contribute to improved community policing, prevention and reduction of future crime in County Westmeath.

Role of the Joint Policing Committee:

The Purpose of the Joint Policing Committee (JPC):

As set out in *Section 36 (2) of the Garda Síochána Act 2005*, and the amendments to this Act in 2014, the main purpose of the JPC is to provide a forum where the Local Authority and Garda, responsible for policing the area, consult with Oireachtas Members and community interests who can make recommendations on matters affecting the policing of the area to contribute to the improved safety and quality of life of the community.

Strategic Approach:

In accordance with national JPC guidelines the focus of the JPC's work is "*strategic*" rather than "*operational*". The JPC is required to develop a six year Strategic Plan linked appropriately with the Local and Economic Community Plan for the area. County Westmeath JPC adopted its Strategic Work Plan 2015 – 2020 in April 2015. The plan sets out five strategic goals:

- 1) Inclusive Consultation
- 2) Community Policing
- 3) Crime prevention and victim support
- 4) Public Safety
- 5) Road Safety

A number of objectives and actions are linked to each goal.

Membership of JPC:

Each JPC is made up of:

- Chairperson – Local Authority Representative
- Garda Officers nominated by the Commissioner
- Local Authority Representatives
- Members of the Oireachtas for the area.
- Community / Voluntary Sector Representatives

Westmeath Joint Policing Committee Meetings held in 2017.

In 2017 the Westmeath Joint Policing Committee was chaired by Cllr Frank McDermott. The Westmeath Joint Policing Committee scheduled four meetings in 2017. However, the October JPC Meeting was cancelled due to the weather conditions of Storm Ophelia. The 2017 JPC meetings were held on the following dates:

- **Monday, 16th January 2017**, @ 11am in the Council Chambers, Áras an Chontae, Mullingar.
- **Monday, 10th April 2016**, @ 11am in the Council Chambers, Áras an Chontae, Mullingar.
- **Monday, 17th July 2017**, @ 11am in the Athlone Civic Offices, Athlone.
- **Monday, 16th October 2017**, @ 11am in the Council Chambers, Áras an Chontae, Mullingar – this meeting was *cancelled* due to Storm Ophelia.

Westmeath JPC hosted a **Public Meeting on Monday, 16th January 2017 at 1 o'clock following the JPC Committee Meeting** in The Mullingar Park Hotel, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath. All meetings of Westmeath JPC are held in public, however this meeting invited submissions from the public and allowed members of the public to participate in the meeting which was very well attended.

Westmeath Joint Policing Committee Membership 2017:

Westmeath County Council Representatives	
Cllr Michael O'Brien	Elected Representative
Cllr Paddy Hill	Elected Representative
Cllr Emily Wallace	Elected Representative
Cllr Paul Hogan	Elected Representative
Cllr Bill Collentine	Elected Representative
Cllr Tom Farrell	Elected Representative
Cllr Andrew Duncan	Elected Representative
Cllr Frankie Keena	Elected Representative
Cllr Frank McDermott - Chair	Elected Representative
Cllr Sorca Clarke	Elected Representative
Cllr Ken Glynn	Elected Representative
Cllr John Shaw	Elected Representative
Cllr Aengus O'Rourke	Elected Representative
Westmeath County Council Officials	
Mr Pat Gallagher	Chief Executive
Mr Declan Leonard	Mullingar Municipal District Manager
Mr Pat Keating	Athlone Municipal District Manager
An Garda Síochána	
Kevin Gralton	Chief Superintendent
Alan Murray	Superintendent – Mullingar Division
Patrick Murray	Superintendent – Athlone Division

Community Representatives	
Pat Grimes	Dalton Park (RAPID), Mullingar
Des Sheridan	Mullingar District of Trade Councils
Sheena Lawless	Battery Heights (RAPID) Athlone
Kathleen Grennan	Rosemount Tidy Towns
Marie Reddin	Ashdale/Woodlands Grove Residents Association
Dave Raftis	Kinnegad Combined Community Employment Scheme Ltd

Oireachtas Members	
Deputy Peter Burke	Oireachtas Member
Deputy Robert Troy	Oireachtas Member
Senator Aidan Davitt	Oireachtas Member
Senator Gabrielle McFadden	Oireachtas Member
Senator Paul Daly	Oireachtas Member

Changes in Membership in 2017:

Mr Dave Raftis, Kinnegad Combined Community Employment Scheme Ltd was nominated by the Public Participation Network (PPN) to fill the vacancy on the Westmeath JPC following Ms Phil Brennan's resignation. This nomination was approved by the JPC at its Meeting on the 17th October 2016.

Ms Marie Reddin of Ashdale/Woodlands Grove Residents Association was nominated by the PPN to fill the vacancy on the Westmeath JPC following the death of Mr Hugh McGuire (RIP). This nomination was approved by the JPC at its Meeting on the 17th October 2016.

Both Community Representatives, Mr Raftis and Ms Reddin attended their first JPC Meeting in 16th January 2017.

Item No. 1:

Summary of Progress in implementing the JPC's Work Programme:

- The Chief Superintendent, Mr Kevin Gralton at each of the Westmeath JPC Meetings presented an overview of the key policing priorities for the Westmeath Divisions, including quarterly crime analysis, crime prevention and community policing measures.

- **Public Safety:** The JPC received a Progress Report from the Working Group established in February 2016 to examine the *Design of the Built Environment* in relation to Crime and Anti-Social behaviour.
- The JPC received a presentation on *Westmeath County Council's revised Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy and Tenants Handbook* as part of the consultation process in reviewing these documents.
- **Road Safety:** Presentation on Road Safety scheduled for JPC meeting on Monday, 16th October 2017, was deferred to the January 2018 JPC meeting due to the cancellation of the October JPC Meeting.

Item No. 2:

Four key achievements of the JPC during the year:

1. Regular engagement and communication with An Garda Síochána in Westmeath Division (encompassing Athlone and Mullingar Districts) regarding crime analysis, crime prevention and community policing in the County.
2. A Progress Report from the Working Group established in February 2016 to examine the *Design of the Built Environment* in relation to Crime and Anti-Social behaviour in the Built Environment was presented to the JPC at the January 2017 Meeting.

The Membership of this working group consisted of the following Local Authority Officials, Garda and Community Nominees.

Westmeath JPC Working Group Members	
Mr Terry McCague – Chair	Senior Planner, Westmeath County Council
Mr Michael Connolly	Senior Engineer, Westmeath County Council
Ms Daire McDevitt	Executive Planner, Westmeath County Council
Sgt. John Connolly	Crime Prevention Officer, An Garda Síochána
Cllr Paul Hogan	Elected Representative, WCC
Cllr Aengus O'Rourke	Elected Representative, WCC
Mr Des Sheridan	Community Representative
Mr Pat Grimes	Community Representative

The JPC Working Group held five meetings and consideration of the recommendations of the Working Group was scheduled for the January 2017 meeting of the Westmeath JPC for approval and adoption. On the proposal of Cllr Paul Hogan and seconded by Cllr Frankie Keena, the JPC Members noted and approved the "*Report of Westmeath Joint Policing Working Group in relation to Crime and Anti-Social behaviour in the Built Environment*" and the recommendations contained therein at their JPC Meeting on 16th January 2017.

3. Westmeath County Council's revised Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy and Tenants Handbook.

The Chief Executive, Mr Pat Gallagher gave an update to the JPC Meeting held on Monday, 17th July 2017 advising the JPC Members that following further consideration by the Westmeath County Council's Housing, Community, Corporate and Culture Strategic Policy Committee, the Elected Members of Westmeath County Council unanimously adopted the revised Tenant Handbook on the 28th November 2016 and the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy on the 27th March 2017 for circulation to Council Tenants in September 2017.

4. JPC Public Meeting:

Westmeath JPC held a public open meeting in Mullingar on the 17th January 2017 in the Mullingar Park Hotel, Co. Westmeath.

Signed: 

Cllr Frank McDermott, Chair of Westmeath JPC