

Minutes – Policing Strategy and Performance Committee Meeting

Date: 20 January 2020

Venue: 90 King Street North, Smithfield,
Dublin 7

Part A – Committee Meeting

Attendance

Authority: Moling Ryan (Acting Committee Chair), Vicky Conway, Ronan Nolan

Secretary: Fiona Larthwell

Executive: Helen Hall, Margaret Tumelty, Aoife Clabby, Mark Nother, Liam Hallihan

Apologies: Judith Gillespie (Committee Chair),

1. Closed session – Committee members

The Committee members began with a closed session.

2. Minutes of previous meeting 5 December 2019

Minutes from the previous meeting were approved. There were no matters arising and no conflicts of interest identified.

A brief summary was provided by the Acting Committee Chair on various matters arising from the December Authority meeting.

3. Evidencing Update

The evidencing update was provided by the Executive. Visits were reviewed and thematic issues arising were discussed.

4. Policing Performance 2019

The Committee was provided with a progress update in relation to the Full Year Assessment of Policing Performance. Feedback on the work to date was given to the Executive.

The Committee discussed potential areas of engagement to bring forward to Part B of the meeting with the Garda Síochána representatives, prioritised based on the need to obtain information to inform the Full Year Assessment.

5. Assaults Strategy

The Committee considered the Assaults Strategy and associated operational order and related analysis. Various matters were discussed including human rights implications, the increase in day time assaults and the inclusion of increased knife searches.

6. Public Attitudes Survey Q2

The Committee considered the overview of the results of the Public Attitudes Survey from Q3, in conjunction with an update from the Executive on its recent meeting with the Garda Research Unit (Action PSP_038_09). Discussion focussed on the increase in the sample, the drop in victim satisfaction, and the work being undertaken by the Unit in relation to 'don't know' responses to survey questions.

7. Preparation for Garda Síochána updates

The Chief Executive provided a verbal update to the Committee on areas of concern arising from an ongoing internal Garda review into the management of DNA samples in investigations. It was noted that this item was to be discussed at the subsequent Authority meeting, and that this was included on the agenda for this meeting as an initial engagement and scoping exercise.

Part B – Meeting with Garda Síochána representatives

Attendance

Authority: As previous

Executive: As previous, with the exception of Liam Hallihan and the inclusion of Karen Shelly

Garda Síochána: Deputy Commissioner John Twomey (Policing and Security), Assistant Commissioner John O'Driscoll (Special Crime Operations), Assistant Commissioner Orla McPartlin (CEPS), David Gilbride (Strategic Transformation Office), Lois West (GSAS), Inspector Paul Franey (Strategic Planning Unit), Gráinne Shortall (Policing Authority Liaison Office)

8. Closed session

The standing option to conduct a closed session was not exercised.

The Acting Committee Chair commended the timeliness of the provision of papers from the Garda Síochána.

9. Assaults Strategy

The Committee sought clarity on the role of analysis in the development and ongoing implementation of the Assaults in Public Reduction Strategy 2019-2021. The Committee expressed a number of concerns on the development of the Strategy, specifically that the Strategy did not appear to be built on the analysis provided. This included the focus on the night-time economy despite the increases in daytime assaults and the prevalence of domestic violence. The Committee

was informed that the Strategy was data driven and that although there was a focus in the Strategy on the night-time economy, it would also allow a response to day time assaults.

The following points were made by Garda Síochána representatives:

- day time assaults are less uniform in terms of contributory factors and interventions and therefore require tailored responses to be designed and implemented at a local level, based on local data;
- local responses may include engagement with community stakeholders and with public transport companies;
- Divisional Officers are being supplied with local analysis through GSAS and are undertaking bi-monthly meetings to review effectiveness; and
- Quarterly meetings are chaired by the Deputy Commissioner to facilitate lesson learning and sharing of best practice.

The Committee indicated that the Assault Strategy was of continuing interest to the Committee, and that it would return to this subject during the year. It was confirmed that there are early indicators that the pro-arrest policy and high visibility aspects of the strategy are having an effect. However, it was noted that increased enforcement is expected to lead to a rise in recorded assaults in the short term, with reductions to be seen in a 9-15 month period. Progress will be reviewed throughout this period to determine if a realignment of the Strategy is needed.

The Committee questioned the inclusion of increased searches as a part of the operational order given there had been no significant increase in knife crime; reservations were raised regarding search related activities and their impact on community relations. Garda Síochána representatives stated that the Garda Síochána does not engage in 'stop and search' as there must be a legislative basis for every search. Garda Síochána representatives acknowledged that its inclusion was primarily intended to address the fear of knife crime and the need for the organisation to ensure data quality in the recording of weapons related incidents.

It was confirmed that domestic assaults, which are addressed in a separate strategy, would be reported on as a separate category from January 2020 (as distinct from all other assaults). This reporting is expected to inform the further development of the domestic abuse intervention strategy. It was reported that the domestic risk assessment tool had been rolled out in the DMR East Division, with national rollout imminent. This tool assists Garda members to undertake informed interventions, including referral of higher risk cases to local DPSUs.

Operation Thor was cited as an example of best practice for the design of the assaults strategy, including the grounding of the strategy in an evidence base, the rollout of an associated, named operation, ongoing analytical support, and linkage to other strategies or initiatives.

10. Management of DNA Samples

The Acting Committee Chair informed the Garda Síochána that this agenda item will be included on the agenda of the next Authority meeting in public.

Garda representatives reported to the Committee that the review of DNA samples is ongoing and that initial work had concluded that there were approximately 500 samples that were undergoing

detailed review as a result of queries raised during initial inspection. These included samples that were destroyed locally, missing samples, and samples that were marked as submitted but missing a confirmation of receipt of same from Forensic Science Ireland (FSI). An issue had also been identified in relation to delays of up to a month in submitted samples to FSI.

The Committee outlined the pressing need for the Garda Síochána to conclude the review and assess any implications that might arise. Concerns were also raised by the Committee regarding the lack of responses to requests for information within the organisation and potential GDPR issues arising. It was noted by Garda Síochána representatives that the missing information may indicate incomplete responses rather than a lack of response from any one Division.

The Committee sought assurances that appropriate stakeholders such as the Data Protection Commissioner and FSI had been informed of this review and its findings.

11. Policing Performance 2019

Garda Síochána representatives advised that there was no substantial change in progress against any of the initiatives with the exception of the anti-corruption unit being allocated staffing, however accommodation remained outstanding.

Points were made in relation to a number of initiatives, including:

- The detections improvement plan had been incorporated into local plans. Improvement have been achieved and work is ongoing regarding the classifications on detections.
- The IMS rollout is at too early a stage to allow for proper assessment.
- An update on Major Emergency Planning was not available in time for the monthly report but will be provided to the Executive.
- HR continues to be a major enabling challenge across the Plan and the Garda Síochána is engaging with external consultants to undertake a review of internal HR systems.
- Anti-corruption related initiatives are off target as they are dependent on draft legislation, which needed external clarification.

In relation to the known concerns with the quality of detection figures, and the Authority's ability to comment upon and assess those figures, the Acting Committee Chair requested that the Garda Síochána prepare a paper outlining:

- the current shortcomings in the recording of detections;
- the impact of those on the recording of detections;
- comparative international experience;
- proposed changes; and
- an indication of when these changes are expected to take effect and have an impact.

It was agreed that a paper would be provided before the end of quarter 2.

It was agreed that the Authority's Executive would engage with the Garda Síochána to receive a demonstration and/or briefing on the OCG Matrix, the National Coordination and Tasking Unit and National Intelligence Model, and the ongoing work regarding rosters. It was agreed that the Garda Síochána would facilitate a senior-level engagement in relation to the Human Rights Strategy.

The issue of driving on Chief's Authorisation was discussed and it was confirmed that a report is being prepared on this matter by the AC Roads Policing, which would be shared with the Committee.

The Committee questioned the absence of carry forward to 2020 of certain initiatives that had not been achieved in 2019, including an increase of roads policing members and a reduction of the FCN recording gap. The Committee was assured by the Garda Síochána that these matters will continue to be addressed but are being reassessed in the context of changing technological solutions.

It was agreed that the Authority's Executive would be provided with further clarifications on a number of matters in order to inform the Full Year Assessment of Policing Performance.

12. Public Attitudes Survey Q3

The Committee invited a general response from the Garda Síochána to the Q3 results. Garda Síochána representatives addressed the trends in relation to perceptions and fear of crime in the context of the current environment. There was also an acknowledgment of the drop in satisfaction on victim related measures however it was noted that the small sample size makes these figures liable to fluctuations.

When asked about the wider experience of victims in the criminal justice system the Committee was informed that there was an expectation that the continued rollout of the DPSUs may help to improve the overall experiences of victims. It was also noted that a CSO release on crime and victimisation is expected to be issued imminently.

13. AOB

The Committee commended the recent presentation provided to members of the Authority and its Executive on the Operational Model, facilitated by the Strategic Transformation Office.

The Committee also raised the issue of the ongoing efforts of the Garda Síochána in embedding a message to the public of the causal relationship between casual drug use and the funding of organised crime. Garda Síochána representatives reported that the communication of this issue is under active consideration; the responses of other relevant public sector bodies were also highlighted. It was confirmed that drug-related intimidation and other drug-related crime are currently among the Garda Síochána's highest priorities.