

Minutes – Policing Strategy and Performance Committee Meeting

Date: 17 February 2020

Venue: HIQA, Smithfield, Dublin 7

Part A – Committee Meeting

Attendance

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

Secretary: Fiona Larthwell

Executive: Helen Hall, Margaret Tumelty, Cormac Keating, Aoife Clabby, Mark Nother

Apologies: Judith Gillespie (Committee Chair)

1. Closed session – Committee members

The Committee members began with a closed session.

2. Minutes of previous meeting 20 January 2020

The Committee requested revisions to the draft minutes in respect of one agenda item. It was agreed that revised minutes will be circulated, reviewed and approved via email.

A brief summary was provided by the Chief Executive on various matters arising since the previous meeting, particularly those arising from the January meeting of the Authority.

3. Fieldwork Update

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

4. Policing Performance – January

The Committee discussed potential areas of engagement to bring forward to Part B of the meeting with the Garda Síochána representatives.

5. Garda Síochána Annual Report Format

The Committee considered the provision of direction on the format of the Garda Síochána 2019 Annual Report. It was agreed that recommendations would be provided to the February meeting of the Authority. It was also agreed that the improvement in the content and format of the Annual Report in 2018 was to be commended.

6. National Drugs Strategy

The Committee considered the briefing paper provided by the Executive on the National Drug Strategy and the policing of drug and drug-related offences. Discussion focussed on the inter-agency aspects of responding to drugs, progress against the Strategy and the organisational capacity to respond to rising levels of activity.

7. Preparation for Garda Síochána updates

The Committee considered the briefing paper and draft information provided by the Garda Síochána on the use of force. The Committee noted that expected papers relating to Roads Policing were not provided in time for inclusion in the papers for this meeting. The impact of this on the topics for discussion under Agenda item 9 was considered.

Part B – Meeting with Garda Síochána representatives

Attendance

Authority: As previous

Executive: As previous

Garda Síochána: Deputy Commissioner John Twomey (Policing and Security), Assistant Commissioner John O'Driscoll (Special Crime Operations), David Gilbride (Strategic Transformation Office), Superintendent Helen Deely, Superintendent Tony Lonergan, Gráinne Shortall (Policing Authority Liaison Office)

8. Closed session

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

The Garda Síochána was informed that a revised version of the draft minutes of the January meeting would be circulated for review and comment.

9. Roads Policing/Crowe Horwath (standing item)

The late provision of papers in relation to Roads Policing was discussed and it was confirmed that the Committee would not consider those papers in this meeting. It was noted that the papers would be provided to the Authority for its meeting in February.

Garda Síochána representatives provided an update on the subject of members driving on 'Chief's Authorisation'. It was stated that a HQ directive had been issued by the Commissioner in September 2019 revoking the ability of Chief Superintendents to allow members in their Divisions to drive without the necessary training, with a follow-up letter also released later in 2019. It was confirmed that this revoked the practice with immediate effect, both for existing authorisations and for issuing new authorisation. It was stated that the immediate revocation had resulted in a sharp increase in training in the weeks following the September directive. This was intended to ensure that all

members who had previously driven under 'Chief's authorisation' were appropriately trained. It was stated that a full training needs analysis is being undertaken.

10. Use of Force

The Committee welcomed the provision of information on use of force, including an initial, indicative draft of figures relating to Q4 2019. It was noted that the initial set of figures being captured is limited to those where information is already being collected, although there are plans to expand the range of categories and types of information. It was stated that the draft figures are being reconciled with other sources of information, where available (such as logs relating to the deployment of pepper spray canisters).

The Committee was informed that the Garda Síochána's initial focus is to ensure accuracy and to enable publication. It was expected that the information would initially be reported narratively. The Committee noted its preference for numeric reporting and commended the clarity of the draft presentation of the figures that was provided to the Committee. It was noted that there has been internal communication to emphasise the importance of recording use of force, pending a PULSE update that would generate a mandatory prompt on case creation.

The Committee noted the progress to date and enquired as to the potential use of this data in the organisation. It was also noted that there would be benefit in comparing this data with other jurisdictions where similar data is provided in greater detail.

Garda Síochána representatives confirmed that the draft figures are the first step in the comprehensive recording of use of force and set out a number of areas for potential expansion and enhancement of the information recorded and reported. This data will be used internally to guide the creation and updating of training and policy as well as to assess performance and adherence to associated policies.

The Committee informed the Garda Síochána that the use of force would be included on the agenda for the February meeting of the Authority.

11. National Drugs Strategy

Garda Síochána representatives provided an update against the 4 strategic actions within the National Drugs Strategy (NDS) for which they are the lead agency. Garda Síochána representatives committed to providing the Committee with a detailed progress report on the NDS by the end of February.

It was confirmed that the Drugs Related Intimidation Reporting Programme continues to operate in conjunction with the Family Support Network. The rise in incidents of drugs intimidation was discussed, including the severity of the intimidation and the increasing targeting of members of the wider family or other networks as well as those directly involved in the sale/supply of drugs.

The Garda Síochána confirmed that its response to drugs related intimidation continues to centre on its allocation of dedicated Inspectors in each Division and the ongoing work of CAB profilers in identifying and targeting those involved.

The Garda Síochána outlined the respective responsibilities of the Garda National Drug and Organised Crime Bureau (GNDOCB), Divisional Drugs Units, and community policing and other local units. The multi-agency approach to responding to drugs was also outlined, including the role for Revenue and other national and international partners.

The Committee was informed that a new initiative to tackle drugs was to be launched by the Commissioner, which would see increased resources in this policing area by the end of Q1. This is to include the expansion of the Divisional Drugs unit layer to approximately 600 members (up from 232 as of September 2019). It was stated that this would allow a minimum resource capacity within each Division and additional resources in areas of high service demand. The impact of additional resourcing of these units on Community Policing was discussed.

12. Organised Crime Groups (standing item)

The Committee received a verbal update on the response to organised crime gangs (OCGs). The Committee was informed that Garda Síochána is currently having a period of unprecedented success in such activities including: interventions in threat to life situations, and the seizure of firearms, assets and drugs.

Garda Síochána representatives also outlined the high level of international and national cooperation with partner agencies that allowed an effective multi-agency response including the ability to engage in Joint Investigation Teams with international partners, which are expected to be an increasing feature of the response to OCGs.

At an organisational capacity level the Committee was informed that significant progress had been made to date on: the roll out of the new OCG Threat Assessment Matrix; the standardisation of the National Coordination and Tasking function; and, the National Intelligence Model, which is designed to complement and work within the Operational Model. Despite this progress it was noted that there continues to be significant work to ensure the organisation can meet the demands on services within Special Crime Operations, including a full review of inter-unit/bureau cooperation in the light of the Operating Model.

13. Policing Performance – January

It was noted that the Policing Plan 2020 had not yet been approved but that the Garda Síochána and the Authority would operate on the basis that it would be approved and laid following the formation of a new government. Both organisations agreed that, on this basis, the draft Policing Plan would be treated as final.

A number of items were discussed in relation to policing performance, planning and reporting, including:

- Crimes against older people, including the Older Persons Strategy;
- Local Policing Plans, which are expected to be delivered by the end of the month following Regional and Divisional workshops;
- The internal communications strategy, with a focus on addressing the challenges experienced in the past in communicating the benefits of change initiatives to the front line;

- All 19 Divisions will have access to an internal DPSU structure by the end of Q1, with full resourcing of those units to continue throughout 2020;
- E-learning modules continue to be rolled-out successfully with ongoing management of IT constraints;
- The recent extension of speed enforcement zones, focussed on areas of likely death and/or serious injury and in line with an increased focus on drink/drug driving leading to higher detections rates;
- The rollout of increased GoSafe coverage, including the management of community relationships through an emphasis on fair and balanced implementation that is based on a desire to prevent speeding, rather than on catching speeding drivers;
- Missing persons reviews (every 30 days), including the related IT fix that is causing an apparent over-reporting of outstanding reviews;
- Recruitment delays in the Human Rights Unit; and
- The disaggregation of domestic assault, which was confirmed as representing 23% of assaults in the year to date.

The Committee enquired as to the organisation's approach to assessing, reporting and addressing risks included in the monthly reporting against the Plan as there was a perception of inconsistency. Garda Síochána representatives explained that the project owners control this aspect of reporting and that this may lead to some inconsistency in approach.

14. AOB

No items were raised.