

Minutes – Policing Strategy and Performance Committee Meeting

Date: 15 June 2020

Venue: Remote Video-Conference

Committee Meeting

Attendance

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

Secretary: Fiona Larthwell

Executive: Helen Hall, Margaret Tumelty, Aoife Clabby, Karen Shelly, Mark Nother, Alex Eisenbarth

Apologies: N/A

1. Closed session – Committee members

Committee members did not exercise the standing option to conduct a closed session.

2. Minutes of previous meetings

The minutes of the previous meetings were approved. Feedback from the Garda Síochána on the previous minutes was provided by the Secretary and it was agreed to discuss same with the Garda Síochána representatives in Part B of the meeting.

There were no matters arising and no conflicts of interest identified.

The Committee Chair took the opportunity to commend Authority and Committee member Vicky Conway on the recent webinar, 'Policed in Covid' at which the Authority Chairperson had attended. The Committee also expressed its gratitude to Fiona Larthwell for her work as Committee Secretary and wisher her well in her new position.

3. Policing Performance – April and May

An overview of Executive fieldwork activity since the April meeting was provided by the Executive, including remote interactions with the Garda Síochána and with external stakeholders.

In light of a changed operational environment, and developments in approach internationally, the Committee discussed various policing performance metrics. It was agreed to discuss same with the Garda Síochána representatives and to continue work on such into the development of the 2021 Policing Plan.

Following a discussion on performance against the Policing Plan and Covid policing the Committee identified a number of key areas for discussion with the Garda Síochána in Part B of the meeting.

4. Format of the mid-year 2020 Policing Performance Assessment

The Committee considered a suggested format as provided by the Executive and agreed to recommend it for approval at the Authority meeting at the end of the month.

5. Preparation for the Garda Síochána updates

The Committee discussed materials received and issues pertaining to the standing quarterly agenda items. In addition to these it was agreed to engage with the Garda Síochána representatives on the policing of protests and mass gatherings in light of the recent Black Lives Matter demonstrations.

Part B – Meeting with Garda Síochána representatives

Attendance

Authority: As previous

Executive: As previous

Garda Síochána: Deputy Commissioner John Twomey (Policing and Security), Acting Deputy Commissioner Anne Marie McMahon (Strategy, Governance and Performance), David Gilbride (Executive Director Strategy and Transformation), Assistant Commissioner John O’Driscoll (Special Crime Operations), Assistant Commissioner Paula Hilman (Roads Policing & Community Engagement), Assistant Commissioner Patrick Clavin (Governance and Accountability), Gráinne Shortall (Policing Authority Liaison Office).

6. Closed session

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

Following a discussion on the minutes of the previous meeting, the Committee Chair proposed that the matter pertaining to terminology regarding ‘anti-spit hoods’ be referred to the Authority meeting with the Commissioner at the end of the month.

7. Policing of COVID-19

The Committee requested an overview of the policing of Black Lives Matter demonstrations and how this aligns with the ongoing work that the Garda Síochána is undertaking to implement the Diversity and Integration Strategy. The Garda Síochána outlined the nature of the discussions held internally which have included the approach to policing demonstrations in light of Covid regulations while preserving the rights of attendees to assemble and to exercise free speech. Central too to the process had been the communication with organisers of demonstrations and ensuring the organisation was building on existing partnerships and utilising stakeholder relationships to reassure and offer support in a very uncertain time.

It was outlined that: the operating environment in regard to these issues varied heavily in comparison to other jurisdictions; that the Garda Síochána had different relationships with communities at a national and local level; that it was an organisation that ensures respectful treatment of all; but that recent events had challenged the thinking in the organisation and as such work was ongoing to assess all existing relationships, including consideration of language and interaction norms.

The Committee pointed to recent experiences of the Traveller Community, who in engagements with the Executive had noted a positive change in interactions with members of the Garda Síochána, as an example of where the organisation should strive to ensure that it retains the breadth and depth of its Covid engagements. The Garda Síochána representatives noted this and spoke to the range of stakeholder groups and communities it had engaged with, covering in excess 50

organisations – 16 of which represented minority communities. It was also outlined that work relating to the Diversity and Integration plan was continuing and that recruitment practices and community policing resourcing remained under review.

8. Performance against the Policing Plan – April and May

The Committee began by seeking the opinions of the Garda Síochána members on effective measures of policing and heard that the organisation would seek to move to greater partnership working in the construction of metrics and performance measures. A greater focus on prevention and proactive policing was also cited. Acknowledging it was a matter for the next Policing Plan, the Committee outlined some concerns it had in the type of trend analysis currently provided. This related to the resilience of this approach to measuring performance and the ability for events such as COVID 19 to impact on the trends. It also raised questions regarding the degree to which the measures are solely the outcome of Garda Síochána activity and can instead be impacted by other environmental factors and whether there are specific measures that might offer a better sense of performance, such as satisfaction levels, detections, etc. The Garda Síochána acknowledged issues in current measurements, particularly as a result of the extreme variations due to Covid, but outlined that the basis of the current metrics was what information was available to the organisation. It was agreed the conversation on performance measures would continue going forward.

A number of specific areas were discussed under this agenda item:

- On **current crime trends** and incident levels the Committee received an overview of contributory factors including the lower consumption of drugs/alcohol, the Covid restrictions and the increased number of roads checkpoints acting as a barrier to a widespread amount of criminal activities.
- The Committee enquired as to the resourcing of the Garda National **Economic Crime** Bureau (GNECB) and the Garda National **Cyber Crime** Bureau (GNCCB) given current increases in these crime areas. It was provided that additional resources had been sanctioned in line with submitted business plans from the Bureaus and would be delivered despite some challenges in recruitment due to Covid and a current competitive jobs market. The Committee was also informed of ongoing international relationships and cooperation in these areas.
- Concern was raised by the Committee as to the fall in **detections of sexual crime**, to which they were told that specialist units and associated training was continuing in respect of the DPSU rollout.
- The Committee also heard that despite potential issues in moving from a door-to-door **Public Attitude Survey** there was an appreciation within the organisation as to the value of continuing with the survey, and a commitment was given to the continued intention to proceed with the expansion of the PAS to Divisional level post-Covid.. They agreed to engage further with the Executive on such.

9. Organised crime (standing quarterly item)

The Committee received a verbal update on the response to organised crime gangs (OCGs), including the rollout of the threat assessment matrix.

An overview was also given in respect of the success to date of Operation Tara. The increased resources allocated to drugs policing in every Division as part of this was credited as being one of the facets in the increased number of seizures seen across the country along with the increase in checkpoints and the success of intelligence operations.

10. Roads Policing (standing quarterly item)

The Committee was provided with updates on a number of specific areas under this agenda item:

- The Garda Síochána representatives outlined how **internal reorganisation** would result in the continued oversight of the Mobility Project by the Assistant Commissioner Eastern Region while the rest of the Roads Policing portfolio would now come under the remit of Assistant Commissioner Roads Policing & Community Engagement.
- Progress against the implementation of the **Crowe Horwath** recommendations was provided at a high level with further in-depth discussion to feature in engagements with the Executive
- It was reemphasised to the Committee that the practice of driving on **Chiefs Authorisations** was only for outreach and community engagement rather than operational activities and would continue to be reassessed as the organisational response to Covid developed.
- The Committee was informed about an ongoing **road safety campaign** which focused on the shared space of the roads in light of changes to road layouts and differing profiles of roads users since the onset of Covid.
- Roads deaths were outlined as slightly increased year-to-date despite the decrease in road users.

11. AOB

Garda Síochána representatives advised that the organisation was currently working through the recommendations relating to the management of child sexual abuse cases to ensure that they are all addressed appropriately. The Committee requested a written update on implementation progress against the Garda Inspectorate's Child Sexual Abuse Report recommendations.

The Garda Síochána representatives informed the Committee that a small number of capacity issues that had arisen in respect of DNA testing in Forensic Science Ireland had been resolved and that further information on work ongoing relating to DNA would be provided in writing.

The Committee Chair stated the Committee's intention to return in detail to use of force and to the assaults strategy in a subsequent meeting.
