



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA  
POLICING AUTHORITY

## Minutes – Policing Strategy and Performance Committee Meeting

**Date:** 15 February 2021

**Venue:** Remote Video-Conference

### Committee Meeting

#### Attendance

**Authority:** Moling Ryan (Interim Committee Chair), Deborah Donnelly, Ronan Nolan, Bob Collins (Authority Chairperson)

**Apologies:** N/A

**Secretary:** Karen Shelly

**Executive:** Helen Hall, Margaret Tumelty, Cormac Keating, Michal, Alfasi-Hanley, Mark Nother

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

The Chairperson provided a verbal update to the Committee on issues relating to the work of the Authority arising since the last meeting, including: the selection and appointment by Government of four new Authority members; intentions to review the Committee structure, including memberships and terms of reference at the February Authority meeting; and communications received from the Minister for Justice.

It was agreed to amend the agenda to take item three and item six together given the overlapping subject matter.

#### 3. Policing Performance Assessment

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

The interim nature of the reporting against the Policing Plan by the Garda Síochána for this month was acknowledged – given the recent completion of the Policing Plan 2021 and pressures faced in relation to the response to COVID-19 – and feedback on the proposed direction of 2021 reporting agreed. Based on this reporting, and following a discussion on performance against the Policing Plan and COVID-19 policing, the Committee identified a number of key areas for discussion with the Garda Síochána in Part B of the meeting.

#### **4. Roads Policing**

The Committee considered materials provided by the Garda Síochána and the Executive pertaining to this agenda item and agreed a number of areas to follow-up on for comment and clarification in Part B of the meeting.

It was also agreed that given the progress made by the Garda Síochána in relation to Roads Policing, with particular reference to the implementation of the Crowe Horwath recommendations, that the quarterly dedicated agenda item could be replaced with consideration of such under the standing Policing Performance Assessment agenda item going forward.

#### **5. Garda Síochána Statement of Strategy**

The Committee discussed the Authority role and potential approach to input into the drafting of the Garda Síochána Strategy Statement 2022-2024.

#### **6. Policing Plan 2021**

Discussed under item three.

## Part B – Meeting with Garda Síochána representatives

### Attendance

**Authority:** As previous

**Executive:** As previous

**Garda Síochána:** Deputy Commissioner Anne Marie McMahon (Policing and Security), Assistant Commissioner Michael Finn (Southern Region), Andrew O’Sullivan (Chief Information Officer), Chief Superintendent Ray McMahon (Garda National Roads Policing Bureau), Emer Doyle (Strategy and Transformation Office), Gráinne Shortall (Policing Authority Liaison Office).

### 7. Closed session

The standing option to conduct a closed session was not exercised. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

The Interim Committee Chair welcomed the Deputy Commissioner Policing and Strategy on the occasion of her first meeting in the role and congratulated her on her recent appointment.

### 8. Policing Performance

On the approach to the Policing Plan 2021 the Garda Síochána representatives outlined that the Plan represented the change in approach as discussed with the Committee and Authority in late 2020, namely a reduction in overall targets with an emphasis on operational policing supplemented by key modernisation projects. It was stated that this led to an increased centrality of the Plan within the organisation as it provided greater relevance to the front-line and provided areas of focus for supervision that cascaded through the management down to Divisional level. It was also stated that the changed approach had received positive internal feedback.

Concerning reporting against the Plan the Committee was assured that the updates given ahead of the meeting were interim and that the reporting going forward would include greater narrative updates on progress, challenges, risks, etc. and in so provide greater clarity to the Authority. It was agreed, in response to a request by the Committee, that an accompanying cover page – to supplement the reporting and provide a high-level, strategic overview of performance against the Plan – would be considered for inclusion by the Garda Síochána.

The Committee heard that assignments of personnel to specialist bureaus due to occur in late 2020/early 2021 had been temporarily delayed in order to allow greater resources be allocated to the operational response to COVID-19. In addition training within the organisation was paused to reduce demand on extraction of personnel from front-line duties. It was reported that these measures were subject to ongoing review and that operational reassignments and resumption of training courses were being considered on a phased and prioritised basis.

The internal communications of the Garda Síochána relating to COVID-19 were praised by the Committee, however reported issues relating to external interactions in certain communities were highlighted to the Garda Síochána representatives as a possible area for improvement.

In response to queries from the Committee the Garda Síochána representatives outlined that:

- Preparations were advancing in respect of reviews of both Divisional Protective Services Units and sexual crime investigations. As discussed previously with the Committee, the former will assess rollout and performance of the DPSUs to-date, including resourcing, scope and service quality. The latter meanwhile will review outcomes of investigations and seek to identify any internal and external trends and/or barriers. It was agreed that the Garda Síochána would report initial findings to the Committee in Q2 and that the final report would be provided to the Authority.
- Recent successes in relation to organised and drug and drug-related crime were based on long-term policing and intelligence operations and strategies, and that the results of such have been significant. The increased visibility and resourcing at Divisional level and strong inter-agency work were accredited as being foundations of this also.
- The organisation has provided members with updated policy and procedure communications and guidance on the policing of evictions and repossessions and placed an increased focus on the management of such. It was noted that reporting and queries on such had dropped during COVID-19 but that where queries were made there was an increased use of referral to relevant, external bodies such as the RTB.
- An operation, focussed on high visibility, outreach and communication, was underway in the North Dublin Inner City in response to current crime trends.

Regarding the policing of COVID-19 the Committee sought to understand the increase in Fixed Charge Notices in recent weeks and the extent to which the 4 E's graduated policing response was still the foundation of the policing response. It was reported that the change in use of powers, including increased use of FCNs, was due to the changed operation environment necessitated by the return to level 5 restrictions and the greater public awareness of the regulations in place, compared to previous lockdowns. The Committee was told that the 4 E's remained the foundation of the response but that given the level of awareness of restrictions that the progression through the stages was somewhat faster than before. It was also outlined that the increase in FCNs was also in part due to increased policing of international travel and the fining of those previously engaged with and warned of potential breaches relating to gatherings and travel.

The Committee sought assurances as to the consistency of application of regulations and fines and received a verbal update on data relating to such – including the data collection and verification procedures in place as it applies to use of powers. The Committee reiterated its support for the recording of use of softer powers, such as encouraging people to undertake certain actions, rather than the use of directional or enforcement powers. The Garda Síochána representatives maintained that the recording of such was not possible at such time.

## **9. Roads Policing**

The Committee Chair noted the progress made in respect of roads policing, specifically the implementation of the recommendations from the Crowe Horwath report, including the external dependencies of the remaining recommendations. It was signalled that the Committee was content to move to a more routine method of oversight with regular reporting through the Executive rather

than continuing with the quarterly standing agenda item. This was agreed to by the Garda Síochána representatives who provided a verbal overview of progress, including in relation to an ongoing review of the mobility project, and an update on the remaining recommendations.

It was also outlined by the Garda Síochána representatives that the learnings in respect of Crowe Horwath had led to, and continued to inform, governance and IT improvements in operational areas beyond roads policing.

#### **10. Garda Síochána Statement of Strategy**

The Garda Síochána representatives spoke to approach and the intended timelines for development of the next Strategy Statement. It was provided that, as with the current iteration, it would be based on key crime strands and large scale areas of reform and that accordingly its design would involve horizon scanning, consideration of external influences and strategies, and internal consultation.

The Committee welcomed the early engagement and the outlined direction. It was agreed that further engagement on planning and development would continue throughout the year at Executive, Committee and Authority level as appropriate.

#### **11. AOB**

No matters were raised.

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