

Cork City JPC

JPC Annual Report 2019

Introduction

In 2008, under the provisions of the *Garda Síochána Act 2005*, Cork City Joint Policing Committee was established. However in 2006, Cork City established and continues to run an effective Community Safety Framework. Cork City Council and An Garda Síochána came together through RAPID to develop a community safety framework for the City's RAPID areas. The primary purpose of this network is to -

To cultivate a safe, quality environment for people to live in.

To support agencies and communities to work together to make communities safer places to live and work in.

The membership of the committee comprises of An Garda Síochána, elected members, senior council officials and various public participation network members drawn from several societal pillars.

2019

Meetings

The JPC met 4 times during 2019 in 2019 in January, April October and December 2019.

Reflecting the priorities of attendees at the community safety forums and district management committees, a number of special presentations were made to the Cork City JPC in 2019.

Mr. Michael O'Donovan of the Vintners Federation gave a presentation on the work of the Vintners Federation and their work and highlighted some concerns of the Federation.

- The Ask Angela Campaign
- Cork receiving the purple flag for being a safe city
- Festival nights across the city to help spread the number of drinkers across the city
- Working relationships with Gardaí, City Council Hotels and Restaurants.

Mr. David Lane, Manager of addiction services in Cork and Kerry for the Health Services Executive (H.S.E.) outlined his role within the city and his partnerships with Senior Gardaí and Cork City Council and some of the main problems addiction services are facing and work that they are doing.

2019 also saw the retirement of two senior Gardaí in the district, Supt. John Quilter and Supt. Charlie Barry whose contribution to the implementation of the work of the JPC was recognised and acknowledged.

The following were some of the items raised during the JPC meetings:

- Increase of charges in relation to possession of drugs for personal use

- Increase of reports of sexual assault (though this is seen as an increase of reporting than a significant increase of incidents over previous years due to increased cooperation between the relevant organisations providing support and the Garda Protective Services unit
- Increase in fines issued for littering
- Increase in incidents of theft from the person

Achievements

32 trainee Gardaí were being assigned to Cork City and County, 24 in the county, 8 in the city. After training the 8 would be permanently assigned to the city, 2 each in Gurrabraher, Ballincollig, Blarney and Anglesea Street.

The recent social media reports of a planned large theft from a City centre sports outlet was largely prevented by Garda monitoring of social media.

In a particular report of Community Garda engagement Sgt. S. Philpott advised that there was improved engagement with UCC student officers and that the office of the President was actively engaged. Together with greater garda visibility and enforcement this had led to a halving of reported incidents year on year. UCC had the power to confiscate student IDs of repeat offenders and provided civic engagement training to Freshers Week participants.

Gardaí regularly visited venues on issues such as security, numbers on premises and overflow of patrons to public spaces. They regularly spoke to landlords and fire officers. Most importantly local residents associations and stakeholders reported significant reduction in previous areas of complaint.

Two of the most significant issues addressed by the Cork City JPC in 2019 were the city boundary extension and the implementation of the new policing structures in the city.

In April Chief Superintendent Barry McPolin outlined the new structures to the JPC. Chief among these changes were that the project was being rolled out in four pilot divisions to test this new way of working. The divisions of DMR South Central, Cork City, Galway and Mayo were chosen as pilot divisions. These divisions were selected as they provide a mix of both urban and rural policing environments. The project will develop Community Engaging and specialist areas in each of the pilot divisions

Key points:

- Increased focus on community policing initiatives
- Increased Garda presence on the streets
- Greater attendance and support at local community events
- Enhanced Garda visibility in our local communities

31st May saw the transition on of services in Douglas, Grange, Ballincollig, Glanmire, and Blarney to the enlarged city. The Transition Project was smoothly delivered with no interruption to public services. The following transferred to Cork City Council on that date:

The following changes came in to effect which will have long term impacts on the working of the Cork city JPC

- Population: +85,000 (from 125,000 to 210,000)
- Area: +fivefold increase from 39km² to 187km²
- Electors: +approx. 62,000 moving from the County to the City
- Planning: +500 planning applications p.a. (500 existing)
- Staff: +210 staff moved to Cork City Council (existing 1,280 staff)
- Social Houses: +approx. 1,000 Social Houses (existing 9,500 approx.)
- Roads: +550km of Roads in effect doubling the existing road network

In October the JPC welcomed members from the newly elected Council members and re-elected members a newly configured City JPC. A new Chair, Cllr C Kelleher addressed the meeting. The bulk of the meeting focused on the new city area transition and on familiarising the new JPC membership with the operation of the City JPC.

At the December meeting, new members from the Public Participation Network were welcomed and took their places on the City JPC .There was a very full report of positive civic engagement and events in the City of the Cork City JPC and it was agreed to invite Chief Superintendent Drew Harris to a meeting of the Cork City JPC in 2020. The Commissioner is expected to address the Community Policing initiative in the Cork City Garda Division.