

Chair, Authority Members,

I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with an overview on progress on some of the matters on the Agenda today.

A key element of the Modernisation and Renewal Programme is ensuring we have the right people with the right skills in the right place.

In this regard, I very much welcome the recent Government decision to increase the number of Gardaí, civilian staff and reserves. I thank the Policing Authority for its support for this expansion.

The commitment of continuous recruitment of Gardaí, civilians and reserves will make a major difference to the organisation. We have already seen the difference the new Garda recruits are having internally and externally.

Expanding the organisation cannot be done overnight and needs significant planning. We are currently developing a detailed and comprehensive resource plan that will cover critical elements such as the selection and recruitment process, as well as the resources, accommodation and training our new personnel will require. This plan will be completed over the coming months.

In bringing in new people, we want to ensure we are hiring people with the skills we need so we can successfully prevent and detect crimes now and into the future, and deliver a professional, accountable service. This will require hiring people from a wide variety of backgrounds and specialities so that we have a blended skill set.

Further to the improvements already made under the Modernisation and Renewal Programme, progress is being made on other individual initiatives as well as the overall governance to ensure that the biggest change in the history of An Garda Síochána delivers real and lasting benefits for communities, the State and our people.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank the Authority for its support for the Programme, which will modernise, professionalise and renew An Garda Síochána.

Serious and violent crimes such as organised crime, assaults, sexual crime and burglaries can impact greatly on the quality of life in communities. An Garda Síochána's objective is to protect and support communities. We are determined to tackle these crimes as the organisation has done throughout its history to ensure civilised living.

In the last number of months, An Garda Síochána has made significant progress in tackling organised and serious crime gangs, which cause such harm to communities here and abroad.

We have built on the expertise and experience in our Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau (DOCB) by introducing a Special Crime Task Force (SCTF).

While DOCB continues to target organised criminality in all its forms with a concentration on high value targets, the SCTF focuses on criminals working at lower levels in organised crime gangs.

We have already seen the value of this approach with a number of significant arrests and seizures achieved in the last number of weeks that have degraded organised crime gangs by taking guns, drugs and cash from them.

Overall, between 9 March 2015 – when DOCB was established - and 23 September 2016, the following has been seized:

- €1.9 Million in Cash
- 35 Guns and 1,000 rounds of ammunition including AK 47 and AK 74 Assault Rifles, Submachine Gun, sawn-off shotguns, several Glock Pistols, other semi automatic weapons, and silencers
- €36m in drugs
- 167 people arrested for offences such as Drug Trafficking, Money Laundering, and Possession of Firearms

In addition, many serious and organised crime gangs operate internationally. As such, they can only be effectively tackled through international co-operation. We are working actively with our counterparts in Europe as well as in Europol and Interpol to share intelligence and examine how such gangs can be disrupted and dismantled.

This co-operation was evident in the recent operations in Dublin and Spain against an international organised crime gang. For the first time, members of An Garda Síochána were accompanied by colleagues from La Guardia Civil on an operation in Dublin, and we had officers present for La Guardia Civil's operations in Marbella.

Such operations require significant planning and information sharing over a long period of time. However, all that advance work paid off and provide us with a template for future joint operations, which will become more commonplace as no single law enforcement agency can solve this problem. We can only do it by working together.

We continue to drive down burglaries through Operation Thor – they were down over 30 per cent in the first quarter of 2016 and over 25 per cent in the second quarter according to the CSO.

This reduction has been largely due to increased visibility and public awareness. For example, to date there have been over 32,000 patrols, more than 41,000 checkpoints, and nearly 17,000 searches conducted under Operation Thor. Nearly 50% of respondents to our Public Attitude Survey respondents who recognised the Thor public awareness campaign said it resulted in them changing their behaviour in relation to home security.

We will not be complacent though. Burglaries tend to rise during the longer winter nights and our focus over the coming months will be to ensure we continue to protect and support communities throughout the country through checkpoints, increased patrolling in burglary

hot-spots, providing impactful and useful crime prevention advice, working with our partners on initiatives such as TextAlert, and denying criminals the use of the road network.

In relation to the CSO report on data quality, we welcome the report. While the report finds that we have made some progress in this area, we fully recognise we have more work to do.

Many of the recommendations in the CSO report will be addressed by our Modernisation and Renewal Programme which will see investment in technology that will automate the recording of crime compared to the largely manual process at moment. In addition, our civilianisation programme will see more staff employed at the Garda Information Services Centre to deal with crime recording and also the appointment of a Data Quality Manager. Data quality is an issue for all police services and we are determined to ensure we have the highest quality data to inform our work.

As outlined at a previous meeting with you by Dr Singh of the Garda Síochána Analysis Service, we have seen a link between an increase in assaults and the vibrancy of the night-time economy.

For example, in the Dublin Metropolitan Region, the number of assaults causing harm rose from 1,396 in 2012 to 1,707 in 2015, while minor assaults increased from 3,100 to 3,337 in the same period.

We want to minimise assaults to enhance community safety.

To achieve this, we put in place our multi-strand anti-crime strategy from early September. This has involved a range of activities across a number of different areas:

- Under the Operations and Crime Prevention strands, assault hotspots were identified and there has been a high visibility policing presence in these areas at key times.
- Under Partnership, An Garda Síochána is working with licensed premises, the business community and local councils to address issues around anti-social behaviour.
- Under Education, a public awareness campaign titled Use Your Brain Not Your Fists was introduced in September. It is currently running on a range of media highly used by males aged between 18 and 39 as this group accounts for the vast majority of assault perpetrators and victims.

Partnership is also critical in dealing with sexual and domestic violence. Whether that is working with other agencies as part of the COSC strategy, liaising with victim groups and individual victims, or other law enforcement agencies.

We have also strengthened our response by establishing the Garda National Protective Services Bureau and under the Modernisation and Renewal Programme further improvements will be implemented including setting up regional Protective Service Units across the country to ensure that investigations into domestic abuse and sexual crimes are conducted in a consistent and professional manner. On the preventative side, a Risk Management Process

which aims to protect victims of domestic abuse will also be established. Both measures will start before year-end.

As I have outlined, An Garda Síochána continues to make progress across a number of areas to protect and support communities. We fully recognise that we can improve in a number of different areas and we welcome the Authority's ongoing insights and input on helping us to provide the best possible policing service to our communities.

Thank you.