

Longford Joint Policing Committee

Annual Report 2016

The Joint Policing Committee (JPC) is a body established under the Garda Síochána Act 2005 to serve as a forum where local authority representatives, Oireachtas members and community and voluntary interests work together with senior Garda Officers to discuss and make recommendations on matters affecting the policing of the County. The County Longford JPC is chaired by Councillor Gerry Warnock.

During the course of the year new Garda Superintendents Jim Delaney and Brian Mohan were welcomed to the Longford and Granard districts respectively.

The Committee held 4 meetings in 2016 on 29th February, 16th May, 10th October and 19th December. The Committee also held one Public meeting on 30th November 2016. At each meeting the members were updated on Garda activities in the county, public order and anti-social issues as well as statistics on crime levels in Longford. They were also updated on local authority matters including the management of local authority housing estates, progress on unfinished housing estate developments and the Age Friendly Strategy including the launch of Longford as an Age Friendly Town. Progress was noted in relation to economic development including the Council's Regeneration programme, the Longford Tourism Strategy and the Center Parcs development.

The members discussed many other issues including Road Safety, speed control, Automatic Number Plate Recognition, the Purple Flag award Scheme, CCTV, the Text alert scheme and the National Vetting Bureau (Children & Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 – 2016. A number of issues were referred to the Infrastructure and Environment Strategic Policy Committee for further consideration including the importance of bringing void houses into stock and the need for enforcement procedures to be taken regarding derelict houses.

During the year a number of presentations were made to the JPC. Garda Edel Toolan detailed the services provided by the Garda Victim Service Office which aims to enhance services to victims of crime and traumatic events, and place victims at the centre of the service by providing a respectful, reassuring, responsive and reliable service, addressing the needs and expectations of all victims. Garda Michelle Nally, Junior Liaison Officer, gave a comprehensive presentation regarding the Juvenile Diversion Programme.

During the year, following a public consultation process, the JPC adopted a six-year strategic plan. The purpose of the plan is to identify high-level strategic objectives and actions, which link with other plans and strategies, and which will guide the future operation of the JPC.

The Joint Policing Committee hosted a public meeting in relation to matters affecting the policing of the county on 30th November, 2016 in the Longford Arms Hotel, Longford. Cllr. Gerry Warnock, Chairperson of the Committee welcomed the members of the public who attended and advised that the theme of the meeting would be the Age Friendly Strategy.

Superintendent Jim Delaney summarised the functions of the JPC. He referred to the Garda Older People's Strategy which aims to ensure that older people feel safe and secure in their homes and

communities. He welcomed the Crime Prevention Ambassadors' Programme which was recently introduced in Longford and expressed confidence that it would be successful in delivering crime prevention information to older people, and help to address the fear of crime.

A question and answer session ensued with members of the public and members of the JPC expressing their views in relation to different aspects of policing in Longford. These included improved methods of communicating with the public through text alert systems, the appropriate timing of public meetings and suggestions to extend the CCTV system to other parts of the county. The meeting welcomed the news that despite a number of highly publicised incidents, the level of crime statistics had reduced throughout the county. The meeting was also advised that additional manpower had been deployed in the county.

The meeting was very successful and provided a welcome forum for engagement with members of the public on local policing issues. The feedback was mainly positive. Mr.Paddy Mahon, the Chief Executive of the Council concluded the meeting by emphasising the level of ongoing co-operation between the Local Authority and the Gardai. He thanked the members of the public for their input and confirmed that the JPC would take on board the various views expressed.