LONGFORD JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

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. Councillor Gerry Warnock is the Chairperson of County Longford JPC. The Committee held meetings on 4 occasions in 2018 - 5th March, 11th June, 10th September and 3rd December with a public meeting also being held on 5th November 2018.

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. The members welcomed the improved success rates of Gardai in tackling crime. The JPC noted that additional resources were required for the provision of an appropriate service to the community and requested the Minister for Justice and Equality to receive a deputation from the Joint Policing Committee in relation to this matter. In September 2018 the members were advised that additional resources had been allocated to Edgeworthstown, Granard and Longford Garda stations. The members discussed many other issues including Road Safety, the Text Alert Scheme, the supply and sale of drugs, community policing and increased Garda visibility at festivals and sporting events.

The Joint Policing Committee was also updated at each meeting on local authority matters including details of various funding schemes that became available during the year. The members were also advised on progress in relation to various community projects and areas of economic development including the Council's Regeneration programme, the Longford Tourism Strategy and the CenterParcs development. Other areas of activity included the Public Participation Network, the Intercultural Strategic Plan, the Resettlement Programme and the Housing Programme.

CCTV continued to be an ongoing topic of discussion during the year. Following a request by the JPC for a briefing from the Community Engagement Unit on the CCTV Programme, the members were advised that Data Protection issues regarding access to information recorded on CCTV had been resolved. The JPC welcomed the setting up of a special steering committee between Longford County Council and An Garda Síochána to progress the enhancement and expansion of the CCTV system for Longford town.

Patrick Clavin, Chief Bureau Officer, Criminal Assets Bureau, gave a comprehensive presentation at the June 2018 meeting regarding the functions and operations of the Criminal Assets Bureau in County Longford. The meeting noted that the Criminal Assets Bureau was working closely with local Gardai to identify the suspected proceeds of criminal activity and were targeting a number of people in County Longford who were suspected of amassing assets as a result of criminal activity.

Joint action Plan

At each JPC meeting, the Gardai and Longford Co. Council detailed progress in relation to the Joint Action Plan in the Ardnacassa area of Longford town. The members welcomed the ongoing focussed approach and ongoing improvements in the area particularly in relation to Public Lighting, CCTV, litter/dumping issues, dog control/animal welfare, neighbourhood watch, estate clean up day and management of vacant houses. At the end of the year the members were advised that most of the actions identified in the Plan had been addressed, completed or were in progress.

Public meeting

The JPC hosted a very well attended public meeting on 5th November, 2018 in Ballymahon Community Library. Cllr. Luie Mc Entire, Cathaoirleach of Longford Co. Council welcomed the members of the public and advised that the theme of the meeting would be "Crime Prevention". There was an excellent panel of speakers including the special guests Ms. Josephine Feehily, Chairperson of the Policing Authority and Garda Commissioner Drew Harris. Other speakers included Mr. Conor O'Leary who was representing Muintir na Tíre in relation to the Community Text Alert Programme, Ms. Kitty Hughes, Chairperson of Longford Older Persons Council and Crime Prevention Ambassador and Ms. Martina Dunne from the Midlands Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force.

An Garda Siochána was also represented by a number of other contributors including Chief Supt. Tony Healy, Supt. Jim Delaney, Insp. Blaithin Moran, Sgt. Lionel Mullally and Sgt. Paul Mc Dermott, Crime Prevention Officer. The final part of the meeting involved a question and answer session with members of the public in relation to crime prevention and different aspects of policing in Longford.

Best wishes and tributes were also extended to Supt. Brian Mohan from the Granard District on his impending retirement.

At the conclusion of the meeting Mr. Paddy Mahon, Chief Executive of Longford County Council referred to the importance of the community, the Council and the Gardai working together for the benefit of all and he thanked the speakers and the members of the public for their valuable input.