

## LONGFORD JOINT POLICING

### ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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 Seamus Butler is the Chairperson of the Longford County JPC and Councillor Paul Ross is the Vice-Chairperson.

The Committee held meetings on 4 occasions in 2020 – 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 6<sup>th</sup> July, 28<sup>th</sup> September and 7<sup>th</sup> December. Due to public health restrictions arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, the meetings in September and December were held online via Microsoft Teams while it was not possible to hold a public meeting.

#### **Garda activities**

At each meeting, the members were updated on Garda activities in the county including roads policing, public safety and community engagement, public order and anti-social issues as well as statistics on crime levels in Longford, including burglaries, thefts, assaults and domestic violence.

The members were also briefed in relation to various Garda operations throughout the year including Operations Fanacht, Thor, Tombola, Stola and Phoenix. They noted that Operation Stola involved a high level of proactive policing engagements to deal with feuding families. The members welcomed Operation Phoenix which is aimed at addressing ongoing anti-social behaviour in the Longford town area and to improve the experience of people while using the centre of the town. The members also welcomed the Garda joint initiative with Longford Women's Link to deal with domestic violence

At the July 2020 meeting, the members complimented the local Gardai and all who were involved in the successful Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB) operation in County Longford earlier in the day.

The members discussed many other issues including race related issues /hate mail, Road Safety, parking at schools, dumping and fly-tipping, consumption of alcohol, the supply and sale of drugs and community policing. The members welcomed the increased pro-active and high visibility involvement of the Gardai in community initiatives, and improvements in crime prevention and detection.

At the July 2020 meeting, a vote of sympathy was extended to the family and colleagues of the late Detective Garda Colm Horkan who was murdered in June 2020 in the line of duty.

#### **CCTV**

At the September 2020 meeting, Longford County Council's ICT Department gave a comprehensive presentation in relation to existing and additional camera locations for Longford Town CCTV. The JPC approved the planned works for the upgrade of the System and its extension to 11 new locations.

At the December 2020 meeting, the members noted that a consultant's report was being examined in relation to CCTV in Granard and Edgeworthstown.

#### **Joint action Plan – Ardnacassa area.**

At each meeting the members were updated on progress in relation to the Joint Action Plan for the Ardnacassa/Palace Crescent/Grian Ard areas of Longford town. The members welcomed the ongoing focussed approach and ongoing improvements in the area. The members also welcomed the work on building community capacity, through local community groups.

### **Local authority activities**

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 as well as updates on various community projects. Progress was noted in relation to other areas including the Council's Regeneration and Tourism programmes, the Library and Age Friendly Programmes, Longford Sports Partnership, the Resettlement Programme and the Housing programme.

Members were also briefed in relation to the Community Response Forum/ Community Call initiative and supports being provided by Longford County Council and Longford LEO to businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, both financial and non-financial.

### **Property Marking Machine**

The members noted that the Property Marking Machine which was launched in 2019 following a recommendation from the Joint Policing Committee continued to be available on loan to local community groups free of charge working in conjunction with An Garda Síochána and Longford County Council.

### **Longford County Council's Citizen Notification System**

Following a Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Murtagh calling on Longford County Council to invest in a countywide communication service, the Council's ICT Department gave a comprehensive presentation at the September 2020 meeting on the new County Council Citizen Notification System. The MapAlert system, based on relevant Eircodes, enables Longford County Council to send area related messages to citizens regarding Council related notices and issues for their area e.g. relevant road closures, floods, severe weather, water outages and updates on National Broadband Ireland Fibre rollout.

### **Monies Confiscated under the Proceeds of Crime Legislation**

Following a Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor G. Warnock at the September 2020 meeting of the JPC it was agreed to write to the Minister for Justice and the Minister for Public Expenditure to make provisions where monies confiscated under the Proceeds of Crime legislation be redirected from central coffers to a local fund where local groups involved in addiction services, youth activities and community initiatives can avail of much needed revenue options to help them in their work to counter the negative impact of criminality on the local stage.

### **New member.**

At the December 2020 meeting, the Chairperson welcomed Ms. Amy Faughnan, representative from the Longford Public Participation Network, as a member to replace Ms Emma Kiernan.

### **Establishment of a Local Community Safety Partnership Pilot**

At the December 2020 meeting of the Joint Policing Committee, the Chief Executive briefed the members on the Department of Justice's proposal for the establishment of a Local Community Safety Partnership pilot in Longford which will replace the existing Joint Policing Committee.