



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA  
POLICING AUTHORITY

## Minutes – Policing Strategy and Performance Committee Meeting

**Date:** 28 May 2024

**Venue:** MS Teams

**Authority:** Deborah Donnelly (Chair), Paul Mageean, Jane Mulcahy, Gill Imery, Moling Ryan

**Secretary:** Samuel Lernihan

**Executive:** Helen Hall, Margaret Tumelty, Aoife Clabby, John Gallagher, Michal Hanley, Barry Smith

### 1. Closed Session

Committee members did not exercise the standing option to conduct a closed session.

### 2. Committee Administration

#### Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were considered, no issues or amendments were identified.

#### Declaration of Interests and Matters Arising

There were no declarations of interest.

#### Updates on Developments From/Since Authority Meeting

An update was provided by the Chief Executive.

#### Log of Actions

There were no updates on the Log of Actions.

#### Planning for Subsequent Committee Meetings

Planning for subsequent meetings was discussed, and possible dates in September and December are being considered.

### 3. Policing Performance Q1 Reporting and Policing Plan 2024

The highlights of the overview of Policing Performance Q1 Report and Policing Plan 2024 were outlined. A number of matters relating to the report and plan, as well as the wider organisational performance were identified for further engagement with the Garda Síochána Representatives in Part B of the meeting.

#### **4. Public Order Policing**

A discussion was had by the Committee on Public Order Policing in light of recent incidents, and a number of matters were identified for further engagement with the Garda Síochána representatives in Part B of the meeting.

#### **Part B – Meeting with Garda Síochána representatives**

**Authority:** As previous.

**Executive:** As previous.

**Garda Síochána:** Deputy Commissioner Shawna Coxon (Operations), Assistant Commissioner Paula Hilman (Roads Policing and Community Engagement), Detective Chief Superintendent Colm Noonan (Protective Services Bureau), Detective Chief Superintendent Nigel Mulleady (Garda National Economic Crime Bureau), Detective Chief Superintendent Aidan Minnock (Garda National Immigration Bureau), Elaine Greene (Principal Officer, on behalf of STO), Niamh O'Hara (Assistant Principal Officer, PALO).

#### **5. Closed Session**

Committee members did not exercise the standing option to conduct a closed session.

#### **6. Policing Performance Q1 Reporting**

The use of force statistics were discussed, specifically why they have not been provided within the Commissioners Monthly for the last number of months. The lack of available statistics within the report and within the Garda organisation has been due to a requirement to change the counting methodology. Previously the use of force was tied to an individual, however within the context of a large scale disturbance or riot, the identity of the individuals on which force is used may remain unknown. The new counting methodology will tie the use of force to a location. The team in the Garda analyst unit is working on this and it is hoped that use of force information can be produced for the next Commissioners report. The lack of use of force information within the organisation during this period was noted as a concern by the Policing Authority. The Garda representatives did however give assurance, particularly on a human rights basis, that the regular reporting on the use of spit guards is still ongoing.

The legislation around e-scooters was discussed, and assurance was sought by the Policing Authority that the frontline Garda on the ground have a clear understanding of what their powers are under the new legislation. It was said that there has been a working group ongoing around e-scooters and electric vehicles, and there has been 80 offences identified, with 25 of these offences relating primarily to e-scooters. A HQ directive was issued to members a week before the legislation went live, as well as internal communications using Newsbeat. The Garda representatives have said they will continue to monitor detections under this legislation and if something more needs to be developed they will remain agile. Regular engagements take place with the Roads Policing Inspectors, and this communication will also determine if further steps need to be taken.

Community Policing was discussed, and an outline of the Garda Síochána's expectations for the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool for Community Policing was given. The CRM tool was one of the five pillars of the Community Policing Framework when it was introduced five years ago, and it will allow the Community Police to monitor if someone have been a victim multiple times so they can then respond appropriately. Another pillar of work being developed is one which will allow for the recording of work carried out within community policing in terms of proactive policing. Engagements within the community will be recorded on the app rather than a paper return. The valuable work carried out by individual Community Policing Officers was also discussed and it was noted that there needs to be an organisational culture where value is placed on the smaller things that make a difference in the lives of people in the community, as well as the high level/profile drugs seizures.

Drug Related Intimidation was discussed including the DRIVE programme and the anticipated impact of the legislation to prevent the grooming of children into crime. Work continues to be ongoing on how the Garda Síochána are identifying and protecting children who are at risk of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, as well as children who are vulnerable to recruitment by criminal gangs, with a primary focus on children who are under the care of TUSLA. It was agreed that these two areas would be revisited at a later meeting.

The progression of the development of the Children's Plan was discussed. There is ongoing engagement on the design of this plan with the Garda Síochána interns as well as young people who are involved in other programmes such as the Rio Ferdinand Foundation. The Human Rights Unit is also engaged. The plan will be developed by quarter three. It was noted as a positive that young people are feeding into the plan. The Garda representatives stated that engagement on the Plan is also going to happen with Youth Diversion groups, JLO's and minority groups. It was queries if the Children's plan will have a neuro-developmentally aware, trauma responsive approach to dealing with children, and it was said that this is a separate piece of work that is being done, and it is being looked at if a programme can be developed to raise awareness of trauma informed practice and adverse childhood experience.

Evaluation of the National Protective Services Bureau was discussed in relation to target 3.1 (Target to provide victims with appropriate services and support), and an outline of the information being used to give the Garda Síochána confidence to conclude that this is on target was provided. This included a review of the divisional DPSUs, which has now been completed. Garda representatives stated that the focus is now on consolidating the methodology, training and securing additional resources and specific support that these individuals need. It was said by the Garda representatives that external training in this regard is needed, and work is ongoing with the College and finance section to obtain financial approval for a third level institute to deliver this training. It was said by the Garda representatives that it is part of the implementation group for the third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender based violence and its engagements with CUAN and the Department of Justice were outlined. The recommendations contained within the O'Malley report were discussed and it was said by the Garda representatives that the Commissioner has approved approximately 80 additional personnel for the national bureau for inspector, sergeant and Garda level. The challenge remains in getting replacements for people who leave or are promoted, as well as getting approval for competitions to be rolled out.

The three day call back rate to victims was said to be 76.5%, so the measures being taken to get this number up to the 95% target were outlined.

The development of the Victims Policy was discussed, and it was noted that there wasn't any mention of gender based violence analysis. It was said by the Garda representatives that the Victims Policy is

finished and is currently with the Policy and Governance Coordination Unit for approval, and it was confirmed that the Gender Based violence analysis formed part of the development of the policy.

The area of Economic Crime was discussed, with regards to the long running issue of GNECB staffing levels, particularly in light of the continuing rise of this crime type. It was said by the Garda representatives that the particular challenges being faced by the bureau is the increase in online fraud that has increased substantially since COVID when online transactions became more widely used. There has been a 40% increase of this type of fraud from 2019 to 2023. Investment fraud was also noted as a concern. The recommendations contained within the Hamilton report were discussed, with particular focus on the workforce plan. Current staffing stands at 86 personnel of all ranks, and in keeping with the Hamilton review recommendations, a full complement of staff would be 147, so there is currently a shortfall of 61 staff. Numbers are expected to remain net neutral for the year 2024.

The Garda Síochána Diversity Forum was discussed and the Authority sought to understand what progress had been made in reengaging the Forum. The measures being taken to ensure the Diversity Forum will become an effective and meaningful forum were outlined. A first meeting of the Forum under the new terms of reference is being arranged. It was noted by the Garda representatives that even in the absence of this meeting, engagements continue to take place around relevant issues such as protests, individual incidents etc.

Immigration and the media coverage of the increased role of the Garda Síochána in monitoring for potential illegal immigration was discussed. The type of checks that are being carried by the Garda National Immigration Bureau were outlined. Garda representatives stated that clear guidance has been given to Garda members prior to the operation beginning. The Garda representatives noted that it is important to state that if people have a legitimate claim to come to Ireland and claim international protection they are not trying to interfere with that in any way.

## **7. Public Order Policing**

The ongoing protests were discussed including the protests in Newtown Mount Kennedy. The extent of the Garda disruption to the activity these individuals and groups have engaged in was discussed,

Garda representative stated they were satisfied that Garda members are using all of their powers. The legislation is currently being examined but generally speaking the current powers are sufficient. There are certain other areas where legislation is being looked at to see if it can be improved upon, but at this time that information needs to remain confidential.

In terms of the approach to arrests at protests, Garda representatives said this is dealt with on a case by case basis as the nature of these protests can vary significantly. It was said by the Garda representatives that the frontline Garda members have a clear understanding of what it is they need to do, and the decision to make an arrest is on a case to case basis.

Videos circulating showing Garda members being verbally and physically assaulted before the public order unit arriving were discussed, with a focus on if these officers are engaged with after the incident to determine if it could have been dealt with in a different way, and if they receive adequate supports. It was said by the Garda representatives that nobody should be subject to such abuse in the course of their work, and the Garda members involved have been spoken to and offered any support required.

**8. AOB**

No other business was raised.

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