AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA
POLICING AUTHORITY

Policing Authority report highlights important lessons for future Garda Síochána reform

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The Policing Authority today publishes its seventh report in a series examining and assessing the Garda Síochána's progress in implementing the recommendations of the Garda Inspectorate's Report *Changing Policing in Ireland*. This monitoring and assessment work was requested by the Minister for Justice and Equality.

Commenting on today's publication, Authority Chairperson, Josephine Feehily said, ***"The Authority strongly believes that there are important lessons that can be taken from this series of reports that can usefully inform the approach to the new government Policing Reform Programme. Critical to the Garda Síochána change effort will be a renewed, persistent and strategic focus on the key enablers of change — HR, ICT, accommodation, training and finance. These matters have been and will continue to be at the forefront of the Authority's assessment of policing performance."***

While this is the final report in relation to the Garda Modernisation and Renewal programme, the Authority will continue to fulfil its statutory obligation to oversee all dimensions of Garda performance.

This short report does not attempt to repeat all the findings arising in each of the Authority's previous reports to the Minister on the implementation of the Modernisation and Renewal Programme. The passage of time has done little to diminish the relevance of those findings and they remain urgent, not least now in light of the impending implementation of A Policing Service for the Future. While these lessons and observations are expanded on in the report, in brief they are that:

- Pockets of the Garda Síochána have demonstrated a real appetite for change with significant levels of personal commitment and drive to the achievement of some recommendations evident. One example is the establishment of a Risk Management Office and the embedding of a risk management process across the organisation.
- Verification of the progress being made by the Garda Síochána needs to be independent, intrusive and persistent. It is critical that any evaluation undertaken moves beyond monitoring the achievement of project milestones to actually evidencing and assessing the outputs and outcomes of activity. It has been the Authority's experience that this is crucial in order to assess whether the intent and benefits of any recommendations are being realised and to understand the impact the change effort is actually having on the policing service offered to the community.
- In instances where the Garda Síochána has consulted and involved stakeholder organisations, in aspects of the Modernisation and Renewal programme, the benefits or potential benefits are evident.
- While they need to be developed further, there have been particular positives emerging for Victims from the work done in areas such as the Protective Services Units and the Victims' Services Offices

− Some projects, which are potentially transformational if properly embedded, are due to be delivered during 2019, including ICT initiatives such as the Investigation Management System.

− The absence of a strategic vision for the organisation in key areas has bedevilled the implementation of change. There is still no settled view articulated as to what the expanded Garda Síochána workforce will look like, how it will be recruited, trained, organised and how best it can be effective for the community. The Garda Síochána needs to articulate what will be the outcomes of change for the policing service provided in addition to the outputs and milestones of a project process.

− 3rd party recommendations are accepted quickly by the Garda Síochána with little assessment as to the feasibility of their achievement. This has led to the Garda Síochána repeatedly over-promising and under delivering.

− Change efforts to date have failed to acknowledge the current state of readiness and ability of the organisation to undertake a change process. Planning has proceeded absent of sufficient consideration of organisational capacity.

− Insufficient attention has been and continues to be given to the key enablers of change – HR, ICT, Accommodation, Training and Finance – to the extent that they need to become the first and main focus of the change effort itself. A continued failure to tackle capacity in these areas will inhibit the success of any planned change.

− Planning has been siloed which has resulted in an inability to assess the overall resource demand, identify interdependencies and prioritise.

− Governance has been siloed with no single coherent view available to the Commissioner of the quantum of work being undertaken and the progress being made for the organisation as opposed to within an individual project lifecycle. There has been insufficient focus on outcomes, with outputs and milestones being regarded as ends in themselves.

− Contestability for resources and subsequent decision-making has not been informed by organisational prioritisation or corporate risk.

− A costed annual policing plan as the expression of the organisation's priorities in any one year is needed within which the commitments being given to organisational development would be articulated. This would give comfort that the full resource requirements have been assessed, understood and secured or alternatively that choices have been made.

− Change has not 'landed' at the front line. The rich data provided in the culture audit evidenced a scepticism toward the Modernisation and Renewal Programme and can inform future change efforts.

− The Garda Síochána has devoted huge resources to the implementation of the Modernisation and Renewal Programme and this has yielded significant levels of activity. Those close to the centre of the organisation and involved in this activity understandably have a sense that work directed at changing the organisation is happening, and constantly. The frontline feel disconnected from this work and despite efforts by the centre to communicate the work being undertaken, in the absence of tangible outcomes for Garda Members, Staff and Reserve this has not been effective.