

Cork County Council Joint Policing Committee (JPC) 25th January 2021

Via MS Teams

Present:

Cllr. Cathal Rasmussen Chair
Cllr. Kay Dawson
Cllr. Joe Carroll
Cllr. Karen Coakley
Cllr. Gearóid Murphy
Cllr. Ted Lucey
Cllr. Danielle Twomey
Cllr. Kevin Murphy
Cllr. Deirdre O'Brien
Cllr. Ben Dalton O'Sullivan
Cllr. Ian Doyle
Cllr. Frank Roche
Cllr. Michael Looney
Mr. Tim Lucey, Chief Executive.
Ms. Patricia Liddy, Director of Service,
Corporate Services.
Ms. Mairead Lucey, Senior Executive
Officer, Corporate Services.
Deputy Aindrias Moynihan TD
Deputy Thomas Gould TD

Chief Superintendent Con Cadogan
Chief Superintendent Barry McPolin
Chief Superintendent Thomas Myers

In Attendance:

Ms. Claire Looney O'Sullivan,
Administrative Officer, Corporate Services
Ms Myra Heffernan,
Assistant Staff Officer, Corporate Services
Ms. Tina Sheehan, Traveller Liaison Officer,
Cork County Council.

The chair of the JPC meeting Cllr. Cathal Rasmussen welcomed and thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

1. Approval of Minutes of Meeting on 14th September 2020

Proposed: Cllr. Kevin Murphy

Seconded: Cllr. Gearóid Murphy

Approval of Minutes of JPC Public Meeting 9th November 2020

Proposed: Cllr. Ian Doyle

Seconded: Cllr. Gearóid Murphy

2. Matters Arising.

There were no matters arising.



3. Correspondence.

Members noted correspondence from An Garda Síochána Assistant Commissioner Michael Finn pertaining to Garda Resources and Personnel for the Togher District.

Cllr Ben Dalton O'Sullivan welcomed the contents of the letter and asked could clarity be sought from the Minister if there are plans for a full time garda station in Carrigaline.

4. Garda Statistical Report on Crime in Co. Cork

Chief Superintendent Barry McPolin presented the Garda Crime & Traffic Statistics Report from January 2020 to December 2020. Figures showed a significant decrease in thefts, burglary and assaults compared to 2019. Chief Superintendent Barry McPolin said these figures were indicative of travel restriction which not only impacted the public but also inconvenienced those committing crime. Comparing figures from 2019 to 2020 possession of drugs for sale or supply has increased in the three divisions. In Cork City possession rose from 188 incidents to 330. In North Cork from 89 to 126 and in West Cork from 57 to 96. Possession of drugs for personal use also rose in Cork City from 836 to 1,106 and in Cork North from 478 to 547. Although there was a decrease in Cork West division from 262 to 229.

Chief Superintendent Barry McPolin said a huge amount of resources has been invested into these units and is targeting those who have drugs for sale and supply. The Chief Superintendent encouraged those with information about drug dealers to come forward and he told Members the Gardaí are working with the Criminal Assets Bureau.

Across the three Garda Divisions the number of people arrested on suspicion of drug / drink driving rose from 163 in 2019 to 246 in 2020. The main drugs detected were cannabis, cocaine and amphetamines. Chief Superintendent McPolin said the Gardaí are continuing to be very active on the roads and those breaking the law will be caught and the sanctions are severe.

Members were told that domestic violence cases were up 12% in both Cork City and North Cork Garda Divisions, and an increase of 26% in West Cork. The lockdown is a factor in contributing to the increased stress in some families. Chief Superintendent Con Cadogan said there is a dedicated staff from the Protective Service Units to contact those victims of domestic violence and who can offer them support. The 5km restrictions at present does not apply to those fleeing domestic violence or seeking refuge. The figures are now trending down by 24.2% over the last two months and this is indicative of the PSU that was set up in Dunmanway and staff working very closely with the voluntary groups. A lot of victims have come forward and there are approximately forty live cases at present with many of those moving into the court system.

With the introduction of Covid 19 restrictions Gardaí carried out a huge number of inspections of public houses. There were 4,178 inspection of premises in the Cork City Division, 4,594 inspections of premises in the Cork North Division and 5,227 in the West Cork Division. Chief Superintendent Myers said most public houses and off – licences are complying with Covid 19 restrictions despite the challenge.



Cllr. Cathal Rasmussen thanked Chief Superintendent McPolin for the detailed report and following a discussion Members made the following points: -

- The increase in domestic violence is alarming and the lockdown measures introduced to deal with Covid 19 pandemic have greatly added to the increase in cases, there are also some historic cases.
- The people referred to in these figures are distressed, vulnerable and often isolated and they need to be protected.
- Recent incident where seven youths travelling outside their 5km and renting Airbnb's in order to have a party. A system should be in place where the Airbnb host should be prosecuted if they rent their house during Covid 19 to young people.
- Taxi drivers should also be questioned if they take fares beyond a 5km radius if it is not for an essential reason.
- Members praised the local Gardaí and the Community Guards for their commitment and their outstanding work above and beyond the call of duty particularly towards the elderly.
- While the sale and supply of drugs in all areas is very worrying, Members are pleased to see the detection and arrests for the sale and supply of drugs in all areas and it is encouraging to see the general public being helpful.
- Members are concerned about the number of suspended sentences given for offences committed.
- Concerned expressed that due to Covid 19 meetings have not taken place between the Community Gardaí and the local neighbourhood watch groups.

In response Chief Superintendent Con Cadogan said regarding the number of youths travelling outside their 5km, they have been issued with fines and Gardaí are following this up with the taxi drivers and will be seeking direction from the DPP.

Chief Superintendent McPolin said it is important that people abide by the rules and warned that both driver and passenger can be fined if found breaking the travel limits, regulations are there for a purpose and many found breaking the law have been issued with fix charged notices and fined.

Chief Superintendent McPolin told members drugs are still very much in our communities and the sale and supply of drugs is very much prevalent across Cork City and County. There is a dedicated drug unit that has been established and with the increase in manpower, searches are on the increase and Gardaí are focusing on preventing crime and putting more resources into it.

Chief Superintendent Myers said Gardaí are working very closely with the criminal assets bureau and depend very much on the help of the public. Staffing levels in the drug units will be maintained throughout the pandemic.

Chief Superintendent Cadogan told Members during Covid the crime prevention officer Sergeant Ian O'Callaghan cannot meet with communities' face to face but is conducting tele conference with different organisations.



The Chair of the JPC Cllr. Cathal Rasmussen thanked the Chief Superintendents for today's presentation and complemented them on their continued good work.

5. Cork County Council Management Report

The CE Mr. Tim Lucey introduced Cork County Council Management Report to the JPC Members.

Mr. Niall Healy Director of Services, Municipal Districts Services and Rural Development made a presentation to Members outlining Cork County Council's involvement in the Community Response Forum and the Covid 19 helpline.

Mr. Healy delivered in detail the number of agencies involved, volunteer groups, supports initiated, community activities and funding available. Examples of completed projects in numerous communities were given.

Mr. Pdraig Barrett Director of Services, Roads and Transportation presented to Members a detailed report of all the major road work projects under construction and in the planning process. The DOS indicated the impact these projects will have on traffic in the next three months.

Mr. Barrett gave Members a detailed account of the winter service plan. A map was given showing in detail the three different priority routes for winter treatment. Members were informed that Cork County Council has fifteen gritting trucks and a salt storage capacity of 7190 tonnes.

The chair of the JPC Cllr. Cathal Rasmussen thanked Mr. Niall Healy and Mr. Pdraig Barrett for the comprehensive reports given and said it was very important that communities know what grants are available to them. Cllr. Rasmussen said he is pleased to see that work on some of the major road projects are ongoing during Level 5 restrictions.

Following a discussion Members made the following points: -

- Are there any reports on the Northern Ring Road?
- Communities would appreciate more public consultation with Cork County Council on the M20 Cork to Limerick Project.
- The R611 and R605 are busy roads and should be listed as Priority 2 routes for the winter service plan.

Mr. Pdraig Barrett DOS told Members Cork City Council are the main authority for the Northern Ring Road and Public Consultation for the M20 was extended by several weeks to allow the Council to engage with communities. On the winter maintenance plan, it is not feasible to treat all thoroughfares, but Cork County Council will keep these routes under review.

6. A.O.B

Speed Signs Batteries

Cllr. Michael Looney said batteries are being stolen from speed monitoring signs and would appreciate if Gardaí could assist in preventing this.

Chief Superintendent McPolin told the meeting that Cork's crime prevention officers are aware of this and are trying to prevent incidents like this from occurring. Monitoring of speed is crucial, and Gardaí will circulate the news that this is happening and communicate with Cork County Council to see how best to go forward.

Abuse of Elderly

Members are concerned for the welfare of elderly people suffering abuse by family members and urge the Gardaí to intervene and assist in these crimes.

Chief Superintendent Barry McPolin told Members any crime reported is investigated and victims are advised to report these crimes. Cllr. Frank Roche said Gardaí need to be trained to help victims in trouble that are being abused by family members. The Chair of the JPC Cllr. Cathal Rasmussen said advice will be sought for this for the next JPC meeting.

Equine Enforcement

Deputy Thomas Gould TD would like to know what if any enforcement is being done between Cork City Council, Cork County Council and the Gardaí in relation to equine enforcement.

The CE Mr. Tim Lucey told the meeting Cork County Council and the Gardaí would need more information on this issue, he will communicate with Deputy Gould to get a deeper understanding of the problem and revert to members at the next JPC meeting.

Votes of Sympathy

To: The family and colleagues of the late Detective Paddy O'Driscoll.

To: The family and colleagues of the late Garda Aidan Cremin

Cllr. Cathal Rasmussen said all members would like to be associated with the sympathies expressed. Chief Superintendents Con Cadogan, Barry McPolin and Thomas Myers expressed their deep sympathy on the deaths of their two colleagues and praised them for the exceptional work they both did in their communities.

***This concluded the business of the meeting
Next meeting 10th May 2021.***