

Cork City Joint Policing Committee

Minutes of JPC Meeting

14 December 2020 at 2.00pm

Via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Cllr. Colm Kelleher (Chairperson)	Cork City Council
Ms. A. Doherty	Chief Executive, Cork City Council
Ms. A Rodgers	Director of Services, Cork City Council
Commissioner Drew Harris	An Garda Síochána
Chief Supt. Barry Mc Polin	An Garda Síochána
Superintendent Colm O'Sullivan	An Garda Síochána
Cllr. Damian Boylan	Cork City Council
Cllr. Derry Canty	Cork City Council
Cllr. Colm Kelleher	Cork City Council
Cllr. Henry Cremin	Cork City Council
Cllr. Ger Moloney	Cork City Council
Cllr. Joe Kavanagh (Lord Mayor)	Cork City Council
Cllr. John Maher	Cork City Council
Cllr. Mick Nugent	Cork City Council
Cllr. Shane O'Callaghan	Cork City Council
Cllr. Thomas Moloney	Cork City Council
Deputy Donnacha O'Laoghaire	Dáil Éireann
Deputy Colm Burke	Dáil Éireann
Senator Jerry Buttimer	Seanad Éireann
Mary Crilly	Public Participation Network
Laurence Owens	Public Participation Network
Derry O Farrell	Public Participation Network

Apologies

Also in attendance:

Mr. David O Brien	Community, Culture and Placemaking, Cork City Council
Mr. Chris Dorgan	Community, Culture and Placemaking, Cork City Council
Ms. Ruth Lynch	Community, Culture and Placemaking, Cork City Council
Supt. Colm Noonan	An Garda Síochána
Supt Michael Comyns	An Garda Síochána
Asst. Principal Liam Hallihan	An Garda Síochána
Asst. Commissioner Mick Finn	An Garda Síochána

1. Welcome

Cllr Colm Kelleher (JPC Chair) welcomed the attendees particularly Garda Commissioner Drew Harris, Chief Superintendent Barry McPolin, Cork City Council Chief Executive Ann Doherty and Adrienne Rodgers, Director of Services Community Culture and Placemaking

Cllr Kelleher reminded the committee that observers were present who do not have the capacity to engage in the meeting including members of the media, Gardai and members of the Oireachtas.

Members of staff of Cork City Council ICT department were also present for any technical issue that might arise

The Chair further reminded members that

- The JPC is not entitled to consider matters relating to a specific criminal investigation or prosecution
- The JPC will not entertain localised issues that are more correctly dealt with in the Local Policing Forums
- Individuals shall not be discussed or named, and all should be treated with respect at this meeting.
- Members should always have their microphones be on mute except when they are speaking.

The Chair then invited Ruth Lynch (CCC) to call the roll for the meeting and introduced Garda Commissioner Drew Harris. He reminded members that there would be an opportunity for questions at the end of the presentation, one question per individual allowed and a strict two-minute limit on the time the individual has to place the question.

2. Presentation by Garda Commissioner Drew Harris and the New Operating Model for An Garda Síochána

Garda Commissioner Harris advised the meeting that his presentation would be verbal but that a PowerPoint presentation would be available after the meeting.

The new policing model was comparable to European models in that its priorities were protecting the vulnerable, monitoring and preventing cybercrime, reducing sex abuse and domestic abuse and doing so with the best use of available resources.

It was formulated in line with international best practice in consultation with internal publics and at national, regional community and divisional level.

Consistency of service was to be a hallmark of the new model providing enhanced flexibility and more frontline availability of An Garda Síochána.

An Garda Síochána was to be divided into 4 regions and 19 divisions. Its key areas were to be in

- Community engagement
- Crime prevention and detection
- Performance assurance and
- Business services (finance and logistics)

The restructuring is intended to free superintendents for operational duties.

The intention is that the staffing levels would be at 15,000 by the end of 2022 but the COVID-19 pandemic has affected that. Regarding implementation of COVID-19 restrictions Garda Commissioner Harris advised the aim was to educate and encourage compliance rather than depend solely on prosecutions.

When concluding the garda commissioner thanked Gardai in the Cork Divisions for being at the forefront of the rollout of the policing model particularly in relation to Community Policing, Finance and H.R.

Questions posed to the Garda Commissioner by members of the JPC

Cllr Cremin enquired of the Commissioner when local safety forums and district management committees might be reintroduced as he felt such meeting were invaluable in addressing issues and suggested perhaps, they could be replaced in the short term by zoom meetings.

In reply **Commissioner Harris** advised that community policing continues support local teams and that the issue of isolation was being addressed.

Cllr Fitzgerald began by congratulating AGS on community policing and continued by expressing his reservation at the absence of a superintendent in each district and suggested their reintroduction. He also suggested the Garda Youth Diversion model needed to be re-examined.

In reply **Commissioner Harris** advised in the past superintendents were working down and that under the new model, inspectors were responsible for local delivery and that inspectors had up to 50 sergeants reporting. The issue of Youth Diversion Programmes was under review.

Senator Gerry Buttimer welcomed the Commissioner and former Chief Superintendent for Cork Mick Finn who was attending the meeting

Senator Buttimer enquired on the difference between urban and rural implementation of the community policing model and how Covid 19 had effected policing and the night-time economy

In reply **Commissioner Harris** advised the movement of the rostering shift from 5 to 4 has meant an increase of available on duty staff at any given time, as has the move from garda to civilian (non-garda) for some administrative functions. Commissioner Harris deferred to Chief Supt. Mc Polin on local issues, who advised as follows.

Since March wet pubs and Night Clubs have been closed. Under the new plan a designated city centre policing unit has been established, There had been increased detections of drug use and drug dealing and the city was a safer place.

PPN Representative Derry O Farrell enquired whether the modernisation Programme 2016-2021 was still in effect and whether the targets in it were still active?

Commissioner Harris advised that the Modernisation and Renewal programme had been overtaken by the new operational model and that reduction in recruitment had pushed the targets out to 2021 .

Command control has meant freeing up Gardaí from front desk duties. There has been increased support from the armed response unit and an increase in detection and prosecution of cybercrime. The response to the COVID-19 pandemic has brought home the importance of effective community policing.

Deputy Ó Laoghaire began by complimenting the ongoing good work of An Garda Síochána and stated that communities were well protected and supported by them. His question to the commissioner was whether promotions had led to key roles being left vacant and where vacancies in the Core Unit would be filled.

In response **Commissioner Harris** reiterated that the move to a 4-shift system had resulted in more gardai being on active duty. 350 Gardaí were to be sworn in in the coming year with 325 retiring and that 2022 would see further growth. Vacancies in the protected services units created by promotion would be filled at the earliest opportunity.

Commissioner Harris thanked the JPC for their invitation to address the City JPC and wished them well in their work in the future. At this point the Commissioner left the meeting.

The meeting then continued in the normal format.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the JPC of 21st September 2020 were considered and approved by the meeting.

Prop. Cllr H Cremin **Sec.** Cllr Damian Boylan

4. Presentations

Presentation by Ann Doherty, Chief Executive, Cork City Council

Ann Doherty, Chief Executive, delivered her report

The ongoing effects of the CoVid 19 pandemic had a significant effect on the proposed Glow Christmas celebrations which were replaced by a re-imagined Cork Christmas which was CoVid compliant.

- This year, Lord Mayor Cllr. Joe Kavanagh, the Lady Mayoress Stephanie, and Chief Executive Ann Doherty lit the lights outside City Hall, as the city was illuminated. All over the City this signalled the lighting of Community Christmas Trees, many with the Lord Mayor present, as beacons of resilience and hope and a tribute to the tremendous spirit so evident in our communities in 2020.
- Transforming the skyline, the much-loved and iconic 32m Panoramic Wheel brings back some very welcome festive cheer. As in previous Christmas periods, the Panoramic Wheel and Carousel will be located on Grand Parade, from December 2 to January 10, daily from 12 noon to 9pm

Exceptions: Closed Christmas Day, closing early at 6pm Christmas Eve & New Year's Eve

The CE was at pains to point out that Panoramic Wheel has robust Covid-19 safety measures in place.

- Cork City Council is spearheading a 'Thank Cork it's Christmas' campaign to increase awareness of the safety and unique experience available to those who wish to shop, eat, drink or visit our city. www.CorkCityShopping.com is available for those who would rather 'Shop Cork Online' from the comfort of their own home while still supporting local.
- Cork City celebrated five prize-winners in the recent Pride of Place Awards The awards, hosted by Marty Morrissey, took place online due to the Covid pandemic with 6,000 people logging in from across Ireland to see community groups pick up awards

Blarney Village took top spot in the Urban Neighbourhoods with a Population under 3,000 category. **"a very caring community, with fantastic volunteers, where a very impressive list of activities was presented. Notwithstanding a celebrated and established tourist attraction the judges were in no doubt that this is a community with great heart and spirit."**

Environmental group SHEP Earth Aware and Elders for Earth won top prize in their categories. SHEP's efforts to improve awareness on climate change were praised for

telling, **“a persuasive story of climate chaos, climate justice, intergenerational justice and loss of bio-diversity thanks to the efforts of their volunteers**

Ballincollig were runners up in the Urban Neighbourhoods with a population over 3,000 category

The Hut Youth & Community Resource Centre, Gurrabraher were runners up in the Creative Place Initiative

South Side Youth Forum were runners up in the Community Youth Led Initiative

Sponsored by IPB Insurance, the Pride of Place competition was initiated 18 years ago through a Co-operation Ireland programme to acknowledge the invaluable work undertaken by volunteers and those involved in local community development.

- Turning to a Centenary of Commemorations the CE commented 1920 was a year of profound importance in Ireland’s history. During this time of great challenges and strife, Cork City played a pivotal role in our country’s fight for freedom.

It had been Cork City Council’s aim to commemorate the centenary of 1920 to gain a deeper understanding of how Irish society has been shaped by our past, to walk for a moment in the footsteps of our ancestors and learn from the men and women of this era who fought for the freedom that we take for granted today.

The challenge of CoVid restricted the comprehensive programme of events that had been planned but, undaunted the and events were switched online wherever possible by the hardworking commemorative group

Among the event which did take place were

[Delaney Brothers Wreath Ceremony](#)

[Special Meeting](#)

[Muriel MacSwiney](#)

[MacCurtain Wreath Laying](#)

[Glen Boxing Club](#)

[St. Finbarr's Wreath Laying](#)

[Fitzgerald Wreath Laying](#)

[MacSwiney Wreath Laying](#)

[Murphy Wreath Laying](#)

[North Monastery Secondary School](#)

- The Lord Mayor of Cork, Cllr Joe Kavanagh, An Taoiseach, Mr Micheál Martin T.D., Cork City Chief Fire Officer, John Ryan and renowned Cork playwright and author, Cónal Creedon took part in a small but significant ceremony outside Cork City Hall on Friday December 11th at 10.30pm to mark the centenary of the Burning of Cork 100 years previously. The event was streamed live on the Councils You Tube channel.

Key Statistics

In relation to Derelict Sites a total of €1,7396,40 was levied in the year to date with €111,456 paid

Regarding vacant housing there were 55 vacant properties with 36 under repair.

Regarding On Street Parking Fixed Charge Penalty notices the figures dropped from €39,317 Jan-Nov 2019 to €22,269 Jan- Nov 2020, due in part to reduced traffic numbers and periods of free parking resulting from the CoVid 19 pandemic

Regarding Litter fines YTD there was a recorded drop from 52 to 31 year on year of litter fines issued with a reported increase from 89 to 183 of litter fines paid.

This concluded the CE's Report and Ann Doherty wished members of the JPC a happy and safe, and of course socially distanced Christmas.

Chief Supt B McPolin in his presentation on Crime and Traffic statistics referred to

Property Crime:

An overall reduction of 29%, the most significant being a 59% reduction in theft from a person

Crimes against the person:

Overall reduction of 16% with decrease of 33% and 31% respectively in harassment and menacing phone calls

Rapes and Sexual Assault:

Overall reduction of 15% with a 27% decrease in Sexual Assault (non aggravated) and a 22% increase in Rape of male or female.

Criminal Damage and Public Order:

12% decrease in Criminal Damage and 10% decrease in public order offences

Drugs and Weapons:

85% Increase of possession of drugs for sale or supply and 33% increase in possession of drugs for personal use. Possession of offensive weapon (not firearm) increased by 49% .

Traffic:

Reductions across the board in non fatal traffic accidents with the largest decrease (32%) in accidents with material damage only

Arising from the presentations the following issues were raised by members

Addressed to Cork City Council Chief Executive Ann Doherty

Cllr L Bogue enquired whether the litter statistics reflected an increase in occurrence of littering or an increase in dumping

A Doherty responded that she would talk to the Litter Management Team and revert as the statistics did not define such a difference

Addressed to Chief superintendent B. McPolin

Cllr M Nugent enquired whether the Chief superintendent was concerned at the levels of public order breaches relating to CoVid in the city centre and the significant increase in detection rates for sale and supply of drugs

Cllr Cremin enquired regarding the significant traffic disruption resulting from a tragic traffic accident in Mayfield

Senator Buttimer suggest that An Garda Síochána move their emphasis on detecting speeding from the N40 areas of the Jack Lynch tunnel, Kinsale road roundabout and Ovens to secondary Roads, citing in particular the Curraheen Road in the approach to Curraheen Church

Chief Superintendent McPolin responded as follows

In relation to public order breaches and congregating in the city centre an An Garda Síochána took a collegiate approach, working well with members of the vintners federation to disperse such gatherings

In relation to the tragic accident in Mayfield the national roads authority and Cork City Council were involved in diverting traffic but could not comment further for operational reasons.

Operation TARA was producing excellent results with a 40% increase in Cocaine seizures and 80% increase in cannabis seizures

That concluded the business of the meeting. The date for the next JPC Meeting is the 22nd of March 2021 at 2pm.