Cork City Joint Policing Committee

Minutes of JPC Meeting 21 September 2021 @ 2.00 p.m.

**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

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 Cork City Council

Cllr. John Maher Cork City Council

Cllr. Mick Nugent Cork City Council

Cllr Paudie Dineen Cork City Council

Cllr Mary Rose Desmond Cork City Council

Cllr Kenneth O Flynn Cork City Council

Cllr Ted Tynan Cork City Council

Cllr. Shane O’Callaghan Cork City Council

Cllr. Thomas Moloney Cork City Council

Deputy Donnacha O’Laoghaire Dáil Eireann

Deputy Colm Burke Dáil Eireann

Senator Jerry Buttimer Seanad Éireann

Mary Crilly Public Participation Network

Derry O Farrell Public Participation Network

**Also in attendance:**

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

1. **Welcome**

Cllr Colm Kelleher (JPC Chair) welcomed the attendees, 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) 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. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the JPC of 21 June 2021 were considered and approved by the meeting. **Prop.** Cllr T Moloney **Sec.** Cllr D. Boylan

**3. Presentations**

**Presentation by Kevin O’ Connor A/Senior Planner, Cork City Council on the Cork City Council Draft Development Plan 2022- 2028**

Mr O’ Connor made a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation on the Draft City Development Plan 2022-2028, the first since the city expansion, which was circulated to members of the committee. Mr O’Connor advised that public consultation of Draft Plan had taken place since 26th July and would remain open to 4th October 2021.

**Presentation by Ann Doherty, Chief Executive, Cork City Council**

**Cork Heritage Open Day**

On Saturday 14th August, Cork City Council in partnership with The Heritage Council, organised the largest Cork Heritage Open Day programme to date with over **45** guided tours of historic buildings and landmarks in Cork City. The 2021 programme took place virtually in light of the ongoing public health guidelines. **5100** pages viewed on Cork Heritage Open Day itself and increase of over 50% on the previous year. There were approximately 10,000 page views of the CHOD Website over Heritage Week i.e. Aug 14th to Aug 22nd. there was excellent engagement online on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

**St John’s Eve celebrations**

To mark the midsummer celebrations of 2021 and with public safety and health in mind, the Council worked closely with youth workers and Cork Education and Training Board to supply refreshments so that small gatherings of young people could celebrate ‘Nonfire Night’. Stevie G and GMC hosted  an event in The Kabin, Knocknaheeny were livestreamed across the city. The Lord Mayor visited a number of these groups, in the Glen, Farranree and Knocknaheeny to meet young people and learn more about their youth projects.

The Council was also mindful of the need to remove the risk of illegal bonfires as much as is possible. With this in mind, bulky waste collections were undertaken across Cork City over the last week. As always, the safety of communities and our emergency services workers were the absolute priority for Nonfire Night. Council and communities will be hoping for a return to the very popular Summer Fun Evenings in 2022.

**Bulky Goods collection**

In June and August 2021 Bulky Goods collections were organised by the environment section of the Operations Directorate at 10 prominent and accessible locations throughout the city. The arrangements for June were to coincide with St John’s Eve to take potential content out of circulation. Arrangements for further collections are currently being finalised for October.

**Cork Pride Week 2021**

Cork Pride Week took place on week of 24th July. Cllr Mary Rose Desmond raised the Cork Pride Festival Flag on at City Hall to start the week. There were a number of events, mainly online, with an online seminar on ‘Working With Pride’, supporting members of the LGBTI+ Community in the workplace. The week’s events culminated in an open air, social distanced car concert on Kennedy Quay.

**Cork Age Friendly City Consultation on City Centre Seating**

Cork City council has been successful in accessing €60,000 from the *Department of Transport Additional Infrastructure Fund* for the provision of age friendly seating in the city centre .The Cork Age Friendly City Programme advisors invited the Age Friendly Forum Representatives to do a walkability study of the city centre with a view to noting areas where additional seating could be added to cater for older people in the city centre. The services of an occupational therapist and the involvement of an interdepartmental working group including Transportation and Environment has taken place and the tender will shortly be advertised with the new seating expected to be in place by December. The provision of such seating has been a key aspiration of the programme and was warmly welcomed by the older persons representatives.

**Sports on the Green**

**S**panned across 24 locations in the month of July. Each of these locations took part in a three-day programme (72 individual sports sessions in total). Participants tried a new sport on each of the three days, where sessions were led by professional coaches from their respective Governing Bodies (Athletics Ireland, Munster Rugby & FAI).

This series required close collaboration with a number of key stakeholders in the city including Cork ETB, Cork Sports Partnership, Cork Community Gardai, TUSLA, Foróige, Youth Work Ireland, Munster Rugby, Athletics Ireland, FAI, Cork City Partnership, Traveller Visibility Group and a number of community and residents’ associations. It also required a lot of interdepartmental working within the council, particularly with our Community Section and Parks Department.

Feedback on this programme has been immensely positive from parents, participants, and community leaders alike. Cork Community Gardai have expressed a particular interest in continuing to work with our Sports Development Officer to bring sports to young people who may not already be involved.

**Culture Night 2021**

Cork City basked in the city’s rich arts and cultural glow once again last Friday evening ( 17th September), with the return of Cork City Culture Night. Now in it’s 16th year, this year saw a hybrid mix of in-venue, outdoor and online events ensuring all audiences and interests are catered for, with all available to view on the website [www.culturenightcork.ie](http://www.culturenightcork.ie/) .Fitzgerald’s Park was the focal point of this year’s celebrations in Cork City with an impressive line-up of events from 4pm.

Upstaged – Culture Night at the Park delivered an evening of circus, music and art from 4pm.

Also in Fitzgerald’s Park, Cork Public Museum opened until 8pm, both for booked tours and more casual visits, subject to capacity. Sample Studios in the Lord Mayor’s pavilion showed Graduate Artist in Residence Lily O’Shea’ s Solo Exhibition until 7.30pm. Culture Night at Nano Nagle Place is always a memorable evening and this year’s offering offered those who wished to experience this historic venue both online and in venue options to choose from.

The museum was open on the night and featured the wonderful ‘*Changing Habits: 250 Years of Convent Life*‘ exhibition. Violinist Caitriona O’Mahony was accompanied by organist James Taylor to perform the Glorious Mysteries live on the night, while a virtual concert of the same also released on their website. Also in musical mode this Culture Night was Elizabeth Fort. Visitors could walk the walls and take in the view, while perhaps being entertained by Cork City Musical Society who pop up in full song at regular intervals. The Lee Sessions also appeared at the ancient venue, and the event was fully booked.

**Online Community Safety Forums**

In the w/c May 24th, Cork City Council and An Garda Síochána held the first online Community Safety Forums, covering the Garda Community Engagement Areas-

Cork North,

Cork South and

Cork City Centre.

Issues raised included

**Housing**: Housing maintenance issues

**Operations:** Parks maintenance, greenery infringing on roads and paths, grass cutting, lighting in parks, CCTV, dog fouling, fly tipping, public toilets

**Infrastructure**: Pedestrian crossings, potholes, road works, surfacing, road safety,

The meetings were well attended by elected representatives, Council staff, community policing colleagues and chairs of local community safety forums, and were also broadcast live on the Council’s website. Members of the public made submissions using an online portal.

The next schedule of meetings are due to take place W/C 18th October . While the in person, local community Safety forums are a valued component of community engagement and interaction with Council staff and elected members, the online iteration has been a useful interim arrangement and the Community team will continue to work to support the collaborative work with An Garda Síochána.

**Key Statistics**

**Derelict Sites :**

6 sites currently undergoing compulsory acquisition. Total amount levied to 01/09/21 €1,748,390 . Total amount paid to 01/09/21 was €476,766.

**Parking Fines**

Year on year comparisons on Fixed Charge Penalty Notices show a continued reduction from 30,613 September 2019 to August 2020 compared to 26,231 September 2020 to Aug 2021.

**Litter Fines**

There has been a marked increase also in litter fines issued, litter fines paid, prosecutions taken and prosecutions won year-on-year in 2021 compared to 2020

**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 63 %reduction in theft from a person.

**Crimes against the person:**

Overall reduction of 5% with Increases of 82% and 50% respectively in Harassment and Menacing phone calls

**Rapes and Sexual Assault:**

An overall reduction of 13% with a decrease of 6% in rape of male or female and an increase of 25% in sexual assault (non-aggravated).

**Criminal Damage and Public Order:**

6% decrease in all public order with a 3% decrease in all criminal damage

**Drugs and Weapons:**

Overall increase of 22% in drugs offences and a 31% decrease in weapons offences

**Traffic:**

Overall increase of 2% in traffic offences

**Arising from the presentations the following issues were raised by members:**

Cllr S O Callaghan enquired, in light of recent protests outside the private residences of prominent politicians, and the fact that three members of cabinet were based in Cork, whether specific safety plans were in place to ensure their safety.

Cllr M Nugent enquired, in light of the report of a trebling of knife seizures, whether an amnesty for the surrender of such items was under consideration.

Senator J Buttimer extended his condolences to family of the late Tony Power whom he described as a Champion of Equality and to his colleagues in the Community, Culture and Placemaking Directorate. He also highlighted the worrying increase in knife seizures and highlighted the need for a special meeting under the City Development Plan addressing the dereliction in the city centre in particular.

M Crilly, Cork Sexual Violence Centre, thanked Chief Supt Mc Polin for his support over the years, particularly through the protective services unit and invited him to join the board of the Cork Sexual Violence Centre in his retirement.

Cllr T Fitzgerald complimented An Garda Síochána on their work in reducing the prevalence of scrambler bikes and associated noise pollution and asked if there was any update on the number of seizures.

Deputy D O’ Laoghaire wished to be associated with the vote of condolences for the late Tony Power and asked whether the provision of a specific yard should be made a condition of planning for larger building projects to reduce the loss of green space during construction. He further enquired whether garda resources were expected to match the expected growth in city size, raised the issue of delays with the coroner’s court and complimented cork city council on their strategy of increased cycle lanes and public dining.

Cllr L Bogue asked Supt Mc Polin whether he had any advice going forward in relation to parking and other issues

Deputy C Burke whether there was to be a review on gun licensing in light of a recently reported event.

Cllr. J Kavanagh wished to compliment An Garda Síochána for their community work during the pandemic to date.

**In response the following replies were noted;**

Extensive pans are in place to protect cabinet members in the event of an escalation of recent activities outside their personal residences but for operational reasons these could not be disclosed

On the matter of increased drug seizure Chief Supt Mc Polin advised that in addition to an increase in searches the recording format in 2016-2020 was different to that in the present day.

The increase in resources in the city centre unit also added to the amount of searches and seizures. Routine traffic stops in the period of restricted travel also uncovered additional materials.

In response to Sen Buttimer Chief Supt Mc Polin added that An Garda Síochána continued to work formally and informally with Cork City Council on the area of city centre dereliction and issues arising.

He accepted M Crilly’s invitation to join the board of the cork sexual violence centre and thanked her for her kind words on the Protective Services Unit.

On the matter of the city development plan Chief Executive of Cork City Council A Doherty advised that there was a city centre strategy at the core of the current city development plan and appealed particularly to members of the Oireachtas to support the establishment of a supervised injection centre in the city.

On the subject of gun licencing, Chief Supt. Mc Polin advised that such licences were issued under strict conditions and were under the supervision of the local superintendent

Chief supt. Mc Polin concluded by stating that he had worked hard on protecting the resources of Garda presence in the city and that there were now 450 gardai at various ranks in the system.

**4. A.O.B.**

Attendees were reminded that the portal for registration for the online Community Safety Forums would open shortly. These are due to take place between 24th September and 4th October.

**5. Date of next meeting**

The date for the next Joint Policing Committee was confirmed for 8th December 2021 at 2.00 p.m. via Microsoft Teams.