

## Kilkenny County Council – Joint Policing Committee

### Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday, 23rd January, 2019 at 2.00 p.m. Council Chamber, County Hall, Kilkenny

**PRESENT:** Cllr. Fidelis Doherty, Chairperson, Cllr. Tomás Breathnach, Cllr. Pat Dunphy, Cllr Pat Fitzpatrick, Cllr. David Kennedy, Cllr. Melissa O’Neill, Cllr. Maurice Shortall, Cllr Ger Frisby, Cllr. David Fitzgerald.

Chief Superintendent Dominic Hayes, Kilkenny Garda Station  
Superintendent Derek Hughes, Kilkenny Garda Station  
Sergeant Barry Smith, Kilkenny Garda Station

Ms. Colette Byrne, Chief Executive, Kilkenny County Council. Mr. Tim Butler, Director of services. Ms Anne Maria Walsh, Senior Executive Officer, Teresa Mahon, Staff Officer, Kilkenny County Council

**Apologies:** Ms. Colette Byrne, Chief Executive, Deputy Bobby Aylward, T.D. Deputy John Paul Phelan Cllr. Joe Malone, Cllr. Michael McCarthy, Superintendent Gerard Egan.

Cllr. Fidelis Doherty, Chairperson - opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance. She passed on the Committees sympathies to Cllr. Thomas Breathnach and his family on the recent loss of his brother Jack.

#### **Item No. 1: Confirmation of Minutes of Meetings:**

Minutes of Meeting of Kilkenny County Council Joint Policing Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2018:

Proposed by: Cllr. Melissa O’Neill  
Seconded by: Cllr. David Kennedy  
And Agreed:

“That the minutes as presented to the meeting are hereby adopted.”

#### **Item No. 2: Crime Statistics**

Chief Superintendent Dominic Hayes gave a presentation on the compatible crime statistics over the last 8 years, 2010 to 2018. He stressed that the most import factor was having the right resources in the right places: The main highlights are as follows:

- Property Crime down nearly 60% (1,800 incidents in 2010 to 931 incidents in 2018)
- Robbery of an Establishment or Institution down from 12 incidents in 2010 to 3 in 2018
- Burglary (Not Aggravated) down 40% - (537 incidents in 2010 to 219 in 2018).
- Theft from Vehicle – reduction of 45% (172 incidents in 2010 to 79 in 2018)
- Theft from persons – reduction of 50% across the County

- Theft from shop – reduction of 11% - from an already low base
- Theft from other property – reduction of 43% - (522 in 2010 to 227 in 2018)
- Aggravated Burglary – reduction of 50% since 2010
- Crimes against a person – incidences of assaults down 18% since 2010
- Assaults down 22% from 2010
- Public order offences down nearly 50% since 2010
- Criminal damage incidents down 50% since 2010

The Crime Statistic for 2018 include:

- Property Crime down 14 %
- Robbery from person down 50%
- Burglary (Not Aggravated) down 7% in City and 4% Countywide
- Theft from other property down 26%
- Public order offences down 5% in Kilkenny area and 3% in Thomastown
- Criminal damage down 3%
- Drug offences – detection rates up 23% but it continues to be a problem as no community is drug free. Kilkenny now has a dedicated drug unit and have seen an increase in arrests for possession of 43%.

Chief Superintendent Hayes reiterated that the Gardai are continuously looking at way to improve. There is no compliancy as reducing levels of crime is one of their main goals.

### **Item No. 3 Gardai Divisional Report**

Chief Superintendent Hayes provided details on:-

- (a) Divisional Protected Service unit – is manned by 2 Sergeants and 10 guards and is a dedicated unit dealing with the area of criminality, rape and human trafficking, sexual and domestic assaults.
- (b) Civilisation initiative- front desk staff in Gardai Stations is now staffed by civilians. Gardai are now redeployed for detection/prevention of crime. New Civilian staff can now staff projects like the Immigration Office from 9 – 5 Monday to Friday.
- (c) Victim & Community Office – this office is now opened 2 days a month. Recently showed a group of children around the Station, they were reassured that it was ok to approach a guard.
- (d) Community Engagement- Sergeant Barry Smith is arranging meetings for 2019 and is hoping to go to new locations around the County.
- (e) Resources- Chief Superintendent Hayes explained that while the above initiatives were invaluable to the public they were depleting the number of Gardai on day to day duty. These redeployments along with promotion are leaving a gap in resources. He reassured the Committee that he will to continue to petition the Government for more resources.

All Members present congratulated the Gardaí for their work in reducing crime and on the new initiatives especially the Divisional Protected Service Unit. They asked questions about increase in resources, comparison of crime statistics on a national level, community policing, visibility of Gardai, writing to the Department and making people feel safe. The concerns about Brexit were expressed along with the fact that Ireland had the least amount of Gardai per capita. Chief Superintendent Dominic Hayes responded to the questions. He gave an update on new recruits, crime detection, comparisons to other counties and confirmed that he is continuing to request more staff.

#### **Item No. 4 Operation City Safe**

Superintendent Derek Hayes gave an update on Operation City Safe. He explained that this initiative was launched in April 2017 to support Kilkenny Chamber of Commerce for purple flag accreditation status for Kilkenny City with the support of Kilkenny County Council. The aim of the initiative is a public safety and harm reduction strategy based on an increase rate of high visibility beat patrols /static posts to detect public order offences and reduce assault offences related to the night-time economy in Kilkenny City. The operational objective is to reduce the rate of assaults in Kilkenny compared to 2017 local and national figures.

The initiative is proving very successful with reductions in assaults causing harm and minor assaults incidents in Kilkenny City. In comparison with national figures where assault figures have risen up to 10% in some cities, Kilkenny has seen a reduction of 27% on 2017. The feedback has been very positive from Businesses, Residents and Visitors with recognition that the Gardaí visibility has a positive effect on reducing crime and rows are stopped before they start. The streets feel safer at night. The Initiative could be affected by a reduction in Gardaí personnel, the reduction in physical resources and financial resources over time.

All Members present congratulated the Gardaí on this initiative and acknowledged the difference it was making to the City at Weekend nights.

#### **5. National Roads Allocation.**

Mr. Tim Butler provided an update on the TII National Roads Allocations for 2019 and the low cost safety improvement for both National Primary and National Secondary Roads in the County. Included in the allocation are improvements to National Primary roads on the N24 Tower Road, N24 Cahir to Waterford, N25 Waterford to Glenmore and minor works on N24 Carrick Road. On the National Secondary Roads minor works to be carried out on the N76 Callan Road and N77 Ballyragget Village. Pavement improvement works have been approved for parts of the N76. Mr. Butler also provided details on the Maintenance works for the National Primary and National Secondary Roads in the County.

Members welcomed the National Roads Allocations.

#### **6. Youth Achievement Award**

Chief Superintendent Dominic Hayes confirmed that the Carlow/Kilkenny area will have Youth Achievement Awards in 2019. The Garda Youth Achievement Awards celebrate outstanding young people between 13 and 21 years of age and recognises the good work being done by young people throughout the communities. The intention is to bring this initiative into schools to highlight excellent young people in the County. The Individual Award is open to young people who have made a positive contribution to their community, making it a better place to live. The Group Award category applies for groups of two more young people whose combined efforts have contributed to their communities.

He explained that these awards were not linked to other awards such as No Name or Comhairle Na Nóg but a new initiative been rolled out nationally by An Garda Síochána.

## **7. Annual Report**

Ms. Anne Maria Walsh provided Members with a copy of the draft Annual Report for 2018 and explained that there is a statutory requirement to prepare and approve an Annual Report. The Report is a record of the issues raised, the actions taken and the progress achieved along with statistical information on number of meetings held and the attendees. She has liaised with Chief Superintendent Dominic Hayes and is circulating the report today to Members. Members should contact Ms. Walsh if they want to make any changes. The report will be forwarded to the Department of Justice & Equality, the Policing Authority and the Garda Commissioner.

It was proposed by Cllr. David Kennedy

Seconded by Cllr Patrick Fitzpatrick

And Resolved that Members of the Committee approve the Annual Report for 2018.

## **8. AOB**

The following matters were raised under any other business;

- Facilities in the Garda Station in Ballyhale. Chief Superintendent Dominic Hayes confirmed that some facilities will be provided but Staff might have to use the Station in Thomastown in certain situations.
- Superintendent Derek Hayes provided some details on the Community Programmes and the 4 new projects commencing shortly.
- Resources shared between Carlow and Kilkenny particularly in relation to Motorcycles.
- Request for Gardai Members on the Committee to attend the Joint meeting with Piltown Municipal District and Waterford Municipal District to discuss issues in the area.
- Gardai in Urlingford and possibility of increased resources.
- Success of increased visibility in Ballyraggett.
- Schools programme in Johnstown.
- Update on Roadside Drug Testing.

## **9. Set Date for Meetings in 2019**

Because of the Local Elections in May 2019, only the date for the next meeting in March will be set.

Next Meeting Scheduled for 27th March 2019 at 2.00pm in Council Chambers.