

## Kilkenny County Council – Joint Policing Committee

### Minutes of Briefing held on Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2020 at 2.00 p.m. Via Teleconference

**PRESENT:** Chairperson, Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick, Cllr. Martin Brett, Cllr Michael Delaney, Cllr. Pat Dunphy, Cllr Joe Lyons, Cllr Tomás Breathnach, Cllr Deirdre Cullen, Cllr Michael McCarthy, Cllr Patrick O’Neill, Cllr Denis Hynes, Cllr Fidelis Doherty, Cllr Andrew McGuinness, Cllr. John Coonan, Deputy John McGuinness TD.

Chief Superintendent Pdraig Dunne, Waterford Garda Station.

Superintendent Derek Hughes, Kilkenny Garda Station.

Inspector Anthony Farrell, Kilkenny Garda Station.

Inspector Sean O’Meara, Thomastown Garda Station.

Sergeant Laura Dragoi, Kilkenny Garda Station.

Helena Power, PPN

Colette Murphy, PPN

Anthony Morrison, Vintners Assoc

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

**Apologies:** Deputy John Paul Phelan, Samuel Morgan, PPN, John Hurley, Chambers of Commerce.

Cllr, Pat Fitzpatrick, Chairperson, opened the briefing and welcomed all. A minute silence was held for Detective Garda Colm Horkan and retired Detective Garda Patrick Mulcahy. Cllr. Fitzpatrick along with fellow Councillors paid tribute to Chief Superintendent Dominic Hayes and welcomed Chief Superintendent Pdraig Dunne to Kilkenny. Chief Superintendent Dunne thanked all for the warm welcome and is looking forward to working with the County Council and local representatives. The new policing division he now covers include Waterford, Kilkenny and Carlow and the transition from 2 areas into 1 will take at least 2 years.

#### **Item No. 1: Minutes of Meeting of Kilkenny JPC held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020.**

Minutes of Meeting of Kilkenny County Council Joint Policing Committee held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020:

Proposed by: Cllr. Michael Delaney

Seconded by: Cllr. Michael McCarthy

And Agreed:

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

#### **Item No. 2: Update on Covid 19 – Kilkenny County Council and An Garda Síochána**

Mr. Tim Butler provided the committee with a Covid-19 update from Kilkenny County Council including details on :

- a. the assistance provided to the HSE.
- b. County Council staff working arrangements.
- c. Supports the Council is providing to businesses through LEO .

- d. the community call and the community forum.
- e. increase in on-line Motor Tax.
- f. Community grants and Town & Village Renewal grants.
- g. Libraries and the reopening of services under revised protocol.
- h. Reopening the City and County including the tourism recovery task force, festivals, projects, grants, one-way system in City, pedestrianisation of streets, extending farmer's market, new seating areas and the shop local campaign.

Ms. Colette Byrne gave an update on the community forum.

Superintendent Derek Hughes presented update in the City area including details on:

- a. the workforce plan adopted by the Gardai and the buddy system.
- b. the successful detection, arrest and return to prison.
- c. focus on industrial and business premises safety during lockdown.
- d. reinstatement of operation city safe and gradual reintroduction of safer socialising.
- e. continuation of public offender programme.
- f. community engagement activities provided by Gardai during the pandemic.

Inspector Sean O'Meara provided update for the rural districts:

- a. community engagement
- b. challenges for staffing and reopening of some smaller garda stations
- c. checkpoints, arrests etc.

### **Item No. 3: Update on Crime Statistics**

Superintendent Derek Hughes explained that crime had reduced during the pandemic:

- Property crime down 30% in the City.
- Burglary from homes down.
- Commercial burglary down by 60% as a result of the Garda's proactive approach.
- Robberies down to 2.
- Theft from vehicles down 50%.
- Shop thefts down 32%.
- Drug search activity up by 50% and more resources allocated.
- Assaults at night time down.
- Incidents of public disorder increased due to outdoors drinking.

Inspector O'Meara gave statistics for his area:

- burglary down 32%
- property crime down 22%
- commercial burglary down by 50%
- increase in thefts from vehicles but this relates to one individual in a specific area.

It was agreed that Chief Superintendent Dunne would join the JPC steering committee to agree agenda items for meetings.

### **Item No. 4: Update on CCTV**

Superintendent Derek Hughes confirmed that the CCTV system for Urlingford is with the Commissioner's office. It is expected that it will be officially signed off in the coming weeks.

The application for CCTV in Kilkenny is been prepared at present. The tender process and spec is to be completed early next year. Mr. Butler agreed that the 3 broken cameras on the Hebron Road will be repaired before being taking in charge by the Gardai.

**Item No. 5: Update on Local Policing Fora**

Two of the four planned Local Policing Partnerships are established. Inspector Sean O'Meara has attending a meeting of the partnership in Piltown and the establishment of the fora in the Callan/Thomastown Municipal District is underway. The fora in the Kilkenny City Municipal District will be led by Inspector Anthony Farrell and the process will commence once Callan/Thomastown is launched.

The fora met in Castlecomer and Piltown and matters such as speeding, test alert, rural safety forum, drugs, road policing, checkpoints and antisocial behaviour were discussed.

**Item No. 6: Consider establishment of Drug Task Steering Group**

Ms. Colette Byrne advised that at the last JPC meeting it was agreed that a Drug Task Force would be set up with both Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick and Cllr. Deirdre Cullen as part of the steering group. It was agreed that Cllr. Fitzpatrick would arrange a call with Chief Superintendent Dunne, Superintendent Hughes, Ms. Colette Byrne and Cllr. Cullen to established the terms of reference of the Task Force and what outside personnel/organisations to involve. The JPC must sign off on the terms of reference and membership.

**Item No. 7: Set Date of Next Meeting**

Next meeting set for the 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020 @2.00pm (venue to be reviewed later)

**Item No. 8: Any Other Business**

The following matters were raised by members of the committee:

- allocation of gardai personnel from Templemore, are they be retained in Kilkenny?
- antisocial behaviour in housing estates including Riverside Drive.
- drug coercion in the City.
- additional resources especially in Thomastown area.
- impact of reduced hours in Mooncoin Garda Station.
- issues on the Ballymac Road.
- Illegal dumping around the County.
- CCTV for Callan By Pass.
- horse cruelty and fouling in the Hebron area, procedure for seizing animals.
- horse free zone in Kilkenny City.
- relationships between the Gardai and the traveling community and the need for cultural training.

Chief Superintended Dunne, Superintendent Hughes, Inspector O'Meara, Ms. Colette Byrne and Mr. Tim Butler responded to the matters raised by the committee. Chief Superintended Dunne confirmed that the extra gardai deployed to Kilkenny during the pandemic will be returning to Templemore but he welcomes any support the committee can give in securing more resources. The process of joining up divisions will see staff duplication in some areas and it will take a few years before the exact staffing

levels are set. He agreed that Ms. Power should arrange a meeting with the Community Garda. He also hopes that the good working relationship with the Vintners will continue to flourish. Superintendent Hughes confirmed that they had increased patrols in housing estates where antisocial behaviour had been highlighted and had made a number of arrests in relation to drug coercion. He reiterated that it is very hard to get a conviction for intimidation and if people could be encouraged to come forward it would help. Inspector O'Meara explained that the reduction of opening hours of rural garda stations had resulted in more guards on patrol and there has been no increase in criminal activity.

Ms. Colette Byrne agreed that illegal dumping is a problem for both the Gardai and the County Council and had increased during the lock down. Dunmore Amenities centre is now fully operational and the incidents of illegal dumping should reduce. The Gardai and Environment Section of the Council will continue to do work in prevention, detection and prosecutions of illegal dumping in the County.

Mr. Tim Butler confirmed that the Bye-Laws for horse free zone's in the City have been drafted. An animal welfare committee is being set up to look at animal cruelty. CCTV for the Callan By Pass will be considered in the overall CCTV plan for the County.

Ms. Anne Maria Walsh verified that no questions were received from committee members prior to this briefing. If anyone wants to table a question please could they do so via email to Teresa Mahon before each meeting.

Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick thanked everyone for joining the briefing.

Briefing then concluded.