

Cork City Joint Policing Committee

Minutes of Public Meeting

3rd February 2020 at 2.00pm

Council Chamber, City Hall, Cork.

Present:

Chief Supt. Barry Mc Polin	An Garda Síochána
Ms. A. Doherty	Chief Executive, Cork City Council
Cllr. Colm Kelleher	Chairperson
Ms. A Rodgers	Director of Services, Cork City Council
Cllr. Henry Cremin	Cork City Council
Cllr. Shane o Callaghan	Cork City Council
Cllr. Joe Kavanagh	Cork City Council
Cllr. Lorna Bogue	Cork City Council
Cllr. Derry Canty	Cork City council
Cllr. Terry Shannon	Cork City Council
Cllr. Thomas Moloney	Cork City Council
Cllr. Tony Fitzgerald	Cork City Council
Senator Jerry Buttimer	Seanad Éireann
Deputy Donnachadha Ó Laoghaire	Dáil Éireann
Ms. Deirdre Healy	Public Participation Network
Mr. Patrick Murray	Public Participation Network
Ms. Ger Moloney	Public Participation Network
Dr. Dermot Kavanagh	Public Participation Network
Ms. Mary Crilly	Public Participation Network

In attendance:

Supt. Colm O'Sullivan	An Garda Síochána
Mr. Chris Dorgan	Community, Culture and Placemaking, Cork City Council
Mr. David O'Brien	Community, Culture and Placemaking, Cork City Council
Ms. Ruth Lynch	Community, Culture and Placemaking, Cork City Council
Supt. Colm Noonan	An Garda Síochána
Ms. Rebecca Loughry	Community, Culture and Placemaking, Cork City Council

1. Welcome

Chair Cllr. Colm Kelleher welcomed attendees and reminded the meeting that only Committee Members were entitled to address the meeting. He further advised that given the nature of the meeting only one question per member would be allowed and a time limit of 2 minutes would be imposed. As Chairperson he advised it was within his powers to deem a question inappropriate to the work of the forum and should be more properly addressed by another relevant forum.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the JPC of 2nd December 2019 were considered and approved by the meeting.

Prop. Cllr T Fitzgerald, **Sec** Sen J Buttimer

3. Presentations

Presentation of Ann Doherty, Chief Executive, Cork City Council

Ann Doherty, Chief Executive, delivered her report outlining a number of points –

- Cork City Council celebrated Cork's strong links with China and her sister city Shanghai by supporting Cork City Chinese New Year Festival 2020 with two free events heralding the New Year of the Rat. The events were hosted by the Chinese Esoteric Buddhist School, the Unitarian Church and Nano Nagle Place. This year, Chinese New Year fell on Saturday 25th January.
- Glow, A Cork Christmas, took place in the four weekends (Friday, Saturday and Sundays), starting 29th November 2019. A total of 52,643 people attended the event over the 4 weeks.
- The 2nd Annual Age Friendly Christmas Choir event took place in the Atrium in Cork City Hall on the 17th of December. The focus this year was on community choirs and the message of the social and health impact of joining a choir was highlighted on the night.
- Boundary Transition update:
Commercial Rates: Cork City Council became the rating authority for all businesses operating in the expanded city on January 1st. The 2020 Commercial Rate is now paid to Cork City Council by those businesses which are located in the area that transferred to the City in May 2019. Commercial rates for 2020 will remain the same as commercial rates in 2019
- A 2 day training programme was held in the concert Hall, City Hall on January 8th and 9th 2020 in partnership with the HSE, CETB, UCC and TUSLA. This training, delivered by Dr Karen Treisman, provided an opportunity for over **350 frontline service providers** and managers to access specialised training free of charge to expand their understanding of Trauma through a new lens. It focused on trauma from a systemic and organisational perspective.

Ann Doherty further presented statistical data on Derelict Sites, housing stock & antisocial behaviour reports, parking fines, litter and drinking fines. As per a commitment given to the December 2019 JPC, the statistics gave a narrative explanation accompanying the statistics in the interest of clarity. Of particular note were the following

- Increase in number of sites taken off derelict sites register, due in part to more rigorous enforcement and the upturn in the economy leading to more construction on previously derelict sites.
- In housing, 255 units reported as being currently under repair. The majority of these are expected to be ready for letting by the end of Q 1 2020.
- Regarding on-street parking Fixed Charge Penalties, a 44% increase year on year between 2018 and 2019 was recorded due in part to increase in number of staff issuing fines. In addition to the breakdown of offences by %, data also illustrated for the first time the number of offences for parking in cycle lanes by cars and busses, parking on footpaths and in disabled bays.
- Regarding litter fines, a substantial increase was reported directly attributable to the use of CCTV cameras in the extended boundary area in Ballincollig.

Chief Supt B Mc Polin gave a presentation on Crime and Traffic statistics to 31st December 2019

Key statistics:

Property Crime:

Increase of 82% of robberies from the person and 31% in interfering with a vehicle with intention to steal corresponding decrease of over 30% in actual theft of a vehicle and of 11% in robbery of an institution.

Crimes against the person:

Notwithstanding the recent upsurge in murders and assault resulting in death which the chief superintendent advised could not be discussed in detail for operational reasons, there was an increase from 2 to 4 in recoded murders and an 11% increase of threat of murder. A reduction of 36% in child abandonment and of 19% in stalking and harassment was recorded.

Rapes and Sexual Assault:

A reduction of 32% was recorded in rape of male or female and an increase of 5% in non-aggravated sexual assault.

Criminal Damage and Public Order:

Reductions were recorded in all categories of criminal damage and public order, the most significant being a reduction of 19% in arson.

Drugs and Weapons:

Most significant was an increase in possession of drugs for personal use of 19% and in relation to firearms and offensive weapons an increase of 9% in possession of offensive weapons (not firearms).

Traffic:

A reduction of 22% in traffic collisions resulting in non-serious injury and an increase of 9% of driving under the influence were recorded.

4. To consider reports from Local Policing District Management Committees

The report of the Mayfield District Management Committee (DMC) was read and discussed. Of particular relevant to the JPC was **St Luke's Forum**: Attendance of 80. As with St Luke's forums in the past the chief concerns are traffic issues and to difficulties with parking. Refusal of permission for an Off Licence in the area welcomed.

Blackpool, Shandon & Farranree Forum: No new topics reported.

Mayfield, The Glen & Ballyvolane Forum:

Deferred as a mark of respect following the death of a member of An Garda Síochána who had long associations in the area, this forum was held later than planned. Over 120 people attended. There was a robust discussion on rumours of the opening of an injection centre in the Glen. Addressed by senior members of the HSE Drugs and Alcohol Taskforce to clarify where the misunderstanding had occurred.

Presentations to the JPC were received from:

David Lane HSE's coordinator of drug and alcohol services for Cork and Kerry,
Declan O Leary, Foróige and
Gary Mulcahy, Student Services and Community Relations Officer, UCC.

Salient point of **David Lane's** presentation :

- David outlined significant improvements in both the staffing of drug and alcohol related services and in the number of projects and interventions this has facilitated.
- For comparative purposes he outlined that in 2008 the service consisted of 1 Part Time GP, 4 Senior Addiction Counsellors 12 Addiction Counsellors and 4 Administration staff .
- In 2020 this now stood at 7 GPs (mix of part time and full time), 2 Nurses ,6 Senior Addiction Counsellors, 25 Addiction Counsellors, a Rehabilitation Manager, 2 Needle Exchange Support Workers, 1 Acupuncturist and 7 Administration staff .

Mr Lane also highlighted the immense benefit of case management across agencies leading to clients not having to re-tell their story which he believed led directly to better outcomes.

He further highlighted the benefits of Cork's very effective interagency approach and his support for minimum unit pricing for alcohol which he believed would be hugely beneficial in treating those with alcohol- based addiction. The opening of a second clinic in Heron House on the north side of the city was also cited as a major benefit to the work of the group.

Salient points from **Declan O' Leary's** presentation:

- Mr O'Leary highlighted the long history of Foróige in Cork drawing particular attention to the fact that 1 in 4 of all Foróige projects in the country are Cork based.
- Funding , of which 85/90% comes from the Department of Children and Youth affairs facilitates the work of 600 youth clubs, 180 community projects and the employment of 500 staff.
- Cork has a high proportion of active volunteers and have been able to put 134,000 children through Summer schemes since their initiation in 1974.

Salient points from **Gary Mulcahy's** presentation:

- Mr Mulcahy outlined the work of the work of the Campus Watch programme in UCC. This initiative acts as a link between the Local Community and UCC. Established in August 2017, it consists of 3 Team Members.
- It considers formal complaints against registered UCC students and determines if the student has broken the agreed standards of conduct/ student rules. Resolution is found in the form of Informal and formal resolutions.
- Strike One – Warning or **€50 Charitable Contribution** Started in February 2018 following changes to Student Rules Policy
- Strike Two – Includes a possible fine of up to **€1000**

In the past 3 years almost €12,000 has been collected in fines from students and distributed to charities. As a result of its vigilance Campus Watch has reduced the number of complaints by 60% during Fresher's week and 33% in Raise and Give (R.A.G.) week.

There was widespread acknowledgement of the comprehensive nature of the contributions from presenters to the meeting and that much clarity had been brought on the matters under review

Arising from the presentations the following issues were raised by members of the committee.

In relation to the Chief Executive's Report the following questions were raised:

1. Could the C.E update the meeting as to the current state of play regarding the derelict site on North Main Street.
2. A related question relating to the increase in financial contributions from derelict sites was also raised.
3. A review of the offence of parking in cycle lanes was sought. Allied to this was a suggestion that hard defences to protect cyclists in designated cycle lanes be considered.
4. The CE was asked if Cork City Council and An Garda Síochána were involved in the trauma training.

In response to questions raised the Chief Executive provided the following clarification:

The increase in levies raised was as a direct result of greater construction activity. In relation specifically to the derelict site in north Main Street the C.E. advised that the three main priorities of any derelict sites were being followed that being stabilisation of the site from a safety perspective, the erection of safety hoarding and the prevention and elimination of litter. The CE further advised that both Cork City Council Staff and An Garda Síochána had been involved in the trauma training.

The CE advised that the issue of cycle lanes and the safety of cyclists was under constant review and where other motorists activity was increasing that risk, appropriate action was being taken.

In relation to the Chief Superintendent's Report the following questions were raised:

1. Could the Chief Superintendent comment on the force's view on the recent upsurge in violent crime.
2. Could he advise on the current staffing levels in the cork area, specifically in relation to the current status of probationary Gardaí that had been assigned to the city division and had since been re-deployed elsewhere.
3. Concern was raised specifically in relation to the increase in assaults and minor assaults and theft from the person.

In response the Chief Superintendent advised that although he could not comment in detail specifically on the cases which were still the subject of ongoing investigations. He could advise the gathering that the cases were unrelated, and that progress was ongoing in each of the active investigations and prosecutions were imminent in a number.

He further advised that divisional numbers were back to pre 210 levels and that he expected that while the numbers of community Gardaí stood at 3 sergeants and 32 Gardaí at present he was hopeful that the numbers of 4 sergeants and 40 community Gardaí outlined in the divisional plan would soon be reached.

The Chief Executive and An Garda Síochána were complimented on their response to recent events in Kilcully cemetery.

In relation to drug and alcohol misuse David Lane was asked whether he observed a change in the type of addiction he and his team were witnessing. In response he advised that alcohol misuse was still the predominant form of addiction but that he had noticed an increase in online drug purchases

and the combination of drug and alcohol misuse combined. Significantly for those dealing in the area there was no significant rise in heroin usage in the city.

A number of contributors commented on the restriction to 2 minute of questions and contributions from the floor. The Chairman Cllr. Kelleher acknowledged their concerns but advised that as it was a public meeting and there were many contributors, a limit of some form had to be introduced in the interest of fairness and equality.

6. AOB

The committee was advised that the Garda Commissioner Drew Harris who was to address the forum was unfortunately unable to do so due to a diary clash but had confirmed his attendance at the next meeting of the JPC scheduled for May 11th, 2020