

Cork City Joint Policing Committee

Minutes of Public Meeting

21st September 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
Chief Supt. Barry Mc Polin	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. Ken O'Flynn	Cork City Council
Cllr. Mary Rose Desmond	Cork City Council
Cllr. Mick Nugent	Cork City Council
Cllr. Shane O'Callaghan	Cork City Council
Cllr. Terry Shannon	Cork City Council
Cllr. John Sheehan	Cork City Council
Cllr. Thomas Moloney	Cork City Council
Deputy Donnacha O'Laoghaire	Dáil Éireann
Senator Jerry Buttimer	Seanad Éireann
Deirdre Healy	Public Participation Network
Mary Crilly	Public Participation Network
Laurence Owens	Public Participation Network
Dr Dermot Kavanagh	Public Participation Network
Patrick Murray	Public Participation Network

Apologies

Deputy Colm Burke	Dáil Eireann
Superintendent Colm O'Sullivan	An Garda Síochána

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

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 allocated. 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.

He further encouraged attendees to complete and return the questionnaire circulated by the policing authority, advising it should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. The chair also advised the meeting that it was hoped the Garda Commissioner would attend the December 14th meeting of the JPC in whatever format it was conducted.

Cllr. Kelleher extended his condolences to the family of the late John Kennedy of Foroige whose untimely passing and immense contribution to the community was noted and echoed by all attendees.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the JPC of 3rd February 2020 were considered and approved by the meeting. **Prop.** Cllr H Cremin **Sec.** Cllr Damian Boylan

3. Presentations

The first of three presentations was made by Denis Barrett of the Community Culture and Placemaking Directorate, Cork City Council, Coordinator of the Cork City Community Response to CoVid.

His contribution focused on three key points

- **Cork City Community Response Forum**
- **Area Response Teams**
- **CRF Task Groups**

On the work of the **Cork City Community Response Forum** Denis advised that the response was inter-agency & cross sectoral, comprising of a membership of more than 30 organisational representatives, focusing on vulnerable individuals and families during Covid-19. It was designed to build on existing services and strengths and to avoid duplication .

On the daily work of the **Area Response Teams** he advised it worked in 16 Areas defined across the city where Area Teams were assembled with City Council and HSE Community Work Dept co-lead, supported in their work by Community Gardaí, TUSLA & Local Community and Voluntary and Sporting Group leaders. The team approach is to be flexible,

responsive, solution-focused, locally directed, using ground up knowledge, supported by agencies as needed

Regarding the **Community Response Forum Task Groups** Denis advised they were focused on three key areas: Food Distribution, Youth Response and Bridging the Digital Divide.

Specifically, in relation to the **Food Distribution Group**, the terms of reference outlines that the group was established to support all members to co-ordinate their efforts to collectively find solutions to get the right food, to the right people at the right time, avoiding waste and duplication and to find new resources where relevant.

Actions:

- Establishing lines of communication between members
- Survey of Food Distribution Needs – 100% increase during Covid - 19
- As a Group to collectively respond to emerging needs: eg School Hamper distribution throughout the Summer

Community Response Forum **Youth Response** focused on improving the range and reach of Youth Activities for Summer 2020 to include Lord Mayors Youth Challenge – We Are Cork ,CETB Programme of Outdoor activities with youth organisations, Sporting organisations Summer programme and Arts organisations Summer programme

Presentation of Ann Doherty, Chief Executive, Cork City Council

Ann Doherty, Chief Executive, delivered her report building on the material delivered by the previous speaker and focusing on specific points including –

- The establishment and the continuing work of the Cork City Community Response
- An indication of the volume of calls specific to the Covid response line (almost 4,500 to date)
- Cork City Council's continuing commitment to and recognition of the contribution of the community and voluntary sector as reflected in the filming and broadcast of Civic, Community & Voluntary awards in an innovative way.

In her presentation particular dates were notable

On Tuesday June 9 the handover of the cultural award to Conal Creedon was broadcast at 3.30pm on Cork City Council's [YouTube channel](#).

On Wednesday, June 10, the civic award ceremonies were broadcast separately at 3.30pm on the same channel.

On Thursday 11th June, a special tribute to the city's community and voluntary groups – who have been the cornerstone of the city's Community Call - aired on the channel at 7.30pm.

On Friday 12th June the Lord Mayor, Cllr John Sheehan recognised two youth advocates Salma Waleed and Alicia O' Donovan for their contribution to youth advocacy and representation in a ceremony broadcast 3.30pm.

- Despite the Covid 19 restrictions Cork has continued to support annual events such as Cork Midsummer Festival – (online delivery) Summer Fun Night aka “Non-Fire Night” with “Rogu” We are Cork Youth Summer Challenge, Summer SING! ,Cruinniú n nÓg, Bike Week, Culture Night, Cork Pride and the re-opening of cultural venues.

The Chief Executive highlighted the provision of €15,000 for Creative Ireland for the Cultural Companions initiative and the collaboration with the ETB in bridging the digital divide for older citizens.

She also highlighted Cork City Council's community Newsletter which has been published and distributed almost 30 times since the onset of the Covid pandemic.

On other matters A Doherty presented statistical data on Derelict Sites, housing stock & antisocial behaviour reports, parking fines, litter and drinking fines.

Key points

- Increase in contribution from derelict sites due in part to an increase in % levy. 39 new files opened YTD.
- Continued work in making houses available for rental by the Housing Directorate
- Antisocial behaviour continued to be monitored and dealt with appropriately
- Reduction in parking fines year on year partly attributed to free parking during Covid emergency and reduction in traffic volumes
- City council continues to monitor and prosecute litter violations

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

Property Crime:

Overall reduction of 27 % with reduction of between 23% and 60% per cent , with the noticeable exception of theft of bicycles which saw an increase of 24 %

Crimes against the person:

Overall reduction of 18% . Reductions across the board of between 23 and 39 percent with the exception of threat of murder which saw an 8% increase.

Rapes and Sexual Assault:

27% reduction in reported crimes with a modest increase in rape of male or female and a significant decrease of non-aggravated sexual assault

Criminal Damage and Public Order:

Modest decrease of 3% of “all public order” offences with a 15% decrease in all criminal damage

Drugs and Weapons:

40% increase in drug offences and 65 % increase in weapons offences . chief superintendent Mc Polin suggested that these increase could be attributed in part to higher visibility of gardai, rostering changes and increase in checkpoints during the lockdown period

Traffic:

With the exception of fatal traffic collisions which saw an increase year on year from 1 to 4 persons, there were decreases of between 4 and 35% in other areas covered

Arising from the presentations the following issues were raised by members

Addressed to Cork City Council Chief Executive Ann Doherty

- Regarding the community Forum the question was raised regarding the elderly in particular whether we were still in touch?

A. Doherty clarified that while the meetings of the Forum might increase or decrease in regularity depending on need, the 16 teams remained in place and would continue to operate if they were needed

Addressed to Chief superintendent B. McPolin

- Were steps being taken regarding the increase in availability and use of fireworks?
- Did the chief Superintendent foresee the re-introduction of community safety forums in the future?
- In crimes against the person, did the statistics reflect an increase in prosecutions for domestic violence?
- Regarding the increase of theft of bicycles, did the Chief superintendent envisage a property register to record same?
- Would the changes to rostering, outlined by the Chief Superintendent during his contribution as being in the order of 20%, remain?

In reply, Chief Superintendent McPolin provided the following clarification

The possession and use of fireworks continue to be prohibited and people are encouraged to report the use of same.

Regarding the incidence of domestic violence, the statistics showed a minimal increase (from 494 to 500) in comparable periods but he stressed that all breaches of protection orders were followed vigorously through the courts system.

Chief Superintendent McPolin advised that all bicycle owners should record the registered number of the bicycle which is available on the frame and should photograph it for identification purposes should it be returned. He informed the meeting that much of the current spate of robberies could be attributed to a particular group of youths who were

being observed and monitored. He advised the meeting that retiring garda T Davis would be replaced on his imminent retirement by garda Brian Mc Sweeney.

Chief Superintendent McPolin concluded that with his colleague a roster more suitable to city streets was being designed and that he was cautiously optimistic of the retention of current rosters.

All contributors congratulated Cork City Council, community groups and An Garda Síochána for their work and cooperation , particularly in relation to vulnerable populations, during the current pandemic.

6. AOB

The committee was advised that the Garda Commissioner Drew Harris who was to address the forum on May 11th was now expected to be in a position do so at the next meeting which was scheduled for **December 14th 2020.**