

Cork City Joint Policing Committee

Minutes of meeting

2nd December 2019 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. Shane o Callaghan	Cork City Council
Cllr Joe Kavanagh	Cork City Council
Cllr Mary Rose Desmond	Cork City Council
Cllr. Paudie Dineen	Cork City Council
Cllr. Ted Tynan	Cork City Council
Cllr. Lorna Bogue	Cork City Council
Cllr Terry Shannon	Cork City Council
Cllr Tommy Gould	Cork City Council
Cllr Thomas Moloney	Cork City Council
Cllr Tony Fitzgerald	Cork City Council
Senator J 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

In attendance:

Supt. C O'Sullivan	An Garda Síochána
Claire Healy	An Garda Síochána
Cllr John Sheehan	Cork City Council (Lord Mayor)
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

Apologies

Ms. Katherine Dullaghan	Public Participation Network
Ms. Mary Crilly	Public Participation Network

1. Welcome

Chair Cllr Colm Kelleher welcomed attendees and reminded the meeting that only Committee Members were entitled to address the meeting. He welcomed the newly elected members to the JPC from the Public Participation Network (PPN) to the meeting.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the JPC of 7th October 2019 were considered and approved by the meeting.

Prop. Cllr T Fitzgerald, **Sec** Cllr H Cremin

4. Presentations

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

Key statistics:

Property Crime:

Significant increases in Robbery from the person, aggravated burglary and theft from the person. Decreases in theft/unauthorised taking of vehicle, theft from shop and non aggravated burglary.

Crimes against the person:

Increases in menacing phone calls, assaults causing harm and minor assault. Decreases in abandoning of a child, (neglect or cruelty) and harassment/stalking threats.

Rapes and sexual assault:

Decrease of 33% of rape of male or female. Increase in non-aggravated sexual assault.

Criminal Damage and public order:

Decrease of 23% in arson and 8% in public order offences. Criminal damage (not arson) increased by 2% as did public drunkenness.

Drugs and Weapons:

Possession of drugs for personal use increased by 26%, while possession of offensive weapons (not firearm) increased by 12%.

Traffic:

Traffic collision (non fatal injury) decreased by 17% and driving under the influence by 6%. Traffic collision (material damage only) increased by 9%.

Presentation of Ann Doherty, Chief Executive, Cork City Council

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

- Since the successful transfer on the 31st of May 2019 no major service delivery issues have arisen. Quality public services are being provided daily to the citizens of the City (both new and old)
- The new Customer Service system has now been in place for 5 months. The telephone number for the public is (021) 4924000. This number is operational 5 days a week from 9:00am to 5:00pm and is operated by 6 highly trained service agents.

- 600 calls per day were handled through the Customer Service Unit. Many are information requests which are addressed and closed while the customer is on the phone.
- The reorganisation of the City Council into three pillars has been completed. Services are now grouped together under Operations, Support and Strategic pillars, with each pillar comprising interlinked Directorates

On the specific area of **Housing Operations** the CE outlined that The Winter Strategy involves the creation of additional emergency spaces in the Simon Shelter and the Vincent's shelter by sourcing additional B & B accommodation. The overall purpose is to ensure nobody has to sleep out during the life of the Strategy, November to March. Since the introduction there has been space every night in the shelters. The team comprised of City Council Officials, Simon, Vincent's, Good Shepherd and other agencies as required, will continue to meet regularly and make additional arrangements if required.

On **Culture Night**, there were 267 events across 132 venues attracting attendances of over 42,000 people. Significantly 7 of these events were in the Irish language and 3 in Irish sign language. In the new city areas 3 events were held in Ballincollig, plus one each in Blarney and Glanmire.

Cork International Jazz Festival saw 45,000 visitors through Cork Airport, thousands more in attendance over the five days across 70 venues with 1,000 musicians from more than 20 countries. 95% of performances were staged for free. The festival is worth approximately €35 M to the local economy.

Christmas Lights and Glow The Switch- On of the Christmas Lights took place on the Sunday 17th November, at 6.30pm. before a crowd of over 20,000 people. Glow, A Cork Christmas, will take place in the four weekends (Friday, Saturday and Sundays), starting 29th November. The Ferris Wheel and Carousel will operate from Friday 29th November until Sunday 5th January 2020 for the full season.

Large numbers attended all three events and the close cooperation between the business community, the general public, An Garda Síochána and Cork City Council has been vital to the successful operation of such public events.

The Chief Executive delivered statistical reports on housing stock, reports on antisocial behaviour among city council tenants and statistics on parking, litter and drinking fines issued together with a report on derelict sites YTD.

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

These questions were addressed to Chief Superintendent McPolin.

The Chief Superintendent was asked to clarify on the breakdown of reported assaults in residential and public places. Other issues raised included the perception that public drug-taking was being tolerated and that there appeared to be an increase in the perceived risk to the public in the city centre.

The Chief Superintendent was also asked for clarity on the number of Gardaí on active patrol as opposed to simply being on duty in response to a report that on a certain recent occasion only 2 Gardaí were on duty in the city. He was further asked to provide an update on the number of Gardaí being assigned to Cork arising from the recent graduations from Templemore Garda Training

College. The Chief Superintendent was also asked to provide an update on the introduction of safety measures on the N40 to prevent possible traffic collisions arising from drivers “rubbernecking” to view developments at the site of the fire in Douglas Shopping Centre.

In response to the above Chief Superintendent Mc Polin provided the following clarifications to his presentation and in response to the issues raised:

- Up to half of reported assaults occurred in a “non-public place”
- 32 trainee Gardaí were being assigned to Cork City and County, 24 in the county, 8 in the city. After training the 8 would be permanently assigned to the city, 2 each in Gurranabraher Ballincollig, Blarney and Anglesea Street.
- The recent social media reports of a planned large theft from a City centre sports outlet was largely prevented by Garda monitoring of social media.
- The increase in menacing phone calls outlined can be explained in part by repeat offenders rather than a marked increase in offending.
- Garda dispatch system processes 4,500 incidents per month.
- Contractors had been approved to erect covers today (December 2nd) to prevent the site in Douglas Shopping Centre from being observed from the N40.
- Regarding the increase in possession of drugs for personal use the Chief Superintendent advised that the Garda response needed to be proportionate and legally based and in response to reasonable grounds for such actions.
- He further confirmed that as a result of the Garda restructuring 21 Gardaí who had been deskbound were now back in frontline service.

In relation to the Chief Executive’s Report

The Chief Executive was asked to provide clarification on the addition to the derelict sites register in 2019 and the appearance that only one site had been removed from the register. She was also asked to comment on the number of incidents of anti social behaviour by city council tenants and the amount of litter fines prosecuted vis-a vis those left unpaid.

The Chief Executive advised many of the issues arising from derelict sites were being resolved both formally and informally. The CE further advised she would seek permission to bring a more detailed information to the JPC on derelict sites.

5. To consider the reports from the Local Policing District Management Committees

Anglesea Street report – No Comments

Togher Report – No comments

6. AOB

The committee was advised that the Garda Commissioner Drew Harris would address the next JPC to be held in the millennium Hall, City Hall on Monday 3rd February at 2.00 p.m. This will be a public meeting and the media and public will be advised of same.