



CO MEATH JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE

SIX YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

2015-2020

1. Introduction

The Garda Siochana Act 2005 introduced the establishment of Joint Policing Committees (JPCS), whose function is *'to serve as a forum for consultations, discussions and recommendations on matters affecting the policing of the local authority's administrative area'*.

JPCs represent a collaborative approach between local authorities, An Garda Siochana and the community & voluntary sector in supporting policing and enhancing community safety.

Key specific functions of the JPC, as cited in section 36(2) of the Garda Siochana Act are:

(a) Keep under review:

(i) the levels and patterns of crime, disorder and anti social behaviour in that area (including the patterns and levels of misuse of alcohol and drugs, and

(ii) the factors underlying and contributing to the levels of crime, disorder and anti social behaviour in the area

JPCs are required to approach their work strategically, so as to ensure a coordinated and focused approach in tackling crime, disorder and anti social behaviour within their administrative areas. Accordingly, JPCs must develop a six year strategic plan, and to report on their implementation in Annual Reports.

2. Background to Co. Meath – Statistical Overview

Profile of Co. Meath – Socio Economic Analysis

Outlined below is a summary of data pertaining to Co. Meath derived from the Socio Economic Statement developed by Meath Local Community Development Committee in the preparation of the Local Economic Community Plan (LECP). The data presented represents key information relevant to the function of the JPC, and is to inform and support its strategic plan.

- According to the Census 2011, there are 184,135 people living in County Meath, representing the seventh highest population of all local authorities in Ireland. Co Meath experienced the 5th highest increase in population in the state between 2006 and 2011 (13.1%).
- Main population growth was centred in the east of the County and in close proximity to the main urban settlements.
- The Age Dependency Rate is higher in County Meath than that recorded in the 2011 Census for the State as a whole. However, the Old Age Dependency element is significantly lower, 13.5% compared to 17.4%, and the Young Age Dependency is considerably higher, 38.3% compared to 31.9%.

- There are relatively high levels of young people and fewer older people in Co. Meath. A total of 29% of the population in the County is under 18 years, the highest rate in the Country. Kells Municipal District has the highest proportion of people aged 65 years and over.
- According to the 2011 Census, there were 7,209 lone parent families in County Meath, accounting for 19.8% of all families, significantly less than the average for the State (25.8%).
- The population of new communities in County Meath was recorded at 19,802, the 7th highest non Irish population in the State. The highest concentration of non-Irish nationals was in the eastern part of the County, and in the urban areas. The towns of Navan, Drogheda, Ashbourne, Kells and Oldcastle have rates in excess of 18%.
- There were 16,292 unemployed in 2011, an unemployment rate of 18%, slightly less than the average for the State. It is important to note that due to the economic recovery in recent times, the Census data does not provide an accurate account of the current levels of unemployment in the County. Accordingly, an analysis of the live register is also provided as it provides more up-to-date information on trends in unemployment.
- The Live Register is used to provide a monthly series of the numbers of people (with some exceptions) registering for Unemployment Assistance/Benefit or for various other statutory entitlements at local offices of the Department of Social and Family Affairs. Information is published in the form of a monthly release titled the Live Register. However, while the Live Register series is primarily an administrative count and not a specific measure of unemployment, one of its main uses/purposes is as a short-term trend indicator of Unemployment.

Since 2011, the live register has been gradually declining since 2011, falling from a peak of 11,667 to 7,678 persons recorded in October 2015.

- In 2011, County Meath had a Relative HP Deprivation Index score of 0.9 (marginally above average), making it the ninth most affluent local authority area in the Country. At Electoral Area level, there were no areas of extreme affluence or disadvantage recorded. The majority of EDs were classed as either just above or below average. The three areas with the lowest relative scores were Ceannanus Mor (-12.1) and Kilmainham (-10.1) in the Kells Municipal District area, and Castlejordan (-9.4) in the Trim Municipal District area.

Garda Crime Statistics for Co Meath 2014/2015

Category	2014	2015	Change
Property Crime	3,400	2,956	-13%
Burglary (Not Aggravated)	919	858	-7%
Robbery from Establishment/Institution	25	24	-4%
Crimes Against the Person	428	505	+18%
Robbery from Person	26	26	0%
Theft from Person	59	54	-8%
Theft from Vehicle	679	564	-17%
Theft/UT of Vehicle	292	222	-24%
Theft from Shop	512	508	-1%
Theft of Other Property	720	568	-21%

Anti Social Behaviour Statistics – Meath County Council

Anti Social Behaviour is defined by the Housing Act 2009 as:

‘Any behaviour which causes or is likely to cause any significant or persistent danger, injury, damage, loss or fear to any person living, working or otherwise lawfully in or in the vicinity of a housing authority under the Housing Acts 1966 to 2002, or a housing estate in which the house is situated and without prejudice to the forgoing includes violence, threats, intimidation, coercion, harassment or serious obstruction to any person’

Examples of anti social behaviour are intimidation, abusive or threatening behaviour and vandalism. When it occurs it has significant adverse impact on the quality of life of local authority tenants and can destabilise a local community.

Meath County Council recognises that Anti-Social Behaviour can have an adverse effect on the quality of life of tenants and the Council is committed to the prevention and elimination of anti-social behaviour in its estates.

Anti Social Behaviour covers a broad range of complaints, some of a minor nature usually resolved with mediation and engagement, while others are of a more serious nature and require more radical means of resolution.

The table below includes all levels of complaints received and dealt with by Meath County Council in for the period 2012 – 2014, indicating that the number of complaints has increase in recent years.

	2012	2013	2014	2015 (Jan – Nov)
Number of Complaints Received re: Anti Social Behaviour	82	142	138	154

3. Strategy Development Process

LECP Workshop – Community Safety

The consultation phase for the LECP involved four workshops centred on four high level goals, as reference in Section 4 (Wellbeing, Resilience, Flourishing, and Renewal). Within the Wellbeing workshop, the issue of community safety was one specific theme discussed.

In addition, four area based consultation workshops were conducted (Trim, Rath Cairn, Ashbourne, Kells).

The following issues emerged from the above consultations, pertaining to the function of the JPC.

- There are 70 Community Alert areas in the county. While meetings do take place at district level, such meetings are not consistent.
- There is a significant level of fear about crime amongst older people and people living in rural areas.
- There are levels of suspicion and fear between older people and teenagers/young people in a number of areas. There are models of good practice that can be used to break down these fears, such as The Way We Were programme.
- One of the core issue presented was in relation to the use of the increasing drug problem in a number of areas in the county. This emphasised the lack of support, counselling and addiction services particularly for those under the age of 18.
- The lack of facilities and the poor attitude towards young people was also noted in some areas. Youth services are run on a completely voluntary basis. There is no strategy for youth work in the county.

JPC Inaugural Meeting

At the JPC's inaugural meeting on 17th September 2015, discussion took place regarding the issues which were of concern to members present, and could potentially be addressed through the Committee.

Areas identified were:

- Garda numbers and visibility
- Rural isolation and attacks on the elderly
- Anti Social Behaviour within estates
- Fear of crime
- Vulnerability of elderly
- Issue of racism
- Text alert groups and co-operation with An Garda Siochana
- Interaction between youth and An Garda Siochana
- IT crime/internet crime
- Speeding within estates/proximity to schools
- Rural response times
- Protection for minority groups
- Lack of resources and investment in young person's services/facilities
- Bye Laws and issues of enforcement

4. Strategic Context

Local Economic Community Plan

The JPC guidelines state that the Six Year Strategic Plans should link with the Local Economic Community Plan (LECP), and derive its strategic objectives from the LECP, of which the JPC considers that it can add significantly to collective efforts in the attainment of those objectives.

The LECP serves as the primary strategy guiding development for a County.

Accordingly, a summary of the draft strategic framework of the Meath LECP is outlined below, which will provide the strategic context for the work of the JPC.

- **LECP Vision**

Meath, a county that will build upon its unique heritage to enable the diversity of its people and communities to have the resources for economic, social and environmental wellbeing, the creativity to flourish, and the strength to be resilient and that will develop a vibrant, sustainable, and competitive economy, all based on shared goals and collaboration between statutory, community, voluntary, environmental and private sectors.

- **LECP High Level Goals**

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1. Promote and secure **wellbeing** of all people and communities in the County.
 2. Stimulate and support a **dynamic economy** to best meet the needs and aspirations of the people and communities in the County
 3. Build and enable **resilience** of all people and communities in the County
 4. Stimulate and empower a **flourishing** for all people and communities in the County
 5. Develop and implement ongoing **renewal** in public sector bodies, the manner in which they fulfil their mandates and the manner in which they work with others.
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The high level goals that are most directly related to the work of the JPC are those pertaining to the concept of wellbeing and resilience.

Wellbeing is where people can meet their basic needs, have a sense of purpose, enjoy financial and personal security, engage in meaningful and rewarding work, and have good physical and mental health.

One of the associated broad outcomes to be achieved through the realisation of the 'wellbeing' high level goal is improved perception and experience of safety for people in rural areas, while a Sustainable Community Objective within the LECP is:

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- *To increase perceptions and experience of community safety (SCO 1.5)*
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Resilience is where people have the capacity to mobilise and deploy the necessary human and physical resources to withstand challenges, adapt in the face of challenges, and build human progress on foot of challenges.

Broad outcomes relating to this high level goal is the development of a resourced community infrastructure that gives voice to communities and pursues innovation in responding to issues. In addition, meeting the specific needs of particular target groups represents a further related outcome. The following Sustainable Community Objectives under Resilience, relevant to the work of the JPC are list below:

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- To expand and strengthen the community infrastructure (SCO 3.1)
 - To address the specific needs of particular groups (SCO 3.3)
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The work of the Co. Meath JPC will play a key role in the fulfilment of the LECP's vision statement for the County, with particular relevance to promoting and securing the wellbeing of all communities within the County, through its specific remit in improving the safety and quality of life by the prevention of crime, disorder and anti social behaviour within the County.

Co. Meath JPC Strategic Priorities

Cognisant of the LECP strategic framework outlined above, the overall purpose of the Co. Meath JPC is:

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- To work in partnership to make Co. Meath a safer place to work, live and visit.
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An Garda Síochána, Meath County Council and the community living in the County, have a shared responsibility for creating a safe and clean environment. The importance of personal safety as a key contributor to quality of life is recognised by the JPC.

This strategic plan provides the JPC with a structured and integrated approach to fulfilling the integral part it has to play in achieving social, economic and environmental wellbeing of all those that work, live and visit Co. Meath.

Three strands will inform the work of the JPC, namely educational/awareness work, prevention and enforcement. The strategy outlines general aims, so that the JPC can be flexible to adapt to changing priorities and good practice over the next six years.

The priority issues for the Co. Meath JPC have been identified as the following:

- Crime Prevention – to reduce the levels of crime in Co. Meath
- Community/Personal Safety– to increase people's sense of security in their communities and ensure that they can undertake their daily activities in a safe manner
- Promoting Public Order – to reduce the incidents of anti social behaviour and public disorder in Co. Meath
- Road Safety – to reduce road accidents and fatalities

5. Taking the Strategy Forward – Implementation

The JPC will be required to produce annual programmes of work to bring their six year strategic plan to fruition. The following steps will need to be considered in order to achieve successful implementation:

- Identification of champions to oversee and deliver on actions
- The creation of JPC sub committees/and or key partners as deemed appropriate, to advance the activities of the committee
- Progress on implementation to be monitored regularly, reviewed and reported on
- Completion of annual strategic assessment of priority issues and actions, so as to allow consideration of any new emerging crime trends/behaviour

6. Communication of Activities

It will be necessary for the JPC to develop a communication strategy in order to enhance communications with the public and other local fora/networks, so as to ensure a fully integrated approach to the committees' work, and facilitate appropriate feedback.

7. Annual Review of Plans

It will also be necessary for the JPC to arrange Annual Reviews of the Strategic Plan from adoption i.e in line with the review of the Annual Reports following end of the year in question, and on an annual basis thereafter.

Strategic Objectives (derived from the Local Economic and Community Plan and which the JPC considers that it can add significantly to collective efforts to achieve the objectives)	Summary of strategy to be pursued in relation to each objective	JPC Strategic Priority	Lead Agency & key partners	Anticipated outcomes
1 SCO 1.5: To Increase Perceptions and Experience of Community Safety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a means to identify priority locations for targeted intervention based on evidence of need 2. To support and coordinate the activities of Community/Text Alert groups within the County 3. Extend the 'Crime Ambassador' programme that supports older people to develop crime prevention strategies 4. Develop and support joint programmes/activities between older people and the younger population to encourage cross generational support and trust including the extension of 'The Way We Were' programme 	<p>Crime Prevention</p> <p>Crime Prevention</p> <p>Community/ Personal Safety</p> <p>Community/ Personal Safety</p>	<p>AGS/MCC</p> <p>AGS/Muintir na Tire/Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>AGS/Later life Network/ Muintir na Tire</p> <p>AGS/MCC/ Laterlife Network/ Comhairle na nOg/LMETB</p>	<p>Pilot targeted initiatives activated, with resulting reduced levels of crime/anti social behaviour in 'hot spot' areas</p> <p>A strengthened, well supported Community/Text Alert infrastructure everywhere and working formally with the Gardai within the County</p> <p>Increased coverage of community/personal safety programmes</p> <p>Reduction in levels of mistrust between the younger and older populations.</p>

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	<p>5. Increase awareness and implementation of crime prevention measures</p> <p>6. Analysis of crime figures pertaining to older persons to address the perception of crime versus reality in order to reduce fear levels</p> <p>7. Ensure that proper attention and seriousness is given to rural Anti Social Behaviour.</p> <p>8. Revision of MCC's Anti Social Behaviour Policy, and preventative measures to be explored</p> <p>9. Revision of existing Bye Laws in operation in the County and the examination of Bye Laws in operation elsewhere, including aspects pertaining to enforcement, with a view to assessing their effectiveness as a tool in counteracting public disorder and replication of good practice operating elsewhere where appropriate</p>	<p>Crime Prevention</p> <p>Community/ Personal Safety</p> <p>Public Order</p> <p>Public Order</p> <p>Public Order</p>	<p>AGS/PPN</p> <p>AGS/Later Life Network</p> <p>AGS/Later Life Network/MCC</p> <p>MCC</p> <p>MCC</p>	<p>Increased coverage of crime prevention measures</p> <p>Fear of crime among older persons reduced</p> <p>Rural communities feel more supported to tackle this problem.</p> <p>Reduction in anti social behaviour activity</p> <p>Effective and efficient operation of appropriate Bye Laws in the pursuit of Public Order</p>

Strategic Objectives (derived from the Local Economic and Community Plan and which the JPC considers that it can add significantly to collective efforts to achieve the objectives)	Summary of strategy to be pursued in relation to each objective	JPC Strategic Priority	Lead Agency & key partners	Anticipated outcomes
	10. Promote the Road Safety message, including awareness of the dangers, and address careless behaviour	Road Safety	AGS/MCC	A reduction in road accidents and fatalities
2 SCO 3.3: To Address the Specific Needs of Particular Groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work in partnership to divert children and young people from anti social behaviour, including assessment of current Garda youth related services 2. Work in partnership to ensure that young people engage positively with the justice system 3. Support an environment where older people's sense of security is enhanced through befriending and other initiatives 4. Initiate a series of preventative programmes enhancing older people's safety 	<p>Public Order</p> <p>Public Order</p> <p>Community/ Personal Safety</p> <p>Crime Prevention</p>	<p>AGS/MCC/ Youth Organisations/ NE RDTF</p> <p>AGS/MCC/ Youth Organisations</p> <p>AGS/MCC/ Later Life Network/ Muintir na Tire</p> <p>AGS/Later Life Network</p>	<p>Reduction in levels of anti social behaviour</p> <p>Reduction in levels of anti social behaviour</p> <p>Fear of crime reduced among older persons</p> <p>Fear of crime reduced among older persons</p>

Strategic Objectives (derived from the Local Economic and Community Plan and which the JPC considers that it can add significantly to collective efforts to achieve the objectives)	Summary of strategy to be pursued in relation to each objective	JPC Strategic Priority	Lead Agency & key partners	Anticipated outcomes
	<p>5. Build a peaceful, safe, inclusive and cohesive society that is tolerant and respectful of diversity</p> <p>6. Take appropriate measures to reduce racist crime and discrimination</p>	<p>Community/ Personal Safety</p> <p>Crime Prevention</p>	<p>AGS/MCC/ Meath Intercultural Network</p> <p>AGS/MCC/ Meath Intercultural Network</p>	<p>Fear of crime reduced among minority groups</p> <p>Reduction in levels of racist crime and discrimination</p>
3	SCO 3.1: To Expand and Strengthen the Community Infrastructure	<p>1. Promote a clean local environment to cultivate pride of place and community ownership</p> <p>2. Work to improve the perception of community safety among local communities via increased civic participation</p> <p>3. Develop Estate Management Initiatives and supports to Tenant/Resident Associations</p>	<p>Community/ Personal Safety</p> <p>Community/ Personal Safety</p> <p>Community/ Personal Safety</p> <p>MCC</p> <p>MCC/PPN/ Muintir na Tíre/Community Alert</p> <p>MCC</p>	<p>Improvement in image and confidence of communities</p> <p>Communities supported and equipped to promote and advance the Community Safety agenda</p> <p>Implementation of community safety estate management plans/Creation of safer residential environments</p>

