

Meath County Joint Policing Committee Minutes of Meeting

Venue: Council Chamber, County Hall, Navan

Date: 1st July 2011

Time 9.30a.m.

In Attendance:

(a) County Council Members: Cllrs. Noel Leonard, Gerry O Connor, Ann Dillon Gallagher, Joe Fox, Oliver Fox, Seamus O Neill and Niamh McGowan, Cllrs, Wayne Harding, Jim Holloway, and Tracy McElhinney

(b) Oireachtas Members: Thomas Byrne and Ray Butler.

(c) Council Officials: Kevin Stewart Director of Services and Martin Rogers Senior Executive Officer.

(d) Garda Officers: Padraig Rattigan Chief Superintendent, Michael Devine Superintendent and Peter Gilsenan Sergeant.

(e) Community & Voluntary: Charlie Traynor and Shaun Lynch.

Apologies: Cllrs. Maria Murphy, Bryan Reilly, Joe Reilly and Francis Deane. Deputies Peadar Toibin, Damien English and Regina Doherty. Community & Voluntary Representative Nick Killian.

Councillor Seamus O Neill, Vice Chairperson, chaired the meeting until the election of the new Chairperson (See Item 3 below).

1. Adoption of Minutes of the meeting of 26th October 2010.

Minutes of the meeting of **26th October 2010** were adopted on the proposal of **Cllr. Noel Leonard** and seconded by **Councillor Seamus O'Neill**.

2. Matters Arising

In relation to the gap between the date of this and the last meeting it was explained that

- ⇒ A meeting of the JPC had been provisionally fixed for late February but because of the general elections it had been postponed
- ⇒ The Chairperson (Regina Doherty) had been elected to the Dail and therefore a vacancy arose in the Chair of the Committee (Chairperson must be drawn from the elected members nominated by the Council)
- ⇒ The new Oireachtas Members decided to await the outcome of the Seanad Elections before agreeing to select their Members to the Committee. The five Members (from 7 Oireachtas Members) were only agreed in early June.

3. Election of Chairperson

It was noted that, in accordance with the JPC Guidelines and Standing Orders,

(a) the Chairperson of the Committee must be drawn from the elected members nominated to the Committee by the Council and (b) it was a matter for those elected members nominated to appoint the Chairperson.

Nominations for the position of Chairperson were then sought.

Councillor Gerry O Connor was nominated for the position on the proposal of Councillor Joe Fox seconded by Councillor Ann Dillon Gallagher.

Councillor Seamus O Neill was nominated for the position on the proposal of Councillor Noel Leonard and seconded by Councillor Oliver Fox.

4. Correspondence

The meeting was advised of the email from Andrew Ogle, Coordinator of the North East Regional Drug Task Force in relation to the needle exchange project in rapid towns (An update on the programme was circulated to Members). It was agreed to invite the group to the next meeting of the JPC to give a presentation on this project.

5. To consider Annual Report 2010

The report was noted and accepted on the proposal of Councillor Jim Holloway seconded by Councillor Ann Dillon Gallagher.

6. To Agree Schedule of Meetings including date for Public Meeting.

It was agreed that (a) the next meeting of the JPC would be held in the Community Centre in Dunshaughlin on the morning of Monday 19th September 2011 and (2) the date for the public meeting would be set at this meeting.

7. Working Sub Groups (a) review composition (b) set date for meetings to review progress.

It was noted that the working groups had met in June 2010. It was emphasised that these groups needed to be outcome focussed and not talking shops. Following a discussion the members to sit on the groups were agreed as follows:

(i) Older People: Cllrs Ann Dillon Gallagher, Jim Holloway, Oliver Fox and Wayne Harding plus 1 Garda Representative and 1 Council Official.

(ii) Anti Social Behaviour: Chairperson Gerry O Connor, Cllrs Tracy McElhinney and Noel Leonard. Community & Voluntary representatives Charlie Traynor and Shaun Lynch. Meath County Council Housing Investigations Officer Mary Carey. 1 Garda Representative.

(iii) Traffic Safety at Schools: Cllrs Seamus O Neill and Joe Fox, plus 1 Garda Representative and 1 Council Representative.

It was agreed to write to those members who were previously on the sub groups and also to those not in attendance to see if there are interested in sitting on any of the groups. In relation to the date for review of progress on the work groups it was agreed to meet at 9.30am on the 19th September in the Community Centre, Dunshaughlin in advance of the meeting of the JPC.

8. Reports

(a) Garda

Chief Superintendent Rattigan felt that the JPC needed to be energised and that members needed to be fully committed to ensure that the Committee could function effectively.

In relation to crime he advised that

- ⇒ Statistically Meath was ahead of most other areas.
- ⇒ Road safety measures were working with a reduction in fatal accidents in 2011 (only the one recent fatality)
- ⇒ No major crimes unsolved in the county
- ⇒ Burglaries were up but similar to most other areas.

It was felt by some Members that the upsurge in burglaries was influenced by the availability of cash for gold in shops and also by the fact that people were now reluctant to bank money and were hoarding it.

In response it was pointed out by the Garda representatives that

- ⇒ An active community helps in keeping crime to a minimum (Neighbourhood Watch Scheme)
- ⇒ Burglaries tended to move from area to area and hit periodically
- ⇒ The cash for gold shops were covered by the Pawnbrokers Act and those inspected (Navan) were accountable and maintained good records. If Members were aware of specific problem locations then the Gardai should be notified.

It was agreed that, through the JPC, general advice should be issued to the public to assist in crime prevention. It was agreed that the Gardai (Crime Prevention) would provide to the Council a series of bullet points in this regard which could form part of a press release from the JPC.

(b) Meath County Council

Kevin Stewart provided a report on anti social behaviour affecting the Council's housing stock which set out the following:

- ⇒ The policy was adopted by the Council in December 2010 and essentially covers how the Council deal with complaints of anti social behaviour.
- ⇒ All complaints are investigated through the Housing Investigations Officer and can include anything from no further action to serving a Notice to Quit
- ⇒ A formal warning is issued in two ways either verbal or written. In 2011 a total of 58 complaints investigated with 23 verbal warnings and 8 written warnings issued.
- ⇒ There were 2 abandonment notices served on households in advance of Notice to Quit. In both cases the tenants then left the houses and both properties were taken into possession.
- ⇒ A lot of complaints relate to poor upkeep of property and tenants are given a timeframe to remedy. This works in the majority of cases.
- ⇒ The Housing Investigations Officer works closely with and attends case conferences with all the relevant agencies including An Garda Siochana, HSE, and Teachers etc.

The matter of Garda clearance/vetting was raised and it was indicated that where convictions/orders were made by the Court these were a matter of public record and could be obtained by written request.

9. Other Business

- ⇒ It was agreed that the Work Programme/Action Plan adopted by the Council in 2010 would be circulated to each Member.
- ⇒ It was noted that a Steering Group (made up of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Chief Superintendent, Council's Director of Services and Senior Executive Officer) had been in place previously and whose role was to facilitate the efficient running and functioning of the JPC. It was accepted that this small group should be re-established.

This concluded the business of the meeting.