



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes
County Meath Joint Policing Committee

Date: 11th December 2023 @ 2.36 p.m.

Venue: Ardboyne Hotel, Navan, Co Meath

In Attendance:

Presiding: Cllr Francis Deane

County Council Members: Cllr Maria Murphy, Cllr Noel French, Cllr Yemi Adenuga, Cllr Gillian Toole, Cllr Helen Meyer, Cllr Paul McCabe, Cllr Trevor Golden, Cllr Alan Lawes

Oireachtas Members: Senator Shane Cassells, Deputy Darren O'Rourke, Deputy Johnny Guirke

An Garda Síochána: Chief Superintendent John Dollard, Superintendent Martina Noonan

County Council Officials: Kieran Kehoe, Fiona Fallon

Community & Voluntary Sector:, Conor O'Leary, Ronnie Owens, Bernard Kenny

Guest: Superintendent Michelle Baker, Superintendent David Nolan, Detective Inspector Michael Dorrigan, Inspector Peter Gilsenan

Co-Ordinator: Angie Mitchell

Apologies: Minister Helen McEntee, Deputy Peadar Toibin, Deputy Damien English, Deputy Thomas Byrne, Senator Annie Hoey, Senator Regina Doherty, Senator Sharon Keogan, Cllr Alan Tobin, Cllr David Gilroy, Cllr Deirdre Geraghty Smith, Cllr Pdraig Fitzsimons, Cllr Tom Behan, Cllr Edward Fennessy, Tinu Achioya, Bill Comerford

1. Chairpersons Opening Remarks

The meeting commenced at 2.36 p.m.

Cllr Francis Deane welcomed everyone to the meeting including the new Chief Executive of Meath County Council, Mr Kieran Kehoe, who was in attendance for his first meeting with Meath Joint Policing Committee.

Cllr Deane advised that there were no items of correspondence for discussion.

2. Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting held on 15th May 2023

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15th May 2023 were confirmed on the proposal of **Cllr French** and seconded by **Cllr Murphy**.

3. Overview from An Garda Síochána on the New Garda Operating Model for Meath/Westmeath Division

Chief Superintendent John Dollard gave an overview on the new Garda Síochána Operating Model which is being introduced as part of A Policing Service for the Future. It is the implementation plan based on the report of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland. It is the largest transformation initiative undertaken in the 100-year history of An Garda Síochána.

He advised that the New Operating Model is

- creating a platform for the continuous improvement,
- allowing An Garda Síochána to meet the changing needs of local communities, and
- to ultimately keep the people safe.

It will see more front-line Gardai, a stronger focus on community policing and a wider-range of policing services delivered locally.

Under the new model, Divisions will increase in size, will be operationally autonomous and will be the key to policing delivery.

He stated that the new Model reflects best international practice, is based on internal and external consultation and is supported by Government, the Garda Inspectorate and the Policing Authority. He added that there are a number of Functional areas within the new division as follows:

- Community Engagement,
- Crime,
- Performance Assurance and
- Business Services.

Each Functional area is led by a Superintendent with the exception of the Business Services Functional Areas which is led by an Assistant Principal officer.

- He noted that the Meath/Westmeath Division has 3 Community Engagement (CE) Functional Areas namely: Meath North CE with a headquarters in Navan which is headed by Superintendent Martina Noonan,
- Meath South CE with a headquarters in Ashbourne which is headed by Superintendent Yvonne Murphy and
- Superintendent Bláithín Moran who previously headed the Kells Area is now heading the Westmeath CE Area with a headquarters in Mullingar.

He advised that the remaining functional area is: Performance Assurance, with a headquarters in Athlone. He stated that the only change is in the Reporting Structure.

Superintendent Michelle Baker who will head the Performance Assurance Functional Area advised that this Area encompasses Performance and Standards, Discipline and Complaints (including GSOC) and Criminal Justice.

Superintendent David Nolan who will head the Crime Functional Area advised that this area encompasses Specialist Investigation, Serious Crime, Immigration, Security and Intelligence.

Superintendent Martin Noonan advised that there are now 2 Community Engagement Functional Areas within Meath which are Meath South and Meath North. Meath South will cover the townlands of Ashbourne, Duleek, Dunboyne, Dunshaughlin, Laytown, Trim, Ballivor, Enfield, Longwood and Summerhill and Meath North will cover the townlands of Navan, Nobber, Slane, Kells, Athboy and Oldcastle. She stated that each Community Engagement Area encompasses the Regular Unit, Roads Policing & Community Policing – including events.

Chief Superintendent John Dollard advised that the Business Services Functional Area encompasses Finance and Logistics, Human Resources and General Administration. He noted that Superintendent Dermot Drea has now moved to County Laois and Superintendent Bláithín Moran has now moved to County Westmeath and thanked both for their time served in County Meath.

He added that there are 3 Detective Inspectors in Meath Division with Inspector P Gilsenan heading the Major Emergency Unit and noted that there are new systems in place for Garda operations and noted that these news systems and the new operating model will take time for Gardai to get used to but he stated that the new operating model does not affect the Garda personnel on the ground and all is going well so far. He further added that there are a further 8 probationary Gardai due to arrive in Meath in the coming weeks making a total number of 23 new Gardai assigned to Meath and he stated that recruitment of Gardai nationally is still being affected by covid and a labour skills shortage.

Cllr Deane thanked Gardai for their update and opened to the floor for questions:

There were queries, concerns and questions raised by the following committee members: **Cllr Lawes, C O'Leary, Deputy O'Rourke, Cllr Adenuga, Cllr French, Cllr Meyer, Cllr Murphy, Cllr Toole, Cllr McCabe & Deputy Guirke** in relation to – *the Recent number of Garda resignations and retirements / Community Text Alert / the New Garda Operating Model / Why the need for a new Garda Operating Model / When the new Juvenile Liaison Officer will be appointed to the Navan Area / Speed Management in Navan / Community Policing Numbers / Who can the Public Representatives make reports to under the new operating model / Garda numbers in relation to population of Meath / When will the 2 Garda personnel from the Duleek Community Hub be replaced / What Stations will new Probationary Gardai be assigned to / Is Kells considered a training station / Who will replace Superintendent B Moran in Kells Garda Station/ Will there be additional Gardai assigned to the Kells Area for Oldcastle and Athboy / How will Roads Policing operate within the County / Have Garda resources from Meath been assigned to Dublin following the recent riots.*

Responses to all queries, questions and concerns raised were provided by: Chief Superintendent Dollard, Superintendent Noonan & K Kehoe.

Amongst the points made were as follows:

- *There was a total of 6 retirements and 12 resignations within the force in the past year with a number of transfers and promotions within Meath Garda personnel*
- *In relation to text alert and the vulnerable persons register, the registers are still being held in the same stations*
- *the Meath Garda Division were allocated the largest amount of probationary Gardai in 2023 outside of the Dublin Area*
- *Education, Engineering and Enforcement are the key factors in speed management and Enforcement of Speeding is a Garda function*
- *Gardai hope to set up a new Community Policing Hub in the Dunshaughlin/Dunboyne Area and also in the Kells Area in either Oldcastle or Athboy in 2024*
- *the new Juvenile Liaison officer will be appointed to the Navan Area in January 2024*
- *the New Garda Operation model did not stem from the riots in Dublin, it was introduced as part of A Policing Service for the Future which is the implementation plan based on the report of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland*
- *The process of reporting of crime or garda issues by Public Representatives has not changed*
- *There is a gap in Garda numbers allocated to the Meath Area per head of population but it is hoped that more Garda Personnel will be assigned to Meath in 2024*
- *Replacement Gardai for the Duleek Community Hub will be backfilled as soon as possible*

- *Inspector B Connor will replace Superintendent B Moran in the Kells Garda Station and Superintendent M Noonan will be stationed in Navan but will also be stationed in Kells Station as much as the Navan Station*
- *It is planned to assign a Sergeant to the Athboy Garda Station*
- *Chief Superintendent Dollard is actively seeking new Garda Personnel for Meath to fill any gaps*
- *Roads Policing Teams are operating across 3 Roads Policing Centres within the Meath/Westmeath Division and are very active*
- *Garda numbers in Meath have not been affected by the Dublin Riots, extra Garda resources in Dublin are being carried out by Dublin Gardai availing of overtime*

Cllr French requested a copy of the reporting structure under the garda new operating model to be sent to him following today's presentation from Gardai.

4. Garda Síochána Overview of Crime Statistics and Report on fatal accidents in Co Meath for Q4 of 2023 in line with Circular RW18 of 2020 – LA16 Collision Reporting and Evaluation Procedure

Inspector Dorrigan presented the policing report with relevant provisional statistics to 3rd December 2023 giving a verbal breakdown of these provisional figures in relation to the following categories: **Property Crime, Burglary (non-aggravated), Theft from Vehicles, Theft of Vehicles, Theft from Shop, Theft of Other Property, Crimes against the person, Drugs (Sale & Supply), Drugs (Possession)**: Inspector Dorrigan welcomed the decrease in burglaries for the Meath Division. He advised there has been a decrease in Theft of cars and noted that significant arrests have been made in relation to theft of vehicles. He stated that the majority of Theft from Shops was the theft of groceries and alcohol. He advised that the low detection in Theft from Vehicles was due to the fact that the thefts were mainly on private property and were due to vehicles being left unlocked by their owners and owners did not pursue the matter through the courts. He added that 50 arrests have been made in 2023 for burglary.

There were questions raised by the following committee members: **Cllr Lawes, C O'Leary, Cllr Deane, Cllr Meyer, Senator Cassells, Cllr Murphy, Cllr Toole & Deputy O'Rouke** in relation to –

- *the number of prosecutions in relation to drug dealing*
- *the number of community text alert meetings that have taken place*
- *the increase in Retail theft*
- *Details in relation to dates that crimes against the person took place and theft from shops took place in Navan*
- *Issue of vaping in secondary schools*
- *When will the Crime Prevention Officer for Meath be appointed?*
- *Can anything be done in the lead up to Christmas in relation to shoplifting in Meath*
- *Crime Gangs operating in County Meath.*

Responses to all questions and concerns raised were provided by: Inspector Dorrigan, Chief Superintendent Dollard, Superintendent Nolan & Superintendent Noonan.

Amongst the points made were as follows:

- *Definitive figures were not available today in relation to the number of prosecutions in relation to drug dealing but the figures would be relatively high*
- *the organising of Community district text alert meetings is on the Gardai's to do list for 2024 but messages are being sent out by Gardai in relation to Community Text Alerts*
- *The appointment of a new Crime Prevention Officer for Meath in on the Gardai's priority list for 2024 and will help increase the detection and reporting of Retail Theft*



- *Definitive figures were not available today in relation to the breakdown of when crimes against the person and theft from shops that took place in Navan but theft from Multinational shops was reduced by 25% due to local collaboration and the public order until was deployed in the Navan area a number of times and extra town gardai have been on the beat in Navan which has been noted by the Community*
- *Roads Policing Checkpoints have helped prevent and detect crime gangs operating within County Meath.*

Inspector Gilsenan gave a verbal report on the roads policing figures (provisional) to 31st October 2023 below and noted that there was no increase in fatalities from 2022 and 2023 year to date, and a decrease in non serious collisions, driving while intoxicated incidents and MIT checkpoints. He stated that a large number of vehicles have been seized for drivers having no insurance, no NCT, being out of Tax or Learner Drivers driving driving unaccompanied. He welcomed the allocation of 55 additional hours per month for Roads Policing in Meath and at the end of October 2023, there were 4,154 detections for speeding in the Meath/Westmeath Division and a large number of fines issued to learner drivers for driving unaccompanied.

Meath Roads Policing

Category	2022 YTD	2023 YTD	Change	% Change
Fatalities	7	7	0	0%
Non-serious injury Collisions	141	139	-2	-1.42%
Driving while intoxicated incidents	240	205	-35	-14.58%
MIT Checkpoints	1091	707	-384	-35.20%
Vehicles Seized (S41, RTA)	484	516	32	+6.61%

**Data (provisional) as on 31/10/2023*

Cllr Deane thanked Inspector Gilsenan for his report and opened to the floor for discussion:

Questions were raised: by Cllr French, Cllr Toole, R Owens & Deputy Gurke in relation to –

- *the number of fatalities*
- *the number of accidents on the Longwood to Trim Road and Trim to Kildalkey Road*
- *Data in relation to engineering analysis on roads where fatalities took place and gritting of local roads*
- *the increase in detections for driving while intoxicated / the number of Roads Policing Personnel in Meath.*

Responses to questions raised were provided by Inspector Gilsenan to the satisfaction of the Committee.

K Kehoe advised that when fatalities occur, the LA 16 Collision Report form is completed and this speeds up the process of gathering information on the most serious collisions and to promote good relations between the Gardai and the Local Author Engineers. He added that in relation to the winter Maintenance programme, resources are prioritized for maximum effectiveness and unfortunately not all roads can be gritted, only those that are most heavily trafficked. He noted that driver behaviour is important during spells of bad weather.

Inspector Gilsenan advised that the Gardai meet with the Council Road Safety Working Together Group each quarter to discuss matters in relation to road safety issues.

Cllr Toole thanked the former Road Safety Officer Michael Finnegan for his dedication and commitment to his Role prior to his recent retirement and questioned when his role would be filled.

F Fallon advised that the post of Road Safety Officer is currently advertised by Meath County Council.

K Kehoe left the meeting at 16.08

5. To receive an update on the 3 JPC Sub Committees

A Mitchell gave an update on the 3 subcommittees confirming the dates of their recent meetings and the details of their works carried out in 2023 and their workplans for 2024.

Cathaoirleach thanked A Mitchell for her update and opened to the floor for questions.

Cllr Toole advised that Senator Cassells had responded to the Comhairle na nOg in relation to their observations in relation to the draft vaping laws that are currently going through the Dail. She noted that it was brought to the attention of the subcommittee on Community Safety and Crime Prevention at their November meeting that a new vape product containing THC was possibly being sold in vapes shops in County Meath and suggested that this may be illegal and is a serious public health issue.

Chief Superintendent Dollard stated that THC is prohibited and agreed to look into this matter.

Cllr Murphy suggested that a letter is written to Michael Finnegan, former Road Safety Officer, on behalf of Meath JPC to thank him for all he has done in promoting Road Safety across the County over the past 13 years and the Committee agreed to do this.

6. AOB & to agree meeting dates for 2024

Cllr Murphy queried who the Public Representatives can contact in order to get forms approved in relation to increasing security at their homes.

Chief Superintendent Dollard advised her to contact Sergeant John McWalter at Mullingar Garda Station in relation to this.

R Owens stated that he had prepared a submission to present to the Citizens Assembly on drugs on behalf of the Meath JPC in relation to the wording used by the media and Gardai etc in relation to seizures of drugs however his submission was not accepted as the closing date had passed.

F Fallon informed the Committee of the proposed meeting dates for the 2024 JPC meetings which had been circulated with the agenda and all were in agreement with these dates.



Cllr Deane thanked all Committee members for their attendance and in particular thanked Chief Superintendent Dollard for bringing the relevant senior Garda Members to each of the JPC Meeting during 2023. He offered a speedy recovery on behalf of Meath JPC to any Gardai that were injured during the riots in Dublin.

The meeting concluded at 4.22 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Francis Deane', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Signed: _____

Cathaoirleach Cllr Francis Deane

Date: 19th February 2024