**Minutes of Meeting of Co. Cavan Joint Policing Committee held in the Council Chamber, Cavan on 30th June 2017 at 3pm.**

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**Present:**

**Councillors:** ChairpersonCllr. J. P. Feeley, Cllr. W. Bennett, Cllr. P. Mc Vitty, Cllr. P. Smith, Cllr. M. Argue, Cllr. N. Connell, Cllr. P. Mc Donald, Cllr. C. Brady, Cllr D. Brady.

**Community Representatives:** Vanessa Clarke, Brian Mc Dermott,

Bob Gilbert.

**Executive**: Tommy Ryan (Chief Executive), Eoin Doyle, (Director of Services), Emer Coveney (Community & Enterprise).

**Garda Officers**: Chief Superintendent Christopher Mangan, Superintendent James Coen.

**Oireachtas Members:** Senator J. O’ Reilly, Deputy Brendan Smith

**Apologies:** Cllr. F. Curtin, Noeleen Brady, Deputy Niamh Smyth

**In Attendance:** Seamus Enright (Anglo Celt), Tessa Fleming (Northern Sound), Inspector Nial McKiernan, Sergeant Ken Coughlan.

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Cllr John Paul Feeley, chairperson, opened the meeting by congratulating Grainne Boyle on her new baby. He expressed congratulations to everyone who was involved in the Constituency boundary campaign.

**Previous Minutes**

Minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by Cllr Peter McVitty and seconded by Brian McDermott.

**Matters Arising**

Cllr Damien Brady asked if the letter had been written to Transport Infrastructure Ireland. Emer Coveney said she had been in contact with the Road Safety Officer who had discussed this with the Senior Engineer but the Road Safety Committee has not met since.

**Presentation on Property Marking**

Sergeant Ken Coughlan gave a presentation on property marking. A pilot project on property marking was launched in June. He provided a demonstration of an engraving machine. This machine can be used to mark various types of property such as lawnmowers, garden tools, bicycles, plastics, carbon fibre golf clubs.

He recommended engraving the Eircode onto property so that lost or stolen items could be easily linked back to their household. It has been proven that property marking is a good way of deterring theft. This scheme was first piloted in West Cork where there was a problem with the theft of outboard engines.

Sgt Coughlan also showed examples of signage that could be used to indicate ‘property marking in operation’ which would further deter theft. Signage can be relatively inexpensive and could be displayed for example in a yard, boat yard, farm yard etc.

He showed examples of items that had been engraved with Eircodes. He also circulated examples of stickers that indicate property has been marked. Property marking can be overt and covert.

The scheme has been piloted in the Carrickmacross district. If any group wants to organise property marking they can contact the Gardai.

**Community CCTV Funding Scheme**

Dr Emer Coveney outlined general information about the new Community CCTV scheme. Grants of up to €40,000 are available to community groups for the capital costs of installing equipment. Grants will cover a maximum of 60% of the total costs. Eligible groups include area partnerships, community development projects, family resource centres, community enterprises etc.

The scheme is not intended for private or commercial applicants. Consortium applications may include private groups alongside community interests. There is significant paperwork to be completed as part of the application process, including a letter from the JPC, supporting letter from the local authority in relation to data control, and authorisation from the Garda Commissioner. The scheme will not fund the upgrading or repair of existing schemes.

Emer asked if communities are generally aware of the scheme and what further promotional work is necessary.

Vanessa Clarke said that Community Alert groups are aware of the scheme but that the amount of paperwork required is onerous. In terms of timeframe, it would probably be early 2018 before we see applications coming through.

She suggested setting up a consultation subcommittee, where representatives of the local authority and Gardai could assist community groups.

There is the potential that groups with higher capacity will access this funding, but other areas with a high level of need may not have community groups with the capacity to apply.

The Chief Superintendent said that the Ballinagh scheme is almost at a conclusion and that a template would be available on this process to support other groups. He assured the committee that An Garda Síochána would engage with groups and assist them. Vanessa Clarke said that the Public Participation Network could also support this process.

The Chief Superintendent said that the control of data is extremely important. He has to sign off on applications, stating there is a need for the scheme.

Inspector Nial McKiernan is the main contact person for the Community CCTV scheme.

Senator Joe Reilly expressed his satisfaction with the introduction of the scheme which will be a huge disincentive to crime and public order offences. He applauded the Ballinagh initiative and enquired into funding amounts under the overall scheme.

Deputy Brendan Smith said that the scheme is a very welcome development. Such schemes have been successful where they have been put in place in the past. The Ballyjamesduff community have advanced a proposal and it is ready to go to the Chief Superintendent.

Cllr Winston Bennet thanked Inspector McKiernan and Superintendent Jimmy Coen for their work to date in supporting the Ballinagh scheme.

There is reluctance in some communities to apply for CCTV schemes and some further promotion work may be necessary.

Superintendent Jimmy Coen noted that there has to be a valid reason to download CCTV footage. It has to be for criminal investigation.

Cllr Feeley clarified that the footage is not monitored on a constant basis.

Bob Gilbert said that communities had a an element of a ‘big brother’ mentality about the scheme, and that we need to look at some way of reducing the paperwork, for example, could all the agencies stamp one document. Vanessa Clarke responded that every application is different. She suggested that the consultative group would be useful because a lot of groups are not used to filling out paperwork. She asked the executive to provide information to the Public Participation Network for distribution to community groups.

The chairperson noted that the application from the Ballyhaise community requires a letter of endorsement from the JPC. This was proposed by Cllr Winston Bennett and seconded by Cllr Carmel Brady.

**Annual work plan for JPC**

Dr Emer Coveney circulated a draft of the annual workplan for the JPC. This was developed by asking lead agencies what activity they proposed to undertake this year, and focusing on the short-term actions from the overall strategy.

The Chief Superintendent said that the actions being led by the Gardai are moving at a pace, however there is an IT issue affecting the text alert system.

Deputy Brendan Smith commented on the Road Show that took place in April. He suggested it could be brought to every post primary centre in the county and that media publicity could be generated for it. Superintendent Jimmy Coen said that the Gardai have started working with Transition Year students who are embarking on their driving careers.

Senator O’Reilly enquired about the effectiveness of Garda intelligence on drug issues and what actions are being taken by the police service.

Chief Superintendent Christopher Mangan replied that they had a number of requests in 2016 regarding establishing a Divisional Drug Unit. He researched the issue and decided, based on seizures, that there was a necessity for it. He said it is possible to buy any type of drug in the immediate locality and there is a ready supply in the greater Dublin area. The information being provided to the Gardai is reasonable. The Drug Unit has resulted in seizures. He emphasised that information provided to the Gardai in relation to drugs is confidential and the informant would not have to attend court. In a lot of towns the greater problems are related to alcohol misuse and there are cases where the Gardai have to arrest people for their own safety.

He noted that there is only one drugs counsellor for the Cavan Monaghan area and that it is difficult for people who have problems with drug use.

Cllr Paddy Smith congratulated the Gardai on the large drug seizure in Co Meath the previous day. He called for more speed cameras, school education and education about safe cycling.

Cllr Peter McVitty enquired what powers the Gardai have in relation to the type of alcohol being sold in premises. Superintendent Jimmy Coen said the Gardai have general powers of entry for the purposes of inspection and to detect offences, but that the quality of alcohol is a matter for Revenue. This is usually investigated on foot of complaints. In general this is not a big issue in Cavan but there are serious fines.

The Chief Superintendent said that the majority of publicans are responsible and try to run a good business. The Gardai endeavour to contribute to school education. There has been an increased budget for traffic in Cavan-Monaghan and it is having an effect.

Deputy Brendan Smith asked if the threshold required to get a conviction for illicit drug possession was too high and whether there was a need for legislative change in this area. He welcomed the establishment of the Drugs Unit.

Cllr Winston Bennett commented on the availability of a single Drug and Alcohol Counsellor and asked whether it would be worth sending a letter to the HSE in relation to this matter. He congratulated the Gardai in Meath on the seizure.

Cllr Clifford Kelly said that drugs are available in every town and village. If signage was in place with the Garda number, people would feel confident to ring a member of the police service.

Cllr Carmel Brady said that the Tanagh Outdoor Education Centre was going to roll out a scheme to teach young people to ride their bikes safely. They are developing a road with relevant markings and will make this training available to groups in Cavan and Monaghan.

Cllr John Paul Feeley noted that the Cavan Drug and Alcohol Forum is in place and this is a good structure for networking and linking with the HSE and many other groups.

**Update on actions in the JPC plan**

There will be a JPC public meeting in the autumn. Date to be confirmed.

The annual work plan states that an audit will be carried out of community safety initiatives, and that a Community Engagement Subcommittee will be established to conduct the audit. It was suggested that we hold the first meeting of this new subgroup in the autumn.

**Set meeting dates for September and November**

The next meetings will take place on Friday 29th September at 3pm and Friday 24th November at 3pm in the Council Chamber.

**AOB**

Cllr Paddy Smith asked about the possibility of getting additional Gardai, especially in Kilnaleck. The Chief Superintendent said it was a fair request and that a number of other areas also need Gardai. He has highlighted this issue and has looked for a HR plan for the division. There was no recruitment for many years and also the service is being affected by retirements. He said there is a major recruitment campaign at the moment and the increase in members should start to take place by the end of 2017. In July there will be additional Gardai assigned to the Carrickmacross area. There are 327 members in the Division at present.

Cllr Winston Bennett asked if there would be a replacement sergeant assigned to Ballinagh.

The Chief Superintendent said that Cavan is a training station and that we require new recruits from Templemore. We are at minimum levels in Cavan at the moment. Other areas will be supplemented as new recruits come in.

Cllr Paddy McDonald welcomed the new police station in Bailieborough but said the location presented access issues. He asked about the start date for construction.

Chief Superintendent Christopher Mangan said he hoped it would be started within a reasonable time. He would know the date at the next JPC meeting. He acknowledged that the site is an issue but said it would be a ‘fit for purpose’ Garda station.

Senator Joe O’Reilly congratulated Cllr Paddy McDonald on his election as Cathaoirleach. He also welcomed the planned development of the Bailieborough Garda Station, stating he had been personally involved in trying to progress this issue.