

## Kilkenny County Council – Joint Policing Committee

### Minutes of Meeting held on Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2019 at 6.30 p.m. Piltown Community Centre, Co. Kilkenny

**PRESENT:** Chairperson, Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick Cllr. Martin Brett, Cllr Michael Delaney, Cllr. Pat Dunphy, Cllr Joe Lyons, Cllr Tomás Breathnach, Deputy Bobby Aylward TD, Deputy John McGuinness TD.

Chief Superintendent Dominic Hayes, Kilkenny Garda Station.

Superintendent Carmel Banville, Thomastown Garda Station.

Inspector Anthony Farrell, Kilkenny Garda Station.

Sergeant Peter McConnon, Crime Prevention Officer.

Ms. Colette Byrne, Chief Executive, Mr. Tim Butler, Director of Services. Ms Anne Maria Walsh, Senior Executive Officer, Teresa Mahon, Staff Officer, Kilkenny County Council.

**Apologies:** Deputy John Paul Phelan, Cllr. Michael McCarthy, Helena Power, PPN., Superintendent Derek Hughes.

Cllr, Pat Fitzpatrick, Chairperson, opened the meeting and welcomed Assistant Commissioner Michael Finn, the Media and all in attendance.

#### **Item No. 1: Minutes of Meeting of Kilkenny JPC held on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2019.**

Minutes of Meeting of Kilkenny County Council Joint Policing Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2019:

Proposed by: Cllr. Pat Dunphy

Seconded by: Cllr. Michael Delaney

And Agreed:

“That the minutes as presented to the meeting are hereby adopted.”

#### **Item No. 2: New Policing Structure**

Cllr Fitzpatrick introduced Assistant Commissioner Michael Finn and explained that the Assistant Commissioner had been invited to address the serious concerns the Committee has with the new policing structure. The Assistant Commissioner thanked the Committee for the invitation and the opportunity to speak about the new structure. He began his presentation by explaining that the current policing structure is over 100 years old and needs modernisation. He went on to give details of the new model which will include creating larger garda divisions with a wider range of specialists' skills, making these new divisions more autonomous and self-sufficient. The aim is to have more garda officers on the streets and to significantly reduce the number in administrative roles so that officers are not tied up with office duties. Garda divisions will be reduced from 28 to 19. Kilkenny/Carlow division will join with Waterford. Each garda division will have two superintendents with responsibility for Community Engagement and a Detective Superintendent will be in charge of serious

crime. 1,265 new gardai are expected to be recruited by the end of 2021 which will result in an increase in frontline gardai across the country.

The members of the Committee thanked Assistant Commissioner Finn for his presentation and raised the following queries and concerns:

- Removal of divisional headquarters from Kilkenny
- Retention of a Garda Superintendent in Kilkenny and Thomastown.
- Number of gardai deployed under the new model.
- Possibility of extra guards in rural areas of Kilkenny, which has seen reductions over the years and the reopening of Garda Stations which had closed in recent times.
- Number of garda resources/manpower to tackle drug problem and drug related crime all over the county including rural areas.
- 24-hour Garda Stations outside of the City
- Importance of Community Policing.

Assistant Commissioner Finn and Chief Superintendent Hayes responded to the members. The Assistant Commissioner said that he did not have all the answers right now as the model is being rolled out over a two-year period. The Committee agreed that the Garda Commissioner Drew Harris should be invited to attend the next Joint Policing Committee meeting to discuss the new structure and the concerns of the Committee Members.

**Item No. 3: Draft Work Plan**

It was agreed to defer this item to the next Joint Policing meeting

**Item No. 4: Set Date of Next Meeting**

The Committee agreed that the next meeting will be set for a date early in the new year that Commissioner Drew Harris will be available to attend. The Committee will write to Commissioner Harris to secure a date.

**Item No. 5: Any Other Business**

The following matters were raised under any other business;

- The possibility of having an update on missing people from Kilkenny.
- Launch of the Local Policing Plan on 10<sup>th</sup> December in Piltown.

Mr Tim Butler explained that specific cases cannot be discussed at Joint Policing Committee meetings but a general report on missing people can be provided.

Meeting then concluded.