

Report on Joint Policing Committee meeting of 21st March 2021

1. GCCN Members Present

Tommy Flaherty, John Rabbitte, John Cleary

Apologies Nichola Tierney, Cameron Keighron.

2. Key issues discussed

We Discussed the Garda report. (Copy attached to email for inclusion on website).

Gccn reps noted the increase in some of the crime figures, and questioned where phone use in cars was included. Garda said it was something that could be added to the report.

3. Consideration and approval of Galway City JPC Annual Report.

This was approved (Copy attached to email for inclusion on website)

4. We received a short presentation from Cope Galway on Domestic Violence and their Resource Pack. This is to be distributed to reps.

5. We received a presentation from the “Ask for Angela” campaign. It was interesting and it highlighted areas where women may feel threatened in bars etc and if they go up to a staff member and ask for Angela they will be provided with a safe place away from the threat.

6. Update on Sub Committees

We received an update from the 4 sub committees and their work to date and work for the coming year.

7. Questions from members. Questions were submitted prior to the meeting and responses were provided in writing.

Questions received from Cllr. Niall McNelis, Galway City Council

1. Can figures be given for the number of bikes that have been stolen in the last 2 years and the process involved after bikes are recovered to identify owners. Also how does Galway City Council remove abandoned bikes across city, what are the time frames for removal and where are these removed to.

Response received from An Garda Síochána: The total number of Theft / Unauthorised taking of pedal cycles in Galway City for the years 2020 and 2021 was 255. On recovery of a pedal cycle, the pedal cycle is examined for the unique serial number which is located under the bottom bracket of the frame where the two pedal cranks meet the frame. The details of the serial number together with the description of the pedal cycle including colour, markings, wheel type are matched to the Garda PULSE system to pedal cycles reported stolen. Where a match is identified the pedal cycle is returned to the owner. It is essential that all pedal cycle owners take note of the unique serial number of their pedal cycle as it

enables the clear identification of the pedal cycle.

Response received from Galway City Council (Community Wardens): Galway City Council (Community Wardens) follow a procedure in relation to the removal of pedal cycles which involves monitoring and logging pedal cycles in the city centre and within the city boundary that appear to be abandoned, tagging to note that if not removed within a 2 month period it will be removed by Galway City Council. If not removed within this period they are removed in conjunction with the Community Wardens and stored in a secure unit, photographed and all details are forwarded to the Gardai. Any pedal cycles that are not claimed after approx. 6 weeks are offered to An Mheitheal Rothar, who upcycle the bikes for reuse. Those not fit for purpose are disposed of.

2. In relation to the new Cyber Crime Unit in Galway, can the Garda please outline its role and if there is a breakdown of those who have been targeted; type of crime, age profile of victim. Does this Unit also investigate cyber bullying, defamation, intimidation and trolling? 2

Response received from An Garda Síochána: D/Chief Superintendent, Garda National Cyber Crime Bureau has responsibility for the Cyber Crime Unit based at North Western Region Headquarters, Galway. This question has been forwarded to the D/Chief Superintendent and the reply will be circulated immediately on receipt of same.

3. How is Galway City Council and Garda tackling the ongoing daily issue of illegal parking in hot spots such as New Dock Street, Mary Street, Eglinton Street and Dominick Street where during peak hours these areas reduce the flow of traffic by illegal parking? When will the physical ticketing be put on windows of cars, areas such as Merchants Road which are designated for bus parking, have had fines issued but poor signage and no paper tickets on windows have led to it being a honey pot for fines.

Response received from An Garda Síochána: Superintendent Flanagan with responsibility for Operational Policing in Galway City has briefed all personnel in respect to illegal parking in the areas outlined and the continued requirement to monitor parking to assist traffic throughput in the city areas. Fixed Charge Penalty Notices (FCPNs) issue to any vehicles found in breach of parking.

Response received from Galway City Council (Community Wardens): Galway City Council's Community Wardens enforce Parking Regulations under the Parking Control Bye-Laws 2009 and The Road Traffic Act, 2010 as amended. Galway City Council has a staff compliment of 9 Community Wardens which includes a Supervising and an Asst. Supervising Community Warden. Two Community Wardens have been recruited and commenced work in the last month and are included in this compliment. The Community Wardens have discretion under the Traffic Warden Act, 1975 and the Road Traffic Act, 2010 to either post out Fixed Penalty Notice to the registered owner of the vehicle, or place on the windscreen of the vehicle. In certain circumstances the Community Warden may consider to issue FCN's by post for Health and Safety reasons.

4. **Questions received from Tommy Flaherty, Galway City Community Network (GCCN)**

- a. What is the update on the suggested installation of red-light enforcement cameras on new junctions which was raised at the JPC meeting on October 18th 2021?

Response received from Galway City Council: A pilot scheme involving the installation of cameras to detect red light offences was successfully carried out in 2015 to 2016 at the intersection of Blackhall Place and Benburb Street in Dublin, on the red Luas line, under an agreement between the NTA and the Garda Síochána. The NTA operated the system and provided images to An Garda Síochána, which had responsibility for processing violations. The aim of the pilot was to reduce collisions at that intersection between cars and trams on the red line. Following a review of the project, it was considered necessary to retender the technical and operational parts of the project and to add two further locations in Dublin. It is understood that the NTA will be developing system design and technical specifications for tenders to install and operate the three sites but that no site is currently in operation. Separately, the role of additional camera-based enforcement and its potential road safety benefits is being considered by the Department of Transport and transport agencies and Galway City Council is awaiting the outcome of this process. The recently published Government 3 Road Safety Strategy 2021 – 2030 provides for the development of camera based Gardaí enforcement at junctions. The lead Department in relation to this is the Department of Transport. Galway City Council as a local authority will not roll out such a proposal in isolation.

- b. With the increase in charges for fixed charged penalties and the negative impact illegal parking has on pedestrians in particular disabled people how do the Gardai and Community Wardens plan to increase levels of enforcement? We request that Community Wardens report to the JPC on levels of enforcement and that the Garda report includes a breakdown of the category of fines.

Response received from An Garda Síochána: Superintendent Flanagan with responsibility for Operational Policing in Galway City has briefed all personnel in respect to illegal parking to ensure the safety of all users. Fixed Charge Penalty Notices (FCPNs) issue to any vehicles found in breach of parking. Mr. Flaherty can contact this office directly to identify any areas of significant concern.

Response received from Galway City Council: The Fixed Charge Penalty Notice report circulates to JPC members in advance of each meeting, noting a breakdown per month in line with the period. The total number of Fixed Charge Penalty Notices issued from 1 st January 2021 – 31st December 2021 was 16,291. The total number of fines issued for parking in a disabled bay during 2021 was 111. For information the top five streets or carparks where fines were issued are Merchants Road Galway;

Rockbarton Road; Salthill Road Upper; Market Street and Prospect Hill.

- c. What is the plan for the development of the new Strategic Plan and how will the JPC engage with communities in the development of the plan? We refer to GCCN's Guidelines for Successful Community Engagement in relation to recommended participatory approaches.

Response received from Galway City Council: As noted in the draft Guidelines for Joint Policing Committees, September 2021, developed by the Policing Authority as part of its statutory role in relation to the JPCs a reference to the Strategic Plan is included, noting that it should have regard to existing local development plans as well as the Annual Policing Plan for the area. The Policing Authority are currently consideration all submissions received on the draft revised guidelines for JPC's and hopes to publish the new guidelines in the coming months. The JPC will be kept up to date on this key area of work, including community engagement as a collective approach to the implementation of the Strategic Plan is essential.

5. Questions received from Cameron Keighron, Galway City Community Network (GCCN)

- a. What work has been undertaken in relation to the following Action under Strategic Objective 2.4: 'Work with the LCDC to promote a coordinated approach to the protection of women against all forms of physical, emotional and sexual violence'?

Response received from Galway City Council: As part of the ongoing delivery of the Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018 – 2023, the Community Response to Domestic Abuse Western Region Network has been engaged and supported through the annual SICAP plans, which have been agreed by the LCDC. This network was established 20 years ago to raise awareness and ensure a 4 coordinated response to ending domestic abuse in communities around Galway, Mayo and Roscommon. In addition funding has been approved through Galway City LCDC to a number and range of community organisations and groups across the City responding to the issue of domestic abuse. Information on campaigns, initiatives and services / supports have also been circulated and promoted through Galway City LCDC.

- b. In light of increased concerns in relation to gendered violence will an audit be conducted to assess the safety of the public realm?

Response received from An Garda Síochána: A Gender Based Violence Working Group has been set up within the Garda Organisation. A D/Sergeant attached to the Galway Divisional Protective Services Unit is nominated to the working group and is currently attending the working group.

- c. What is the update on the findings from the investigation on unanswered 999 calls in Galway City?

Response received from An Garda Síochána: The examination of the 999 calls is near completion. No further information can be provided at this time.

6. **Questions received from John Cleary, Galway City Community Network (GCCN)**

- a. Given the ongoing risks to children safely accessing school due to illegal parking and a lack of safe segregated infrastructure what is the update on the status of the School Streets project and is there a planned expansion of the project?

Response received from Galway City Council: A pilot School Streets project is in operation at Scoil Iognáid, Raleigh Row since 2020. Results of the pilot have been largely positive from parents, school staff and the wider community. Scoil Iognáid is now participating in the national Green-Schools Safe Routes to School programme. Temporary infrastructure associated with the pilot School Streets project will be formalised at the school, as part of the Safe Routes to School programme. Designs are currently being progressed. Please note that a School Street would not suit all school locations in Galway City. Should additional school communities wish to trial a School Street, this can be explored on a school by school basis, subject to resources/ funding by the National Transport Authority. Galway City Council is also progressing School Zones at a number of other schools in the City, through Safe Routes to School funding. These include Scoil Bhríde, Shantalla; Radharc na Mara, Mervue; Scoil Chaitríona Junior and Senior, Renmore; Galway Educate Together and St Joseph's Special School, Newcastle.

- b. What is the update on the Road Safety Plan and will a minimum distance between pedestrian crossings be implemented?

Response received from Galway City Council: Ireland's Government Road Safety Strategy 2021 – 2030 was launched in December 2021. The next Road Safety Plan for Galway City and County now needs to be developed by Galway County Council, Galway City Council, An Garda Síochána, Transport Infrastructure Ireland and the Road Safety Authority under the auspices of the Road Safety Together Committee to outline how the new government strategy will be implemented in Galway City and County. The location, frequency and type of pedestrian crossings are determined with regard a number of factors including the movement function of streets, traffic, cyclist and 5 pedestrian volumes, junctions and the alignment with key pedestrian desire lines rather than by the prescription of a minimum distance between crossings.

7. **Questions received from John Rabbitte, Galway City Community Network (GCCN)**

- a. How will Galway City Council address the ongoing pedestrian safety concerns on Foster Street? The illegal parking by buses and taxis continues to put pedestrians at risk.

Response received from Galway City Council: The Community Wardens continue to monitor illegal parking on an ongoing basis during their scheduled working hours within the City. From the 1st January, 2021 to the 31st December, 2021, 349 Fixed Penalty Notices issued for illegal parking on Forster Street. This 349 fixed penalty notices formed part of a total of 16291 fixed penalty notices issued in 2021.

- b. How is the location of speed vans decided? Is it based on statistics on accident blackspots? Are the locations decided through engagement by the company with Gardai or GCC or are they decided by the company alone? Can GCC provide a map of accident blackspots?

Response received from An Garda Síochána: The locations of Go-Safe speed vans are identified by Go-Safe. Once identified confirmation is sought from the Local Authority that the speed limit is legally in place and that the townland location name used has been confirmed in accordance with an ordnance survey map.

- c. How are community guards promoting awareness of access to personal alarms for disabled people and older people?

Response received from An Garda Síochána: The locations of Go-Safe speed vans are identified by Go-Safe. Once identified confirmation is sought from the Local Authority that the speed limit is legally in place and that the townland location name used has been confirmed in accordance with an ordnance survey map. Sergeant Michael Walsh, Crime Prevention Officer has an article in the Connaught Tribune this week on home security which includes the recommendation that persons over 65 years of age avail of the SAS pendant alarms. Access to alarms is via the Pobal website who provide a list of local installers. Sergeant Walsh has participated in a large number of Community Alert meetings in recent months, which include community Gardai where he has promoted the use of the Personal alarm SAS Pendant. Sergeant Walsh has further undertaken to issue further information on the Facebook page and will brief all Community Police in promoting the awareness of the SAS Pendant.

8. **Questions received from Nichola Tierney, Galway City Community Network (GCCN)**

- a. Are any Ethnic Liaison Officers currently in post in Galway city? How are they engaging with ethnic minority communities?

Response received from An Garda Síochána: The Galway Divisional currently has 29 trained Diversity Officers. Further training plans are currently being put in place to train new personnel for the role. The Ethnic Liaison Officers engage with minority communities through community groups, schools and

religious groups.

- b. Given the ongoing issue of racism within Galway city how is An Garda Síochána strengthening their response to racism and increasing protection of ethnic minority groups?

Response received from An Garda Síochána: The Galway Divisional currently has 29 trained Diversity Officers. Further training plans are currently being put in place to train new personnel for the role to strengthen the response. The Galway Division continue to work closely with the Garda National Diversity and Integration Unit at Harcourt Square.

Note Tommy asked the Super was there a dedicated Ethnic Liaison unit and he replied no.

8. Upcoming issues/information to flag to Plenary

- Need to ensure that members feed into the JPC reps any issues that they feel need to be highlighted.

9. Any support required from the GCCN membership

- There is a need for regular meetings of the reps rather than last minute.
- There is a need to have a forum for members to meet with the reps and bring forward issues that they feel are important.

10. Upcoming Meetings

- Next meeting is June 2022

Attachments

1. Minutes of last JPC Meeting
2. Garda Report
3. Galway City JPC annual report
- 4.

Report by Tommy Flaherty