



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA
POLICING AUTHORITY

Minutes – Policing Strategy and Performance Committee Meeting

Date: 07 February 2023

Venue: 90 King Street North & Zoom

- Authority:** Moling Ryan (Acting Committee Chair), Shalom Binchy, Gillian Imery
- Secretary:** Mark Nother
- Executive:** Helen Hall, Margaret Tumelty, Aoife Clabby, Cormac Keating, Gráinne Curtin, Sophia Carey, Philip Cox, Michal Hanley, Linda Yeates, Judy Higgins, Barry Smith
- Apologies:** Deborah Donnelly (Committee Chair)

1. Closed session – Committee members

Committee members did not exercise the standing option to conduct a closed session. The agenda was agreed as set, and no conflicts of interest were declared.

2. Committee Chair's Opening remarks

The Committee Chair opened the meeting with an update that was provided following an advance meeting with the Deputy Commissioner, Policing and Security regarding the agenda and high-level engagement on Q4 Policing Performance Report.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved with minor adjustments made, and the Executive provided the Committee with an overview of any pertinent developments since the last meeting.

4. Policing Performance

A number of matters relating to the Q4 Policing Performance Report were identified for further engagement with the Garda Síochána representatives in Part B of the meeting. The Committee advised the Executive as to points for consideration in the drafting of the Assessment of Policing Performance 2022.

5. Early discussion to inform Resource Letter

In the context of the above item and the preparations for the Authority's annual provision of ministerial advice on the adequacy of Garda resources, the Committee discussed the impacts of resourcing constraints on the delivery of policing services, as evident through Garda reporting and the Authority's oversight activity. A number of areas were identified for discussion with the Garda Síochána Representatives in Part B of the meeting.

6. Outcomes Project

The Outcomes Project was discussed by the committee and a number of areas were identified for further engagement with the Garda Síochána Representatives in Part B of the meeting.

Part B – Meeting with Garda Síochána representatives

Authority: As previous.

Executive: As previous.

Garda Síochána: Deputy Commissioner Anne Marie McMahon (Policing and Security), Deputy Commissioner Shawna Coxon (Strategy, Governance & Performance), Andrew O’Sullivan (Chief Information Officer), Eiméar Bourke (Executive Director Strategy and Transformation), Yvonne Cooke (A/Executive Director HRPD), Detective Chief Superintendent Colm Noonan (Garda National Protective Services Bureau), Deirdre Morris (Strategic Transformation Office), Sara Parsons (GSAS), Gráinne Shortall (Policing Authority Liaison Office)

7. Closed Session

The standing option to conduct a closed session was not exercised. The Committee Chair provided an update regarding the minor changes agreed to the minutes of the previous meeting, as agreed in Part A.

8. Policing Performance

The Committee Chair outlined the importance of the discussion under this item in respect of ensuring clarity of end of year position of the Policing Plan to inform the upcoming Assessment of Policing Performance 2022, and also in the context of the Authority’s annual provision of ministerial advice on the adequacy of Garda resources. It was noted that the accuracy and emphasis included in this advice was reliant on accurate assessment of current resourcing challenges, their impacts and the provision of a strong evidence base. As such, it was outlined, the veracity of the organisations self-assessment and reflection included in the evaluation received from Garda Síochána in the Q4 Performance Report is of critical importance.

In this vein, concerns were raised by the Committee in relation to the methodology employed in the assignment of RAG ratings to the targets at end Q4, particularly:

- Consistency in the evaluation of progress and achievement vis-a-vis the milestones, the delivery of outcomes, and/or wider progress and day-to-day achievement by the unit/bureau in question;
- RAGs as a proxy for performance management and the perceived issues that may arise in respect of organisational morale in the face of red/amber ratings;
- the paucity of reds in the overall determination of achievement against the targets, relative to their frequent inclusion in the sub-ratings for resourcing; and,
- the tangential lack of apparent connection between this resource rating and the overall ratings which were significantly positive in the main (27 green, 7 amber and 0 red).

In particular, as a result of this lack of connection, it was raised that there was a resultant lack of clarity in the communication of resourcing as it relates to performance and the ability of the organisation to achieve its strategic goals. The Committee noted that this gives rise to concerns on the impact that such has on the outlook of partners when considering resourcing (including in the context of the Authority annual advice to the Minister). The Garda Síochána representatives were urged to reflect on these matters and, if appropriate, undertake a reconsideration of their assessment.

The Committee noted that due to the above it held a considerably different assessment of performance, the impact of resourcing challenges, and therefore the overall level of achievement against the Policing Plan 2022 and that this may be reflected in the Authority's Assessment of Policing Performance 2022.

The Garda Síochána Representatives outlined that the plan and reporting against it was considered iterative and increasingly moving towards the inclusion of greater depth with an outcome focus. It was noted that this was the first Plan to give effect to a three year strategy, and it was an important year in terms of a change perspective and baselining for progress in the delivery of policing services over the medium term. In addition, the Committee heard, due to resourcing constraints the Plan may have presented a more modest set of targets rather than stretch goals and that this, combined with the reiteration in mid-year of 12 targets, meant that there was likely to be a large amount of success reported against the stated targets. In response the Committee reiterated the statutory nature of the Plan. Providing that, as such, it must retain centrality as a public commitment to members, staff, stakeholders, and the public by the Commissioner on behalf of the organisation, underlining the necessity of Garda Síochána to retain a priority of focus in performance against it.

The Garda Síochána representatives provided an overview of successes achieved against the Plan, including: improvements made in the area of electronic devices examination, the continued provision of human rights training and the increase in human rights champions trained to approximately 2,000; the maintaining of contact rates for victims of domestic abuse; and advances made in respect of ICT and the Garda fleet. In respect of challenges faced, the Garda Síochána representatives spoke to the considerable challenge in recruitment and retention – with particular reference to appropriately skilled and experienced Garda staff.

In response to questions, the Committee heard that targets relating to protective services targets were reported as fully achieved despite resourcing issues as the targets in this area were reiterated mid-year. It was provided that in the context of rising reporting and progression of cases to court, resourcing is currently under review in terms of the needs in DPSU's in different parts of the country and the review should be complete in the latter half of 2023.

Similarly the Committee sought an update on the progress in the organisations capacity to respond to economic crime, in the context of a positive assessment in the Q4 reporting despite the continued reports of severe resource shortages. The Garda Síochána representatives outlined that resourcing was a broad issue affecting many units and bureaus, but the work is still moving forward regardless.

The Committee noted the successes achieved as a result of the recent increases in the capacity of the Garda National Cyber Crime Bureau, and enquired as to the awareness of reported issues of storage capacity in this area. The Garda Síochána representatives maintained that there is currently adequate storage capabilities but that there will be an ongoing need to continue to develop storage capacity and network capabilities where possible.

The Committee sought an update on the recent increase in protest activity, the management of such and the impact on resources. It was outlined that for the most part protests are managed at a local level and that due to the prevalence in the Dublin Metropolitan Region, that there is regional level governance of the response. The Garda Síochána representatives outlined that there is a concentrated effort being made to engage directly with protest organisers in advance and during protests as well as community engagement with those subject to and/or affected by them. This facilitates protests but

ensures that there is a balance between the right to do so and the safeguarding of the rights of the wider community. It was provided that while there is a monitoring and community policing focus in the first instance there is the usual use of a graduated response where necessary, in support of which there are public order units on standby – but more often than not deployment of such is not required. It was also noted that the amount of current protests are taking up a lot of time, and placing huge strain on Garda resources, thus impacting the ability of the organisation to engage in other policing activities within the community.

In respect of community policing and the rollout of the Community Policing Framework it was noted that there are considerable variances reported in the allocation of members to training and the numbers that have completed this training across divisions. The Committee heard that this is being further examined by management in the Garda National Community Engagement Bureau.

9. Early discussion to inform Resource Letter

In light of the discussion on the above item and the centrality of resourcing issues to the matters discussed, the Garda Síochána representatives were asked to consider areas where resources need to be prioritised for 2023 and communicate same to the Authority. The Committee heard that at present a notable challenge being faced was the ability of the organisation to recruit and retain specialist staff in areas such as legal, medical, analysis, etc. due to the competitive employment market.

10. Outcomes Project

The Garda Síochána representatives provided an overview of the progress made in respect of the outcomes pilot and the overall goal to achieve further insight into non-detection outcomes. The Committee heard that to-date the project has been a success, with a strong engagement from Garda members. The success of the pilot means that it will be successfully rolled out nationally later in the year once the necessary updates have been made to the PULSE system. It was noted by the Garda Síochána representatives that the definition of ‘Detection’ is very narrow and that this move to outcomes reporting allows recognition that in a percentage of domestic, sexual and gender based violence cases, it may not be possible to pursue a prosecution for many different reasons, and that as such this project offers a method to understand those reasons. This in turn will allow for training and victim engagement to be tailored.

11. AOB

No other business was raised.