

# Public Document Pack

## Minutes of Joint Policing Committee meeting held on Thursday, 10 December 2020 via MS Teams at 11.00 am.

### **In attendance:**

Councillor Enda McGloin (Cathaoirleach)

Councillor Brendan Barry

Councillor Sean McDermott

Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire

Councillor Gerry Dolan

Councillor Enda Stenson

Councillor Pdraig Fallon

Councillor Justin Warnock

Councillor Paddy Farrell

Breege Grimes

Janice Raine Conick

Chief Supt Aidan Glacken

Mary Quinn, Director of Services, Housing, Corporate Services, Community and Cultural Services

Kieran Brett, Meetings Administrator

Ornaith O'Shannon, Assistant Staff Officer

### **Apologies:**

Councillor Mary Bohan

Councillor Sean McGowan

Councillor Thomas Mulligan

Councillor Felim Gurn

Bernie McGauran

Kenny Murtagh

Kathleen Flanagan

Osazuwa Peter-Olabiyi

Lar Power, Chief Executive

### **1 Adoption of Minutes**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Pdraig Fallon

**SECONDED** by Cllr Enda Stenson and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the Joint Policing Committee Meeting of 3rd February 2020 be adopted.

### **2 Correspondence**

There were no items of correspondence received since the last meeting.

### **3 Consider for approval the Leitrim Joint Policing Committee Strategic Plan 2021-2026**

Following the meeting on 5th October it was agreed to put the plan on public

consultation. It was on public consultation for 5 weeks and there were no public submissions received on the plan.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Finola Armstrong McGuire  
**SECONDED** by Cllr Sean McDermott and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

That the Joint Policing Committee Strategic Plan 2021-2026 be approved.

#### **4 Report from an Garda Síochána**

Chief Superintendent Aidan Glacken gave a presentation on crime statistics for 2020 in comparison with 2019 statistics for Co. Leitrim. He advised 2020 has been a very different year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, however this has had a positive impact on the criminal activity with an overall reduction in the crime statistics.

Chief Superintendent Glacken thanked Leitrim County Council for their support in relation to a number of community initiatives that are taking place such as Message of Hope Christmas Campaign, Keep Well and Light Up Campaigns.

The presentation appears in Appendix as Minute Item 4.

Cllr Sean McDermott enquired about the presence of grow houses in the County and where they are likely to arise.

Cllr Pádraig Fallon welcomed the reduction in the crime statistics. He stated there is a positive impact arising from the presence of An Garda Síochána in the community throughout 2020. He enquired if the increase in minor assaults was related to domestic incidents as a result of lockdowns.

Cllr Justin Warnock outlined a number of grow houses have been uncovered in Leitrim in recent years and he enquired if close proximity to the Border influences the location of these grow houses.

Ms Janice Raine Conick enquired if there is an overlap of Garda Síochána resources at shift change over times to ensure continuity.

Chief Superintendent Glacken responded as follows:

- Grow houses are usually set up in an isolated rental property, generally grow houses are not set up in built up areas. Low rent property that are easily abandoned are the property of choice. He asked people to be vigilant if they notice a house in an isolated area that has new occupants, if the windows are blacked out or covered up or there is new unusual activity around a property.
- He thanked Cllr Fallon for his comments on the increased Garda Síochána community presence. To deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, in March the rostering of personnel was restructured, this resulted in a 20% increase in available resources. This roster will continue until March 2021 and will be reviewed. The restructuring has shown to be positive for both service provision and staff in

terms of a work life balance, therefore it would be preferable to retain this new roster.

It is not possible to confirm if the increase in minor assaults reported could be attributed to an increase in domestic violence during the period of lockdown until the statistics could be examined further. He advised the figures in Leitrim did show a slight increase and he welcomed the fact people are reporting such incidents.

- He advised there is no correlation between Leitrim's proximity to Northern Ireland and the establishment of grow houses.
- Garda staff currently work 4 days on and 4 days off, he advised there is an overlap for community, roads and detective units. There is also an electronic handover system. In addition, all incidents are uploads to the Garda Pulse system.

## **5 Receive presentation on Komeer App ( Text Alert App) from Mr. Pat Walsh CEO Komeer**

Cllr Enda McGloin welcomed Mr Pat Walsh, CEO Komeer to give a presentation on Komeer alerts system. The system is a two-way communications platform designed to deliver fast, reliable and cost-efficient messaging. Messages can be delivered across a variety of platforms and the system can be used by a number of groups and organisations.

The presentation appears in Appendix as Minute Item 4.

Cllr Sean McDermott outlined that text alerts are expensive on community groups and advised that such a system would be of benefit to the community. He advised the initiative being managed by the Council and JPC is very important.

Cllr Justin Warnock enquired what the cost implications are and if there is funding available. He asked if this is an Irish initiative or will there be uptake in Northern Ireland. He also asked how community group can access this service if its implemented.

Ms Janice Raine Conick said she could see how this system could overcome a lot issues currently experienced by text alert schemes. She asked how the growth of the number of users accessing the system is managed and what impact this would have on the cost of implementing the system both for the Council and for community groups.

Cllr Brendan Barry called on Leitrim County Council to write to the Minister for Justice, Ms Helen McEntee TD to renew the Community Text Alert Rebate scheme for 2020 and 2021. The scheme which has been administered by Muintír na Tíre on behalf of eligible Text Alert Groups has proven to be invaluable to community groups as they receive a rebate on their operating costs. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions, community groups have had considerable difficulties this year in running their normal fund-raising activities and the renewal of the Text Alert Rebate scheme would therefore be of significant benefit.

Cllr Barry queried what the Komeer Service will cost and what is required of the user to access the system.

Mr Pat Walsh Pat responded as follows:

- The Council acting as lead provider for community groups to access the scheme is key.
- The buy in from community groups in Monaghan was achieved by their interaction with the Council. Demonstration of the service could be facilitated for community groups to illustrate the benefits of the Komeer system.
- This is an all-island service. The PSNI and the Department of Health in Northern Ireland are currently using this system.
- Normally Council's have a large SMS service cost and the introduction of Komeer has resulted in cost savings.
- Data is fully encrypted and hosted in Ireland.
- In order to provide costings details would be needed on the service requirements i.e., number of groups, users and what the Councils needs are to provide an accurate costing. He advised Monaghan County Council has made a saving of approx. 65% by using the Komeer system.
- Service users will need to download a free app to access the service. Family members can also receive messages via that app that are relevant to vulnerable family members. Users who wish to receive SMS will need to complete a form.

Cllr Paddy Farrell advised this messaging service would be very beneficial to Co. Leitrim.

Ms Mary Quinn advised that Leitrim County Council does not currently offer a messaging service and therefore there is no existing cost or budget. She advised the Joint Policing Committee is a partnership of the Local Authority, Gardai and the community representatives and that it should not be the full responsibility of the Council to fund all initiatives brought before the committee. She added it would be desirable if funding streams could be made available through the Department of Justice to support the JPC in the implementation of such initiatives.

This was supported by Cllr Enda McGloin and was unanimously resolved that:

**“Leitrim County Council write to the Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee TD to seek a funding stream for initiatives and proposals that are brought before the JPC and which will be beneficial to the wider community, but which have on-going cost implications for the Local Authority. Increasingly initiatives are being put forward for consideration by the JPC that due to their technological nature will have significant cost implication for Leitrim County Council and this JPC considers it appropriate to request funding from the Department of Justice to help meet the costs of such initiative and proposals.”**

On the proposal of Cllr Brendan Barry and seconded by Cllr. Enda McGloin it was also unanimously resolved:

**"That Leitrim County Council call on the Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee TD to renew the Community Text Alert Rebate scheme for 2020 and 2021. The scheme which has been administered by Muintir na Tire on behalf of eligible Text Alert Groups has proven to invaluable to community groups as they receive a rebate on their operating costs. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions, community groups have had considerable difficulties this year in running their normal fund-raising activities and the renewal of the Text Alert Rebate scheme would therefore be of significant benefit."**

Chief Superintendent Glacken advised he has responsibility for County Monaghan since September, and he has experienced the efficiency and the success of the Komeer system firsthand.

## **6 Questions submitted by JPC Members**

### **6a Question from Councillor Sean McDermott:**

Can the issue of speeding in Glenfarne, on the stretch of road between The Ballroom of Romance and the local shop and Post Office, be addressed?

Chief Superintendent Glacken advised there will be static check points and speeding check point along the N16 which is part of the Christmas Roads Policing Plan for Leitrim. He added the road policing unit have been issued with a new handheld speed camera which is capable of picking up speeds at a distance of 600m.

### **6b Question from Councillor Sean McDermott:**

Can the Telesis Property Marking Machine be made available to communities along the border?

Chief Superintendent Glacken advised there have been no property marking during level 5 restrictions. He advised the property marking machine is available upon request through the Community Garda Unit.

## **7 AOB:**

Cllr Justin Warnock enquired in the event of a hard Brexit could this JPC meet early in 2021 to address issues arising from same?

Cathaoirleach Cllr McGloin agreed this could be facilitated if it is required. As Brexit negotiations are ongoing and the nature of Brexit is not yet known a decision on holding an additional meeting can be taken when more information is known. He thanked all the committee members for their service throughout the year and wished everyone a Happy Christmas.

**8 Date and time of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 11:00am.

**Signed:**

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**Councillor Enda McGloin  
Chairperson**

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**Mary Quinn  
Director of Services  
Housing, Corporate,  
Community & Emergency  
Services**

**Monday, 29 March 2021**

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