

# **SUBMISSION TO COMMISSION ON FUTURE OF POLICING IRELAND**

## **Submitted by Cllr Eddie Mulligan 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018**

### **Introduction**

My submission is based upon my experiences as a Public Representative on the ground within the Communities, as Vice Chair of the Waterford Joint Policing Committee and as a member of Waterford City Centre Management Group. In essence, the Police Force of the Future must deliver a policing service that has the trust, confidence and support of the people of Ireland.

I attended the Waterford City Public evening where I participated with input through discussion also. However, disappointed with the low turnout from the City, I returned home and asked the public on my Facebook page to state one thing that they would change within the Gardai. I received thirty six replies with one joking answer, This is summarised in the last paragraph.

#### 1. Structure

In relation to the overall Terms of Reference, these are consistent in the majority with the ethos and values of the Gardai as a whole at the moment. However, the Gardai Senior management are hugely engrossed in a culture that is unable to deliver the values that the force is built on from the top down whilst at the same time gaining a trust from the people they serve. In this respect, maybe the Police Force of the future should be held accountable to a National Joint Policing Committee.

In relation to structure, the most deficient aspect of the current structure of An Garda Síochána is the mis-trust of the public in the current Garda Infrastructure, particularly at senior level. There needs to be restructuring of An Garda Síochána with the input of Communities at the heart of it. Community input will pressurise senior management to ensure that the Gardai or a force of the future deliver on their ethos and core values.

Whilst there is much work going on within the JPC strategic plans for better community integration, the public representatives feel that the Gardai are not taking this seriously. The main reason for this is the absence of Gardai at meetings outside the formal JPC Meetings, e.g. non attendance and absence of input at subcommittee meetings for Strategic Plan Development and Steering & Oversight Committee meetings.

Whilst Gardai may not attend due to operational priorities, they may not understand the impact this has upon the members of the public perception of them, who are giving up their time to attend voluntarily.

#### 2. Resources

The Police Force of the Future need to establish minimum policing numbers for efficient operational policing whilst retaining experience and attracting young officers who see it as an optimum career opportunity in Life.

There needs to be a better employment of civilian personnel within the Police force of the Future. E.g. Most Sergeants that I encounter seem to be overwhelmed with administration and paperwork that impacts on their on the ground supervisory skills. In this respect, civilian secretarial assistants should be considered for Sergeant level.

### 3. Community Policing

On the ground in Waterford there has been an absence of Community Policing which was working so well through integration of Officers within all the main residential areas of the City.

Whilst a Police Force might aspire to growing community spirit in a manner that might attract increased knowledge and intelligence to the benefit of the Communities, the Police by service must practice an ethos that reflects the higher moral ground and civic pride expected by the public.

The Police Force of the Future must have a management control that can encourage, mentor and support a strong civic leadership and community collaboration network to the benefit of the diversity of people living in and expecting safe communities.

### 4. Collaborative Interagency Policing

There is a need for greater integration between Gardai, the HSE and Tusla when dealing with Drug and Children related issues and offences. For example, both drugs and children are involved in Teenage Anti Social Behaviour in our City which needs a collaborative agency approach in dealing with the issues strategically at a local level

It is through Community Policing with children that relationships of trust and equality between Police and Communities will be built into the future.

### 5. Cyber and Internet Crime

A Police Service of the future needs police that can monitor the Internet from a social media intelligence building aspect to detecting internet crime.

### 6. Transparency, Accountability & Communication

It has been represented to me on many occasions that it is highly appropriate and necessary for the Garda or person on the front desk of a Police Station dealing with the public to be wearing a name identifier.

However, uniformed Gardai on the beat should at all time display numbered identification and that Plain Clothes Gardai on operational duties should have a generic identification with number displayed when necessary only.

In relation to Public Relations it has been referred to me on many occasions that;

- a. Gardai should receive Customer Service Training for phone answering and Front Desk duties.
- b. Community Garda be more proactive calling in to businesses, residents and Community Groups introducing themselves and engaging in interaction as opposed to passive patrolling.
- c. Poor Communication by Gardai one of biggest representations I get from the from public.

## 7. Critical Mass Policing

On the ground, critical mass policing operations such as Operation Thor have instilled huge reassurance and confidence by the public in the Gardai and the successful results and deterrent factors have made it a massively appreciated policing strategy.

## 8. Leadership

Individual policemen of the future must realise that they are leaders in the Community whether they are responsible for other Garda staff or not. He/she must be aware of this and that they are a vital link to the community and act accordingly.

### **Summary of Recommendations**

- a. Delivery on ethos of core values through Community input at the highest level may assist in changing a culture of trust from the citizens of Ireland.
- b. A Police Force of the Future be held accountable to a National Joint Policing Committee.
- c. A Policing Service must be delivered that can retain the trust, confidence and support of the people of Ireland.
- d. A reformed Garda Síochána with the Community at the heart of the structure with meaningful input.
- e. Minimum acceptable Policing numbers or establishments be implemented and budgeted for throughout urban and rural areas.
- f. At local level, greater integration and a collaborative approach from the Gardai supported by Tusla and the HSE is needed from an overall strategic aspect in dealing with ongoing issues such as Drugs and Anti Social Behaviour.
- g. A Police Force of the Future needs readily identifiable name and or number identifiers displayed at all times.
- h. A Police Force of the Future needs training in Public Relations and Community Integration.
- i. A Police Force of the Future must have Police Officers skilled in Internet Policing.
- j. The success of Operation Thor and critical mass policing must be maintained in a successful police force of the future and consideration given to the support by the traffic corps at checkpoints.
- k. Individual Gardai must understand that they are leaders of civic pride in vulnerable communities and must act accordingly.

### **Constituent Contributions by Social Media**

In the aftermath of a poor public attendance at the Open Evening in Waterford, the following is a summary of input by 36 individuals with verifiable identities can be summarised as possible;

- a. On the Ground, visible Community Policing x 11
- b. Improved use of Technology by individual Gardai x 6
- c. Improved Customer Service/Public relations x 5
- d. Increased legislation for greater powers x 5
- e. Accountability, Improved Management Structure x 3
- f. New Force x 3
- g. Independent Commissioner x 2
- h. Armed Gardai x 2
- i. Trust x 2

- j. Increased CCTV x 1
- k. Improved Fitness x 1
- l. Improved Driving Standard x1
- m. Improved Training x 1
- n. Less Court Time x 1
- o. No second jobs x 1
- p. No double tapping on speeding role when private company monitoring speed x 1
- q. Stop use of police abbreviations x 1 (Speak Normal)
- r. Include word 'Service' in a new name x 1
- s. Availability of 'Sign Language' for Deaf Community x 1
- t. Improved use of civilian staff x 1

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