

## **Submission to the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland**

As an elected Councillor in the Clones/Ballybay area of Co. Monaghan and a member of the County Monaghan Joint Policing Committee, I wish to make a submission to the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland.

I have read the Terms of Reference and hope that any ideas or suggestions that I make will be helpful in developing strategy and policy for the future.

“The people of Ireland are entitled to have a professional and effective police service that they can trust and have confidence in to act not only within the law, but to the ethical standards appropriate to a modern police service; whose leadership and management have the capacity to provide such a service, to meet emerging challenges and to oversee and realise the benefits of ongoing reform initiatives; and that is subject to robust external oversight.”

Trust and the ability to deliver are vital components, for any public service, if local communities are to have confidence in it. This is especially true for the policing service.

The experience of the border community over the period of the northern conflict, and particularly of republican families, has left a very negative legacy towards the Gardaí. I believe there is a need for a ‘Patton’ type commission, which would allow people who feel they were unfairly targeted because of their political views, to detail their experiences of harassment, raids and arrests. Many would ask where are those who were involved in the ‘heavy gang’ now? Are they in the current hierarchy?

Recent reports of malpractice within the Gardaí throughout the state are having a very negative effect on the confidence and morale of both the community and the local Gardaí. These incidences need to be properly and independently examined and those involved dealt with and seen to be dealt with.

The closure of many Garda Stations in rural Ireland means that many communities feel abandoned. The stations in Newbliss and Smithborough were closed in the Clones area. Ten years ago there were 10 Gardaí in Clones. Now there are 2. When a spate of break-ins and robberies happen, as has happened recently, people immediately blame the withdrawal of resources. This is reminiscent of the closure of local hospitals and the resultant trolley crises. Any new strategy must ensure that Gardaí are more visible in the local community both as a deterrent and to reassure local people.

I agree with the list of proposals in the Terms of Reference that need to be addressed by the Commission.

It is important that Gardaí behave in a professional, sensitive and respectful manner at all times. Therefore the provision for appropriate ongoing professional development training for all personnel to meet the challenges of modern policing is very important. This is not always the case. Sometimes victims feel that they are not being kept up to date with investigations.

The community's view of the Gardaí is determined by their experience of any face to face interaction with the local Garda.

Is mise,

Pat Treanor (Cllr)