

To members of the Commission

I refer to the meeting held by the **Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland**, in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15 on 24 January, 2018.

Thank you for the invitation to attend the meeting, which was most useful.

I am the Chairman of Deerpark Area Residents Association, which is made up of c. 240 houses in an area close to Castleknock Village and the Phoenix Park in Dublin 15. I was accompanied at the meeting by [REDACTED], who is our Honorary Treasurer.

We welcome the fact that you are looking for short submissions to be made as part of the process of consultation with communities.

We recognise that your brief as a Commission is very broad and far reaching. We have the following short comments to make. We note that our comments are narrow in scope and are focused on local policing matters.

1. We believe that An Garda are held in high regard within our community and generally across most communities in Ireland.
2. The importance of the standing and trust that An Garda have within our communities is fostered in large part by their 'presence' and 'connection' within local communities and their ability to 'communicate' on the prevention and detection of crime effectively.
3. We believe that the current resources and deployment model employed by An Garda is not sufficiently focused on ensuring that they are adequately visible within local communities. This is a tangible deficiency.
4. There is an over emphasis of An Garda being utilised for civilian tasks which are not necessarily linked to security and crime prevention (for example - passport documentation / ID, parole sign ins, fixed speed camera checks, court appearances etc). A revised scope of services should be developed, such that tasks are split between different and more suitable civilian agencies and / or technology be deployed to free up An Garda to be more present within local communities. This may require changes in legislation and / or working practices but should be considered against other policing operations in other countries. This should also not be seen as an opportunity to reduce costs but instead seen as an opportunity to redeploy much needed personnel to front line policing duties.
5. Clear distinction between various sub-sectors within policing should be made, with greater emphasis on specialist resources being deployed and dedicated to each area e.g 'Serious and Violent Crime' versus 'Community Policing'. We believe that a particular emphasis on *'Think Local First'* principles should be at the forefront of new thinking, with 'community' services being at the core of policing strategy, rather than the apparent current emphasis on the highest profile crimes and functional / departmental roles. Putting 'communities' at the core allows for strategy and policy to be developed based on a common set of 'values', which link directly to a more diverse society, with a cultural identity that is evolving. This also allows for An Garda to be rooted within society - from local schools, parish centres, local sporting facilities, elderly support networks.
6. A review of An Garda communications should take place to examine the linkages between 'crime reporters' and An Garda press office, such that the apparent continual emphasis on 'gang related crime', does not receive a disproportionate amount of coverage within the news media and / or cause increasingly disproportionate anxiety to communities, who in large part are unaffected by such crimes.
7. A review of communication mechanisms such as 'Text Alert' should be examined. In our experience, this is a largely redundant and inefficient mechanism to communicate crime and / or risks in a timely manner. With the availability of new technologies - a better method to keep communities informed in a live environment should be possible.
8. The deployment of Artificial Intelligence and the use of Machine Learning technologies should also be examined to facilitate the use of predictive analytics within communities - to help with crime prevention and community awareness. The use of biometric testing would also facilitate current manual form filling for ID purposes.
9. An increased focus and emphasis on the prevention and detection of cyber crime should be emphasised. Increased communication of safeguards that citizens should be taking to protect their data and assets should also be prioritised.

We wish you the very best in your review and strongly encourage you to put on emphasis on '*Think Local First*' within your findings and recommendations.

Kind regards,

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