Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find my submission attached. ███████████████████████████
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If you consider it beneficial I am willing to meet your group to discuss any matter you may think useful.

Yours sincerely,

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Submission - The Future of Policing.

Introduction

The future of policing lies in being able to police in the digital age, which is rapidly changing the way we live and work.   These changes are presenting government, including the Garda Siochana, with unprecedented challenges. The hallmark of the digital age is the massive amount of information available at ones' fingertips. Sweeping organisational shortcomings under the carpet will soon be a thing of the past.

The problem I believe you have in your terms of reference is to be able to distinguish between genuine reform and pushback from those who don't understand we have entered a new epoch in social development - the digital age.

Policing organisations are a product of the Industrial age, which Ireland practically bypassed.   Strange as it may seem, the Garda Siochana was until the past decade or so one of the largest and most modern police forces in the world. There still remains a healthy respect for the force, which must be maintained and built upon.

I note your terms of reference encompass all functions carried out by An Garda Siochana, including state security and reform recommended by the Garda Inspectorate and the Policing Authority.

It is important to recognise the distinction between the corruption unearthed by the Morris Tribunal and the inappropriate structures and management arrangements that caused subsequent Tribunals. This distinction is blurred in the public mind.   Many people do not understand the importance of proper structures and management arrangements.   These can substantially increase efficiency and effectiveness while at the same time reduce the risk of corruption.

Policing in the digital age

In 2006 the Garda Siochana was the world leader in creating a structure and putting in place management arrangements for policing in the Digital Age.   PULSE, which was an acronym for Police Using Leading Systems Effectively, was central to this achievement.

Pulse was designed to do away with discrete IT Systems that created silos or islands of information.   It was designed on the understanding that modern technology, enabled by proper business processes, would improve policing and police management and thus increase public confidence.

Pulse was an enterprise wide system intended to integrate all operational and administrative functions. Seventeen system areas that were Part 1 of Pulse were rolled out in the late 1990s and early 2000's. Sadly part 2 of PULSE was never built or rolled out.   The organisation was deprived of the benefits of an investigation management system, a human resource management system, a procurement system, a financial management system etc.   It was the pathway for the entrance of An Garda Siochana into the Digital Age.   It was capable of providing operational and management information in any shape or form from minute detail to what has now become known as big data.

When the Honourable Mr Justice Frederick Morris was enquiring into improper garda investigations in Donegal[1] he sought a demonstration of PULSE. He reported as follows: -

> *The Tribunal has been given a most impressive demonstration of the PULSE computer system and it is obvious that enormous energy and thought is being put into the development of this system.*

The critical business processes that ensured individual accountability by Gardai, by inputting online their own data and the ensuing online supervision of their work by sergeants, ceased in 2006. This reduced the effectiveness of PULSE. The letter "E" was removed from the acronym. This was a pushback against progress. Within a year the consequences of this short-sighted pushback began to manifest itself. Policing in Ireland has suffered enormously by not building Part 2 of PULSE. The strategic vision of PULSE was to combine all operational and administrative functions in an integrated data base.

In 2007, a sergeant in Co Cavan was labouring to have young gardai under his control carry out their duty properly. He consulted his authorities. Neither he nor they knew how to remedy the situation. Matters did not improve. When he came under pressure he began to navigate PULSE. He discovered an abundance of incidents including, the Fine on the Spot system, was operating without proper supervision and management processes. The sergeant became known as a whistle blower. The rest is history but the controversy he generated is still raging.

A decade later, after the loss of two Garda Commissioners, two Ministers for Justice and a number of senior officials in the Department of Justice, the cause of the problem is still illusive. The forum on the future of policing was set up to provide strategic direction to correct the position.

Several investigations inside the Garda Siochana and Tribunals of enquiry including, Mr Guerin SC, the O'Higgins's Tribunal and the current Disclosures Tribunal have looked at the problem. The O'Higgins Tribunal pointed in the direction of PULSE. The people who gave evidence to Judge O'Higgins did not have the organisational knowledge or understanding to put the facts in historical context.

The old saying, if you don't know what the problem is you won't be able to fix it, is a truism.

The first two steps in solving the problem

In my view, the first and most important step in finding a solution is to provide operational gardai with the tools to **enable them to take personal accountability for their work**. This can be achieved simply by reintroducing online data entry by members of the force.

Online supervisory review was partially reintroduced before the findings of the O'Higgins Tribunal were published. To the best of my understanding, it is still the civilian staff in the data entry centre in Castlebar who decide on the classification of crime. This duplication of effort, requiring two people to enter incidents on PULSE, is poor management practice. It must be rectified, otherwise problems generated by lack of personal accountability will continue to manifest themselves. The latest example is

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[1] Report of the Tribunal of Inquiry conducted by The Honourable Mr. Justice Frederick R. Morris into the death of Richard Barron and extortion calls to Michael and Charlotte Peoples Terms of reference (a) and (b) p664 par 8 - 13.121.

the elevated figures associated with the breath tests. This problem was investigated both inside the force and by outside consultants Crowe Horwath under the direction of the Policing Authority. I will deal with this further under the heading Policing Authority below.

The second step in finding a solution to the current problems in the Garda Siochana is to **fully restore to sergeants the online tools for supervisory review** including the proper classification of crime.

Steps one and two are simple to implement. Expect strong resistance from forces who want to put their own special interest above the interest of providing a proper police service.

When looking at the regulatory environment the two fundamental questions I would ask are, what is the cost of maintaining the institution and what benefits do they deliver.   I am aware there may be different perspectives on what a benefit is.   To my mind a benefit is providing assistance to the Garda Siochana in their efforts to adjust to policing in the digital age.   An institution that keeps them anchored in the policing structures of the industrial age is part of the problem when integration of systems is the key to success in the digital age.

State security

The issue of separating state security from general policing has received some attention in the media. This would create two silo structures.   No real benefit has been articulated other than some vague mention of removing industrial relation risks. If a separate state security structure was set up on a higher pay scale than the gardai receive, it would probable lead to leap frogging with the public cost of providing the policing service in both structures increasing.

My View is, a unitary structure is more appropriate than two separate policing organisations for state security. The eyes and ears of the Garda Siochana are spread across the country.   To duplicate this, would be very costly and not as productive.   The benefits of combining all aspects of policing is far greater than the sum of its individual parts.

Insider or outsider for Commissioner

I see a suggestion of having an outside CEO as Commissioner floated in the media on the rationale that an airline does not require a pilot to run an airline.   This reasoning misses the point that an airline is run for the profit of its shareholders.   The main function of a police force is to maintain public order and tranquillity in a manner consistent with maintaining public confidence in the institutions of the State, and protecting the individual rights of citizens, often in conflicting situations. There is no profit in it.

There is more money to be made by a CEO managing a tangible target like money than managing an intangible target like confidence in the institutions of State.   If a CEO is employed in one section of the public service it will require a pay rise across the board to those in equivalent positions.   Likewise, a pay ratio will have to be maintained with other ranks within the organisation.

The Garda Inspectorate

The Garda Inspectorate is in existence for over a decade.   While their reports may be helpful in some respects, it appears to me they do not understand budgeting nor do they understand the dysfunctional nature of organisational silo systems.

For a number of years in their public announcements, they are misleading the public into believing more civilians in the garda Siochana would release gardai for the front line. The simple fact is the more civilians that are employed in the force the less gardai there will be available for duty. They are paid out of the same budget.

I don't think I need to go into the dysfunctionality a civilian silo will create in An Garda Siochana. The Toland Report on the Department of Justice says it all. Many of the public announcements of the Inspectorate only serve to unnecessarily undermine confidence in An Garda Siochana by making them appear to be resistant to change. It is better not to change than to change to make things worse.

The Policing Authority

I felt initially a Policing Authority could enhance the functioning of the Garda Siochana. I am disappointed. Even with the benefit of the Crowe Horwath report that highlighted poor supervision and poor performance, they could not see the need for online accountability for gardai in the performance of their duty. In their latest public announcement, the best they could do was express 'hope' it would not recur.

They too appear to be stuck in the erroneous belief that a civilian silo structure would improve the performance of An Garda Siochana. It was a blind belief that a civilian silo structure would improve the performance of the Garda Siochana that led to the dismantling of the PULSE business process in 2006. It resulted in continuous organisational and political carnage ever since.

Final steps

The third step is to replace the ICT silo systems in the Garda Siochana with an integrated data base along the design of PULSE. When tendering for this system ensure the contract stipulates, redesigning the business processes in the context of change management, is part of the tender. Make the one vendor responsible for all aspects of the change process. If you separate the IT systems from the change process, you will be inviting the blame culture between vendors; one vendor will blame the other vendor if and when problems arise.

To date neither the Garda Inspectorate nor the Policing Authority have added anything to solving the problems being experienced by the Garda Siochana. The final step is to consider if they are providing value for money.

Conclusion

For an organisation to learn from the mistakes of the past, they must know what the mistakes are. In this submission I have made you aware of major mistakes relating to inappropriate structures and management arrangements in the Garda Siochana.

I wish you well in your work in preparing An Garda Siochana for policing in the digital age.