

For the Commission:

Firstly many thanks for giving us the opportunity (Wood Quay Venue, Dublin) to share our observations, views and suggestions re supporting professional and effective policing solutions for Ireland of the future. It was also good to meet with some of you (Kathleen, Peter and Eddie) and share thoughts and perceptions.

In relation to the three questions you raise, the following are some of my views. However, I would preface my views by asking who are the 'we' in each of the questions, as I am not convinced that individual members of the Garda Síochána, representative bodies of An Garda Síochána, the Department of Justice and more worryingly the senior management of An Garda Síochána believe there is an imperative to value, improve or change in any fundamental or meaningful way.

Engagement, buy-in and also some clear direction to engage is essential. I think as part of this engagement, the question of 'Why Reform' would be an interesting one to start with, for each of these populations, followed by the What (from them and us as per the consultations already underway) and then the How with the key stakeholders (the Gardai themselves) with the help of expert process and organisation development facilitators and also input from other reformed/reforming police forces, where appropriate.

What should we value?

- Our unarmed police force
- Our specialist units
- A police force that is for the neighbourhood, but not funded by the neighbourhood i.e. national funding and national interests reflected
- 

What should we improve?

1. Community Policing model - greater accessibility; working with community groups rather than just making presentations to them; more walking or cycling around neighborhoods at random times, etc.

2. Senior management in An Garda Síochána need to:

- link in with City/County Council's re agreeing objectives and collaborative approach to prevention and enforcement e.g. Graffiti; Illegal Dumping; Cycle Lanes; Traffic Management; Speed limits; Burglaries and Petty Crime; Drink and Drug related behaviors, etc.
- Not make sweeping statements like "the state is letting children down re internet predators".....what does this mean in terms of parents' role, Gardai, legislators. Shifting blame to nameless 'state' is meaningless and populist. Suspect it was to deflect from focus on Gardai. An Assistant Commissioner should be more responsible than this.
- Gardai in stations need to listen to public and not adopt a 'shrugging of the shoulders'/'what can we do as we don't have enough resources' when people report illegality/crimes e.g. Mindless damage/scraping of cars; illegal dumping; graffiti; cyclists/motorists crashing lights, etc. The public need to know that the police force have empathy and are prepared to take some action either to particular incidents or to address common problems with new innovative approaches, possibly in collaboration with other arms of the state and/or community.

3. A technology system for recording statements, capturing evidence, data management, intelligence gathering and capable of sharing across the force and training of all members on how to use it effectively.

4. Regular links to community and special interest groups (e.g. Intercultural; Disability; etc) to understand their needs and appropriate responses.

Above all what needs to improve is respect and confidence in our police force and a willingness to take on this challenge within the police force.

What should we change?

Strategic Management; People Management; Process Management, Change Management Capability and Stakeholder Management.

In terms of some suggested specifics across these areas.

- Clear separation of roles and responsibilities between An Garda Síochána and the Department of Justice.
- Clarity around the purpose, role and authority of each of the Garda Governance Regulatory bodies set up in recent years and how they link with each other. Not clear, not fully respected and not accepted by the police force. Impossible job for these bodies....."ham in the sandwich" springs to mind!
- Need for new Commissioner to come from outside of Ireland and have a proven track record as an exemplary leader and as a reformist.
- Need for more enlightened criteria for assessing suitability for promotional roles given the challenges both in terms of modern policing and also change management.
- Value of opening up some roles to external recruitment to bolster skills and experience in certain areas.
- Enhanced promotional/performance recognition opportunities for members who are excelling, regardless of service, etc.
- Performance measures audit needed to see are we measuring the right things and what benefit are we deriving from them e.g. in terms of acknowledging achievements of the police force; taking action; adapting strategies, etc.
- Greater focus on training and building skills for new challenges
- Consideration of seconding in expertise from other police forces and seconding out Gardai to build experience and professionalism with other police forces or other institutions (in Ireland and abroad). Would also have the effect of demonstrating a willingness to invest in both the personnel and the development of the police force.
- In looking at the needs of the Gardai, the role, challenges and effectiveness of civilian employees needs to be addressed also.
- The current defensive and siege mentality of the representative bodies for members.
- Structured working relationships and shared goals/targets with other arms of the State e.g. Councils; Dept. Of Justice; National Emergency/Crisis Management Unit; etc. Encourages accountability; solutions oriented approach rather than reactionary only.
- A review process for assessing and evaluating changes/reforms at various stages with a view to building on what works well, dropping what doesn't or making appropriate changes.

I look forward to the 'roadmap' that the Commission presents and fully appreciate that they can only recommend what needs to be done, the delivery of it will be complex and take time.

