

To the Lord Mayor and
Members of Dublin City Council

Report No. 84/2009
Report of the Chairperson of the
Dublin City Joint Policing
Committee



Dublin City Council

Comhairle Cathrach Bhaile Átha Cliath

Report of the Dublin City Joint Policing Committee on the performance of its functions during 2008

In 2006, Dublin City Council established a Joint Policing Committee and 5 Sub Committees corresponding to its 5 operational areas (Area Committees) in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law reform and the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Under paragraph 14.1 of those guidelines the Joint Policing Committee is required, not later than three months after the end of the year, to submit a report to the City Council, on the performance of its function during the preceding year.

Accordingly I wish to report as follows:

Report of the Dublin City Joint Policing Committee 2008

The Dublin City Joint Policing Committee held 2 meetings in 2008, on 27th February and 6th October. The following is a synopsis of the achievements and issues looked at during the year 2008:

- **Estate Management**

The following progress was made during 2008 and the following actions agreed:

- Citywide Community Safety Strategy drawn up by Housing & Residential Services Department and due to be presented to Members at a forthcoming meeting.
- Following a request from Members for a protocol around evictions to be established, Housing & Residential Services Department to provide a report, which will explain the legislation and how it can be used for exclusion orders.

- All new tenants requested to attend tenant-training courses.
- The Programme “Dial to stop Drug Dealings” to be rolled out nationally. It includes Tallaght area, North East and some parts of the country. Members would like it to include the South West Inner City. Any member of the public who suspects that drug dealing is taking place in their locality can call a low cost confidential number, 1800 220 220, and report it to the Gardaí.

Report on Alcohol Control

The Government Expert Group on Intoxicating Liquor reported, as did City Councils Alcohol Subgroup. The Government has followed up by enacting the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2008 which covers a lot of the recommendations of our subgroup; vis; New grounds (Section 7) for the Courts refusing to grant **new** off licences including unfitness or inconvenience of the premises and adequacy of the existing number of licenced premises of the same character in the neighbourhood, Gardai & local residents may object to court on same grounds; Later general opening hours (12.30pm) for off licences on Sundays and St. Patrick's Day and early closing hours (10pm) everyday; Strengthen public order grounds for Garda objections to late night opening of pubs and clubs which must also comply with fire safety standards; Courts can attach a requirement for CCTV and trained door-staff for licenced premises; The so called Happy Hour, 2 for the price of 1 or other alcohol promotions are prohibited; Advertising, sale and display of alcohol is restricted to a specific, structurally separated area of mixed premises; Test purchasing to prevent underage sales is authorised; General powers granted for the confiscation by Gardai of alcohol being consumed in public places; Court closing orders on pubs and clubs for underage sales or serving to intoxicated customers must now be for a minimum of 2 days. It is understood that a codifying Bill covering all aspects of the Licenced Trade is planned for the next 12-18 months.

In the meantime City Council has amended its own Drinking in Public Bye-laws to cover (a) Confiscation of all alcohol being consumed in public (This

will work with Sections 14 and 19 of the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2008) (b) Increase the on the spot fine to €75 and the maximum Court fine to €1900 (c) Inclusion of Beaches, Boardwalk, Canal, Towpaths, Curtilage of Public Building, Cemeteries in the definition of Public Places. These new Byelaws are now operational and have been copied to Dublin Gardai.

Dublin City Council has also amended the Development Plan to provide a policy framework covering applications for planning permission for new off licenced premises (This will work in tandem with Section 7 of the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2008).

The City Centre Night Economy Partnership Group has continued to operate. The Parks Public Order Initiative has now been running for over 12 months under the Aegis of the Area JPCs; Area JPCs have been requested to review the outcomes of this initiative and to consider whether a second phase extending to two additional Parks for area would be worthwhile and timely.

The Chair of the City JPC is meeting the Chairs & Managers of the Area JPCs to review progress to date & identify priorities for the future

The activities of the 5 **Sub-Committees** during 2008 were as follows:

CENTRAL AREA JOINT POLICING SUB-COMMITTEE 2008

The Central Area Joint Policing Sub-committee was established in late 2006 and meets on a quarterly basis. Meetings during 2008 took place on the following dates:

- 4th February
- 28th April
- 1st September
- 1st December

The Chair of the Central Area Sub-Committee of the Dublin City Joint Policing Committee is Cllr. Christy Burke.

The sub-committee discuss issues which they feel need addressing in the context of the forum, which is to provide an opportunity for consultation and discussion on matters affecting the policing of the area. At each meeting the Gardaí give a report on policing in the area and pertinent crime issues which they are addressing. Members add individual issues of concern to the agenda for each meeting.

As Stoneybatter and Drumcondra/Glasnevin were two areas identified as not being serviced by a community forum, a quarterly forum has been set up in each area.

Concerns were raised regarding antisocial behaviour in private rented accommodation and representatives of the Private Rented Tenancies Board and DCC Rental Accommodation Scheme made presentations at the February meeting on their roles and functions in relation to this issue.

The sub-committee wrote to the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform following the April meeting, to express opposition to the legalisation of slot machines in betting shops. It has since emerged that due to widespread opposition, it is unlikely to form part of the proposed gambling legislation.

A representative of DCC's Anti-Social Policy unit made a presentation to members on the policies, procedures and legislation utilised for addressing antisocial behaviour among Dublin City Council tenants. The new Housing Bill and its provision for a council anti-social behaviour strategy, which is to include consultation with the local JPC, is an item that has remained on the agenda since the September meeting and update reports are made, as appropriate.

Intoxicating Liquor byelaws, along with other issues around the consumption of alcohol in public places have been discussed. A motion was sent to Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform expressing concerns regarding the inconsistencies in prison sentences imposed on drug offenders. The response stated that notwithstanding the existence in law of a maximum penalty, it is up to the judge to exercise his/her discretion, within that maximum penalty, in each individual case.

A Senior Executive Officer from the Waste Management Department attended the September meeting to give details of the five key priority areas for litter management and the co-operation between DCC and the gardaí, particularly with regard to graffiti crime and litter fines. At that meeting it was noted that a Garda youth diversion project has been set up in the Sheriff Street area. Also, a major operation was undertaken by the Gardaí to confiscate alcohol consumed in public places.

Members of the East Wall Residents Association attend the December meeting to bring to the attention of the sub-committee issues of concern in their area. Members reported that this Halloween was the first that there were no major issues; this was credited to the three-month campaign by DCC and the Gardaí prior to Halloween.

The last meeting was held on January 12th '09 at which a garda report was made on prostitution in the Arbour Hill area, the Gardaí have extended their operation as a result of this issue being raised in the forum. It was agreed to write to the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform to request that the fine for soliciting be increased.

A discussion on the JPC structure and focus and the how the sub-committee will progress in 2009 took place at that meeting. The subject of the two pre-established Community Policing Fora arose and it was agreed that the possibility of the carrying out of a review of these be put forward to them for consideration. This is with a view to the CPF and JPC committees moving forward together.

Following a request from the Chief Superintendent in Store Street it was agreed to have a special meeting in relation to the Policing Plan 2009, this is scheduled for February 23rd.

An Inspector from Store Street Garda Station made a report on traffic issues around the recently opened O2 arena. It was agreed to invite a representative of the venue to a future meeting. DCC's Anti-Social Policy Unit representative returned and made a report to the sub-committee on matters arising from several High Court decisions which found against certain procedural matters as implemented by DCC.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 6th 2009.

NORTH CENTRAL AREA JOINT POLICING SUB-COMMITTEE 2008

The meetings of the North Central Area Joint Policing Sub-Committee in 2008 were held as follows:

- 14th January
- 21st April
- 21st July
- 20th October

The issues dealt with at these meetings included:

- Alcohol in public places
- Anti-social behaviour
- Bus Shelters
- Community Policing
- CCTV
- Fast food and public order
- Graffiti
- Litter management
- Police Plan
- Safety forums
- Traffic management.
- Youth Diversion

Presentations were made by the Gardaí, the City Council, the HSE and the local Drugs task force over the year.

Safer Darndale and Safer Clongriffin forums

In 2008, there was the establishment of the pilot community forums - Safer Darndale/Belcamp/Moatview and Safer Clongriffin/Belmayne. Each of which met on 6 occasions.

A matter noted is that there is only one community representative at the JPC sub-committee meetings despite efforts to attract such representation.

NORTH WEST AREA JOINT POLICING SUB-COMMITTEE 2008

Meetings of the North West Joint Policing Committee took place on the following dates during 2008:-

- 21st January
- 31st April
- 28th July
- 20th October

Presentations made during the year covered a variety of topics as follows:

- Minister Pat Carey gave an overview of the preparation of the Local Drugs Task Forces Strategic Plan for 2008-2016 and on the role of the Local Drugs Task Forces.
- A new resident living in Finglas South, formerly from Nigeria, spoke to the Committee on the challenges facing his family in integrating into the existing community.
- The Rapid Co-ordinators were invited to give an overview of their role in the North West Area.

- Community Development/Sports Development staff outlined their programmes and ongoing work in the area.

In addition, An Garda Síochana provided statistical reports on levels, trends of crime in the area. A number of joint initiatives took place between the North West Area and local Gardaí on improved safety in parks, lifting wandering horses in the area, and working closely with Dublin Bus to assist in maintaining a high quality bus service throughout Finglas and Ballymun and mitigate against anti-social behaviour on buses.

The Joint Policing Committee provided support in an application for funding to provide for CCTV in Ballymun.

The Local Safety Fora in Finglas and Ballymun continued to meet and report quarterly to the JPC. A number of community representatives were elected to the steering group of Safer Ballymun. Safer Ballymun received two awards, the Taoiseach's Award for Public Service Excellence and the Vodafone Innovation in Government Award (Best Community Project Category).

It is also worth noting that the new Garda Station has opened adjacent to the Ballymun Civic Offices and the newly constructed Garda Station opposite the Finglas Civic Offices is nearing completion and will open in Spring 2009.

SOUTH CENTRAL AREA JOINT POLICING SUB-COMMITTEE 2008

The South Central Area Joint Policing Committee has met four times during 2008 as follows:

- 18th January
- 18th April
- 18th July
- 17th October

As a result of the meetings a number of initiatives have been suggested which I now set out below: -

- Having had a presentation on 'Dial to stop Drugs' initiative in Blanchardstown the Committee forwarded a letter to Minister of State John Curran T.D expressing disappointment that " Dial to Stop Drugs " was not implemented in South Central Area. A response from the Ministers Office indicated that each Drugs Task Force Area could choose whether to become part of the scheme.
- As part of improving links between the Area JPC and local Policing groups Mr John Mortin from Bluebell Community Policing Forum was invited to present to the Committee. He outlined the work of the forum and issues raised.
- The Committee paid a visit to Ballyfermot Garda Station to view the CCTV system operation. It has greatly reduced anti-social blackspots in Ballyfermot.
- The Committee visited Markievicz Park in Ballyfermot, which has a local Parks Safety Committee operating successfully.

- Two new Community Representatives joined the Committee and are actively participating in the Committee.
 - Chief Superintendent John Manley gave a presentation to the Committee on the D12 Safety Partnership.
 - It has been agreed that the Committee request a representatives from Dublin Bus & Luas be invited to present to the Committee on the strategies for dealing with criminality and anti social behaviour.
 - The Committee received a presentation from South Inner City Local Drugs Task Force (S.I.C.L.D.T.F) to inform the Committee of their work.
 - A report on Estate Management processes and activities within the South Central Area was delivered by John Bruckshaw, Area Housing Manager, Ballyfermot.
 - Since then the Area Housing managers present to the Committee on Estate Management issues in South Central Area at each meeting
 - Report on the Park Warden Service delivered by Gerry Barry (Chief Parks Superintendent)
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SOUTH EAST AREA JOINT POLICING SUB-COMMITTEE 2008

The South East Area JPC Sub-committee met on the following dates in 2008:

- 1st April
- 30th June
- 6th October

The following issues were discussed at the South East Area Joint Policing Subcommittee meetings in 2008: Policing Plan 2009, Prostitution, Graffiti, Noise Issues and Control of Dogs. Dublin City Council and the Gardaí gave presentations on the Policing Plan 2009, Anti Social Behaviour relating to parks and alcohol, Graffiti Reduction Schemes, Noise Control Bill and the Responsibilities of Various Agencies regarding the Control of Dogs.

A presentation was given by a representative of Ruhama on issues relating to prostitution. The link between homelessness and prostitution was also raised and as a result arrangements were made for Ruhama to participate in the Open Day for Homeless Service Providers in the South East Area. This allowed Ruhama to highlight the issue and provided a link between Ruhama and local service providers.

The members of the Subcommittee were regularly updated on the Joint Policing Subcommittee - Parks Working Group. This Group is made up of Dublin City Council Officials, Gardaí, Community Representatives and local residents and has met on eight dates in 2008 in relation to the management of parks with particular reference

to Ringsend Park. Issues discussed in 2008 include alcohol abuse, licensing laws, drug abuse, promotion of the park's facilities to non-users and antisocial behaviour issues surrounding Halloween. A number of initiatives came out of these discussions.

The Group supported Drug Awareness Week, which took place in June 2008. As part of this initiative Outreach Workers liaised with younger members of the community in Ringsend Park making them aware of the impact of anti social behaviour on the use of the park.

A number of issues previously raised by residents have been addressed such as the closure of a laneway, which was the focus of anti-social behaviour, and the pruning of trees and shrubbery which were perceived to be making the area unsafe and providing opportunities for anti social behaviour.

The Working Group and Gardaí met with local publicans and off licence owners regarding Liquor Licensing Laws and their responsibility with regard to the sale of alcohol to minors. The Gardaí have also Increased the number of patrols of the area.

A very successful Ringsend Park Open Day was organised in September 2008, to promote the use of the park's excellent facilities in order to encourage the wider community to use the park and thus provide activity, which will reduce the opportunity for anti social activities.

Links were made with with Belfast City Council and the Police Service of Northern Ireland and site visits took place in Ringsend Park and also the Waterworks Park, Belfast. It is intended to continue the exchange of information and views in relation to the management of parks.

Overall, anti social behaviour incidents have been reduced in the vicinity of Ringsend Park. In 2009 the Parks Working Group intends to examine issues around Halloween, Antisocial Behaviour, Lighting in Ringsend Park and the further promotion of activities in the park and Irishtown Stadium thereby further reducing anti social behaviour.

Councillor Michael Conaghan
Chairperson