

To the Lord Mayor and Members of
Dublin City Council

Report No. 349/2007 of the Chairperson
of the Joint Policing Committee



Dublin City Council

Comhairle Cathrach Bhaile Átha Cliath

Meeting of the Dublin City Joint Policing Committee – held on Monday 2nd July 2007 at 4.30 p.m. Members Room, City Hall.

Attendance: Committee Members

Councillor Paddy Bourke (Lord Mayor)	Councillor Anne Carter
Councillor Michael Conaghan (Chairperson)	Joe Costello TD
Councillor Mary Freehill	Councillor Kevin Humphreys
Councillor Vincent Jackson	Mr. Philip Maguire, Asst. City Manager
Councillor Bronwen Maher	Councillor Paddy McCartan
Asst. Commissioner Al Mc Hugh	Mr. Ciaran McNamara, Asst. City Manager
Ms. Kathy Moore	Councillor Críona Ní Dhálaigh
Aengus O Snodaigh TD	Councillor Larry O'Toole
Mr. John Tierney, City Manager	

Also Present: Councillor Christy Burke, Inspector Frank Walsh, Mr. Brendan Hayden, Senior Executive Officer and Mr. Hugh Fitzpatrick, Administrative Officer.

1. City Manager's Report. Mr. Philip Maguire presented the City Manager's report to the Committee (copy of which is attached as Appendix A to these minutes.) Order: **Noted**
2. Assistant Garda Commissioner's Report. Mr. Al Mc Hugh presented his report to the Committee (copy of which is attached as Appendix B to these minutes). Order: **Noted**
3. Working Group on (a) Alcohol-Related Issues and (b) Estate Management. Mr. Maguire informed the Committee of progress being made by both groups. It was noted that the HSE had been invited to nominate a rep to sit on the Estate Management Working Group.

Date of next meeting: 24th September 2007 at 3.30 p.m. It was also agreed that the theme for the next meeting of the Joint Policing Committee would be "Escalation of Violence/City Gangs" and that it would start at 3.30 p.m. to facilitate an update from the Assistant Commissioner and debate on that matter.

Michael Conaghan
Chairperson

Meeting of Joint Policing Committee 4.00 p.m. 2nd July 2007

Dublin City Manager's Report

At the last meeting of the Joint Policing Committee it was agreed that Working Groups be established to analyse issues in relation to Estate Management and Alcohol Abuse and to make recommendations about how these matters might be best managed.

The following is the membership of each group:

Estate Management Working Group

Councillor Michael Conaghan
Councillor Criona NíDhálaigh
Councillor Kevin Humphreys
Councillor Larry O'Toole
Councillor Catherine Byrne
Councillor Mick Rafferty
Councillor Dessie Ellis
Councillor Liam Kelly
Councillor Mary Murphy
Maria Metcalfe

Brendan Kenny
Brendan Hayden
Celine Reilly

Superintendent Michael Sullivan (Santry)
Inspector Fergus Dwyer (Store Street)

Working Group on Alcohol Related Issues

Councillor Michael Conaghan
Councillor Anne Carter
Councillor Christy Burke
Councillor Emer Costello
Councillor Paddy Bourke
Councillor Naoise Ó'Muirí
Councillor Michael Donnelly
Councillor Aodhán Ó'Riordáin
Councillor Eibhlin Byrne

Kathy Moore

Charlie Lowe
Eileen Brady
Damian Drumm

Superintendent John Twomey (Pearse Street)
Inspector John Lambert (Crumlin)

The Alcohol Group has met on the following occasions 3rd May, 2007 and 7th June, 2007 the next to take place on the 6th July, 2007.

To date the following initiatives have been taken by the Alcohol Groups

- a) A large list of business and community organisations have been invited to make submissions in relation to alcohol related issues including off licences, drinking in public, late night exemptions for pubs and associated pub nuisance

A significant number of submissions have been received and are being considered by the working group.

It may be that the working group will wish to meet for further clarification with some of the groups that made submissions. It is also intended to examine how these matters are handled in other jurisdictions.

It was also agreed to examine the wording of the Intoxicating Liquor Byelaws with a view to strengthening Garda powers of confiscation and to ensure that the next review of Development Plan included consideration of changes to limit proliferation of off licence premises and mixed sales premises.

In the meantime it has been decided that each of the five Area Joint Policing Committees be required to identify 2 parks in their area for priority attention in relation to public consumption of Alcohol and other anti-social behaviour. It is intended that these be examined by local Gardaí, local parks staff and the local Area Manager and the local Community / Parks users group with a view to implementing an effective management regime.

It is understood that this process is now commenced in each of the five areas.

Due to the recent election, the Estate Management group's first meeting was delayed and held on the 28th May 2007 and a further meeting was held on 25th June, 2007. It has been agreed to invite a representative from the HSE to join the group to help formulate policy around problem families and evictions.

In relation to the Control of Dogs, following the recommendations of the Committee, the Minister of the Environment was written to regarding the banning of keeping certain types of dogs; please see copy letter attached and reply from Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

**Report From Al Mc Hugh, Assistant Garda Commissioner, to JOINT POLICING
COMMITTEE MEETING
2ND JULY 2007.**

The 2007 Garda Corporate Strategy document lists Community Engagement as one of our 6 primary Strategic goals. These strategies display a clear commitment to the community and ongoing Garda efforts to address their concerns and policing requirements. I am a firm advocate of Community Policing and have allocated resources throughout the Region as circumstances permit. While it is extremely high on my list of priorities, there are other serious crime and traffic related issues that also require attention and the allocation of substantial resources. There is a fine balancing act to be achieved and I ask that you appreciate that there are finite resources available and that such resources must be allocated appropriate to the various demands placed on the Garda Service.

On crime, at the March meeting I reported that for the year ending 31/12/2006, crime in the Dublin Metropolitan Region fell by 5%, and An Garda Siochana had achieved a 39% detection rate. This followed on from a 4% reduction in the year ending 31/12/2005 and 4% in the year ending 2004. The detection rate during those years has risen from 33% to the current figure of 39%.

Crime figures for January and February 2007 show the downward trend continuing with falls of 5% and 10% respectively. I stated that while I was pleased with the figures; there was no room for complacency. I have conducted an analysis of the crime figures and note, that while serious crimes, such as robbery, burglary and assault are significantly down in these periods, other crimes, including theft from shops and fraud have risen to such an extent as to impact negatively on our gains in preventing and detecting serious crime.

There are many reasons for the increases in these particular categories and my Divisional and District Officers throughout the Region are taking active measures to address them. As you will appreciate, such offences are extremely difficult for An Garda Siochana to prevent, given that they take place in business premises and often, over the internet. In an effort to reduce the instances of these crimes, our Crime Prevention Personnel are visiting and advising retail outlets on best practice and security issues.

Since my last presentation, we have continued to tackle public order and anti-social behaviour. You will recall that there were 9629 public order incidents recorded during 2005, which was a 4% increase on the 2004 figures. The result for 2006 was in excess of 11,000, an increase of an 18.5%. To date for 2007, detections are running broadly in line with the preceding years.

Traffic management in the city continues to receive dedicated Garda attention and we continue to work closely with the Director of Traffic.

On the last occasion, we discussed setting up two sub-committees on Alcohol Related Issues and Estate Management. A Garda Superintendent and an Inspector were allocated to each group and I am aware that meetings have taken place and some progress has been made on these important issues.

The alcohol issue is one where there is a major interface with An Garda Siochana. There is no doubt that there is a strong link between alcohol abuse and incidents of public disorder and anti-social behaviour. I note from a submission from the Ballymun Neighbourhood Council that the

“...new legal framework alone will not address the problems experienced in our society generally, and in local communities particularly. The dangers of alcohol abuse need to be addressed in national mainstream education and health promotion programmes. Investment needs to be forthcoming to provide alcohol free alternatives for young people, and local treatment centres offering advice, counselling and support for people to address their alcohol problems.”

Some of the actions under consideration, such as purchase coding for Off Licence sales, effective and immediate sanctions, use of CCTV, and increased education to change our drink culture are laudable and if properly implemented will assist in reducing the impact of alcohol abuse. Statistics provided by Bernardos and the SLAN Survey on the extent of alcohol abuse among children and young people in Ireland, as supplied to the sub-committee make frightening reading and should provide an incentive, if one were needed, to take affirmative action.

As I have said before, the Gardai alone will not solve important societal issues such as this. This forum, working closely with parents, teachers, young people, the Licensed Trade and other interested stakeholders, is the ideal vehicle to apply different strands of expertise to address a problem that is common to us all.

On Estate Management, I am informed that discussions focused on future plans for the workgroup and items such as evictions, challenging tenants, community wardens, sexual and domestic violence were discussed as matters which could be progressed. A Community Safety Strategy was proposed for the city based on the Ballymun example. In addition to eviction, it is heartening to see that ideas are being examined in relation to what can be done for evicted tenants to reintegrate them. The concept of an early warning system to identify potential families who may be the subject of an eviction is also a good initiative.

On this note, I would like to pay tribute to Mr. Brendan Kenny who recently left Dublin City Council to take up a position in Limerick. Brendan was always a pleasure to work with and I take this opportunity to thank him publicly for his assistance to gardai and the communities. I wish him every success in his new role.

On another topical note, that you will have heard that I recently met with representatives from the Fair, or love Ulster Group, who wish to hold another parade in Dublin. You will of course be aware of the difficulties that arose following the last such parade. Despite the coverage of Mr. Frazer's press conference following our meeting, I would like to report that no final decisions were reached in relation to holding another parade.

I discussed this matter with the Council of the Dublin City Centre Business Association last week and naturally they are very wary of any repeat of the disgraceful scenes witnessed on the last occasion. I explained to the FAIR deputation that all rights afforded under the Constitution were subject to the common good. Our discussion centered on the timing of the parade, the impact on traders and citizens of Dublin, and the cost of providing a massive police presence. I reiterate – No concrete decisions were reached and the deputation agreed to take the issues discussed back to their membership for further consideration. I will, of course keep the Committee informed of all developments in this regard.

One further area worthy of note is the current position with begging in the city. You may be aware that the High Court recently held that the relevant provisions of the Vagrancy Act were unconstitutional. In an effort to address the ongoing problem,

Gardai are utilising Public Order legislation. I am not referring here to homeless people; rather I refer to organised groups of people who make substantial earnings from begging, often using small children to gain sympathy, or indeed to carry out the begging on their behalf.

It is possible that the High Court ruling will be appealed. I will keep the Committee informed of any developments in this area.