



Garda Síochána Inspectorate Press Release

Publication of Garda Inspectorate Report “Policing with Local Communities”

Friday 21 December 2018

The Garda Inspectorate welcomes the publication today by the Minister for Justice and Equality of the Inspectorate’s thirteenth report entitled “*Policing with Local Communities*” and the Minister’s decision that it be referred to the Garda Commissioner and the Implementation Group on Policing Reform so that it can be taken into account in their work.

Carried out at the request of the Policing Authority and Minister for Justice and Equality, this inspection focused on and gives an up to date analysis and assessment of the allocation and use of resources available to the Garda Síochána in the delivery of policing services to local communities. It sets out a number of critical actions that would enable it to provide a more effective, visible and responsive policing service.

To inform this report, the Inspectorate assessed:

- How local policing services are planned and organised;
- How staff and other resources, including Garda stations, overtime, technology and equipment, are allocated to divisions and districts;
- How staff resources are deployed on the front line in terms of numbers and skills; and
- How policing services are delivered in local communities.

On welcoming the publication of the report, Chief Inspector Mark Toland said, “*The Garda Síochána do many things well and their strong community ethos was reflected throughout this inspection and forms a strong foundation to develop a more structured and consistent approach to preventing harm in communities*”.

Some of the key findings from the inspection are:

- An insufficient understanding of demand for policing services and the absence of an intelligence-led strategic planning process means it is unclear what the

optimum number and mix of members, garda staff and reserves should be to police Ireland;

- The Garda Síochána is well behind other comparable services in how it uses technology and data to help it measure and manage demand, allocate resources and improve its service to the public;
- The model used to distribute resources does not determine how many staff a division needs to match its policing demands and as a result, there are often insufficient gardaí on duty at the right times. Compared to urban areas, there are often fewer gardaí available each day in more rural places;
- Communities have noticed a decrease in visibility;
- In spite of increased investment, opportunities to maximise front-line resources are hindered by slow progress on civilianisation, the decline in the number of reserves and, abstraction of members from front-line policing roles;
- The district model of policing in operation is too small in scale and leads to inefficient and inconsistent services for victims and the public;
- Community policing is a critical area of service delivery and where garda community policing units were sufficiently staffed and able to undertake their role appropriately, it had led to some positive excellent local initiatives;
- In many divisions, the number of community policing members has reduced by up to 50% with large reductions in rural areas. Some districts have no dedicated community policing members in place;
- Members are often taken away from their core role for prisoner escorts and other non-core functions, which greatly impacts on the availability of resources. Often the persons most affected by this are victims of crimes and local communities;
- The “one-size-fits-all” garda roster is not making the best use of finite resources;
- There are organisational risks associated with arrangements for custody management, front-line supervision, response driving and deployment of district detectives to firearms incidents; and
- While many previous Inspectorate recommendations have been implemented, many have not been progressed and others are not yet fully implemented.

Critical Actions

This report contains nine critical actions that provide a road map to modernise and improve local policing services. Actions include:

- Local policing should be managed within a divisional structure that does not retain district constraints, barriers or boundaries that affect the delivery of local policing services;
- Development of a new resource allocation process that assigns resources to Garda units based on policing need;
- Recognising concerns about crime in rural communities, development of a multi-agency rural crime prevention and reassurance partnership;
- Development of a community policing model with resources in all divisions trained in problem solving and partnership working to tackle issues that matter to local communities;
- Development of an organisational strategy that maximises resources for enhanced visibility and accessibility;

- Take policing to the public through use of garda clinics, kiosks and shop fronts as well as through enhanced online services;
- Development of a new ICT strategy that prioritises mobile technology to local policing units to transform the capability of front-line gardaí;
- Recruitment of a critical mass of garda staff to release garda members from non-operational posts;
- Use of tools such as strategic assessments, business process mapping, academic research and priority-based budgeting to develop a new workforce plan;
- Place patrol sergeants and inspectors on duty in all divisions on a 24/7 basis;
- Further development of Joint Policing Committees and local community fora to provide enhanced accountability of and support to local policing;
- Development of multiple rosters that put resources on duty when needed;
- A review of the organisation’s firearms requirement.

Speaking following the publication of the report, Chief Inspector, Mark Toland said, *“Visibility, accessibility and reassurance are critically important to local communities, particularly those most vulnerable. The findings of this report can help to frame the development of an evidence-based approach to the allocation of resources in order to optimise visibility and accessibility of Garda services in local communities and for victims of crime”*.

A copy of the report is available at <http://www.gsinsp.ie>

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Notes for editors

1. Garda Síochána Inspectorate

The Garda Síochána Inspectorate is an independent statutory body established under Part 5 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005, which commenced its work on 26 July 2006. Its objective is to ensure that the resources available to the Garda Síochána are used to maintain and achieve the highest levels of effectiveness and efficiency in its operation and administration as measured against best international practice. Under Section 115 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005, the Inspectorate must be three members, including a Chief Inspector, appointed by the Government. The current members of the Inspectorate are Mr Mark Toland, Ms Pauline Shields and Mr Hugh Hume.

Mr. Mark Toland was appointed Chief Inspector of the Garda Síochána Inspectorate in November 2017 having previously served as a Deputy Chief Inspector from 2012 to 2016. His policing career was in the Metropolitan Police Service where he worked for 30 years prior to retiring in 2010 and he received the Queens Police Medal for distinguished service in the same year. Before returning to the Inspectorate, Mark served as a Commissioner on the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission from 2016 - 2017.

Ms. Pauline Shields was appointed as a Deputy Chief Inspector of the Garda Síochána Inspectorate in October 2016. Pauline served for 30 years with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) in a variety of different policing roles and retired at the rank

of Chief Superintendent. For services to policing and the community in Northern Ireland Pauline was awarded an OBE in the 2014 New Year's honours list.

Mr. Hugh Hume was appointed as a Deputy Chief Inspector of the Garda Síochána Inspectorate in November 2017. Prior to his appointment in the Inspectorate, he served as a police officer in the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) for almost 31 years and completed his service at the rank of Detective Chief Superintendent. Hugh was awarded the Queens Police Medal in 2016 for distinguished police service.

The Inspectorate has produced twelve reports since its establishment in 2006. Further details of the Inspectorate's work and copies of previous Inspectorate reports can be found on our website. www.gsinsp.ie.

2. The Divisional Model of Policing

The Inspectorate previously recommended a new divisional functionality policing model in the *Crime Investigation Report (2014)* and in the *Changing Policing in Ireland Report (2015)*. In this model, particular senior management responsibilities are allocated on a functional divisional basis rather than on a geographical district basis. In July 2016, the Government endorsed the decision of the Garda Commissioner to replace the current district model of policing on a phased basis with a divisional model.

The Garda Síochána has not yet fully implemented the recommended model. It is currently piloting a model in four divisions (Galway, Cork City, Mayo and DMR South Central) that differs from the Inspectorate's recommendation in that it retains a district-based structure for responding to calls from the public, investigating less serious crime and managing all community policing and stakeholder engagement.

3. Previous Inspectorate Recommendations

The report references best international practice in local policing. Five previous inspections completed by the Inspectorate, *Roads Policing (2008)*, *Resource Allocation (2009)*, *Front-Line Supervision (2012)*, *Crime Investigation (2014)* and *Changing Policing in Ireland (2015)* were considered to have significant relevance to this inspection. The progress made since these reports was assessed and while many relevant recommendations have been implemented, many have not been progressed and others are not yet fully implemented.