

Submission to the Joint Policing Committee

From Longford Community Resources Ltd' Social Inclusion Network

8th April 2016

The Social Inclusion Network of Longford Community Resources Ltd is a network of groups and individuals from across County Longford who are concerned with poverty, inequality and social exclusion.

Following the call from the Joint Policing Committee for submissions for Committee's Six Year Strategic Plan, the Social Inclusion Network held a short consultation at our meeting of 8th April. Below are the suggestions which arose at the meeting.

Obviously all of the suggestions will require additional resources or the redistribution of resources, and may require lobbying national government to make such resources available and/or to change practices and policies.

1. Prevention of Crime, Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour

Gardai

- More visible police around the streets and in our communities – on foot/bike/horse, 24 hours a day, seven days per week.
- More Community Watch and Community Alert schemes.
- More clerical staff in the Garda station so that the phone can be answered (a number of people have had experience of phoning the Garda station and the phone not being answered).
- Extend the opening hours/re-open rural Garda stations.

Community Workers and Youth Workers

- More community workers and youth workers are needed to work on the ground, getting people involved in activities and developmental projects. This is about helping individuals and also trying to change the circumstances in which they live which might lead people to get involved in crime.

Dealing with Anti-social Behaviour in Estates/Areas

- Joint initiative between guards and community for employment of estate workers/area workers in areas experiencing anti-social behaviour.
- More repercussions for people associated with anti-social behaviour

Physical Actions

- Enhanced and extended street lighting.
- More CCTV cameras.
- Deal with derelict houses and parts of estates that are in disrepair.
- Put physical barriers (attractive ones) in known places of anti-social behaviour.

Raising Awareness

- A simple step by step guide to be circulated to the public on prevention of crime and how to report crime.

Dealing with Those Convicted of Crime

- Reform is needed of the prison system. Whilst prison is appropriate for certain crimes such as crimes against the person, people convicted of much lesser crimes would potentially benefit more from rehabilitation within the community, through which they would learn about respect for themselves and others, and through being made to contribute something financially in recompense.

2. Community Policing

Members of the Social Inclusion Network were extremely positive about the Community Policing Unit and felt that this should be expanded greatly.

- More visibility in housing estates, including private rented estates.
- Increase the involvement in schools, youth services etc so that young people can build up positive relationships with the Gardai.
- Have a very defined remit for the Community Gardai so that they have a clear role and do not get pulled into other areas of policing (eg business policing). This would create more time for community police to be out in the communities.

3. Public Safety and Security

- Increase police presence.
- Develop more Neighbourhood Watch Programmes and encourage neighbours to look out for each other.
- Enforce dog control laws.
- Enforce litter control laws.
- Deal with double parking.

4. Misuse of Drugs, Alcohol and Related Crime

- More drug/substance awareness (even safe disposal of needles etc info on how to use safely).
- Merchants Quay/Anna Liffey to have a physical presence as well as workers in the Longford.
- Lobby for more community development workers and youth workers.
- More education at school, start at 5th class. Resilience, showing alternatives. And for parents, eg at the parent teacher meetings.
- Re-examine the legal system, with longer sentencing, make prison less attractive.

5. Victim Support

- Raise awareness of the supports available to victims and encourage people to take up their services.
- Ensure that there are an adequate number of trained victim support people available in Longford.
- Link people into community supports such as Longford Community Resources Ltd, youth services, Longford Women's Link etc.
- Supports for people who witness violent crime.

6. Equality and Human Rights

- Ensure that all the actions to be carried out under the Joint Policing Committee Strategy will have due regard to, and be underpinned by, equality and human rights in their implementation, in accordance with the Public Sector Duty: Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act (2014).
- Provide training for the Gardai and the Joint Policing Committee on equality and human rights.

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