

GARDA SÍOCHÁNA ACT 2005

JOINT POLICING COMMITTEES GUIDELINES - AMENDED AUGUST 2014

Preface

The existing guidelines for the operation of Joint Policing Committees were issued in 2008 and heralded the establishment of these important partnership structures in all of the then existing local authority areas, as provided in the Garda Síochána Act 2005.

A review of the operation of the Committees commenced in 2012, to see if there were ways in which their operation could be enhanced and ensure that they were functioning as intended. The review process included a questionnaire to all existing members of Committees throughout the country and the production of a discussion document which helped to facilitate a public consultation process. The review was managed in consultation with an Oversight Committee which included representatives of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and An Garda Síochána.

To assist those already using the guidelines these revised guidelines are presented as an addendum to the previous guidelines. The changes which are being made reflect feedback received during the review process as well as input received by the Department of Justice and Equality during the public consultations in relation to the preparation of the White Paper on Crime. The revision of the guidelines is particularly timely as it allows for the alignment of Joint Policing Committees with the new local government structures. The most significant changes to the guidelines reflect both the new local government arrangements and a strengthening of strategic and collaborative functioning within each Committee. Important changes include,

- Committees will operate at a City and County level following the abolition of Town Councils, reflecting a more modern and streamlined approach to the management of local issues.
- There is a requirement for Committees to develop six year and annual strategic plans, and to report on their implementation in Annual Reports.
- The number of community representatives is increased, as this was a recurring theme during the review process.
- The need for a proper communications strategy to support interaction with local communities and effective and efficient coordination with other local structures is emphasised.

We are hopeful that the new guidelines will assist Committees in renewing their commitment to collaborative efforts to support policing and enhance community safety.

Frances Fitzgerald
Minister for Justice
and Equality

Alan Kelly
Minister for the Environment
Community and Local Government

1 **Introduction**

- 1.1 These Guidelines replace all previous Guidelines, which are now withdrawn.
- 1.2 A reference in these Guidelines to a joint policing committee (JPC) is to be construed as a reference to a Dublin City area subcommittee also.
- 1.3 The purpose of these Guidelines is to set out in detail the functions, composition and operation of joint policing committees in accordance with the Garda Síochána Act 2005. The Act (section 36) provides for the establishment of a JPC in each local authority administrative area. The purpose of these JPCs is to provide a forum where a local authority and the senior Garda officers responsible for the policing of that area, with the participation of Oireachtas members and community interests, can consult, discuss and make recommendations on matters affecting the policing of the area. It is intended that the JPCs be partnerships which are co-operative in nature and operate in accordance with paragraph 2.1 below with the minimum of formality to identify, raise awareness of and find solutions for issues impacting on, or causing concerns for, the local community. Through the work of a JPC both partners – the local authority and the Garda Síochána - along with Oireachtas members and community interests have the opportunity to contribute to the improved safety and quality of life of the community.
- 1.4 It is essential that JPCs take a strategic approach to their work so that issues arising can be dealt with in a considered and properly coordinated manner. Conversely, the business of a JPC cannot be progressed by simply having an exchange of views on relevant Garda or local authority reports. It is imperative that local issues are addressed collectively and strategically and in this regard each JPC must have strategic plans which are focussed on achieving coordinated actions to support enhanced policing and crime prevention. Templates for JPC work plans are included in Appendix 2. These include a Six Year Strategic Plan designed to link with the Local Economic and Community Plan for the area and an Annual Plan which will include objectives derived from the relevant Annual Policing Plans. JPCs should use the templates provided but are free to include other relevant information in their plans if they so wish.
- 1.5 JPCs should accordingly be established for the administrative areas of each local authority in the State. In the case of Dublin City, five area subcommittees, corresponding to the operational areas of the City Council, should also be established to progress the work of the JPC in an effective, efficient and manageable way. (See section 16 for details of JPC membership.)
- 1.6 The establishment of the JPCs should not detract from, or substitute for, either regular day-to-day contact or consultation at ground level which is a feature of ordinary policing or the maintenance and development of suitable local liaison between local authority and Garda representatives not requiring a formal structure.
- 1.7 It is desirable that demands on the Garda Síochána and the local authorities arising from participation in the JPCs should be kept within manageable proportions. There should be flexibility to adapt to particular local

circumstances, such as population, the nature of the area and policing priorities, and there should be proper linkage between the JPCs and their local authorities.

- 1.8 Each member of a JPC should receive a copy of these Guidelines.
- 1.9 Copies of the Guidelines should be available at all local authority offices for consultation and reference by elected members and staff of the local authority and by members of the public. Copies should also be available at all operational Garda premises for consultation and reference by Garda officers, civilian employees and members of the public. Local authorities and An Garda Síochána should ensure that awareness of the JPCs, subcommittees and the Guidelines is as widespread as possible.
- 1.10 Greater detail in respect of certain aspects of the Guidelines is provided in Appendix 1 – Code of Practice..

2. Functions

- 2.1 The function of the JPCs is set out in section 36(2) of the Garda Síochána Act, which states:

“The joint policing committee’s function is to serve as a forum for consultations, discussions and recommendations on matters affecting the policing of the local authority’s administrative area, and in particular to –

- (a) keep under review -
 - (i) the levels and patterns of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour in that area (including the patterns and levels of misuse of alcohol and drugs), and
 - (ii) the factors underlying and contributing to the levels of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour in the area,
- (b) advise the local authority concerned and the Garda Síochána on how they might best perform their functions having regard to the need to do everything feasible to improve the safety and quality of life and to prevent crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour within the area,
- (c) arrange and host public meetings concerning matters affecting the policing of the local authority’s administrative area,
- (d) establish, in consultation with the local Garda superintendent, as the committee considers necessary within specific neighbourhoods of the area, local policing fora to discuss and make recommendations to the committee concerning matters that it is to keep under review under paragraph (a) or on which it is to advise under paragraph (b), in so far as those matters affect their neighbourhoods, and
- (e) co-ordinate the activities of local policing fora under paragraph (d) or otherwise.”

2.2 Section 37(1) provides:

“A local authority shall, in performing its functions, have regard to the importance of taking steps to prevent crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour within its area of responsibility.”

2.3 As a result of the work of the JPCs, decisions which are made by any of the interests represented on the JPC should be better informed ones as a result of the discussion of local needs and circumstances. In particular, the JPC acts as a mechanism through which, firstly, the local authority can have a role in conveying information and views to Garda Divisional and District officers to assist them in the formulation and operation of their annual policing plans and, secondly, Garda Divisional and District officers can convey information and views to the local authority to assist it in carrying out its duties, functions and activities.

3. **Establishment**

3.1 Section 36(1) of the Garda Síochána Act provides:

“A local authority and the Garda Commissioner shall arrange for the establishment of a joint policing committee in accordance with guidelines issued ...”

3.2 A local authority shall, after consultation with the Garda Commissioner or an officer authorised by him or her to consult with the local authority, by resolution establish a JPC.

3.3 The Garda Síochána representatives on the JPC shall be appointed by the Garda Commissioner. The other members first appointed shall be appointed by resolution of the local authority by which it was established, and subsequent appointments shall be by such resolution or in such other manner as that local authority may provide for by resolution.

4. **Chairperson**

4.1 Section 35(2)(c) of the Garda Síochána Act provides that the chairperson of a committee will be drawn from the elected members nominated to the JPC by the relevant local authority.

4.2 The local authority elected members of the JPC shall appoint the chairperson of the JPC.

4.3 The term of office of a chairperson shall be not less than two years and, in view of the central role of the chairperson to the success of the JPC, committees are encouraged to consider appointment of a chairperson for a longer period..

4.4 The chairperson of a JPC and the other members of the Steering Group (see par. 11.1) have the key role in ensuring that these Guidelines are followed.

- 4.5 It shall be open to a JPC to appoint a vice-chairperson from among the local authority elected members. The local authority elected members of the JPC shall appoint the vice-chairperson of the JPC. The JPC shall ensure that, as far as is practicable, the offices of chairperson and vice-chairperson are at all times held by elected members of different political groupings.

5. Members of Oireachtas who are not Members of JPCs

- 5.1 A member of the Oireachtas is entitled to be present without notice at a meeting of a JPC, subject, as appropriate, to section 45(3) of the Local Government Act, 2001 or regulations made under section 54 of that Act.
- 5.2 A JPC shall make available without charge to members of the Oireachtas who are not members of the JPC the notice, agenda and minutes of meetings of the JPC, reports made by and to the JPC, where a member informs the JPC in writing or electronically that he or she wishes to receive such documents.

6. Meetings of a JPC

- 6.1 The presumption is that members of the public (any person who is not attending the meeting at the JPC's request) and representatives of the media (including accredited representatives of local and national press, local and national radio and local and national television) are entitled to be present at a meeting of a JPC and information and documents produced for the JPC are to be available to them, unless it would not be possible for legal or confidentiality reasons or would not be in the public interest to have such persons present or make such information or documents available. (See paragraphs 6.2 and 6.3 following.) JPCs should endeavour to make their reports and documents publicly available to the widest degree possible.
- 6.2 Where a JPC is of the opinion that the absence of members of the public and representatives of the media from the whole or part of a particular meeting is desirable, for example, due to the special nature of the meeting or of an item of business to be, or about to be, considered at the meeting, the JPC may decide to meet *in committee*.
- 6.3 Meetings to plan future business, including public meetings, shall be held *in committee*.
- 6.4 Particular efforts should be made by a JPC in its initial phase to advertise publicly:
- its establishment, purpose and functions;
 - the date, time and place of its initial meetings;
 - an invitation to the public to attend, taking into account the provisions of paragraphs 6.2 and 6.3.
- 6.5 Efforts should be made to ensure that meetings take place throughout the local authority area as appropriate.
- 6.6 It is envisaged that quarterly meetings for each committee would prove adequate in most circumstances. Meetings should be held at times and in locations which

facilitate maximum attendance.

6.7 Any proposal to hold additional meetings of a JPC must be agreed in advance by the Steering Group.

6.8 In setting the date and time of a meeting, a JPC should endeavour to ensure that a date and time are set which would allow a member who is a member of a House of the Oireachtas to attend a meeting of that House.

7. Public Meetings

7.1 Section 36(2)(c) of the Garda Síochána Act provides that the function of a JPC is, inter alia, to “arrange and host public meetings concerning matters affecting the policing of the local authority’s administrative area”.

7.2 The emphasis of public meetings shall be on general policing rather than individuals and on obtaining the co-operation of the public in preventing crime.

7.3 It is envisaged that JPCs would hold public meetings at regular intervals and at least once a year. Care should be taken to ensure that the venue is varied.

7.4 When considering arranging and hosting a public meeting, a JPC should consider whether the business of the meeting should focus on a particular topic, age group or geographic area or a combination of these.

7.5 Procedures for public meetings should have a minimum of formality and should reflect the co-operative nature of the JPCs.

7.6 Decisions on holding public meetings shall be made at meetings of the JPC. At least 14 days before a meeting, advertisements should be placed informing the public:

- of the date, time, place and purpose of the meeting;
- that they are welcome to attend;
- that they have the right to make their views known and ask questions of the members of the JPC;
- of the procedure for submitting written questions, including an address for doing so;
- of an alternative means of submitting a question (for those who have difficulty in providing written material), for example by recording a question via a telephone number for setting down in writing;
- that questions will be accepted from any person affected by the policing of the area;
- that questioners should give their name and address, which will not be publicised;
- that the JPC welcomes the public’s views on what should be discussed at the meeting and how the meeting should be conducted and also on previous public meetings held (the formulation used should take account of any decisions subsequent to paragraph 7.4);
- that in some circumstances it may not be possible to provide information requested (see paragraph 7.12 and section 8 below).

- 7.7 As public knowledge of the meetings grows, the JPC may consider that it is not necessary to provide the same level of detail in all such advertisements.

Dissemination of Information Regarding Public Meetings

- 7.8 Appropriate provision should be made to ensure that marginalised and hard to reach sections of the community are made aware of the meetings. Particular care should be taken to choose a date, time and place which maximise the opportunity of the community to attend the meetings. In this respect, use should be made to the greatest possible extent of active community networks and local groups and any relevant RAPID Programme Area Implementation Teams.

- 7.9 Representatives of the media may attend public meetings, subject to the provisions of section 45 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

Procedure for Tabling Questions

- 7.10 In order to increase the productivity of meetings, the public should be encouraged to give to the greatest extent possible advance notice of questions to be raised.
- 7.11 In certain circumstances, for legal reasons or because it would not be in the public interest to do so (see section 8), it may not be possible for either the Garda representative or the local authority to reply to a question.
- 7.12 Furthermore, in some circumstances it may not be possible to provide information or respond to a question because to do so would involve the disproportionate use of resources and the meeting should be informed accordingly.
- 7.13 If information cannot be provided for any of the above reasons the chairperson should encourage the questioner to rephrase the question in order to create a greater opportunity for information to be provided. This may involve the questioner submitting a general rather than a specific question.
- 7.14 A record should be kept of all written questions submitted. Questions and the answers provided form part of the official records of the JPC. Such records should be stored appropriately.

8. Subject Matter of Meetings

- 8.1 The subject matter of meetings should be in line with section 2 of these Guidelines. There is, however, a range of matters which may not be discussed. These are set out in the following paragraphs.

- 8.2 Section 36 (4) of the Garda Síochána Act provides:

“Neither the joint policing committee nor any of its subcommittees may consider matters relating to a specific criminal investigation or prosecution or matters relating to the security of the State.”

This also applies to public meetings arranged and hosted by a JPC.

8.3 A JPC should not consider a matter if:

- it would endanger the security of one or more individuals;
- it relates to an individual;
- it involves information received by the Garda Síochána or the local authority in confidence;
- it would, or would be likely to, prejudice the prevention or detection of crime or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders; or
- it is deemed prejudicial to a Garda operational matter, such as the deployment or composition of specialist units, or involves material of a sensitive nature.

8.4 Individuals shall not be discussed or named. An individual's right to privacy and the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights Act 2003 must be adhered to.

9. Reports

9.1 Section 36(5) of the Garda Síochána Act provides:

“Not later than 3 months after the end of each year, the joint policing committee shall –

- (a) submit to the local authority a report on the performance of its functions during the preceding year, and
- (b) supply a copy of the report to the Minister [for Justice, Equality and Law Reform], the Garda Commissioner and such other persons as may be specified in the guidelines issued under section 35.”

9.2 In addition, a copy of the report should be supplied to the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

9.3 In particular, the report should set out how it carried out its function under each of the headings set out in section 36(2) of the Garda Síochána Act and the outcomes from strategies adopted by the JPC.

9.4 Annual reports should reflect closely the work done to achieve the objectives set out in JPC annual work plans. In this regard JPCs should use the template which is included at Appendix 3 for their Annual Reports. Annual reports must include information on achievements during the year. JPCs are required to highlight at least three areas of achievement in their reports, and this is reflected in the template. The information specified on the template is considered sufficient for the purposes of annual reporting, but JPCs are free to include other relevant information if they so wish.

10. Resources

It is generally intended that the actions of each JPC will be resourced by the organisations represented on it..

11. Steering Group

- 11.1 Each JPC must establish a steering group, consisting of the chairperson of the JPC, a representative of An Garda Síochána and the Chief Executive of the local authority or a person nominated by him or her. The function of the steering group will be to facilitate the efficient functioning of the JPC **and in particular to ensure that it retains a clear focus on strategic and collaborative action**. It will also arrange procedures for the appointment of any new or replacement members, draw up the agenda and arrange for documentation for meetings (see paragraph 15.7), be the point of contact for co-operation and joint action with other JPCs (see section 13) and with any subcommittees of the JPC.

12 Subcommittees

- 12.1 Care should be taken to avoid a proliferation of sub-committees, which would represent an unproductive use of scarce resources. JPCs should not establish more than four sub-committees. In the case of Dublin City Council, these would be in addition to the five area subcommittees. The establishment of a sub-committee should only be proposed where the JPC is satisfied that this is necessary for the pursuit of objectives described in the Six Year Strategic Plan described in Appendix 2 and there are sufficient resources available to support the effective functioning of the sub-committee. In this regard, any proposal to establish a JPC sub-committee must be agreed in advance by the JPC Steering Group.
- 12.2 Apart from the five Dublin City area sub-committees, JPCs should consider the establishment of sub-committees to address thematic issues rather than on the basis of geographical areas. However where a JPC considers it necessary, area based sub-committees may be established, provided that any proposal to establish these is agreed in advance by the JPC Steering Group. In addition, JPCs must ensure that the establishment of an area-based sub-committee does not lead to duplication of work being done by the JPC at city or county level.
- 12.3 To ensure continuing efficiency, the need for the continuation of sub-committees, other than the Dublin City area sub-committees, should generally be reviewed annually by the JPC.

13. Communications between Joint Policing Committees and with other local structures

- 13.1 If two or more JPCs consider it appropriate to do so, they may, by resolution of each of the JPCs, co-operate and perform joint actions. A JPC may co-operate and perform joint actions with more than one JPC or group of JPCs. A Dublin City area subcommittee may co-operate and perform joint actions with more than one Dublin City area subcommittee or group of Dublin City area subcommittees.
- 13.2 It is clear that the range of local fora which exist in a JPC area can play an important role in collaborative actions which may be pursued by a JPC.

Therefore it is essential that JPCs are aware of the plans and activities being pursued through other relevant local structures, in particular Local Community Development Committees. JPCs should maximise their engagement with all such structures and relevant community based groups to coordinate appropriate partnership approaches.

- 13.3 JPCs should ensure that there is effective linkage between them and relevant local authority committees including the Local Community Development Committee. Such linkage should include copies of the JPC plans and reports being provided to the relevant local authority committees..

14. Local Policing Fora

- 14.1 Section 36(2)(d) of the Garda Síochána Act (see paragraph 2.1) provides for the establishment of local policing fora by JPCs. The internal procedures of such fora should be similar to those for the JPCs, but to the greatest extent possible be more informal.
- 14.2 As a general principle, JPCs should ensure that in establishing local policing fora they do not divert scarce resources from the work of the JPCs themselves.
- 14.3 In accordance with commitments in the National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016, Guidelines for the operation of local policing fora in Local Drugs Task Force areas issued in 2009..

15. Internal Procedures

- 15.1 A code of practice is attached as Appendix 1, section 1 of which sets out principles and approaches which JPCs should adhere to in their functioning.
- 15.2 JPC members shall declare to the JPC if they have an interest in any matter under discussion and shall withdraw from the meeting while that matter is being discussed.
- 15.3 JPCs should always bear in mind the importance of clear, comprehensive and ongoing communication between their members.
- 15.4 Procedures should have a minimum of formality and should reflect the co-operative nature of the JPCs. It is envisaged that decisions would be taken by agreement rather than by voting. However, in the exceptional event of a vote being taken at a meeting of a JPC, each member present at the meeting shall have one vote. A member may abstain from voting, and such abstention may be recorded in the minutes. Where there is an equality of votes, a matter before a meeting shall be determined by a second or casting vote of the person chairing the meeting.
- 15.5 A quorum shall be such as applies to a committee of the local authority.
- 15.6 In order to facilitate JPC members, a date for the following meeting should be set at each meeting, save in exceptional circumstances. In any case, members of the JPC must be notified in writing of the date, time and place of a meeting at least 21 days before the meeting. A meeting, when arranged, should not be

cancelled, save in exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the chairperson. When a meeting is cancelled, the date, time and place of the next meeting should be fixed, with the agreement of the chairperson.

- 15.7 An agenda and related documents, including minutes of the previous meeting, should be circulated in advance of a meeting. Agendas should be focused, clear and the number of items included should reflect the time available. They should strike a balance between the role and responsibilities of each stakeholder. A template for the agenda is included in the code of practice (Appendix1). The setting of an agenda should not prevent the raising of an item of business (in advance of the meeting) that, following consultation with the Steering Group, is in the opinion of the person chairing the meeting or, if the chairperson is not available, the vice-chairperson particularly urgent.
- 15.8 If considered appropriate by the JPC, a non-member may be invited to attend a meeting and speak to a specific agenda item or items. This applies in particular to representatives of statutory agencies or persons with specific expertise or local knowledge which would be of assistance to the JPC. The Chairperson, in consultation with the Steering Group, should manage any proposal to invite non-members to attend with reference to the strategic objectives in the JPC work plan, and facilitate any appropriate arrangements which may be required. The same arrangements for non-member participation may be applied in relation to JPC sub-committees.
- 15.9 At JPC meetings, the Garda representative presents a report which includes general information in relation to the commission of crime and to crime prevention matters in the area. The Garda representative should, to the greatest extent possible, endeavour to provide statistical data which is appropriate and relevant to the local authority's administrative area.
- 15.10 The Chief Executive of the local authority or an official nominated by him or her, will also present a report in relation, or ancillary, to their functions and the work of the JPC.
- 15.11 Members of the JPC may ask the relevant Garda and local authority representative questions on matters contained in their report or other matters for which they have responsibility and which are relevant to the work of the JPC. Such questions should not take up a disproportionate amount of the time available for the meeting, and the main business of the JPC meeting must be devoted to progressing items on the annual work plan.
- 15.12 In order to increase the productivity of meetings, reports, documentation and copies of presentations should be circulated in advance of a meeting. Such documents should be treated as confidential until the meeting takes place. Advance notice of questions which it is intended to ask should also be given and JPCs should set appropriate time limits to ensure timely distribution of documents and adequate notice of questions to be asked.
- 15.13 In some circumstances, it may not be possible to provide information or respond to a question because to do so would involve the disproportionate use of resources, and the JPC should be informed accordingly.

- 15.14 When confirmed, with or without amendment, the minutes of a meeting shall be signed by the person chairing the meeting they were submitted to for confirmation and any minutes claiming to be so signed shall be received in evidence without proof.
- 15.15 Any public statements by a JPC should be made on an agreed basis and issued by the chairperson on behalf of the JPC or, if the chairperson is unavailable, the vice-chairperson.
- 15.16 The actions, decisions and proceedings of a JPC shall not be invalidated only because of a vacancy or vacancies in its membership or of the disqualification or want of qualification of any of its members.
- 15.17 The actions, decisions and proceedings of a JPC shall not be invalidated for the reason only that the number of members of the Oireachtas who have registered their interest in being a member of the JPC, and hence the number of such members on the JPC, is less than the number provided for in these Guidelines.
- 15.18 In the event of disorderly behaviour at a JPC meeting, the procedure set out below should be applied.

If

- (a) in the opinion of the person chairing a meeting (“the chair”), any member has been or is disorderly by persistently disregarding the ruling of the chair, or by behaving irregularly, improperly or offensively, or by otherwise obstructing the business of the meeting, and
- (b) the chair has conveyed his or her opinion to the members present by naming the member concerned,

then the chair or any member may move “that the member named leave the meeting” and the motion, if seconded, shall be put and determined without discussion.

Where a committee decides in accordance with (a) and (b) above that a member leave a meeting, that member shall immediately leave the meeting and shall not be entitled to speak or to take any further part in that meeting on that day.

Where in the opinion of the chair -

- (a) there is general disorder which impedes the orderly transaction of business, or
- (b) where a member against whom it was resolved that he or she leave the meeting by virtue of this paragraph refuses to do so,

the chair may adjourn the meeting for such period as he or she considers necessary in the interests of order.

16. Membership of Joint Policing Committees

16.1 JPCs should ensure that local authority elected members reflect the elected representational spread on the full council, as far as it is practical; be representative of each municipal district within the local authority area; and, in local authorities without municipal districts, be representative of each of the area committees.

16.2 In relation to Community Members, each JPC should decide the most appropriate community based organisations or groups to be represented. In doing so JPCs should have regard to relevant guidelines on community representation which may be issued by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government. JPCs should also ensure that those community members selected will ensure broad based representation of the range of local community interests, as well as considering the need for representation of particular localities, young persons and children, victims groups, business interests and particular communities (e.g. Travellers or Immigrant Communities).

16.3 The following table shows the number of JPC members applicable to different local authority areas, and the numbers applicable to each category of membership.

Joint Policing Committees Membership

Local Authority area types	Local authority elected members	Oireachtas elected members	Local authority official	An Garda Síochána	Community
Counties with 32 or more elected members)	15	5	2	2	7
Counties with 26 to 31 elected members	14	5	2	2	6
Counties with less than 25 members	13	5	2	2	6
Dublin City	13	6	3	2	6
Dublin City areas	All members	6	2	2	6
Cork City	16	6	2	2	7
Limerick City and County	15	5	2	2	7
Waterford City and County	15	5	2	2	7
Galway City	11	5	2	2	5

16.4.1 In relation to the local authority official members, the Chief Executive of the local authority shall be an ex-officio member, and another person shall be nominated by him or her. They may be accompanied to meetings of the JPC by such other officials as he or she considers appropriate.

16.4.2 In relation to representatives of An Garda Síochána, two Garda officers are nominated by the Commissioner, and they may be accompanied by such other Garda officers as they deem appropriate.

16.5 General Membership Matters

16.5.1 In order to facilitate as wide a representation as possible of Oireachtas members, no Oireachtas member may register for membership of more than one JPC at county/city level. In the case of Dublin city, no Oireachtas member may register for membership of more than one area subcommittee. However, where there will be a substantial under representation in the number of Oireachtas members

on a particular JPC, by reference to what is specified in these Guidelines, the Minister will consider proposals to set aside this requirement for that JPC with a view to increasing the number of Oireachtas members on it.

- 16.5.2 Members of JPCs and subcommittees shall not be entitled to appoint substitutes to attend and participate as members of any JPC, with the exception of officials and members of the Garda Síochána as provided for in these Guidelines.
- 16.5.3 Section 35(3) of the Garda Síochána Act provides:
“In nominating members of the Garda Síochána for appointment to a joint policing committee, the Garda Commissioner shall have regard to the need to ensure that such members are of appropriate rank and seniority.”
- 16.5.4 A person appointed to fill a casual vacancy shall hold office for the remainder of the term of the person in whose place he or she is appointed. A member who is a local authority elected member shall cease to be a member of the committee if (i) he or she resigns by notice in writing to the local authority; (ii) he or she becomes disqualified for membership of the local authority; or (iii) he or she ceases to be a member of the local authority. A member other than a local authority elected member shall cease to be a member if (i) he or she resigns by notice in writing to the local authority; or (ii) he or she ceases to be a member of the grouping which originally nominated him or her to the committee. A person whose term of office expires or who has resigned shall be eligible for re-appointment subject to compliance with membership requirements outlined in this section.
- 16.5.5 To the greatest extent possible, the objective of achieving a 40% gender balance in the making of appointments, as well as the need to foster social inclusiveness and equality when selecting membership should be adhered to.

(signed)

Frances Fitzgerald
Minister for Justice and Equality

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Joint Policing Committees – Code of Practice.

1. Joint Policing Committees (JPCs) are intended to be a forum for discussion and a means of building confidence and trust, thereby bringing communities together through a process with which all participants feel comfortable. A JPC should engage with local community groups to the greatest degree possible. Such groups are an important resource in tackling the issues addressed by the JPC.
2. Operation

It is recognised that JPCs should be allowed to develop their own agendas and approaches, since one size does not fit all. Nevertheless, JPCs should have regard to the following principles and approaches in their operation.

 - 2.1 A JPC should be strategic. It should not be a forum for addressing matters of detail. It should set priorities and be action oriented.
 - 2.2 It should draw up an annual work programme, which would include realistic targets and indicators to measure implementation. The work programme should set out tasks for each stakeholder in the JPC.
 - 2.3 It should not become a “talking shop”. Discussion of issues should be outcome focused and, in this context, should be of a constructive nature. An excessive amount of meeting time should not be spent on questions and speeches. An oral report or presentation and related questions should last for no longer than 15 minutes. (See paragraph 15.11 of the Guidelines).
 - 2.4 A JPC should aim at developing a cross sectoral strategy and building consensus. Meetings should focus on delivering a partnership approach and not on question and answer sessions directed particularly at any one set of participants. A JPC should not concentrate on presentations and crime statistics.
 - 2.5 While the Garda and local authority partnership is central to the effective operation of the JPC, it is essential that there is a collective approach to assigning and accepting responsibility. JPC members should indicate what they will contribute to its work. All stakeholders have a role to play.
 - 2.6 Possible issues a JPC could focus on are: illegal drugs; CCTV; public order; anti-social behaviour; underage drinking; drinking in public places; consideration of drink licensing applications; vandalism; safer neighbourhoods; estate management (including tenancy enforcement and public lighting); youth diversion; traffic management; planning of major events attracting large crowds, eg. fleadhanna; casual trading; litter; community-based crime prevention initiatives. Consideration of issues should be data and research based – it should not be emotion based.
 - 2.7 JPCs should be pro-active in making constructive inputs in relation to District and Divisional policing plans and relevant local authority plans and initiatives.

- JPCs should also support local Garda management and local authority management in relation to any relevant consultation which may arise with respect to Garda or local authority plans.
- 2.8 A JPC should focus on outcomes. It should make recommendations, eg. suggest varying bye-laws or changes to policies and regulation, and set out the reasons for its recommendations.
- 2.9 Each item on the agenda of a meeting should have an action outcome. Provision should be made at an early point on the agenda of each meeting for a review of the status of implementation of recommendations made at the previous or earlier meetings.
- 2.10 The following is a template for JPC agendas:
1. Minutes of previous meeting
 2. Progress on implementation of JPC annual work plan and actions agreed at previous meetings
 3. Reports by An Garda Síochána and local authority representatives, followed by questions on reports
 4. Discussion on specific topics
 5. Actions agreed
 6. Date of next meeting
 7. Any other business
- 2.11 Minutes of each meeting shall be submitted for confirmation as an accurate record at the next following ordinary meeting and recorded in the minutes of that meeting. Responsibility for preparing the minutes should be assigned to a specified person.
- 2.12 Following each JPC meeting, information should be circulated to members, setting out the issues discussed; the actions to be taken and by whom; a target date for completion; and the date, time and place set for the following meeting (paragraph 15.6 of the Guidelines). This could be facilitated by circulating an updated version of the JPC work plan based on the template in Appendix 2 .
- 2.13 JPC and local authority council meetings should not be held so close together that there is a risk of their agendas and consequent discussions becoming intertwined. When scheduling meetings of the JPC, regard should be had to scheduled meetings of other bodies in which members are involved.
- 2.14 While JPCs should have the flexibility to adapt to particular local circumstances (paragraph 1.7 of the Guidelines), it is desirable that they work as far as possible to similar standards.
3. Training
- 3.1 Training should be on a collective basis. It should give participants a thorough knowledge of the potential of the JPCs and the role and responsibilities of members, thereby enabling them to operate the JPCs to their full potential and in the spirit of partnership.

- 3.2 Training of chairpersons is particularly important, as they have a central role in the efficient and effective conduct of meetings. Training should be given inter alia in how to act effectively as facilitator of committees and smaller groups.

4. Joint Co-operation

JPCs are encouraged to bear in mind on an ongoing basis the provisions of section 13 of the Guidelines and, if they consider it appropriate to do so, co-operate and perform joint actions.

5. Communications

- 5.1 A communications strategy is an essential element of the work of JPCs, as indicated in the template in Appendix 2. This strategy must include communications with the public in relation to the work of the JPC and also communications with other local fora.
- 5.2 To raise awareness and support for the work of the JPC full use should be made of existing networks available to Garda and local authority members. Engagement with local community networks should also be maximised to increase the effectiveness of partnership approaches and to prevent duplication of efforts among the various local stakeholders.
- 5.3 This approach may include the production of a periodic JPC newsletter and JPCs should make full use of opportunities to publicise their work through local press and radio and through the use of on-line communications, including social networks.

JPC Work Plans

Each JPC must make strategic work plans which link with other appropriate plans and strategies. In this regard each JPC must put in place

A six year plan linked to the relevant objectives in the Local Economic and Community (LCD) Plan of the local authority

An Annual Work Plan which, as well as linking to the LCD Plan, must include relevant objectives from the Garda Annual Policing Plan(s) applying to the local authority area.

JPC plans should be confined to a limited number of strategic objectives to facilitate appropriate monitoring and review.

JPCs plans should focus on areas where cooperative and collaborative actions can add most value to the existing work of relevant stakeholders. It is important that plans set specific and measurable objectives, identify lead individuals or agencies as well as others responsible for contributing to relevant actions, include relevant resource allocation and set out defined timescales. In addition to including key objectives derived from the LCD and Annual Policing Plans as set out above, consideration should be given to linking JPC plans to

Appropriate elements of other local authority or Garda strategies (e.g. accommodation plans or particular crime prevention initiatives)

Drugs Task Force Plans relevant to the area

Other issues which the JPC considers to be important for crime prevention, policing and public safety (including road safety) in the area

Strategic actions to enhance communications with the public and to ensure adequate communication with other local fora (e.g. Drugs Task Forces, local policing fora, Community Alert and Neighbourhood Watch, Groups, and other relevant local fora) to prevent duplication and support coordinated action

Annual work plans should include consideration of how JPCs can enhance overall efforts to address key issues affecting community life, including

Crime Prevention

Anti-social behaviour and street crime

Misuse of drugs and related crime

Support for crime victims, including those affected by domestic violence

In addition, work plans must prioritise objectives and highlight at least three strategic priorities. Templates for the JPC six year and annual work plans have been devised and it is hoped that these will assist committees in their work. JPCs should use the templates provided but are free to include other relevant information in their plans if they so wish.

JPC Six Year Strategic Plan

	Strategic Objectives (derived from the Local Economic and Community Plan and which the JPC considers that it can add significantly to collective efforts to achieve the objectives) List these in order of priority with at least three High Priority objectives	Summary of strategy to be pursued in relation to each objective	Lead /agency key partners Name of JPC sub- committee where relevant	Anticipated outcomes
	High Priority Objectives (at least 3 of these)			
1				
2				
3				
	Other Objectives			

JPC Annual Work Plan Template

	Strategic Objectives List these in order of priority with at least three High Priority objectives	Origin (Garda Policing Plan, local authority plan, JPC members)	Summary of actions to be taken	Lead person /agency key partners Name of JPC s sub-committee where relevant	Timescale for action
	High Priority Objectives (at least 3 of these)				
1					
2					
3					
	Other Objectives				

Annual Report of _____ Joint Policing Committee 20__

ITEM 1 - Summary of progress in implementing the JPC's work programme.

	Strategic Objectives (Please list in the same order as on JPC Annual Work Plan)	Summarise the actions taken and the progress achieved during the year and any significant difficulties which were encountered	Summarise the advice given by the JPC give to the local authority / Gardaí – identify specific recommendations made	Results of advice / recommendations – identify the feedback received from the local authority / Gardaí
	High Priority Objectives			
1				
2				
3				
	Other Objectives			

ITEM 2 - Please highlight three key achievements of the JPC during the year and give reasons why these are considered to be significant?

Achievement 1

Achievement 2

Achievement 3

ITEM 3**Public meetings hosted by the JPC during the year.**

Please provide details of the public meetings that the JPC hosted during the year concerning matters affecting the policing of the local authority's administrative area.

ITEM 4 - Record of members and meetings held during the year.

Please enter the total number of JPC meetings held in the year

Date of each meeting

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The JPC Steering Group comprises of the Chairperson, the Chief Executive of the local authority (or representative) and Senior Garda representative*

[illegible]