

AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA



Section 23 Garda Síochána Act 2005

Three-Year Review Report

Foreword

Dear Minister,

I am pleased to introduce the first ‘Three Year Review Report’ of An Garda Síochána in accordance with Section 23 of the Garda Síochána Act, 2005. This report covers the period from 31st March 2006 to 31st March 2009 and outlines the performance, developments and improvements that have occurred.

An Garda Síochána has made significant progress in implementing an extremely ambitious change and modernisation programme that can be encapsulated into the categories of structural, cultural and technological change, all designed and developed to further enable frontline policing capability and service delivery improvement. These changes include developments in crime investigative capability; improved analysis capability; civilianisation; boundary realignment; technological integration with partner criminal justice agencies and significantly enhanced governance arrangements.

An Garda Síochána has also significantly invested in Garda safety and effectiveness supplying an array of personal and specialised equipment to ensure in as far as possible the safety of all employees and the public at large.

An Garda Síochána has also implemented improved structures and internal controls through key initiatives such as the Performance and Accountability Framework; the establishment of a Professional Standards Unit; the implementation of a new management system for handling covert human intelligence sources; the establishment of a Crime Training Faculty; the introduction of extensive training programmes for Senior Investigating Officers and crime scene investigators; the appointment of specially trained forensic collision investigators; the appointment of family liaison officers; the introduction of new, comprehensive Treatment of Persons in Custody records and guidelines; the launch of the Garda Síochána National Model of Community Policing and the training, equipping and deployment of the first Regional Support Units.

These changes have resulted in improvements in the management and deployment of resources available to An Garda Síochána. As Commissioner it is my belief that, taken together, these changes and developments have contributed significantly to increased confidence among the public that the work of the Gardaí has a real and measurable effect on crime prevention and detection.

The changes that have been implemented and which are outlined in greater detail in this report will enhance the performance of our most important resource, namely the committed and dedicated staff, both Gardaí and civilian support staff, who perform their duties professionally and effectively in the face of the continuous challenges of modern society.

Assisted and supported by my senior management team, I will continue to ensure that optimum resources are deployed to frontline policing to provide a strong visible presence that guards the communities An Garda Síochána are proud to serve.

As Commissioner of An Garda Síochána I am committed to our over-riding objective which is to prevent, detect and disrupt crime and criminal activity and to secure a safe environment for all who live in and visit this State.

M F MURPHY
COMMISSIONER OF
AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA

May 2009

Introduction

In the timeframe of this Report, Ireland as a nation has undergone significant transformation with population increases, increased affluence, social improvements, cultural diversity, demographic changes and more laterally economic turbulence. An Garda Síochána now polices a significantly more diverse society. In 2006, non-Irish nationals represented some 10% of the population, an increase of over 72% in non-Irish nationals since 2002. There are now significant populations from Eastern Europe (Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia), the United States, from the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Spain, as well as from Asia and Africa.

Also during the period of review, An Garda Síochána maintained a high level of satisfaction amongst members of the public. In the most recent Public Attitude Survey (2008) 81% of people were ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with overall Garda service to the community. This has been a consistent trend over the last three years (2006 - 80%; 2007 - 81%).

Between March 2006 and March 2009 the Garda organisation engaged in a fundamental transformation process underpinned in the main by three key and strategic principles:

- The Garda Síochána Act 2005
- The Morris and Barr Tribunals
- A deep inner desire for improvement

The nature and complexion of policing challenges have also changed during this period. An Garda Síochána has responded by providing excellence in policing in the following areas;

- *National Security*
- *Public Safety*
- *Community Commitment*
- *Disruption of Criminal Activity*
- *Road Safety*
- *Improved Involvement with all Communities*

This has been enabled through the Government’s investment of € 4.5 Billion in policing and the organisation’s commitment to deliver on its vision of *‘Excellent people delivering policing excellence’*.

As a result of this considerable investment, and the willingness of the organisation to accept and implement changes, An Garda Síochána is today a significantly better organisation. It has:

- BETTER ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT & STRUCTURES
- BETTER OVERSIGHT, GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY
- SIGNIFICANT OPERATIONAL SUCCESSES
- ENHANCED OPERATIONAL CAPACITY
- ENHANCED FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
- GREATER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES
- BETTER HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES
- A MORE DEFINED STRATEGIC DIRECTION
- GREATER ACCESS TO AND USE OF TECHNOLOGY
- IMPROVED COLLABORATIVE PROCESSES ACROSS THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE FAMILY

Better Organisational Management & Structures

An Garda Síochána listened to various advisors and sources who commented on the organisational structure and remodeled itself to meet emerging challenges from a social, economic and community perspective. It instituted several structural modifications that leave it well placed to meet the challenges of 21st century policing. These include the following:

An Garda Síochána structurally remodeled to adapt to the fabric of 21st Century Ireland. This has been manifested in the period under review by:

- Re-alignment of operational policing to the forefront of the organisation
- Enhanced expertise via civilianisation
- Enhanced Management Structures
- Realignment of Regional Boundaries
- Realignment of Divisional Boundaries
- The establishment of new Divisions

The Executive Committee

The Garda Commissioner has also established an Executive Committee that meets weekly on matters of organisational, financial, operational and administrative concerns relating to the policing function of the organization and the policing requirements of the State.

Better Oversight, Governance & Accountability

Enhanced governance arrangements were instituted that include:

The Garda Inspectorate

The Garda Inspectorate was established in 2006 and to date it has published the following reports:

- Report on Senior Management Structures in the Garda Síochána*
- Review of Practices and Procedures for Barricade Incidents*
- Policing in Ireland-Looking Forward*
- Roads Policing Review and Recommendations*

An Garda Síochána have enthusiastically implemented, or implemented with agreed modifications, the vast majority of recommendations contained in the reports which have resulted in an improved service level capability of the organisation.

Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (GSOC)

The Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission was established in 2006 and has contributed to the oversight and accountability process in An Garda Síochána, thereby contributing to further organisational improvements. An Garda Síochána engages fruitfully with GSOC at many levels to ensure accountability in all the organisation's activities. This is in line with best practice worldwide and indeed far outstrips many other comparable organisations.

Garda Síochána Audit Committee

An independent Garda Síochána Audit Committee was established in 2006 in accordance with Section 44 of the Garda Síochána Act, 2005. Its role is to advise the Commissioner on significant financial matters as well as promoting good accounting practice, improved and more informed decision-making, and continued focus on regularity, propriety and value for money throughout An Garda Síochána. An Garda Síochána is represented at

Deputy Commissioner level on the Audit Committee (as the Commissioner’s representative).

Public Accounts Committee

When requested, the Commissioner attends, in his capacity as Accounting Officer for the Garda vote, the Dáil Committee of Public Accounts, and informs it on matters of interest.

Garda Professional Standards Unit (G.P.S.U.)

Established in February 2006 the G.P.S.U. examines and reviews the operational, administrative and management performance at all levels of the organisation. The unit utilises the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model as a methodology for ensuring continuous improvement in the wider Garda organisation. To date thirty-five Garda Districts and Garda Headquarter units were examined under a comprehensive examination process in accordance with the EFQM model.

Performance Accountability Framework (P.A.F.) and Regional Reviews

Local governance arrangements have been enhanced by the development of a Performance Accountability Framework (P.A.F.) at Regional, Divisional and District levels. This is further enhanced by Regional Reviews conducted by the Garda Commissioner, or Deputy Commissioner, where performance targets and achievements are analysed and assessed.

Raised Ethical Standards

The Confidential Reporting Charter (Section 124 of the Garda Síochána Act, 2005) provides a confidential reporting mechanism for the organisation. This reporting mechanism was established and circulated to the organisation in July 2008. An external confidential recipient was appointed by the Minister along with nine internal recipients who were appointed by the Commissioner. Protocols are being put in place with the Ombudsman Commission, the Inspectorate and the Commissioner.

In the period under review the organisation has also developed:

- A new Code of Ethics
- New Discipline Regulations
- Policy on Anti Bullying/Sexual Harassment
- A Diversity Strategy

Significant Operational Successes

During the period under review, An Garda Síochána has successfully maintained National and International Security, reduced road deaths, disrupted criminals and criminal activity and confronted organised crime, drug dealing and public disorder.

National and International Security Maintained

An Garda Síochána was continually focused on meeting its obligation in maintaining the National and International Security of the State in this period. The main challenges faced relate to the threats posed by indigenous dissident republican groups and international terrorist groups.

An Garda Síochána has continued to work closely with law enforcement colleagues in the international arena, Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom in an intelligence sharing capacity.

On the international front, An Garda Síochána has continued to closely monitor the activities of those in this jurisdiction who are suspected or believed to be involved in international terrorist activity, whether actively or through the provision of financial or other forms of support. In this regard, we work closely with our international colleagues, intelligence services in the sharing of intelligence.

Criminal Activity Disrupted

During this period An Garda Síochána has continued to disrupt the activities of those involved in serious and organised crime and reduced the harm they caused to society. The methodologies employed in confronting criminals and criminal activity is grounded in a focus on Intelligence-Led Policing. Intelligence-led policing involves the collection and analysis of information to produce an intelligence package designed to inform police decision making at both tactical and strategic levels in a value for money environment.

This has manifested itself in:

- A reduction in the murder rate from 61 in 2006 to 49 in 2008, a reduction of 20%
- 2384 firearms taken off the streets
- 1,867,111 Prosecutions

Drugs

Garda resources in the fight against illicit drugs have increased. This is particularly evident with the creation of additional Divisional and District Drugs Units. By the end of 2008, each Division in the country had a dedicated Drugs Unit. The Garda National Drugs Unit and Divisional and District Drugs Units are also supported in their work by officers from other national units such as the National Bureau of Criminal Investigation, the Criminal Assets Bureau and the Garda bureau of Fraud Investigation. The effective use of resources in the fight against illicit drugs is contingent on intelligence led operations and An Garda Síochána collaborates with our colleagues in Customs and with international law enforcement agencies. Our success to date is manifested in Drugs seizures in excess of €880 million in the period 2006-2008.

Operation ANVIL

One of the principal strategies utilised for confronting crime, and criminal activity, is ‘Operation Anvil’; an intelligence-led operation that has been used to target criminal individuals. ‘Operation Anvil’ was extended countrywide in 2006 with the primary objective of disrupting serious and organised criminal activity. Anvil operations have a short-term focus and are designed to address specific and emerging criminal activity. Crime trends are analysed and are the subject of ongoing discussion at management meetings and other appropriate fora. Intelligence-led initiatives are put in place in conjunction with resources made available under Operation Anvil.

Public Order

An Garda Síochána continued to work closely with communities, statutory groups and local representatives to identify and target local public order ‘hot spots’ and to make our communities safer places in which to live and work. Throughout this period Gardaí have continued to proactively enforce the law in relation to drunkenness and public order offences. Drunkenness offences have reduced by 26% during the period. Detection of Public Order Incidents has increased by 25%.

Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) were introduced into Irish law through the Criminal Justice Act 2006. The provision allows local Gardaí to deal with anti-social behaviour through a civil process using behaviour warnings and orders. A total of 947 adult behaviour warnings and 644 child behaviour warnings were issued during 2007 and 2008.

Roads Policing

Together with our partners in road safety, An Garda Síochána has successfully challenged errant road user behaviour throughout the State, employing an effective road safety enforcement strategy, an educational awareness strategy and an effective engagement strategy.

The successful implementation of the Roads Policing Strategy 2007-2012¹ has led to a reduction of 24.2% in road fatalities during the period under review:

| Period: | Number of fatalities: |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1/1/06 – 31/12/06 | 365 |
| 1/1/07 – 31/12/07 | 338 |
| 1/1/08 – 31/12/08 | 279 |

¹ Road Safety Strategy 2007-2012, Road Safety Authority (2007)

In line with the Strategic Review of Traffic, specific resource allocations to the Traffic Corps were continued.

Mandatory Alcohol Testing

The legislation underpinning Mandatory Alcohol Testing (MAT) was introduced on the 21st July 2006 and has been extremely helpful to the Garda organisation in tackling drink driving. The general public has willingly accepted this legislation and this acceptance is witnessed on a daily basis by Garda personnel at MAT checkpoints. The number of Drink Driving Detections rose from 17,868 in 2006 to 19,837 in 2007 an increase of over 11%. The figure for 2008 was 17,600.

Collision Prone Zones

A Collision Prone Zones initiative has identified sections of road within each Garda division which have a fatal and personal injury collision history.

The objectives of the Collision Prone Zones initiative are to ensure:

- A Collision Focused Approach: (The targeting of locations with a collision history).
- Targeted Enforcement: (With an emphasis on Drink/Drug Driving, Speeding, non-wearing of seat belts and the improper use of mobile phones).
- Efficient Use of Resources: (Human resources, transport and equipment).

In order to educate and keep the public apprised of the risks associated with driving at excessive speeds within these Zones, details of the Zones are available to the public on the Garda website.

Garda Mobile Speed Detection Vehicles

In September 2008, the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, and the Garda Commissioner launched eight new Garda ‘Mobile Speed Detection Vehicles’. The digital enforcement technology operating in these vehicles enhances An Garda Síochána’s enforcement capability during both daylight hours and the hours of darkness. These vehicles are deployed nationally with an emphasis on Collision Prone Zones. Additional speed enforcement activity is being conducted in these Zones by handheld speed enforcement equipment.

Enhanced Operational Capacity

In order to support and supplement the efforts of An Garda Síochána in maintaining both national and international security and in continuing to confront serious and organised crime the organisation has developed a number of strategic initiatives.

Organised Crime Unit

The Organised Crime Unit (O.C.U.) was established with the specific objective of targeting organised crime. The OCU works in association with other specialist units, e.g. the Criminal Assets Bureau, the National Bureau of Criminal Investigation, the Garda Bureau of Fraud Investigation, and the Garda National Drugs Unit. The result of the combined efforts of these units is manifested in a reduction in murders and enhanced seizures of firearms and drugs.

Regional Support Units

The establishment of the Regional Support Units (R.S.U.) further enhances the operational capability of the organisation. The R.S.U. provides An Garda Síochána with a multi-skilled and equipped Regional response capability for critical incidents. The R.S.U. was established primarily to provide a ‘Second Tier’ Regional response to critical incidents, in support of unarmed Garda First Responders, pending the arrival of the Emergency Response Unit, where appropriate. Units are equipped with a range of lethal and less-lethal weapons, including specialist firearms and conducted energy devices (C.E.D.s).

Garda Reserve

The Garda Reserve was established in 2006. The first intake of Garda Reserves began training at the Garda College on 30th September 2006. The Reserve has a current strength of 327 with an additional 111 in training. Recruitment and training is ongoing. The impact of the Garda Reserve can be identified in increased visibility and enhanced operational capacity.

Forensic Collision Investigation

Forensic Collision Investigation involves the forensic examination of Road Collision Scenes. An investment in specialist training has resulted in the enhancement of the organisation's collision investigation capability. Forty-four Forensic Collision Investigators are now trained and it is planned to have one Forensic Collision Investigator located in each Garda Division. The investigators have completed an intensive course accredited to 'City & Guilds' standards and have access to the most modern technical equipment.

Covert Human Intelligence Source (C.H.I.S.) System

In line with best international practice An Garda Síochána has developed a comprehensive Covert Human Intelligence Source System (C.H.I.S.) and a Code of Practice for the Management and Use of Covert Human Intelligence Sources. This system, and Code of Practice, is mandatory for all members of An Garda Síochána and is the basis of the required professional standards to ensure and maintain the confidence of the public and the Courts in the continuing use of C.H.I.S. The Code of Practice brings together current established best practice and recent recommendations made to the organisation. Its operation became the organisational policy on the 3rd April, 2006.

Garda Síochána Analysis Service (G.S.A.S.)

Established in 2007 the G.S.A.S. supports the organisation by:

- Using crime pattern analysis techniques to determine patterns, trends, hotspots and linked crime series
- Formulating practical, evidence-based recommendations
- Evaluating the effectiveness of policing operations and techniques
- Assisting with ongoing operations by researching, collating and analysing information from all relevant sources

There are currently 21 crime and policing analysts deployed throughout the organisation, together with a Head Analyst and two Deputy Heads based at Garda Headquarters.

Incident Command Capabilities

Critical incident investigation capability has been enhanced by the provision of ‘Incident Command Vehicles’ which provide secure and visible command facilities at the scene of critical incidents. These vehicles have been deployed on numerous occasions since their launch providing vital command and control facilities to members on the ground at major events / incidents. They have also been successfully deployed as temporary Garda Stations when required.

Enhanced Financial Management

Over the course of the period under review the Government has invested €4.5b in An Garda Síochána. This budget has allowed the organisation to operate effectively, as set out in this Report. The budget has been utilised in the following areas:

- People: Funding of salaries, superannuation and training
- Technology and equipment procurement
- Enabling Operations
- Securing Resources
- Management and maintenance the Garda Estate.

Finance Directorate

The Finance Directorate ensures the prudent management of the Garda budget. It operates within the Public Financial Procedures Framework and is subject to a high level of internal and external scrutiny. A review of the effectiveness of internal financial controls is undertaken each year to ensure that the procedures within the Finance Directorate meet the requirements of the Comptroller and Auditor General. Additional professional accountants were appointed to the Finance Directorate to assist with the development of the financial and management accounting functions. Their role is to support the ongoing devolution of budgetary responsibility, financial reporting, review of financial systems and to better support line management in financial matters. The integrated financial management system is completed and the new system supports the devolution of budgetary responsibility.

Improved financial management capability supports the Garda Commissioner in his role as Accounting Officer allowing him to maintain budgetary levels and introduce enhanced financial management practices across the organisation.

These financial management practices are exemplified through:

- Remote Entry Payroll System
- An examination of Activity Based Costing

- Streamlined procurement
- Enhanced Transport Management
- Revised Estate Maintenance processes

Procurement

Procurement Section has been involved in a number of significant contracts on behalf of the organisation such as the purchase of anti-stab ballistic vests, incapacitant spray, operational uniforms, firearm ranges, protective equipment, mobile speed detection systems, ANPR systems etc. All Garda tender competitions are carried out in accordance with EU Directives, National Public Procurement Procedures and relevant legislation.

Estate Management

The improvements to the Garda estate in the form of new station facilities, refurbishments and extensions over the period 2006 – 2008 include the following (some uncompleted);

- Thirteen new Garda stations at: Schull, Ballyvary, Urlingford, Donard, Oranmore, Ballymun, Trim, Irishtown, Claremorris, Leixlip, Ballymote, Finglas and Buncrana,
- eight extensions,
- six refurbishments, and
- two modular firing ranges.

Greater Community Engagement

Partnership and consultation with the community is critical to successful policing. An Garda Síochána's commitment to the community it serves is manifested through the introduction of the new National Model of Community Policing, our active involvement in Joint Policing Committees and numerous local initiatives throughout the country.

National Model of Community Policing

An Garda Síochána, in accordance with our commitment outlined in the Corporate Strategy 2007-2009, has developed a National Model of Community Policing. The Model builds on the success of existing good community policing practice and aims to create a policing environment where collaborative partnerships are fostered between An Garda Síochána and members of communities in order to find workable solutions that increase safety, security and protection. The new model will result in a more visible Garda presence and a reduction in crime and the fear of crime in our communities.

Ten Key Pillars in the Model have been identified as *Garda-Community Partnerships, Problem Solving, Crime Prevention and Reduction, Accountability, Accessibility, Collaborative Engagement, Visibility, Improved Response, Enforcement and Empowerment.*

Joint Policing Committees

Section 36 of the Garda Síochána Act, 2005 provided for the establishment of a Joint Policing Committee in each local authority administrative area and as part of local government structures. Twenty-nine committees were established on a pilot basis in 2006. To date seventy-four Joint Policing Committees are established. Garda management throughout the country has actively engaged in all Joint Policing Committees to discuss and make recommendations on matters affecting the policing of their respective areas.

Neighbourhood Watch and Community Alert

Neighbourhood Watch operates as a partnership between An Garda Síochána and the public. It operates on the basis that every member of a community can help to improve the quality of life in their area by keeping a look out for their neighbours and contacting the Gardaí where necessary. There are in excess of 2,600 Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in locations throughout the country.

Community Alert is a community safety programme for rural areas with an emphasis on older and vulnerable people. It operates as a partnership between An Garda Síochána, local communities and Muintir na Tíre. There are currently 1250 Community Alert schemes throughout the country.

Better Human Resource Management, Training & Development

During the period under review An Garda Síochána delivered on the Governments accelerated recruitment commitment. The strength of An Garda Síochána increased from 12,435 on 31st March 2006 to 14,569 on 31st March 2009 which represents an increase of 17.2%. This, together with the civilianisation programme, has enhanced the numbers of members available for frontline duties.

Civilianisation

942 civilian support staff were recruited over the three year period. This represents an increase of 80.5% and facilitated the replacement of sworn members who performed exclusively clerical, administrative or technical duties. The posts of Chief Administrative Officer, Executive Director ICT, Executive Director of Finance, Director of Communications and Head of Legal Affairs have been filled. The expertise and management skills of these post-holders have proved invaluable to the Garda organisation from both an administrative and operational perspective.

Partnership

Constructive working relationships with the Garda staff associations and the civilian trade unions were managed and maintained. Through the combined use of both the Partnership Process and the Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme a positive industrial relations climate was fostered. A Partnership Committee was established to deal constructively with a range of Human Resource issues. There were significant developments and agreements reached in relation to the accelerated programme of civilianisation. Other notable achievements agreed through the partnership forum included the realignment of Regional, Divisional, District and Sub-District boundaries to make them coterminous with local authority boundaries. There has also been ongoing cooperation with the recruitment of the Garda Reserve, the ongoing development of the National Digital Radio Project, the implementation of the Accomplishment Growth Model.

Training

An Garda Síochána views training as an investment which recognises people as its most important strategic resource. Training is particularly important with the increasing pace of technological, structural and social change. Training needs are based on an objective assessment related to:

- The vision, goals and objectives of the organisation
- The need to be responsive to changes in external environmental influences
- Human resource strategic planning.
- Operational requirements.

Training Outputs

The results of a sustained investment in accelerated recruitment and training has resulted in:

- 2,698 members graduated from the Garda College with BA Degrees in Police Studies
- 63 members at Superintendent and Inspector ranks graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Police Management
- 26 senior managers successfully completed the Garda Executive Leadership Programme including officers from the P.S.N.I., the Strathclyde Police and the Suffolk Constabulary
- 75 members have completed the Senior Investigating Officers Training Programme
- 216 members of An Garda Síochána have been trained as Family Liaison Officers
- 25 members of An Garda Síochána and eight employees from the HSE successfully completed the Specialist Child Interviewing course

- 32 members attended a familiarisation course on the interviewing of witnesses and suspects. Full training commenced on the 30th March 2009.
- The establishment of a Crime Training Faculty at the Garda College

The Commissioner initiated a strategic review of all Garda training and development during 2008 and the resultant Report and recommendations are under consideration.

A More Defined Strategic Direction

Strategically An Garda Síochána is focused on delivering excellence in policing to the diverse communities that make up the social fabric of Irish society. The formulation of this strategic direction is an iterative process that involves many stakeholders involved in the policing function. An extensive consultative process underpins this process involving; Government; Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform; the public; Representative Associations; Local Government and individual members of An Garda Síochána.

The organisational strategic direction is planned and articulated to Government, community and membership of organisation through the organisation's Corporate Strategy and a series of Annual, Regional, Divisional and District Policing Plans, which enables the delivery of a policing service that meets the diverse requirements of our communities.

Organisational activity is focused on the realisation of the corporate goals of the organisation which are organised around six key objectives of *'National and International Security; Crime; Traffic and Road Safety; Public Order; Ethnic and Cultural Diversity and Community Engagement'*. These public facing objectives are further underpinned by a comprehensive change and modernisation programme articulated through six key strategic imperatives that outline a planned approach for the organisation.

The realisation of all the objectives and goals of the organisation are measured against performance indicators and an achievement matrix. The results of this strategic process have seen the organisation well positioned to anticipate and resolve many emergent social and policing issues.

Greater Access to and use of Technology

An Garda Síochána has remained abreast of technological advances through a series of well planned, managed and implemented IT projects.

Garda Information Services Centre (G.I.S.C.)

The introduction of a central call answering service has enhanced operational capacity increasing the time operational members can remain patrolling. There are currently 161 civilian support staff employed at the centre and they create approx 83% of PULSE incidents a week.

Automated Fingerprint Identification System (A.F.I.S.)

Integration with the PULSE system is being progressed. The new A.F.I.S. system has resulted in the number of crime scene hits increasing by over 100%, a more secure means of checking the identity of Garda National Immigration Bureau (G.N.I.B.) applicants nationally and allows for conformity with EURODAC, (European Dactyloscopie – the European fingerprint database).

Automatic Number Plate Recognition (A.N.P.R.)

All vehicles fitted with the A.N.P.R. camera systems have the capability to identify vehicles as being stolen, suspect, untaxed and uninsured thereby making a significant contribution to the fight against serious and organised criminal activity.

Portal

Knowledge and information is essential in everyday work and the introduction of the Garda Portal, in December 2008, provides employees with online access to organisational knowledge and information. The general purpose of Knowledge Management is to make knowledge usable and available across the organisation.

Automated Ballistic Information System (A.B.I.S.)

The Automated Ballistic Information System went live in 2008 and is used to support investigations within the Ballistics Section. It improves the overall efficiency and response times in the investigation of gun crime. This ensures timely and accurate provision of forensic information to investigations and the analysis of ballistics exhibits.

National Digital Radio System (N.D.R.S.)

Rollout is currently proceeding to schedule with the Dublin Metropolitan Region fits at an advanced stage and station fit-outs have commenced.

CCTV

Nationally, a total of twenty six Garda CCTV systems are in place or nearing completion. The project for the centralisation of CCTV systems at Abbey Street in Dublin city centre has recommenced. It is anticipated that the centralisation of the Pearse Street and Store Street systems will enhance policing in the city centre.

Improved Collaboration Processes Across the Criminal Justice Family

An Garda Síochána is acutely aware of the value that strategic partnerships bring to the complexity of policing in this State. In this regard collaboration with many Government Departments and the private sector is essential for success.

Collaboration with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (D.J.E.L.R.)

An Garda Síochána works closely with its partners within D.J.E.L.R. to ensure the best and most imaginative approaches are deployed in the continual challenge to ensure the personal protection of all citizens, the security of the State and the best commitment to all our diverse communities. This manifests itself in engagements on Joint Policing Committees; Special projects; youth initiatives; juvenile diversion programmes and many other initiatives.

Collaboration with other Government Departments and Agencies

This collaborative approach is also replicated with other Government Departments and agencies such as the Health Service Executive in areas associated with child safety; public health and welfare issues. An Garda Síochána fosters excellent relationships with our ‘blue light’ emergency service partners such as the Fire Service, the Ambulance Service and our colleagues in the Department of Defence and Department of Education.

International Law Enforcement Agencies

Internationally, An Garda Síochána worked closely with relevant law enforcement agencies including all EU agencies, the Drugs Enforcement Agency (US), Interpol and Europol. An Garda Síochána also has Liaison Officers based in the Hague, London, Paris, Madrid, Europol and Interpol.

An Garda Síochána also participated at the Maritime Analysis Operations Centre for Narcotics (MAOC-N), which was established in Lisbon, Portugal, during 2008. An Garda Síochána is in ongoing liaison with its international law enforcement partners

and the Irish Prison Service to counteract the activities of persons who attempt to continue their criminal endeavours from outside the jurisdiction and / or while serving prison sentences.

Conclusion

It must be recognised that policing in Ireland occurs in a complex environment influenced by a multitude of varying factors. Policing occurs everyday on a 24 hour basis and ranges from extreme violence and hardship to incidences of severe emotional displays. The modern Garda, educated and trained, must be capable of working in this eclectic environment. Meeting these challenges cannot be the sole responsibility of An Garda Síochána. A multi-agency approach offers the best potential and best solutions for maintaining an orderly society and to allow social and economic development to prosper.