



Chambers Ireland Submission to the Commission on the Future of Policing

January 2018

Introduction

Chambers Ireland is the largest business network in the State. With members in every geographic region and economic sector in Ireland, we are well positioned to understand the concerns of businesses from all areas in the country and represent their views.

We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the work of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland as it undertakes a review of policing and how it can be made fit for purpose in the future.

What should we value?

Collaboration between the business community, civic society and the Garda Síochána has been highlighted by chambers in our network as being crucial.

One example of successful collaboration between businesses and local police is the successful Purple Flag programme. Launched in Ireland in 2012, Purple Flag is an international accreditation scheme for town and city centres in the evening and at night. It is the “gold standard” for night time destinations. Like Blue Flag for beaches, places that meet the standards can fly the flag. 70 town and city centres have been awarded Purple Flags since the scheme was launched by ATCM in October 2009. The success of the Purple Flag initiative is centred on close co-operation and collaboration between the business community, local authorities and the local Gardaí.

In addition, our chambers noted that as the geopolitical landscape changes, it is necessary to be diligent and prepared both nationally and regionally. Working proactively with communities to promote social integration across all cultures is crucial for effective collaboration. Chambers Ireland believes that a focus on community and the further development of supported and inclusive activities should be central to the future strategy,

What should we improve?

Chambers and their members have consistently called for increased resourcing of Community Policing via an increase in Gardaí numbers as critical to supporting local economies.

In addition, feedback from the Chamber Network recommended the need for further emphasis on crime prevention as being essential. This requires additional resources (manpower, budget and technical) nationally and regionally, and across urban and rural areas, and again emphasises the importance of resourcing Community Policing and enhancing crime prevention, and investigative, resources.

What should we change?

Another trend in the feedback we received from the Irish Chamber Network was the recommendation that the Gardaí need to ensure that it is resourced and trained to cope with cybercrime which has been rapidly increasing in recent years. The average cost of fraud to organisations in 2016 was estimated to be €1.7m, and with cyber-attacks have doubled since 2012.

As part of reviewing how police spend their time and what resources they need into the future, Government must ensure that as the nature of crime evolves, so too do the tools the Gardaí are provided with to police and prevent this crime. Increased funds and training in cyber-security will be vital in the years to come.