

A chara,

I put forward the following submission in the spirit of the phrase contained in the second paragraph of the Terms of Reference as stated 'the need for pro-active, routine and continuous engagement with local communities'.

The growth and popularity of the 'Community Text Alert Schemes' throughout most of our rural communities arising out of increased levels of criminality in rural and isolated areas has enhanced the engagement and participation of citizens in assisting statutory authorities in tackling crime. This community focused approach of increased vigilance and reporting has created a useful aid to An Garda Siochana in an era of reduced resources particularly with the closure of rural stations and patrolling. As a participant of a Community Text Alert Scheme, I am acutely aware of the benefit, as I have experienced firsthand, that such engagement brings to rural dwellers.

No different to many states and territories around the world that share a border with neighbouring jurisdictions, the border counties and regions in Ireland suffer inordinately compared to other counties when it comes to the efficacy of policing and security in combating crime. More so in an environment where the border is, for all intents and purposes, physically invisible. I acknowledge and accept there are open and active lines of communication between An Garda Siochana and the PSNI, however, the lack of similarly open and active lines of communication on a Community Text Alert basis creates a considerable security deficit in providing for communities along the border corridor. It is a well established fact that where borders occur with separate policing authorities, criminality thrives where the potential for ease of flight from pursuit occurs. The lack of a cross-border Text Alert Scheme, and the 'real time' notification system of alerting both residential and business property occupants, further exacerbates the sense of fear and isolation experienced by citizens particularly among our elderly and those living alone. Through this submission, I implore the relevant authorities to robustly address this weakness in an otherwise excellent community service and further, collaborate with the relevant agencies with the aim of establishing a cross-border Community Text Alert Scheme.

Many thanks for your consideration of this submission.

Is mise,

Cllr. Sean Conlon

Monaghan County Council