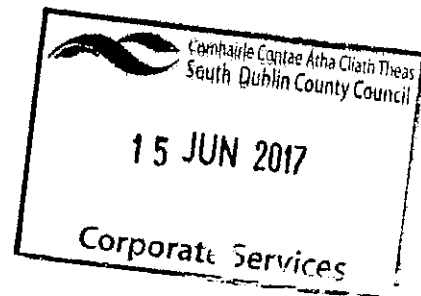


OIFIG AN AIRE DLÍ AGUS CIRT AGUS COMHIONANNAIS
OFFICE OF THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

Mr Colm Murphy
Meeting Administrator
South Dublin County Council
County Hall
Tallaght
Dublin 24



Reference: M20S/0517
Ministers Reference: 0508093816

13 June 2017

Dear Mr Murphy,

I am directed by the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality, Ms. Frances Fitzgerald TD, refer to your letter dated 3 May 2017, regarding the motion agreed at November meeting of South Dublin County Council.

The Garda Commissioner has statutory responsibility for the distribution of personnel among the various Garda Divisions and the Minister has no direct involvement in the matter. The Commissioner also ensures that the allocation of Gardaí is continually monitored and reviewed taking into account all relevant factors including crime trends, demographics, and security assessments relating to the area in question so as to ensure optimal use is made of Garda human resources.

Local Garda Management closely monitor patrols, and other operational strategies in DMR South, in conjunction with crime trends and policing needs of the local community to ensure optimum use is made of the Garda resources, and the best possible Garda service is provided to the public. The situation is kept under review.

Operation Hybrid has been established to coordinate the response to violent crime in Dublin and address public concerns about community safety. As of 18 May 2017, there have been 56 arrests and 5 charges brought in connection with the recent shootings and 3 charges brought for related offences. In addition, 26 firearms have been seized and over 11,900 lines of enquiry conducted. In the region of 31,500 high visibility checkpoints have been implemented with significant support from Armed Support Units and a significant amount of CCTV footage, mobile phone traffic, and forensic evidence is also being examined. I understand Operation Hybrid

is reviewed on a weekly basis to maintain optimal impact.

Operation Thor is a nationwide initiative to tackle burglary and related criminal activity as well as working with communities to prevent crime. It was designed and launched after the Minister initiated a broad review of our response to burglary and it represents a major step-up in our response to criminals who have sought to target householders in many areas of the country.

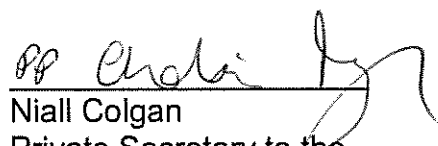
Operation Thor has particularly targeted mobile gangs engaged in burglary and related crimes and it is encouraging to note that since the launch of the operation in November 2015, the burglary figures have shown a significant downward trend. Indeed, the most recent CSO official recorded crime statistics for Q4 of 2016 show a decrease of 30% in burglary for the twelve months in 2016 compared to same period in 2015 which parallels the implementation of Operation Thor. This reflects the success of the concerted Garda drive against crime being implemented under Operation Thor.

This Government is committed to ensuring a strong and visible police presence throughout the country in order to maintain and strengthen community engagement, provide reassurance to citizens and deter crime. To make this a reality for all, the Government has in place a plan to achieve an overall Garda workforce of 21,000 personnel by 2021 comprising 15,000 Garda members, 2,000 Reserve members and 4,000 civilians. In 2017, funding has been provided for the recruitment of 800 Garda recruits and up to 500 civilians to support the wide ranging reform plan in train in An Garda Síochána. Funding has also been provided for the recruitment of 300 Garda Reserves.

This plan is progressing apace. I am informed by the Commissioner, since the reopening of the Garda College in September 2014, that just under 1,000 recruits have attested as members of An Garda Síochána and have been assigned to mainstream duties nationwide. I am also informed that another 600 trainee Garda are scheduled to attest this year which will see Garda numbers, taking account of projected retirements, increase to around the 13,500 mark by year end.

This focus on investment in personnel is critical. The moratorium on recruitment introduced in 2010 resulted in a significant reduction in the strength of An Garda Síochána. We are now rebuilding the organisation and providing the Garda Commissioner with the resources she needs to allow her to deploy increasing numbers of Gardaí across every Garda Division, including Dublin Metropolitan Regional South in the coming years.

Yours Sincerely



Niall Colgan
Private Secretary to the
Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality