

Meeting 5: 18th February 2022 in Boomerang Youth Café

New community representatives Louise Mahony and Valerie Artherton were welcomed to the meeting. Louise and Valerie were elected to these seats on the Board by community sector representatives at a meeting held on 15th February. Minister for Justice Helen McEntee was in attendance for the duration of this meeting.

The Chair of the Board has had a discussion with Vivian Geiran and clarified a number of the actions within the Drogheda Report. In particular, action 7.4 will be updated in the next biannual report on the Implementation Plan.

Since our last meeting the Chair and Coordinator of the Board have met with a variety of key stakeholders including TDs, Borough District of Drogheda members, and Laytown-Bettystown Municipal District members. We have agreed to meet with elected representatives on a regular basis to discuss the work of the Board. Meetings were also held with the Minister for Justice, HSE and other key stakeholders in this period. The communications strategy, agreed at our last meeting, has been implemented with www.droghedaimplementationboard.ie and all social media channels now live. In addition, a regular newsletter is now being circulated to community organisations and elected representatives.

Chief Superintendent Christy Mangan outlined the considerable increase in detections, seizures and arrests in the Drogheda area. Chief Superintendent Mangan further noted that the Community Policing Unit in Drogheda is now double the size of many other districts which will enable An Garda Síochána to be very responsive to issues on an individual and community level.

A number of Board members noted a requirement for multiannual funding and increased financial supports for community services operating in the addiction and drugs sector. The gap in frontline staffing in this field was further noted. The need to focus on supports to young people was also emphasised and gaps in training provision for under 18s identified. A proposal submitted by LMETB for the provision of a dedicated Youth Officer for the Drogheda area, which aligns to a number of actions in the report and was recommended to the Board by Subgroup B: Family Support, Children, Young People and Education was considered and supported by the Board.

A request for support from Drogheda Institute for Further Education for applications for capital funding for a sports and community changing/meeting block to progress action 4.4 of the plan was approved.

A comprehensive discussion of many action points on the Implementation Plan was held. The Chair noted the challenges for bodies and agencies with a broader regional or national focus in delivering on the actions but emphasised that the focus of the work of the Board and its constituent members has to be on Drogheda and its environs. A number of suggestions were made by members as to how some actions with broader and long-term focus could be implemented with Drogheda to the forefront.

The Chair of the Board commended Louth County Council on securing capital works funding for Lourdes Stadium.

The Chair further wished Chief Superintendent Mangan well with his imminent retirement and thanked him for his service to the people of Drogheda in a very difficult period.