



Chairman, I wish to thank the Committee for the opportunity to appear once again before it, in my capacity as Accounting Officer for the Garda Vote and I look forward to discussing any aspect of the vote with you and the Committee. I have previously supplied briefing material to the Committee in response to a number of queries the Committee has raised and wished to have information on.

As an introduction let me describe the resources available to me in policing this country.

The strength of the Force at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010 was 14,377 (all ranks). The strength of An Garda Síochána on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011 was 13,894, a reduction of 483 members. The strength of An Garda Síochána on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2012 was 13,476 sworn members inclusive of all ranks. In total since 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010, 901 Gardaí (all ranks) have retired or left the organisation.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2011 there were 2,074 full-time equivalent civilian staff employed in An Garda Síochána with a ratio of civilian to sworn members of 1:7. An Garda Síochána remains committed to attaining a lower ratio however this is influenced by the current Public Sector recruitment moratorium. It must also be borne in mind that An Garda Síochána performs “Security and Intelligence and Immigration” functions that are not performed by many of our comparator police organizations. These additional mandates have an impact on the Garda/civilian ratio<sup>1</sup>.

The number of full-time equivalent civilian staff employed in An Garda Síochána on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2012 was 2031.

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<sup>1</sup> If these functions are excluded the ratio becomes 1:6

2012 to date has been a challenging and demanding year, yet An Garda Síochána had much success operationally and organisationally throughout the year with decreases in many categories of crime, reductions once again in road fatalities and many successes against dissident republicans intent on causing injury in either this jurisdiction or in Northern Ireland.

The efficient use of resources has been highlighted in the Annual Garda Policing Plan 2012. One of the objectives of the Policing Plan is to promote efficiencies and effectiveness in resource allocation and deployment so as to enhance the policing service we provide to members of the public. However I am also very conscious of the need to make the very best use of state resources made available to me. With this in mind I have initiated constructive dialogue with our criminal justice sector partners such as the Court Service, the Prison Service and indeed the Department of Justice and Equality that will generate further efficiencies in the years to come.

The 2012 budget for the Garda Vote amounts to €1.325 billion, which is 8% less than the 2011 budget of €1.439 billion which as you know was also reduced from the 2010 figure. The rapid decline in the public finances in recent years requires us all to do more with less. An Garda Síochána is not immune from the effects of the downturn in public finances and we continue to play our part in our nation's economic recovery. The Public and other stakeholders expect as efficient and productive an organisation as possible. Indeed the significant achievements already made by An Garda Síochána in delivering organisational reform is widely recognised and here I would like to mention for example the piloting of a new roster, the first in almost forty



years in An Garda Síochána and the new Performance and Accountability system (PALF) which is also at pilot and due for full roll out in 2013.

In conjunction with these achievements An Garda Síochána also has a significant organisational development and change programme in operation encompassing my commitments towards the Croke Park Agreement, the Integrated Reform Delivery Plan (IRDP) and the GRACE Programme. This programme has 39 projects either completed or in progress in areas such as a new “Service Delivery Model, District and Station Rationalisation, Workforce Realignment and an examination of Specialisation” in the organisation among others.

As the Committee will be aware, 90% plus of the Garda Vote is expended on wages, salaries and allowances. A number of allowances were first introduced by Government in the Garda Síochána Allowances Order 1924 and 1926. These allowances recognised the unique nature of the work of An Garda Síochána and were awarded in many instances in lieu of basic pay rises over the years. This uniqueness was subsequently recognised by both the Conroy Commission (1970) and the Ryan Committee of Enquiry (1979). The Conroy Commission recognised the significant impact these allowances had on the morale of the organisation. The debate around allowances has particular resonance in An Garda Síochána similar to other public service organisations and indeed has implications for the Public Service Pay Agreement 2010-14 (Croke Park Agreement).

The Conciliation and Arbitration process is one of the negotiating mechanisms which exists for the purpose of enabling the Minister for Justice & Equality, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, and

the Commissioner of An Garda Síochána on the one hand, and the Garda Representative Associations on the other hand, to provide for the determination and validity of claims, including pay and allowances.

A further purpose of the Conciliation and Arbitration process is to secure the agreement and fullest co-operation between the State, as employer, and the members, as employees, for the better discharge of the functions of An Garda Síochána. Indeed it is a mechanism which has served this State well in that it has ensured the preservation of industrial harmony, while at the same time maintaining confidence and effectiveness in the Garda industrial relations machinery.

For over four decades this mechanism has been utilised by both sides in the initial granting of or subsequent increase in these allowances /expenses for the Garda Síochána. In the case of civilian employees the trade unions that represent civilians in An Garda Síochána continue to engage and work to ensure their members work efficiently in An Garda Síochána.

When the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Mr. Brendan Howlin, T.D. published the outcome of the review of public service allowances and premium pay on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2012 following consideration by Government, one allowance, similar to other public sector bodies namely Delegates Allowance was deemed no longer justified.

In addition the Minister announced that arising from the review a number of changes will be made to the public service allowance regime which included certain allowances for An Garda Síochána. These included classes of

allowances proposed to be abolished for new beneficiaries, allowances which were subject to review and/or modification. In addition it identified classes of allowances proposed to be approved for new beneficiaries. A total of eight allowances were identified within An Garda Síochána for priority elimination.

Following this Central Government decision, I have instructed, that as part of the Revised Action Plan 2012 for An Garda Síochána in the context of the Public Service Agreement 2010-2014, that the consultation process will now begin with the Garda Staff Associations with the objective of establishing a mechanism whereby these priority allowances to existing beneficiaries will be eliminated. This process will include a timescale for the elimination of these allowances.

I will now answer any questions the Chairman and members may have.