



Statement

Jim Mulligan, President Garda Representative Association

Budget shows Garda reform plan being built on quicksand

The Government's policing reform plan looks like it is being on built on quicksand following today's Budget allocation of €81 million for An Garda Síochána.

Jim Mulligan President of the GRA said:

"The additional €81 million for next year's budget will have to be spread so thinly it is difficult to see how it can meet all the plans that have been announced for policing reform.

"Gardai are apparently supposed to operate a pro-arrest approach to street violence, implement a new operating model with more specialist units and police the growing level of criminality on the border and elsewhere against a backdrop of an overtime ban. The new uniform for next year will cost €12m and commitments will need to be met under the Public Sector Stability Agreement.

"All of this will need to come from the €81 million as well as the €15 – €18m taken this year from the Garda budget to pay for the visits of Donald Trump and Mike Pence. The arithmetic does not look good at all. So, this is yet another dent to our confidence in the government's intention to reform policing.

"It is unclear how much of the capital budget for policing, prisons and courts is for investment in An Garda Síochána.

"While we welcome the ring-fenced funding for ICT and the replacement building for Harcourt Terrace, we are particularly concerned about there being no mention of a ring-fenced amount for renovating and replacing the many dilapidated stations around the country such as Clonmel, Sligo and Newcastlewest. Macroom is supposed to become a divisional HQ but there's no mention of funding for it.

"Infrastructure is a foundation stone for the new Operational Policing Model announced recently but the only project mentioned in today's budget that features in the policing reform plan, A Policing Service, for the Future, is the ICT strategy. However, there are another 25 projects that that need to be delivered over the next two years.

"Yet again our request for a ring-fenced training budget has not been delivered so this will again need to be met from the €81 million. The Government policing reform plan looks ever more like it is being built on quicksand."