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Extra resources must account for return to more normal policing

Jim Mulligan, President GRA

06.10.2020

The commitment of extra resources to policing the new Level-3 Covid-19 restrictions nationwide must be enough to cover for the additional work being carried out, GRA President Jim Mulligan has said.

Minister for Justice Helen McEntee is promising additional funding for the new guard operations which begin at midnight tonight. But she has yet to indicate how much additional money will be made available.

However, Mr Mulligan set the circumstances surrounding the new restrictions are different from those that pertained when the lock down was implemented last March.

“We welcome the commitment to more resources by the Minister for Justice. When we were policing at the start of the outbreak, most of society had been shut down. Since then, police work is closer to normality, so stricter enforcement of restrictions will create an added pressure our members,” Mr Mulligan said.

Operation Fanacht will see 132 large-scale checkpoints daily arterial routes and thousands of mobile checkpoints on secondary routes nationwide.

Despite Government statements early in the week saying there would be enhanced powers for gardaí, it now appears that will not be the case for the time being.

Mr Mulligan said this makes clear messaging to the public and businesses all the more important.

“Policing the pandemic has been based on a measured and professional approach by gardaí working in a cooperative spirit with the public and the business community.

“We expect that will continue but it is crucial that the message from government around the new restrictions is clear and unambiguous for the public and the business community,” Mr Mulligan said.

He also welcomed the commitment to increase policing support to vulnerable people and maintain a focus on Operation Faoiseamh which supports victims of domestic abuse. To date, over 100 prosecutions have been commenced since the operation began.

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