



Statement

Jim Mulligan, President Garda Representative Association

GRA has no confidence in Government commitment to policing reform after announcement of HQ downgrades

25.09.2019

Garda management and the Government appear to be oblivious to the right of gardaí and the communities they police to have been consulted about the location of new Divisional HQs, according to GRA President Jim Mulligan.

Mr Mulligan said: "To hear the location of nine downgraded HQs announced out of the blue, is a disgraceful way to approach this hugely sensitive issue.

"Garda management and the Government appear to be completely oblivious to the entitlement of gardaí and the communities we police to have been consulted.

"And there has been no regard whatsoever for workers who found out through the media that they could soon have a new workplace 100 miles or more away from home. Yet again, gardai are treated as second-class workers.

"Members are also hugely concerned that the lion's share of resources will be allocated to HQs. Our fear is that places furthest away will end up under-resourced - particularly isolated rural areas.

"Garda management has also failed to follow the requirement for engagement contained in the policing reform plan which all key stakeholders have endorsed. For instance, the effect of the changes on the integration of policing with public and community services cannot have been subject to consultation.

"The Commissioner has yet to produce an evidence base for the new policing model he is implementing, despite being called on to do so. We believe no such evidence base or plan exists.

"Meanwhile, the Government is diverting €15m in Garda funding to pay for the visits of Donald Trump and Mike Pence leading to cutbacks in patrols and other resources not being delivered as promised. So, we have no reason to believe the Government is committed to funding the reforms and resources as promised.

“Also, feedback from the divisions where the operational model is being piloted shows administration actually increased because gardaí were bringing timesheets and other documents from one station to another in Garda cars due to the inadequacy of IT infrastructure.

“The feedback also shows the plan for managing investigations is failing with frontline gardaí still investigating crimes because detective units are understaffed.

“Despite all this, the unprecedented decision not to meet the cost of the Trump/Pence visits through a supplementary budget means capital investment in ICT, training and accommodation will be cut, which are all central to the plan outlined by the Garda Commissioner.

“The GRA continues to support the Policing for the Future reform plan which we believe, if fully funded, will provide a better service to the public. Today’s announcement shows Garda management and the Government do not share that commitment and we fear we will end up with a half-developed, half-implemented plan that serves no-one’s interest.”

ENDS