

## **AGSI Outrage at planned closure of Harcourt Terrace Garda Station**

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The Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors (AGSI) has expressed outrage at the planned closure of Harcourt Terrace Garda Station in Dublin 2.

Confirmation of the planned closure was given to an AGSI delegation at a meeting with Assistant Commissioner Al McHugh in the DMR HQ, Harcourt Square at 9.30am on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December. The date of the closure was not available as this statement was being prepared.

“It will be a sad Christmas present for the people of South Dublin and it will be a sad day for policing in this very busy part of Dublin when they close Harcourt Terrace,” said AGSI General Secretary Pat Flynn. “It flies in the face of the reasoning which says that you must have a police presence in the community in order for the community to feel protected.”

Mr Flynn pointed out that Harcourt Terrace was one of the busiest garda stations in the country with a staff of 70 and a prisoner detention rate which was in the top four stations – alongside such well-known stations as Pearse Street and Store Street. It also contains the Stephen’s Green area and busy shopping and entertainment streets like Wexford Street and South Great George’s Street. “In fact an average of 1500 prisoners are detained there each year and up to 200 juveniles.” The closure of Harcourt Terrace would place huge pressure on the facilities in other city stations, he added.

The station’s area runs north of the Grand Canal as far as Baggot Street.

“If they close Harcourt Terrace then people will have to look to Pearse Street and Kevin Street for their garda service. The resident population and the tens of thousands of shoppers and visitors will have a huge trek to their nearest garda station,” said AGSI Vice-President Pascal Feeney who looks after accommodation matters on the AGSI executive. “We deplore

this planned closure and we call for a re-think of all the issues surrounding policing in Dublin city.”

Mr Feeney pointed out also that the only stations members could be re-deployed to were Pearse Street and Kevin Street, stations already choc-a-bloc and without a spare inch. “In addition to that we understand that garda management intends to deploy the Divisional Task Force – an inspector, four sergeants and 30 Gardaí – to Harcourt Terrace in January. In the face of all that the decision to close is absolutely ridiculous.”