

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
HELD ON 16TH JANUARY 2013
ON THE RISE OF THE CONFIRMATION HEARING
AT 3.15PM**

Present

North Somerset Council

Councillor Nigel Ashton (Chairman), Councillor Roz Willis

Somerset County Council

Councillor William Wallace

West Somerset District Council

Councillor Stuart Dowding

Mendip District Council

Councillor John Parham

Bristol City Council

Councillor Pete Levy, Councillor Jeff Lovell,

Councillor Doug Naysmith

Taunton Deane District Council

Councillor Mark Edwards

Sedgemoor District Council

Councillor John Swayne

South Somerset District Council

Councillor Tony Lock

Bath and North East Somerset Council

Councillor Lisa Brett, Councillor Francine Haeberling

South Gloucestershire Council

Councillor Mike Drew, Councillor Justin Howells

Independent Members

Rosa Hui

Roger Kinsman

Officers Present:

Ian Pagan – Lead Officer Bristol CC

Jude Williams – Scrutiny Officer, Bristol CC

Patricia Jones – Clerk to the Panel, Bristol CC

Sue Mountstevens – Police and Crime Commissioner

John Smith – Chief Executive OPCC

Mark Simmonds – Treasurer OPCC

Joanna Coulon – Head of Criminal Justice, Youth and Health Partnerships OPCC

PCP

27.1/13

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE; EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

Apologies for absence were received from Brenda Steel. The Chairman extended thanks to members and officers for their contribution to the Confirmation Hearing.

PCP

28.1/13

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None.

29.1/13

MINUTES – AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND CRIME PANEL – 10TH DECEMBER 2012.

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel held on 10th December 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PCP

30.1/13

PUBLIC FORUM

The Panel heard from David Redgewell in relation to his statement circulated in advance of the meeting. Mr Redgewell highlighted his concerns regarding passenger safety on the public transport network across Avon and Somerset. Amongst other issues, attention was drawn to the recent anti-social behaviour experienced on the network in Henbury, Bath and Somerset resulting in buses being taken out of service over the Christmas period. He emphasised the importance of the Purple Flag scheme, a new accreditation recognising excellence in the management of town and city centres at night.

The Chairman acknowledged the importance of the issues raised, but pointed out that it was not within the Panel's specific remit to address these concerns. The statement would therefore be referred to the Commissioner for response. Panel members were also recommended to lend their support where possible in their respective areas.

COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE

The Commissioner provided the Panel with a written update on the following areas :-

- Development of the Police and Crime Plan and public consultation, including the dates and venues for District level consultation. Text in a variety of languages had also been added to the website to make it more accessible. More feed back would be provided to the 6th February meeting following a meeting with District Commanders.
- Grant settlement and arrangements for agreeing allocation of the Community Safety Fund
- Programme of out-and-about days
- Initiatives – Business Crime Forum and Volunteers Panel
- Forward Plan for key decisions included the Budget on 6th February, the Police and Crime Plan on 15th March, the Community Safety Fund and Enabling Fund allocations for 13/14.

Below is a summary of the ensuing discussion:-

- The Commissioner agreed that where possible, hand-outs would be provided in advance of meetings.
- Community leaders were often able to take on the task of translating documents and provide a more accurate and cheaper service.
- Precise information on the future of Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) was not yet available from the Home Office. Discussions with the Mayor had taken place regarding the proposal to reduce Police Community Safety Officers (PCSO). It was understood that Bristol would be looking at the community safety provision again as a whole before a decision was made. Should the proposal go ahead, the Commissioner had been assured that redundancies would not follow given PCSO attrition rates and the scope for flexibility across the Force area.
- The Commissioner would look to extend the duration of her visit to Well Town Hall on 11th February if the time allocated was insufficient.
- A framework had been devised to assist with the allocation of the new community safety grant of £2.4 million. Key community activities would be retained, projects and outcomes funded not posts, clear business plans requested and funding aligned to

priorities. A funding formula would ensure population, crime and deprivation were taken into account.

- Panel members would continue to be kept informed on “out and about” days following the Bristol and South Gloucestershire visits on 18th and 25th January respectively. Suggestions for future visits were welcomed.
- The Office of the Police Commissioner (OPC) was consulting widely with the Force and business groups as part of scoping work to establish a Business Crime Forum and identify issues and priorities. Terms of Reference were in the process of being finalised and meetings with businesses had been set up across January and February 2013 to discuss shared interests and best practice. Progress would be measured over 4 years.
- Peter Heffer would chair the Volunteers Panel set up to oversee complaints against the Police. Meetings would take place quarterly and the findings of the group published. Work was underway with Weston College to gain representatives for a Stop and Search Panel and Youth Advisory Group. No costs would be incurred other than expenses.
- The first session for monitoring complaint records would be fixed by the clerk.
- Draft Anti-Social Behaviour Bill - the Commissioner acknowledged concern regarding dispersal powers and the potential marginalisation of LAs. It was noted that this would be looked at by the Commissioner as part of a joint work stream with the constabulary to bring forward proposals in response to the bill. It was agreed that the Panel would be provided with the proposals in due course.
- It was predicted that the Chief Officer Group would change following the appointment of the new Chief Constable. This was a matter for the Chief Constable.
- The Commissioner was working on a response to consultation on the privatisation of the Probation Service and intended to offer alternatives.
- The Commissioner agreed that it was necessary to strengthen the support of volunteer agencies and partner groups in an effort to combat anti-social behaviour. It was recognised that volunteers came free but charities were struggling to deliver.
- The Commissioner commented events leading to the Chief Constable’s recent High Court application to delay the recruitment process. It was reported that the contract of the present Chief Constable would come to an end on the 26th January, and a decision was taken to conduct an open recruitment process. When asked, the Chief Constable had indicated that he would not be applying for the post.

Outstanding candidates came forward and the Commissioner intended to work in a collaborative, open and transparent manner with the successful candidate.

RESOLVED - (1) that member be kept informed of “out and about” days.

(2) that the first session for monitoring complaint records be fixed by the clerk.

(3) that the Panel be provided with the Commissioner’s proposals in relation to the Anti-Social Behaviour Bill at the appropriate time.

PCP

32.1/13

PRECEPT AND BUDGET

The Panel received a report from the Chief Finance Office in the OPC (agenda item no. 6) providing an updated draft of the Medium Term Finance Plan for the period 2013/14 – 2016/17 following funding settlement announcements on 19th December 2012.

Officers reported the key issues as set out in the report. The Panel noted the main grant settlement of £177.3 million. This included a Community Safety Grant of £2.4 million, less than last year’s equivalent sum of £2.7 million. A prudent approach had been adopted to counter a worse case scenario position in 2014/15. The intention was to absorb 2% without this affecting the constabulary.

The budget for 2013/14 had been balanced as a result of cumulative savings identified across the first three years of the CSR. However if the constabulary continued to see 2%-3% cuts per annum, a more fundamental review of the structure would be required based on declining funding. On a positive note there was time to address this, determine the gap, and present the options to make the required savings. The main assumptions were a 1% pay rise going forward and 3% thereafter although the latter was unlikely.

The impact of changes to council tax remained uncertain, but more certainty could be expected once billing authorities confirmed their tax base over the coming weeks. It was confirmed that the Commissioner still intended to freeze the council tax precept. The requirement for the Panel to formally respond was noted.

It was suggested a mechanism for discussion with other authorities would be helpful, particularly in the event of a referendum.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

PCP

33.1/13

COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

The Panel received a report from the Chief Executive in the OPC (agenda item no. 7). Members noted that there were no further complaints to report since the last meeting.

RESOLVED - that the report be noted.

PCP

34.1/13

REPORT ON PANEL COSTS

The Lead officer tabled a summary of member expenses and Panel support costs for the period 31st October to 31st December 2012. The Panel noted that a total spend of £17,121.95 had been incurred leaving a balance of £9,528.05.

There was general agreement that collective training days were preferable and more cost effective than ad hoc sessions. A session would be arranged in May/June time to evaluate the work undertaken to date and to focus on potential areas of interest. The Scrutiny Officer agreed to email members potential work areas.

Attention was also drawn to the free member resource on the LGA website. Rosa Hui stated that she would appreciate more training on local authority and Police affairs generally.

RESOLVED - (1) that the report be noted.

(2) that a half day session be arranged with Frontline in May/June 2013.

PCP

35.1/13

WORK PROGRAMME

An updated Work Programme was circulated for consideration.

RESOLVED - that the revised work programme be noted.

PCP

36.1/13

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 6th February 2013 at 10.30am at North Somerset Council's Castlewood Offices, Clevedon.

(The meeting ended at 4.25pm)

CHAIRMAN