

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
HELD ON 5TH FEBRUARY 2014 10.30 A.M.**

Bath and North East Somerset Council

- P Councillor Lisa Brett
- P Councillor Francine Haeberling

Bristol City Council

- P Councillor Gary Hopkins
- A Councillor Hibaq Jama
- P Councillor Doug Naysmith

Mendip District Council

- P Councillor John Parham

North Somerset Council

- P Councillor Nigel Ashton (Chairman),
- P Councillor Roz Willis

Sedgemoor District Council

- P Councillor John Swayne

Somerset County Council

- P Councillor Richard Brown

South Gloucestershire Council

- P Councillor Mike Drew
- A Councillor Justin Howells

South Somerset District Council

- A Councillor Tony Lock

Taunton Deane District Council

- A Councillor Mark Edwards

West Somerset District Council

- A Councillor Stuart Dowding

Independent Members

- P Rosa Hui
- P Roger Kinsman
- A Andrew Sharman

Officers Present:

Shana Johnson – Interim Democratic Services Manager

Jude Williams – Scrutiny Officer

Patricia Jones – Democratic Services Officer

PCP
48.2/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lock, Councillor Dowding, Councillor Jama, and Andrew Sharman.

PCP
49.2/14 PUBLIC FORUM

The Panel heard from David Redgewell. He thanked the Commissioner for the valuable work undertaken in the Bristol and Bath bus stations in relation to passenger safety. It was hoped that similar work could be carried out in the Weston, Taunton and Bridgewater areas.

With regard to the rationalisation of the force estate, it was emphasised that deciding where to locate Police stations was of key importance to communities. Attention was also drawn to the extension of British Transport Police Pact meetings in North Somerset and Somerset.

PCP
50.2/14 MINUTES - AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND CRIME PANEL – 11th DECEMBER 2013

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel held on 11th December 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PCP
51.2/14 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

The Chairman reported on the inaugural meeting of the South West PCP Network. He confirmed that he did not support the formation of another level of administration to look at procurement practices across the region. It was his view that the Commissioner should be held to account by this Panel for her decisions in this respect.

The Commissioner confirmed that an outside agency would be appointed to find the best possible model, the details of which would be shared with the Panel in the future.

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE REPORT

A briefing note was circulated in advance of the meeting. Below is a summary of the key points discussed :-

- A new 4 bed unit at Southmead Hospital for section 136 detentions had been approved. This would provide a secure setting and dedicated staff to look after vulnerable adults following arrest. Work to provide a similar service for children would follow.
- The Commissioner agreed to follow up the concerns raised in relation to Bristol's Community Speed Watch scheme.
- The Commissioner agreed to clarify who could apply for the Neighbourhood Managers Posts as part of the Constabulary's plans for a revised operating model.
- The Shape Mendip Project for integrated public services was welcomed.
- Whilst it was recognised that this was an operational decision for the Chief Constable, the Commissioner confirmed that she was satisfied with the current allocation of officers to rural and semi-rural areas. It was noted that almost half of the PCSOs employed by the force were allocated to Somerset where crime levels were highest (37%).
- The Commissioner acknowledged that more could be done to improve procurement practices. It was confirmed that a regional purchasing arrangement for the constabulary's vehicle fleet was already in place.
- West Somerset's suspended Speed Watch Scheme would be up and running in the near future.
- The effectiveness of the Independent Resident's Panel would be assessed after one year. Anyone wishing to participate should contact the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).
- The wider integration of police services was welcomed. The Panel discussed the resulting changes to shift patterns and the impact on sickness levels and the work life balance of staff. The

Commissioner reported that the welfare of staff was paramount and consultation had been robust. It was confirmed that although the rotas of the Neighbourhood Teams and PCSOs had been aligned to include more evening work, individuals would only be working nights in exceptional circumstances.

- Attention was drawn to the excellent work undertaken by the beat manager in working with the community and businesses in Bristol's city centre. The point was made that Neighbourhood Contact Points could successfully operate in a variety of ways.
- The Commissioner was in agreement that Solo Patrol required a stringent risk assessment but she was confident that the objective of this initiative was sound and would go some way to increasing the confidence of residents.
- Close work with health bodies continued to tackle Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The Commissioner was keen for the practice to fall within the definition of child abuse. It was anticipated that the coming months would see a statutory requirement placed on public health bodies and hospitals to report incidences of FGM to the Police.
- It was suggested that the rationale behind the introduction of localised Neighbourhood Contact Points should be conveyed to the public more robustly. Specifically, in the context that the current configuration of Police stations does not adequately address local need. The Commissioner added that she was committed to ensuring a targeted Police presence.
- The Commissioner was congratulated on securing a £1m contribution to a regional project to transform digital imaging evidence in the region. It was reported that the force was in the process of looking at its internal forensic activity as part of a regional collaboration. Sites would be located according to demand with two of the main facilities located in the Avon and Somerset force area.
- Efforts would be made to link in a request to visit Exmoor with the Commissioner's visit to Exmoor Search and Rescue on the 25th March.
- The Panel welcomed the additional policing activities currently being undertaken to assist with the severe flooding in Moorland. It was suggested that details of the on-going efforts shared with the community where possible. The Commissioner reported on her visit to the area and emphasised that there were valuable

lessons to be learnt in terms of emergency agencies working together and ensuring that the right resources were made available.

- It was noted that calls from the public to the Police predominantly took place between 5pm and 10pm. Plans for a revised operating model for the Constabulary as reported by the Chief Constable at the last meeting, would take account of this.
- the implementation of the recommendations emerging from the Windsor Review was at an advanced stage, with many of the proposals adopted from the outset.
- The possibility of bringing LA community safety teams and Police community safety teams into a single line management structure was raised. It was noted that the OPCC planned to visit Nottingham Constabulary to see how this worked in practice.
- The Commissioner agreed that it made sense for agencies to come together to deliver shared objectives where possible. However in the context of Fire and Rescue, the integration of services would have to be government led.
- The Commissioner agreed to report back on the conclusions and findings of the Home Affairs Select Committee Inquiry.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the concerns raised in relation to Bristol's Community Speed Watch scheme be followed up.**
- (2) That the application process for the Neighbourhood Managers Posts (as part of the Constabulary's plans for a revised operating model) be clarified.**
- (3) That the Panel receive a report on the conclusions and findings of the Home Affairs Select Committee Inquiry.**

**PCP
53.2/14**

POLICE AND CRIME PLAN – SCRUTINY OF THE FIRST DRAFT

A first draft of the Police and Crime Plan was circulated at the meeting. It was agreed that the Panel would formulate its response and suggested amendments in advance of the next meeting on the 21st March 2014, when the final draft would be considered.

RESOLVED – that the Panel formulates its response and suggested amendments to the first draft of the Police and Crime Plan in advance of the next meeting on the 21st March 2014.

PCP

54.2/14

FORMAL SCRUTINY OF THE BUDGET AND PRECEPT

The panel considered a report (agenda item no. 8) setting out the revenue and capital budget for 2014/15, the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the four year period until 2017/18, and the capital programme for the five year period until 2018/19.

The Commissioner confirmed her intention to increase the police council tax precept for 2014/15 by a maximum of 1.99% as previously notified to the panel and subject to the Panel's approval. This proposal was put forward on the basis of the earlier indication from the Government that the trigger level for a referendum would be set at 2%.

The Commissioner added that she was gravely disappointed at the late announcement of referendum guidelines, and wished to notify the Panel of her intention to lower the level of precept in the event of a lower referendum cap being set. The Chairman made the point that the Panel had already taken a decision to write to the Home Secretary expressing dissatisfaction with these circumstances at this very late stage.

Particular reference was made to the following in the ensuing discussion:-

- The Commissioner was invited to comment on the reasoning behind a precept increase in the context of the sizeable reserves being maintained (demonstrated at 6.3 of the report).

The Commissioner informed the Panel that this course of action was considered necessary to provide assurance against a number of risks that could impact against the Constabulary's financial performance. Additionally, no increase in the precept over the next 3 years, would result in a deficit of nearly £50m by 2017/18.

- The Chief Finance Officer gave a breakdown of the 3 distinct categories of reserve, set out in detail at 6.2 of the report. It was reported that the ability to maintain this position was the result of sensible financial decisions taken by the force which in turn would provide assurance against the need to implement savings in the future. A risk assessment paper for the general fund

reserve and further detail contained in the annual accounts would be shared with the Panel.

- Councillor Parham indicated that he was unable to support an increase in the precept given the potential for efficiencies in the future and the emerging benefits of the Windsor recommendations. He suggested there was an opportunity to gauge public opinion on an increase in May 2014 should the Commissioner decide to run a referendum. The Commissioner stated that consideration was being given to the possibility of doing so next year, subject to cost and a clear mandate. In the meantime, it was emphasised that it was not possible to keep taking money from the central grant, top slicing, and dealing with the effects of cumulative damping.
- A strong return on collections was forecasted for this year.
- Pension costs were considerable compounded by the need to top up the pension fund and the on-going indexation of medically retired officers. The review process was now more robust.
- The potential for extra demand on services was considered as part of the Joint Needs Assessment process. The funding formula did not reflect the population changes in the force area.

In conclusion and following detailed discussion in the member pre-meeting, the Panel;

RESOLVED :-

- (1) That the report be noted.**
- (2) That that the majority decision of the Panel to accept the Commissioner's proposal to increase the Police council tax precept for 2014/15 by a maximum of 1.99% be noted (10 voting in favour and 2 against).**
- (3) That the Commissioner's decision to lower the level of precept in the event of a referendum cap being set lower than 2% be endorsed.**
- (4) That a risk assessment paper on the general fund and further detail contained in the annual accounts be shared with the Panel.**

**PCP
55.2/14**

DOMESTIC ABUSE

The panel considered a report of the Scrutiny Officer, Bristol City Council (agenda item no. 11) relating to domestic abuse.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Commissioner bring a report to the next meeting outlining the work underway in relation to domestic abuse (as part of the work being undertaken to transform Victims services).**
- (2) That the Panel postpone an active piece of scrutiny work in relation to domestic abuse until the Commissioner's review is complete.**

**PCP
56.2./14**

SOUTH WEST PCP NETWORK MEMBERSHIP/PROPOSAL

The Panel considered a report (agenda item no. 12) regarding the South West PCP Network membership/proposal.

There was detailed discussion about the role of the Panel. The Panel was clear that its remit was to scrutinise the work of the Commissioner as opposed to scrutinising the performance of the force as a whole, or the Chief Constable in terms of operational decisions. There was also general agreement that the Home Office could usefully assist by defining the role and providing more clarity at this stage.

It was agreed that it would be helpful if the Commissioner and the Chief Constable could assist the Panel in defining what they considered the role of the Panel to be in relation to their roles.

The Scrutiny Officer outlined the purpose of the South West PCP Network (SWN) and discussion in relation to the merits of becoming a member followed. Members were not persuaded that membership of the network would be justified in terms of added efficiency whilst focussing on delivering its core objectives. Accordingly, it was agreed that the Panel would not pursue membership at this stage.

The Panel also felt unable to support the proposed joint scrutiny investigation, preferring to review the Commissioner's procurement policy and practice initially as part of its own work programme.

It was agreed that the Chairman would write to the Chairs in the South West region confirming the position. The Scrutiny Officer would similarly confirm with South West Councils.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) that the Commissioner and the Chief Constable be invited to assist the Panel in defining what they considered the role of the Panel to be in relation to their roles.**
- (2) that the Chairman writes to the Panel Chairs in the South West region confirming the decision in relation to membership of the South West PCP Network and the proposed scrutiny investigation. The Scrutiny Officer to similarly confirm with South West Councils.**

PCP

57.2/14

SUMMARY OF PANEL SUPPORT COSTS

The Panel considered a report (agenda item no. 13) setting out Panel support costs to date.

Shana Johnson, Interim Democratic Services Manager at BCC and the Lead Officer for the Panel, was introduced to members.

The Panel noted that the combined total of support costs and member expenses claimed to date - £36,598.87. Panel members were urged to submit any outstanding expenses as soon as possible. The request for the relevant claim forms to be re-circulated was noted.

A report on the costs and practicalities associated with the live web streaming of future Panel meetings would be brought to the next meeting.

RESOLVED – that a report on the costs and practicalities associated with the live web streaming of future Panel meetings be brought to the next meeting.

PCP

58.2/14

COMPLAINTS REPORT

The panel considered a report of the Chief Executive, Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner' Office (agenda item no. 14) providing an oversight of all complaints made against Avon and

Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner, for scrutiny of the initial handling by the Chief Executive of Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner's Office.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

PCP

59.2/14

WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED – that the work programme be noted.

PCP

60.2/14

UPDATE REPROTS FROM PANEL LINK MEMBERS

The Panel heard from Councillors Willis, link member for voluntary sector relations. Councillor Willis reported that she had met with the OPCC and discussed a protocol around the use of a Compact agreement to outline a method of working and improving the relationship between the OPCC and voluntary organisations.

In the absence of a lead organisation in Somerset and B&NES to assist with the process of engaging with the OPCC, North Somerset was offering up their Compact as a starting point. The alternative was a generic Compact with appendices specific to the individual LAs. It had been agreed that 12 weeks was an appropriate consultation period given some voluntary organisations met infrequently and organisations needed sufficient notice if they were to lose funding.

Councillor Swayne confirmed that he would circulate an update from the OPCC on the work currently being undertaken in relation to business crime.

Councillor Brett drew attention to the work carried out by the Integrated Victims Board in supporting victims through the criminal justice system and improving the services available to all victims of crime. Councillor Brett agreed to circulate a brief report on this area of work.

(The meeting ended at 1.35pm)

CHAIR