



Agenda Item No: 4

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel

Thursday 12th February 2015 at 11.00am

North Somerset Council Offices, Castlewood

Councillor Members Present:-

Nigel Ashton (Chairman), Lisa Brett, Richard Brown, Roz Willis, Francine Haerberling, John Swayne, Gary Hopkins, Tony Lock, Jeff Lovell, John Parham, Heather Goddard, Afzal Shah.

Independent Members:-

Rosa Hui, Roger Kinsman, Andrew Sharman.

Officers in attendance:-

Patricia Jones.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Stuart Dowding, Councillor Mike Drew and Councillor Jane Warmington.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

3. Public Forum

There was none.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on the 30th October 2014

Resolved – that the Minutes of the last meeting on the 10th December 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the inclusion of Councillor Willis under Apologies.

The Commissioner circulated the following documents relating to matters arising from the last meeting:-

- One Team Project – details of the multi-agency project to improve Neighbourhood Policing and reduce crime by combining resources and adopting a co-ordinated managed approach
- Chart showing latest reported crime trends
- Crime Integrity Inspection Update.

Panel Members were invited to contact the Commissioner with any resulting queries.

5. Chairman's Business

The Chairman referred to a recent meeting with Lord Bew, Chair of the Committee on Standards in Public Life. The committee's report would be published post-election.

6. Commissioner's Update

The Commissioner introduced the report and highlighted the following areas:-

- Mental Health Concordat - work to develop local Action Plans, as required Concordat was on-going. The national deadline for agreeing the plans is 31st March 2015.
- Road Safety – some cameras had been turned on.

- Recruitment – 128 Police officers would be recruited this year. An open process for Special Constables was running alongside.

Below is a summary of the key issues/questions raised by Panel Members:-

- The Commissioner agreed to confirm the switch-on date for the red light cameras in Bristol.
- The Commissioner was commended for the standard of care and remarkable work being carried out by the Lighthouse Victims Care Project. However it was felt that the Victim Support service would benefit from more volunteers.
- It was clarified that victims of FGM were recognised as vulnerable and could therefore access the advance service provided by Lighthouse.
- The OPCC was working closely with clinical commissioning groups and the ambulance service around mental health issues. This would include talks about the national protocol adopted by the ambulance service in relation to Section 136 detentions. This included providing a response within 30 minutes to Police calls for assistance, which was currently not being met.
- The Commissioner stated that Police cells were generally unsuitable for any section 136 detention. It was acknowledged that Police officers required to deal with these arrests were often placed in a vulnerable position themselves. In an effort to increase the number of available beds across the Force area, work with commissioning groups would continue.
- Councillor Willis reported on the partnership work underway in her area to find alternative places of safety for vulnerable people. She encouraged the Commissioner to assist with this work where possible.
- It was suggested that the definition of homelessness/duty of care adopted by housing options teams was contributing to the lack of refuge provision being offered to victims of domestic violence. The Commissioner agreed to look at how

Local Authorities (LAs) were approaching this issue and report back.

- The Commissioner agreed to confirm the cost of reinstating the control room.
- Cyber-crime was massively under-reported. The aim was to increase officer training so there was less need for specialist support and assistance. It was suggested that reporting incidents of cyber-crime was not a straightforward process and should be made easier. It was noted that officers should be referring the public to Action Fraud, the national fraud and internet crime reporting centre.

It was noted that there was specific reference to cyber-crime in the Police and Crime Plan. The Commissioner agreed to arrange for an officer to attend a meeting of the South West Forum on Aging to advise older people on what they can do to protect themselves.

- There was positive feedback following the recent recruitment drive at Easton Community Centre. The Commissioner agreed to provide an overview/statistics relating to BME applications at the end of the process.
- There was a brief discussion around the impact of counter terrorism measures on the Muslim community. To address the fears and concerns generated, the Commissioner and the Mayor had requested an extension to the consultation on the Counter Terrorism and Security Bill. Julian Moss (Assistant Chief Constable) was responsible for this area of work and would work closely with the community if the Bill was passed.
- The Commissioner was asked how the business community could feed into the Out of Courts Disposals process to ensure that action taken is appropriate and proportionate.

The Commissioner indicated that she was happy to provide feedback to the Constabulary.

- Whilst local policing and collaboration would remain locally managed and delivered, there was now active discussion around the restructuring and perhaps inevitable merger of Constabularies (subject to the General Election).

Resolved:-

- (1) The activation date for the red light cameras in Bristol to be confirmed.**
- (2) The Commissioner to report back on refuge provision for victims of domestic violence.**
- (3) The cost of reinstating the control room to be confirmed.**
- (4) Cyber-crime - the Commissioner to arrange for an officer to attend a meeting of the South West Forum on Aging to advise older people on what they can do to protect themselves.**
- (5) An overview/statistics relating to BME applications to be provided to the Panel at the end of the current recruitment process.**

7. SCRUTINY OF THE BUDGET AND PRECEPT

The Panel considered a report (agenda item no. 8) setting out the latest position on the revenue and capital budget for 2015/16 and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

It was reported that following consultation, both residents and LAs were largely supportive of the intention to increase the police council tax precept for 2015/16 by 1.99% (put forward on the basis of a referendum trigger level of 2%). This would result in an average annual increase of £3.41.

Whilst the key funding and expenditure assumptions reported at the last meeting in advance of the final Grant Settlement had been pessimistic, the final announcement amounted to a

reduction of 5.1% (a cash reduction equivalent to 4.8% had been forecasted).

Attention was drawn to the table at page 24 showing the latest position on the MTFP across the next four years. In order to balance the Budget in 15/16, savings of over £13 million had been made. The combined result of the projections set out in the report was a standstill deficit of £40.6m by 18/19 - reduced to £22.9m after planned savings of £17.6m from Estates, the force wide budget, departmental savings and collaboration/partnership working.

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

- Medical pensions and injury on duty awards – these were currently under review and were not being taken into account as part of any savings. Decisions on the continuance of payments were made by the Commissioner based on the findings of an independent medical examination.
- The Council Tax Freeze Grant was worth just under £2 million to the Constabulary.
- South West 1 was still delivering savings and fit for purpose.
- Gloucestershire Constabulary did not intend to develop a strategic alliance with another force.
- Fuel costs were unlikely to stay at the current level over the next 4 years. A windfall saving now, but an adjustment had been made going forward.

In conclusion and following discussion, the Panel;

RESOLVED :-

- (1) That the report be noted.**
- (2) That the Commissioner's decision to increase the Police council tax precept for 2015/16 by 1.99% be endorsed (14 voting in favour and 1 against).**

8. Work Programme

The Panel noted the updated Work Programme. It was agreed that the Complaint Review and Emerging Recommendations /Systems item would be deferred to the AGM meeting on the 10th June 2015.

The Chair was asked how items could be formally put on the agenda. The clerk drew attention to the following from the Panel's Procedure Rules, agreed when the Panel was set up:-

"Any member of the Panel shall be entitled to place items on Panel agendas which are relevant to the Panel's functions. Members' requests for matters to be included shall be submitted in writing/e-mail and received by the host authority lead officer at least 15 working days before the next ordinary meeting of the Panel, failing which they shall not be submitted to such meeting without the express direction of the Chairman."

It was agreed that the Panel would receive a preliminary briefing on Cybercrime at its next meeting on 11th March 2015. This would enable the Panel to make an assessment of the individuals and groups most at risk, the areas being exploited by criminals and the training provided to officers. It was agreed that this overview would then enable the Panel to decide on the areas they would like to look at in more detail at a future meeting.

In the meantime, Panel members were invited to pass any specific questions/areas of concern to the clerk and these would be passed to the Commissioner.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Panel receives a preliminary presentation on Cybercrime at the next meeting on the 11th March (a more detailed report would be considered at a future meeting).**

- (2) That the Panel Members provide the clerk with any questions/areas of concern in advance of the 11th March meeting to enable the Commissioner to brief the Constabulary.**

9. Standing Complaints Report

The Panel considered and noted a report of the Chief Executive (OPCC) providing an oversight of all complaints made against the Commissioner.

It was agreed that the dip sampling of files would continue when an appropriate complaint was lodged.

Resolved:-

- (1) That the report be noted.**
- (2) That the dip sampling of files would continue when an appropriate complaint was lodged.**

10. Link Member Roles

Councillor Willis stated that she had found the role of link member (voluntary sector) useful and informative. She reported that the charter used by the OPCC shapes the major commissioning work carried out in the sector. It was noted that the OPCC participated on a number of volunteer compact groups and recognised that it was important for the sector to have the lead and oversight this provided.

Councillor Brett commended the OPCC for the valuable work being carried out around victims and commissioning and the standard of care provided by the Lighthouse Victims Care Project. She reiterated her earlier concerns about the capacity of the Victim Support Service to deliver the emotional support that victims of crime need.

It was noted that Councillor Swayne provided any updates via email.

It was agreed that Councillor Parham would undertake a new role as link member for Cybercrime.

11. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved - that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of the following item, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of Exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended).

12. Panel Briefing – IPCC Investigations

(Exempt Paragraph 1 –information relating to any individual)

The Panel was updated on current IPCC investigations.

(the meeting ended at 12.21pm)