



Agenda Item No:5

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 10th June 2015 at 11.00am

North Somerset Council Offices, Castlewood

Councillor Members Present:-

Nigel Ashton (Chairman), Richard Brown, Stuart Dowding, Mike Drew, Heather Goddard, Francine Haerberling, Deborah Joffe, Jeff Lovell, Martin Wale, Jane Warmington, Mark Weston, Roz Willis.

Independent Members Present:-

Rosa Hui, Roger Kinsman, Andrew Sharman.

Officers in attendance:-

Patricia Jones.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Brett, Councillor Parham and Councillor Slocombe.

2. Membership of the Committee

Following preliminary discussion at the pre-meeting in relation to the revised political arrangements across the local authorities, there was general agreement that the following membership was within tolerable limits of the balanced appointments objective (excluding Bristol's Elected Mayor representative from the Green Party):-

Conservative – 11
Liberal Democrat – 2
Labour – 1

It was moved by Councillor Brown, seconded by Councillor Willis and on being put to the vote, unanimously:-

RESOLVED - that the finalised membership of the Panel be confirmed and reported to the Home Secretary for approval as follows, in line with the statutory requirement:-

**Conservative – 11
Liberal Democrat – 2
Labour – 1
Green – 1 (Elected Mayor Representative)**

3. Election of Chair

It was moved by Councillor Brown, seconded by Councillor Willis and on being put to the vote, unanimously:-

RESOLVED - that Councillor Nigel Ashton be elected as Chairman of the Police and Crime Panel for the 2015/16 municipal year.

4. Election of Vice-Chair

It was moved by Councillor Brown, seconded by Councillor Willis and on being put to the vote, unanimously:-

RESOLVED - that Councillor Francine Haeberling be elected as Vice-Chair of the Police and Crime Panel for the 2015/16 municipal year.

5. Dates of Future Meetings

Resolved:-

(1) that the following meeting dates be confirmed :-

13th October

7th December

8th February

14th March

All meetings to take place at Castlewood commencing 11.00am.

(2) that the following training dates be noted and agreed:

18th November at 11.00am - Budget training (Police Headquarters)

1st September at 11.00am – scoping/planning session on Scrutiny of performance (Weston Town Hall)

6. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

7. Public Forum

None.

8. Minutes of the meeting held on the 11th March 2015

Resolved – that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 11th March 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to Councillor Dowding being recorded as present.

9. Chairman's Business

None.

10. Commissioner's Update

The Commissioner introduced the report.

- The Commissioner reported on her key business areas post-election, including:-
 - Police governance and the introduction of the new Policing Bill emerging from the Queens Speech which would develop the role of Police and Crime Commissioners. The Commissioner would keep the Panel sighted on developments and her campaign for re-election, should she decide to stand again.
 - Increased scrutiny and transparency, focusing on three key areas of policing - accessibility, visibility and civility. As part of this, work was on-going with the Constabulary to promote morale.
- A successful bid to the Home Office Innovation Fund had secured over £2million in funding to support victims of child exploitation across Avon and Somerset and Wiltshire.
- The Chancellor would be announcing a new budget on 8th July 2015 and it was understood the Police Service was not under threat of further in-year cuts.

The following issues/questions were raised by Panel Members:-

- The Panel sought clarification of the Force protocol relating to Police attendance at non-suspicious deaths. Attention was drawn to the time being lost by Police officers who were reported as attending in these circumstances to confirm the death. The Commissioner understood that it was Force policy for officers to attend and obtain a medical declaration, but not to confirm the death – a medical practitioner was requested attend for this purpose. However the position would be clarified and reported back.
- The Commissioner was asked to provide an update on the three new custody centres opened in 2014. It was noted that initial issues had been resolved and detainees were being processed more quickly by dedicated teams. Whilst acknowledging the distance officers were required to travel, the point was made that the time actually spent at the centres was less. The feasibility of officers being met at a halfway point would be looked at and reported back to the Panel.

- A massive drop-off in arrests in Taunton was being attributed to the inconvenience of transporting detainees to Bridgewater. This was shaking the confidence of the business community.
- The Commissioner was asked for an up to date position on the cost of reinstalling static speed cameras – the Panel felt the anticipation of a cost neutral position by the summer was too ambiguous. The Panel was advised that a more useful report could be brought later in the year when the OPCC had a firmer grasp on the number of people caught. She remained confident of a cost neutral position however, and was happy to report in the figures when available.
- Given the benefits emerging from regional collaboration/alliances, the Commissioner was asked if a regional merger of the Police and Crime Commissioner role was being considered. It was confirmed that this was not the case.

Resolved:-

- (1) Costings and figures around road safety cameras to be provided later in the year (as previously agreed).**
- (2) The Commissioner to keep the Panel sighted on key business areas and her campaign for re-election, should she decide to stand again.**
- (3) The Commissioner to follow up the concerns relating to the distance/processing of detainees at Bridgewater Custody Centre.**

11. Police and Crime Annual Report 2014/15

The Panel considered a report from the Commissioner setting out the functions of the Police and Crime Commissioner role and the progress made in meeting the objectives set out in the Police and Crime Plan.

Members of the Panel made specific reference to the following:-

- Burglary offences – the Commissioner was invited to comment on detection rates and impact on the confidence of local communities when cases were not resolved. Attention was drawn to the regional variations in performance and she was asked how effective she considered the Constabulary to be in tackling this crime.

The Commissioner reported that a 10% detection rate was low. However there had been a dramatic drop in burglary offences in recent years – 10,000 in contrast to 16,000 offences 5 years ago. This was a direct result of prevention work and the roll out of the new operating model. It was pointed out that without the key elements of forensic recovery and intelligence, it was difficult to reverse a downward detection trend.

To increase intelligence, the aim was to continue working with the Neighbourhood Policing Model. There were 500 fewer officers than in 2010 and their priority was to assess and respond on the basis of threat risk and harm. The immediate vulnerability of the victim was the key concern. However burglary was still a priority and prevention work would continue.

The Commissioner was invited to explain how satisfaction rates in relation to burglary remained high when fewer crimes were being detected and people were reporting less. The Panel was informed that people were satisfied because officers were extremely good at keeping people informed even if the crime went undetected.

- It was noted that the Home Office and HMIC no longer recommended using overall crime detection rates to measure performance. However the Commissioner would endeavour to assist and provide the information to the Panel.
- The Panel noted that fully resolved serious sexual offence investigations had fallen from a strong position (33%) compared to other police forces nationally to an average position (18%). The Commissioner reported that this was partly due to an increase in reporting.

- A Senior citizen Liaison Team was in place to work with older people in the community who were more vulnerable and therefore more targetable. Work was underway with third party agencies to help children experiencing domestic abuse and to recognise patterns of behaviour in schools.
- The Panel discussed perceptions of Police visibility and the links to public confidence. Whilst acknowledging the financial constraints facing the Constabulary, it was suggested that less Police officers and less arrests were contributing to an increase in low level offending. There was a brief discussion around the merits of Voluntary Attendance as an alternative to arrest. It was pointed out that without an arrest, the ability to undertake a Section 18 search of the offender's address is lost. The Commissioner agreed to provide more information on Voluntary Attendance and to establish the repercussions of a breach.
- It was reported that more than 80 drivers were caught speeding in 20mph zones across the Avon and Somerset Police force area last month. The Commissioner was asked if anyone had been prosecuted and confirmed that a proportion of people had been fined/attended a speed enforcement awareness course. It was felt that motorists requiring motorists to abruptly reduce their speed from 50mph to 30 mph in certain areas was unreasonable and potentially dangerous.
- There was discussion around the use of nitrous oxide, the impact on anti-social behaviour and the ability of PCSOs to deal with the problem in parks and recreation areas. It was agreed that some detail on the extent of the problem and its links with ASB would be brought to the next meeting.
- There was general agreement that a drop in the number of Special Constables was disappointing. The Constabulary was looking at this, and specifically the way training was accessed. The current arrangement of 12 weekends of training was thought to be deterring people from applying. It was suggested that local companies could be usefully involved in a recruitment drive.

- The Commissioner was asked if calls were being effectively assessed by handlers in the call service centre. It was reported that there had been considerable investment in training and up skilling staff, and monitoring satisfaction at the end of a call. However it was accepted that delays on 101 calls were not satisfactory and a change in the script handling was delivering good results. The Constabulary was also working with health providers and the family and friends of the most persistent callers to try and alleviate this additional pressure where possible.

Abandoned calls were measured but there was currently no way of knowing if these callers came back.

- The Commissioner was invited to comment on the Ofsted review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board which had determined that services needed to improve. The Commissioner reported that the responsibility of the safeguarding boards to deliver safe and effective services for children and adults at risk of abuse, was a huge remit across 5 LAs. Efforts were being made to target resources most effectively and reduce the amount of meetings that board members were required to attend.
- The Commissioner agreed to clarify how the officers at Hinkley Point were treated in the statistics and how often they were required to be available for other matters.
- The Commissioner was made aware of an incident involving a Panel Member at the roundabout on the St Paul's slip road. She agreed to speak to the Beat Manager and establish if there had been any similar reports at this location.
- The Commissioner was asked for an update on the Strategic Alliance with Wiltshire. It was noted that Julian Moss had been appointed to the position of Temporary Assistant Chief Constable to develop the alliance. Talks were already underway to ensure that the Constabulary was exploiting best practice in other forces and a briefing paper would be brought to the next Panel meeting.

Councillor Brown stated that there were some issues around SW1 and referred to the questions he posed at the last meeting.

- The Commissioner reported that the ethnicity of the victims of hate crime is routinely recorded by the Constabulary subject to the information being provided by the victim.

Resolved:-

(1) The Commissioner to provide:-

- **An overview of overall crime detection rates.**
- **Information on Voluntary Attendance/repercussions of a breach.**
- **Nitrous oxide - detail on the extent of the problem and its links with anti-social behaviour.**
- **Follow-up to the report of an incident at the roundabout at St Paul's slip road.**
- **Clarification on how the officers at Hinkley Point were treated in the statistics and how often they were required to be available for other matters.**
- **An update on the Strategic Alliance with Wiltshire.**

12. Scrutiny against delivery of the Police and Crime Plan – scoping report

The Panel considered a report setting out issues for consideration to enable members to plan for scrutiny of delivery against the Police and Crime Plan.

The Panel considered the proposed thematic programme to enable members to scrutinise the Police and Crime Plan priorities with a focus on performance based on the Commissioner's success in delivering against the objectives set out under each priority.

The following themed programme was agreed:-

October – Victims

December – Violence against Women and Children

February – Anti-social behaviour

March – Burglary and Road Safety

It was agreed that the Panel dedicate time at their Training Day on the 1st September to plan the format and methodology for the proposed scrutiny sessions. Given the breadth of issues within each of the five priorities, it was also agreed that the Panel should identify an area for focus to inform development of the scope for each session in advance of the training session.

Resolved - that the Panel dedicate time at their Training Day on the 1st September to plan the format and methodology for the proposed scrutiny sessions. Given the breadth of issues within each of the five priorities, it was also agreed that the Panel should identify an area for focus to inform development of the scope for each session in advance of the training session.

13. Work Programme

The Panel noted the updated Work Programme.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

14. Panel Budget Report

The Panel considered a report from the Lead Officer providing an update on support costs.

There was discussion in relation to the annual allowance of £920.00 that was available to members and designed to cover the costs incurred from attending meetings such as travel, subsistence and child care. There was general support to continue receiving this payment

(paid quarterly and in arrears) as opposed to the system of submitting ad hoc expense claims.

Resolved – that the Panel continues to receive the annual allowance of £920 to cover travel expenses, subsistence and child care.

15. Independent Members

Resolved – that the current Independent Members write to the Clerk confirming if they wish to continue the role for another 4 year term.

16. Standing Complaints Report

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

It was noted that there has been one complaint received since the last report and that this was being handled directly by the Panel. It was unanimously agreed that this complaint should be resolved as proposed by the Complaints Officer and in accordance with the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012.

Resolved - that the report be noted.

17. Link Member Reports

There were no current reports. It was noted that Councillor Parham was due to meet with the OPCC in relation to his Link Member role for Cyber Crime.

It was agreed that the Panel would give some thought to establishing another link member role.

Resolved - that the Panel considers establishing another link member role.

18. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED - that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

19. Panel Briefing

(Exempt Paragraph 1 –information relating to any individual)

The Panel were briefed on a current investigation.

(the meeting ended at 1.30pm)

CHAIRMAN