



Dorset Police and Crime Panel

Minutes of a meeting held at Dorset County Council, County Hall, Dorchester,
DT1 1XJ on 23 April 2013

Present:

Members

Borough Poole

Co-opted members:

Phil Goodall
Ann Stribley

Bournemouth Borough Council

John Adams (Vice-Chairman)

Co-opted members:

Dennis Gritt
David Smith
Theo Stratton

Dorset County Council

Angus Campbell (Chairman)
Fred Drane

East Dorset District Council

Malcolm Birr

North Dorset District Council

Audrey Burch

Purbeck District Council

Ali Patrick

West Dorset District Council

John Russell

Weymouth & Portland Borough Council

Geoff Petherick

Independent members

Iain McVie
Mike Short

Officer advisers to the Police and Crime Panel:

Andy Frost, Strategic Manager DAT & Community Safety, Dorset County Council
Adam Richens, Finance Lead Officer to the Dorset Police and Crime Panel, Borough of Poole
Robin Taylor, Senior Policy and Performance Manager, Dorset County Council
Fiona King, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Dorset County Council

Also in attendance:

Richard Bates, Treasurer to the Police and Crime Commissioner
Martyn Underhill, Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
Bryony Houlden, Chief Executive at South West Councils
Christopher Williams, Proposed Chief Executive to the Police and Crime Commissioner

Apology

17. Apologies for absence were received from Judy Butt (Borough of Poole) and Bernie Davis (Christchurch Borough Council).

Code of Conduct

18. There were no declarations by members of any disclosable pecuniary interests under the Code of Conduct.

Minutes

19. The minutes of the meeting held on 7 February were confirmed and signed.

Confirmation Hearing for the Police and Crime Commissioner's Proposed Candidate for Chief Executive

20.1 The Panel considered a report by the Chief Executive, Dorset County Council, which outlined the appointment process for the selection of the Chief Constable of Dorset Police. Bryony Houlden the Chief Executive from South West Councils was introduced to members, to help guide them through the process of the confirmatory hearing.

20.2 The Chairman explained that the confirmatory hearing for the appointment of the Chief Executive was required by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. The Police and Crime Commissioner would be invited to speak to the Panel to introduce the candidate. The candidate would then have the opportunity to address the Panel, and then the Panel would ask questions of the candidate relating to professional competence and personal independence. The Panel would then go into exempt session to make its decision on whether to recommend the appointment or recommend against the appointment.

20.3 The Police and Crime Commissioner introduced his preferred candidate to members, Mr Christopher Williams.

20.5 Members received a report from the Independent Member of the Selection Panel, Geoff Pears, which confirmed that a rigorous and robust selection process had taken place. He noted that it was one of the most comprehensive assessments for a senior post that he had seen for many years. He was entirely satisfied with the selection process, and the decision arising from it. The decision was based on the principles of merit, openness and fairness.

20.6 The report informed members of the Panel that there had been five candidates shortlisted for interview, from 39 applications.

20.7 The Chairman advised members that Mrs Judy Butt, Borough of Poole had acted as the silent observer in the shortlisting process but as she was unable to attend the meeting as she had asked for the following comments to be shared with members:

'A thorough cross grid system was employed regarding the short listing process ensuring that all candidates came to the attention of the panel members at least twice. On filtering 11 choices from the 39 anonymous applicants, further interrogation of these 11 candidates suitability was undertaken, resulting in the 5 short listed candidates for interview. I am completely satisfied that the process was measured, equitable and appropriate and that the outcome that ensued is right in all the circumstances'.

20.8 Independent Panel Member, Mike Short, Police and Crime Panel acted as the silent observer in the interview process and felt that the questioning had been extremely robust. He noted that the process had been fair and unbiased and agreed with the decision of the Interview Panel that the strongest applicant had been selected.

20.9 The Vice Chairman put the following questions to the Police and Crime Commissioner, who responded accordingly:

1. Can you explain how your process assessed the professional expertise of candidates?

Dorset Police and Crime Panel – 23 April 2013

Mr Underhill referred members to Mr Pears' report which addressed the candidate's professional expertise in full.

2. Would you like to comment on the professional expertise of the proposed candidate?

Mr Underhill commented that the candidate brought all the requisite skills for the role along with a wealth of knowledge of partnership working and a passion for his Police and Crime Plan. He felt that they would make a great team.

3. What do you see the candidate bringing to the role that will assist the effective relationship between you and the Panel?

Mr Underhill felt that the candidate would bring a fresh approach to the role and would make a break with the past history of the Police Authority. Mr Williams had an in depth knowledge of the local Government Association (LGA) and government working and felt that he would add strength to their relationship with members of the Police and Crime Panel.

4. Why have you chosen to appoint a Chief Executive?

Mr Underhill responded that he was obliged by law to appoint a Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer.

5. Why have you set the salary at this level and is this affordable?

Mr Underhill emphasised to members that this was not a salary increase but the salary band for this new post. He highlighted the very different role Mr Williams would be undertaking compared to the previous Chief Executive role. A fundamental part of the role would be to support the Commissioner in his legal duties including the wider community safety and criminal justice issues. He was the Head of Paid Staff within the Commissioner's office and supported the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan. Mr Underhill had taken the decision not to appoint a Deputy Commissioner and had agreed formal delegations for the Chief Executive to act on his behalf. The remuneration package was previously out of line with other authorities and so had been benchmarked nationally. Mr Underhill confirmed that the new salary of £82,000 was still significantly less than the national average and he felt that the increase was appropriate. He confirmed that his costs for 2012-13 were under the budget set by the previous Police Authority, and the salary increase was affordable.

20.10 One member from the Borough of Poole put the following questions to Mr Williams on his professional expertise, and he offered the responses below:

1. Please highlight for us the main areas of expertise you have which will enable you to undertake the Chief executive role effectively.

Mr Williams advised members that he had a long background of working in community safety and had worked with front line Police, he advised and lobbied government on behalf of Community Safety Partnerships. In his current role at the LGA he understood the challenges that faced local councils. He wrote the LGA guidance on PCCs and had been involved with the transition and therefore

understood the PCC agenda and its interface with local government. He brought a breadth of knowledge and experience to the new role in Dorset.

2. In your role you will need to exercise a high degree of political sensitivity. Could you please briefly outline aspects of your experience that demonstrate this ability.

Mr Williams explained that he had worked with elected members from ward councillors to Minister level and understood the different sensitivities of the different parties. He has previously acted as adviser at the LGA to lead members.

3. The introduction of the PCC and new structures is a major change. How will you ensure all the staff in the Office of the PCC understand the changes and adapt to the new working environment effectively?

Mr Williams commented that he has been in the fortunate position that his predecessor had done a sterling job with the transition process for Dorset. The team had now been restructured and were aware and understood the changes. In his new role as Chief Executive he would be supporting officers to develop and source good practice.

4. As Chief Executive you have a very wide range of responsibilities (for example you will be supporting delivery of the PCCs vision and the Police and Crime Plan, you will be representing the PCC at high level meetings and you will also be the monitoring officer). How will you balance competing priorities and ensure nothing important gets overlooked?

Mr Williams expected to have a close working relationship with the Commissioner and would mutually agree priorities at any given time. There was a good strong team in place that would deliver the Police and Crime Plan to ensure a safer Dorset. Priorities would be towards legislative requirements and to ensure that the community voice was heard.

5. How will you be able to ensure that the Dorset PCC is heard nationally on issues concerning policing and reducing crime?

Mr Williams responded that after 5 years of working in Whitehall he had worked nationally to make strong links and this would ensure that the voice of the PCC was heard. He intended to use these national links to highlight to other areas the good work being done by Dorset Police and their partners.

6. This is a busy role. How will you keep your skills up to date?

Mr Williams emphasised to members that he felt that investment in staff was the best investment that could be made and would ensure that staff felt they were not working in isolation. He would be looking to work with other partners to encourage joint development with staff.

20.11 The member from West Dorset District Council put the following questions to Mr Williams on his personal independence, and he offered the responses below:

1. You will need a diverse range of key working relationships. How will you win the confidence of all partners whilst maintaining your personal integrity?

Dorset Police and Crime Panel – 23 April 2013

Mr Williams advised members of his background in developing successful partnerships up to a national level.

The Police and Crime Commissioner added that Mr Williams had already been invited to sit on 2 partnership groups as a result of his previous background and experience.

2. The Panel is one of the key stakeholders who the PCC will need to engage and we will also be holding the PCC to account. How will you ensure a constructive relationship between the PCC and the Panel is maintained at all times?

Mr Williams had been very involved in the legislation for Police and Crime Panels and was aware of the limitations on them. He was hoping to build effective relationships with both members and officers and firmly believed in transparency and accountability. He felt that a key role for the Panel was to support the PCC, not to just scrutinise his work.

20.12 In response to a question from the Vice-Chairman about the national profile of the Panel, Mr Williams felt that this was very important and would be well placed to help achieve this.

20.13 One of the independent members who had recently attended an LGA event to see how other PCPs operated nationally endorsed the importance of this.

20.14 The Police and Crime Commissioner noted the importance of Panel members meeting other south west colleagues as he and members of his team did on a regular basis.

3. Can you explain how in the past you have challenged a senior officer/member on an issue where you have had concerns around propriety.

Mr Williams responded that he was not afraid to challenge and made reference to a recent situation that he had dealt with that concerned bullying of a junior colleague, and how he managed to diffuse the situation.

4. How will you go about guiding the Commissioner if you feel he is moving into operational issues inappropriately?

Mr Williams responded that the PCC was well aware of the boundaries of the legislation and referred to his close working relationship with him and the Chief Constable and noted that should the situation arise he would be able to resolve it.

5. How will you ensure a safe environment for members of staff to express their professional opinion and be heard when it may conflict with the views or strategy of the PCC?

Mr Williams noted that the Commissioner would expect to be challenged by professionals, and would encourage an atmosphere of positive dialogue. He hoped to listen to not just officers at the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner but to partners as well. He highlighted the importance of a team ethos and encouraged an open door policy.

20.15 In response to a question from a member from Bournemouth Borough Council about whistleblowing, the Commissioner responded that he felt that in his view whistleblowing was acceptable albeit as a last resort. He would see it as a failure of the organisation and encouraged an open environment where staff felt able to share their views.

6. How do you demonstrate the standards you expect from members of your team in public service?

Mr Williams replied that he tended to lead by example and hoped that staff would view him as a person with personal integrity and high professional standards. He added that he was not politically focussed.

Exempt Business

Exclusion of the Public

Resolved

21.1 That in accordance with Section 100 A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting in relation to the business specified in minutes 22 - 24 because it was likely that if members of the public were present, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

21.2 To preserve confidentiality of debate and decisions taken in private Session, the Panel resolved to exclude the press and public.

Panel Decision on the proposed candidate for the Chief Executive to the Police and Crime Commissioner (Paragraph 1)

22.1 All Panel members gave their respective opinions on the Commissioner's preferred choice of candidate. There was general agreement that Christopher Williams was a strong candidate and that the appointments process had been robust. The Panel therefore agreed unanimously to endorse the Commissioner's choice of candidate and recommend that Christopher Williams be appointed to the position of the police and Crime Commissioner's Chief Executive.

22.2 The Commissioner returned to the room and was advised that the Panel unanimously supported his decision.

Resolved

23. That following full and comprehensive discussion the Commissioner's preferred candidate of Mr Christopher Williams for appointment to the post of Chief Executive be supported unanimously.

Reason for Decision

24. To assist the Panel in conducting a fair review of the process followed by the Commissioner and the suitability of the preferred candidate.

Dates of Future Meetings and Programme of Future Business

25. The Panel considered and agreed its work programme for remainder of the year 2013.

Resolved

26.1 That the next meeting of the Panel be held on Monday 3 June 2013 at 10.00am.

Dorset Police and Crime Panel – 23 April 2013

26.2 The dates for meetings in **2013** be agreed as follows:

- Thursday 7 November 2013, 10.00am
- Thursday 12 December 2013, 10.00am

Questions

27.1 Mr Phil Goodall, Borough of Poole asked the following question to the Police and Crime Commissioner:

In the light of a recent spate of accidents concerning bicycles/motorcycles, would the Police consider running a similar campaign to the Be Safe Be Seen campaign that had been held in the past?

27.2 The Police and Crime Commissioner gave the following response:

Thank you for your suggestion regarding the use of the 'Be Safe Be Seen' campaign which has been used both nationally and in Dorset to educate cyclists about the importance of being visible whilst using the roads.

The figures for 2013 need to be validated, but the early indications are that, despite some recent tragic incidents involving cyclists and motorcyclists who have been killed or seriously injured as a result of road collisions, the general trend has shown the number to be decreasing. The majority of injuries suffered in road traffic collisions are the drivers and passengers of other vehicles involved. Nevertheless, keeping all road users safe is an important strand of the priority in my five year Police and Crime Plan to reduce the number of people seriously harmed and I am also conscious of recent press reports referring to Bournemouth as the second most dangerous place for cyclists outside of London.

Working with partners in the Highways Authority, educational establishments and local authorities, the Force employs a range of tactics to both educate the public about how they can keep themselves safe, and provides appropriate enforcement where necessary. These tactics include long standing Operations such as the 'No excuse' campaign aimed at tackling the most common fatal four factors, which either contribute to collisions or the level of injury following a collision. The Force also use preventative tactics such as engaging with the Vehicle Operator Services Agency (VOSA) to examine vehicles at heightened risk of causing collisions through being overloaded or in poor condition.

The lack of visibility of road users including cyclists, motorcyclists or pedestrians can certainly increase the likelihood of a collision and the effects are often more serious due to the vulnerability of these individuals. Dorset Police has run a number of operations specifically targeting the issue of visibility including the 'be safe be seen' campaigns. Where cyclists have been stopped without lights they have been issued a £30 fixed penalty which can be cancelled if they provide proof of purchasing appropriate lights within a given timeframe. Local safer neighbourhood teams have conducted campaigns where youths have been stopped and rewarded for having the right equipment and clothing. I support such cycle awareness initiatives.

On 8 May, during 'Road safety week' the Force is running an operation in the North of the county focusing on educating pedestrians about good road sense highlighting the importance of visibility. We are also looking to utilise volunteers through the 'Community speed watch' programme which will enable local communities to provide a visible presence targeting local area where excess speed is an issue.

In practice a number of creative tactics are already employed to deal with the very complex problem of preventing road collisions involving serious injury, but I would always welcome any fresh ideas that can be used to ensure that we are doing everything we reasonably can to ensure that our roads are safe for all users.

27.3 Members had a general discussion with the Police and Crime Commissioner on road safety in general within the different areas of Dorset. The Commissioner advised members that the number of road deaths and those seriously killed in road traffic accidents had significantly increased in the shires rather than in the conurbations, but nationally these figures had also increased. He was currently working with the Force to try and address this and felt that the Road Safety Partnership Strategy would need to be changed in the light of this. He would welcome any observations members had at the November meeting of the Police and Crime Panel.

27.4 In response to a question from a member from Bournemouth Borough Council about the type of offences that the Police retained the income from fines, the Commissioner advised that Dorset Police kept the proceeds from the driver awareness schemes which was quite considerable. He advised that he had asked for a review of the Road Safety Policy and commented that he needed to be able to inform residents that speed cameras were in place for just two reasons: the area was an accident black spot; or that people had asked for a camera to be placed in a specific place.

27.5 The Senior Policy and Performance Manager, Dorset County Council advised members that as part of the quarterly performance report, which would be presented at the June meeting of the Panel, these issues could be included.

27.6 In response to a question from a member from North Dorset District Council about the date for the speedwatch campaign, the Commissioner advised that he had now put this on hold until the end of May until an insurance issue could be resolved.

Membership changes to the Panel

28.1 The Chairman advised members that this would be his last meeting as he was not seeking re-election in the forthcoming County Council elections. He thanked members for their support since the introduction of the newly formed Police and Crime Panel.

28.2 One member from Bournemouth Borough Council, Mr Theo Stratton, advised members that due to time constraints this would also be his last meeting of the Dorset Police and Crime Panel.

Meeting Duration: 10.30am – 12 noon

