



Dorset Police and Crime Panel

Minutes of a meeting held at County Hall, Dorchester
on 5 June 2014

Present:

Members

Borough Poole

Co-opted members:

Phil Goodall

Independent member

Mike Short

Christchurch Borough Council

Bernie Davis

Bournemouth Borough Council

John Adams (Chairman)

Co-opted members:

Malcolm Davies

Dennis Gritt

David Smith

West Dorset District Council

John Russell (Vice-Chairman)

Dorset County Council

Ian Gardner

North Dorset District Council

Gary Jefferson

Officer advisers to the Police and Crime Panel:

Debbie Ward, Chief Executive, Dorset County Council

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

Fiona King, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Dorset County Council

Also in attendance:

Martyn Underhill, Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

Officer advisers to the Police and Crime Commissioner

Dan Steadman, Chief Executive to the Police and Crime Commissioner

Richard Bates, Treasurer to the Police and Crime Commissioner

DCC James Vaughan, Dorset Police

Julia Yates, Head of Corporate Development, OPCC

Richard Brittan, Chairman of the Wiltshire Police and Crime Panel also attended.

(Note: These minutes have been prepared by officers as a record of the meeting and of any decisions reached. They are to be considered and confirmed at the next meeting of the Dorset Police and Crime Panel on **11 September 2014**.)

Election of Chairman

Resolved

17. That John Adams (Bournemouth Borough Council), be elected Chairman for the remainder of the year 2014/15.

Appointment of Vice-Chairman**Resolved**

18. That John Russell (West Dorset District Council), be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the year 2014/15.

Apologies for Absence

19. Apologies for absence were received from Elaine Atkinson (Borough of Poole), Malcolm Birr (East Dorset District Council), Fred Drane (Dorset County Council), Iain McVie (independent member), Ali Patrick (Purbeck District Council), Ann Stribley (Borough of Poole) and Weymouth and Portland Borough Council.

Code of Conduct

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

Minutes

21. The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2014 were confirmed and signed.

Matters Arising**Minute 4 – Drunk Tanks**

22. As an update to the issue of drunk tanks the Deputy Chief Constable expressed concern around the criteria of drunk tanks and noted that questions on their commercial viability had been asked and officers were at present waiting for the result of a national feasibility study. The concept was to reduce the burden on the public purse. He explained that privately run houses were used but that there was a range of health and safety issues surrounding this.

Minute 5 – 101 Service

23. The Commissioner advised members that the 101 service still remained a matter of concern to him and members of the public. Further resources had now been put into this service and a long term recruitment plan was in place. He assured members this was a high priority for the Force.

Minute 6 – Station Desk Closures

24.1 The Commissioner advised members that following two public consultations there had been a decision made to delay the decision to allow for the exploration of further opportunities in order get it right for Dorset. Members would receive a report later in the year highlighting how this process was developing and what operational decisions had been made.

24.2 The member from North Dorset District Council asked that the Commissioner consider sharing estates and highlighted the advantage to small stations by doing this. The Deputy Chief Constable responded that the Force was very supportive of shared estates and one stop shops, there was one caveat though that the Force was not short of buildings but short of people.

24.3 In response to a question from a member from Christchurch Borough Council about Dorset Alert, the Deputy Chief Constable explained that this was a community messaging tool which had been launched earlier in the year. There had been a mistake made by the provider which then led to a human error which resulted in a negative start. However, the Commissioner undertook to look into the ongoing issue that Homewatch in Christchurch seemed to be experiencing.

Minute 12.7 – Restorative Justice

25. The Commissioner advised members that he had now received funding for two years in order for the OPCC to co-ordinate restorative justice in Dorset. A Restorative Justice co-ordinator had now been employed and he undertook to update members regularly on the progress. The Commissioner referred to the change in prison estates which meant that Dorset prisoners were now held in Devon.

Minute 13.6 – Refresh of the Police and Crime Plan

26.1 The Commissioner advised members that the refresh had not been done as there had been pressure to remove the targets and it was not possible to refresh without reaching a conclusion on this issue. There were very few targets that were set in Dorset, mainly relating to call handling, and he felt that he might remove just the one target of reducing crime by 1% as this had already been reduced by more so therefore was not a worthwhile target.

26.2 The Chief Executive to the Commissioner thanked members for their feedback and comments in relation to the Plan.

Public Participation

Public Speaking

27.1 There were no public questions received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(1).

27.2 There were no public statements received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(2).

Petitions

28. There were no petitions received in accordance with the County Council's petition scheme at this meeting.

Annual Report

29.1 The Panel considered the Draft Police and Crime Commissioner's Annual Report 2013/14, in accordance with Section 12 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. The Chief Executive to the Commissioner welcomed feedback from members about the approach, content and size of the report.

29.2 The member from North Dorset District Council highlighted that one or two areas could be more transparent and felt that the Commissioner had perhaps missed an opportunity of communicating with areas that were not covered by the PCC Advocates. The Commissioner responded that he had seven advocates which was manageable and were there to fill any gaps. Information about the advocates was available on the Commissioner's website and reference to this could be made in the report.

29.3 The Vice-Chairman suggested that in future the Annual Report could be a web based document with a front page which showed all the relevant information. The Chief Executive to the Commissioner welcomed this suggestion as it was in-line with the plans for the report. He added that the OPCC were a progressive team that were never complacent and were continually improving and added that they had recently made a new appointment with regards to digital reporting as a further engagement tool.

29.4 The Independent Member felt the structure of the report was about right but that some form of how risk was managed would be useful. He also felt that victim commissioning was not in the right place in the report as it didn't support the reducing crime priority. The Chief Executive responded that dealing with vulnerable victims could deter

them from becoming victims again, and that there was not a natural place for victims commissioning to sit as it cut across all six priorities.

29.5 In response to a comment from the member from the Borough of Poole about a lack of police presence in his particular area, the Deputy Chief Constable responded that this was the most common complaint. The Commissioner added that as they had lost around a fifth of staff some visibility would be lost. Recruitment was taking place this year so there would be a slight increase.

29.6 The number of special constables had also reduced but there were plans to recruit more. 80 had initially been recruited but many had left due to either securing a job with the Police or other work commitments. Exit interviews were carried out but the message was they were open for recruitment now.

29.7 The Vice-Chairman drew attention to the opportunity of becoming a volunteer for the Police and felt that more communication in this area was needed. The Deputy Chief Constable advised members of the ambitious target to have as many people volunteering for the Police as paid staff. A further resource had been put into recruiting volunteers.

29.8 The member from North Dorset District Council made reference to the pilot scheme for a Street Sex Outreach Worker and noted that the Health Service originally operated such a scheme. The Commissioner made reference to the NHS funding gap and the PCC was funding the scheme for the first year to bridge that. It was a complex area and rather like the mental health triage system he would pump prime the initiative but did not plan to fund it beyond five years.

29.9 In response to a question from the Independent Member about vehicle crime the Deputy Chief Constable explained that officers do attend at most vehicle crime cases which had led to a huge uplift in the public view. The Force was trying to drive up standards in relation to crime.

Noted

Progress against the Police and Crime Plan (Q4 Report)

30.1 The Panel considered a report by the Commissioner which informed members of the progress against the Police and Crime Plan 2013 – 17 for Quarter 4 (January - March).

30.2 The Commissioner highlighted a few key areas of activity to members, to which members asked questions on the following priorities:

30.3 Priority 1: In response to a question from the Chairman about information from insurance companies to members of the public about securing their premises, the Deputy Chief Constable advised that the Police do run sheducation campaigns which helped educate people to secure their sheds.

30.4 Priority 2: Following a question from the member from North Dorset District Council seeking clarity on the statistics for serious sexual offences, the Deputy Chief Constable advised that if people chose not to report an offence at the time it would not affect the statistics. The sanction detection rate for serious sexual offences was confirmed at 23.7% which was a reduction on the previous year and the error in the report would be rectified and then republished.

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30.5 Priority 3: In response to a concern from a member from Christchurch Borough Council about criminals deprived of their assets, the Commissioner confirmed that 82% went to the Government but as a result of negotiation by the Commissioner in Yorkshire with the Home Secretary there would be a change in the percentage rate.

30.6 Priority 4: The Commissioner advised members that he was lobbying Government to try and change the rules around how prison release papers were completed in relation to the high number of ex prisoners moving into the Bournemouth area from London and Birmingham but did not anticipate a quick success.

30.7 In response to a question from a member from Dorset County Council about the re-offending rate, the Deputy Chief Constable advised that detection was not measured in the same way as re-offending and Dorset was slightly below the National average.

30.8 Priority 5: Following a question from the member from North Dorset District Council about the victim satisfaction rate, the Head of Corporate Development advised that Dorset was in the bottom quartile for keeping victims informed. The Chief Executive added that the Victims Bureau would shortly be reviewed. Victim surgeries had recently been arranged for those people that were so dissatisfied.

30.9 Priority 6: In response to a question from the Vice-Chairman about people who were involved in Neighbourhood Watch being able to access information relating to volunteering, the Deputy Chief Constable advised that there were 46 Community Speedwatch schemes and this was growing in some areas. There were currently 172 people classed as police volunteers who had been vetted and carried a warrant style card, a further 1800 other volunteers could be involved in flooding, missing child or custody lay visitor duties (for example).

30.10 Members asked the following questions of the Treasurer in respect of the financial update against planned spending section of the monitoring report:

1. Can the Commissioner confirm that the Panel should congratulate both him, the Chief Constable and their officers on delivery approximately a £4.7m saving in 2013/14 which is about 4% of the original budget set.

The Treasurer confirmed savings of approximately 4%. He advised the major reason for the underspend was around staffing and a number of police staff posts had been held vacant. Estate costs were lower due to a mild winter and the infrastructure work had been delayed slightly.

2. Can the Commissioner confirm this a £2m improvement in the underspend from the December 2013 position used as the basis for setting the 2014/15 precept. This precept generated an extra £435k for that year from putting up council tax by 1.96% compared to the alternative of accepting the government's council tax freeze grant.

The Treasurer confirmed this was an improvement and noted that there was always some slippage in expenditure from one year to the next. The major operations budget ended up around £400k underspent. The underspend also partly related to the successful Innovation fund bids which covered some costs of projects that were already underway.

The Deputy Chief Constable added that thankfully the numbers of major crime incidents were not too high for this year but in 2012 there was a huge spike so it was felt a reserve needed to be put in place.

3. Could we respectfully request the Commissioner provides the Panel with details of the financial performance against the capital programme and in respect of the reserves position of the police Force as these were significant issues in respect of the setting of both the 2013/14 and 2014/15 precept.

The Treasurer circulated to members a table showing Specific Reserves and General Balances and a table of figures which related to the Capital Programme, he added that the capital programme and reserve position were still being finalised for the year end accounts, and were at too early a stage for inclusion in the draft outturn report.

The independent member raised a concern about the level of resources in the insurance fund and that a recent independent review of the fund would possibly equate to a windfall of £1.5m.

The Treasurer advised that he had now taken the opportunity to look at reserves, potential capital receipt and would present members with a budget review paper at their next meeting in September.

4. Can the Panel (in the absence of the information requested a question 3) request clarification as to the extent of the additional capital cost of the crime intelligence system and associated hardware, including servers, referred to in the monitoring report.

The crime intelligence system is currently within the available budget of £1.25m. £1m has been spent in 2013-14 and a further £0.25m is available in 2014-15.

5. Can the Treasurer please explain the impact on the overall resources available to the police Force of the decision to make a £1.4m one-off payment to reduce the LGPS deficit and when this payment was made. The Panel would also appreciate details of the value of future years revenue budgets that will now be freed up as a result of this payment.

The transfer of £1.4m to the LGPS deficit is equivalent to approximately £200k per annum off of the pensions costs. This will however not be reflected in lower payments until the next actuarial review. The payment was made at the end of March 2014.

The full repayment of the LGPS deficit would allow for around £0.9m to be removed from the base budget. Further budgeted repayments will allow us to remove most of this prior to the next actuarial revaluation and the saving will reduce the remaining long term budget gap in 2017.

6. Can we also be advised as to the value of the provision being made for cash payments to police officers instead of the previous approach of holding time held in lieu of overtime payments.

Police officers are able to elect to have overtime worked 'repaid' as hours held in lieu of payment, rather than receiving an additional payment for time worked. In accordance with Police Regulations, such time held must be taken within three months of the date at which it was incurred. In Dorset Police, a local agreement exists whereby police officers have been able to carry forward such time held indefinitely once incurred, and is often used by officers to take considerable time off immediately prior to retirement. This causes the Force increasing problems in respect of managing resources, and ensuring sufficient officers are available to meet demand. The problem is particularly exacerbated as officer numbers continue to reduce and resourcing becomes increasingly challenging.

Officers are already able to request payment of time held over three months old at any time, although historically few have exercised this option. In view of the effect on resourcing, and the desire to comply fully with Police Regulations, it is increasingly clear that the excess time held should be reduced as soon as possible. Officers have therefore been given until the end of 2014 to either reduce the balance of time held, or ask for it to be paid in full. We have therefore fully recognised this liability in the accounts with a provision of £560k, whereas previously the provision was significantly lower.

7. In section 3.34 of the monitoring report it is highlighted that Dorset Police have been successful in 3 innovation fund bids. Can the Commissioner highlight any potential financial benefits that are expected to flow from these investments.

Dorset Police, and the Officer of the Police and Crime Commissioner have indeed been successful in having three agreed Innovation Fund bids, with funding anticipated to be an exceptionally high proportion of the overall 'pot' available nationally. The grant claims have been submitted, and are currently being assessed.

The three bids were:-

*Regional forensics centre of excellence £848,000
Ecommerce for Policing £205,000
Improve blue light and local authority integration £80,000*

The regional forensic works will deliver savings of at least £5m over the first five years of operation across the region.

Ecommerce for policing, which will transform the interface between the public and the police for numerous transactional services, is expected to deliver £6.5m financial savings nationally per annum.

Finally the benefits of improved integration between public sector bodies, and others as appropriate are not directly financial, but will significantly improve the efficiency of each organisation.

Noted

Strategic Collaboration

31.1 The Panel received a presentation from the Deputy Chief Constable on the proposed strategic alliance with Devon and Cornwall Police. They highlighted to members the challenges and considerations which included a focus 15 strategic areas of policing,

more than 60 functions/departments and an outline business case produced to consider 30+ functions in the first phase.

31.2 The next step would be for the Programme Team to produce a strategic Outline Business Case which would be considered by the Alliance Steering Group at its meeting on 23 June 2014. If agreed by the two PCCs and two Chief Constables, that there was sufficient evidence to warrant the investment in resource required, to develop detailed business cases the Chief Executive invited the Panel to consider how it would like to be involved following this meeting.

31.3 The Chief Executive to the Commissioner advised that there would be a phase of public engagement following the 23 June meeting to tease out from members of the public what their views and anxieties were in order for these views to be considered within the detailed business cases. He highlighted that the Panel's role between the 23 June and the strategic alliance decision would be helpful in scrutinising the decision making process (although the decision itself sat exclusively with the Commissioner).

31.4 The Independent Member asked whether it would be worth considering inviting both Chairmen of the PCPs to sit on the Executive Board, in a non-voting capacity. The Chief Executive responded that this maybe worthwhile, although may not be practical as it would need four-way approval.

31.5 Three members of the Panel undertook to work with the Police in respect of the strategic outline case and the Commissioner welcomed this but stressed at the present time the document would be highly confidential.

31.6 In response to a question from a member from Bournemouth Borough Council about whether this was a Government initiative, the Commissioner advised that the Government was very keen on strategic alliance but that he and the Chief Constable were driving forward a proper consideration of all options to address the shortfall, as the Force needed to save £8M/pa by 2017-18.

31.7 The Commissioner stressed that this was not a merger but an alliance and was not about affecting frontline policing. The aim was to protect the identity and resources for Dorset and to look at how to work differently, enabling investments in future demands on policing.

31.8 Following a further question from a member from Bournemouth Borough Council about whether there would be just the one Commissioner for the Alliance, the Commissioner noted that his, and the Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall's role was to represent their local community which would stay the same. If there was to be one Chief Constable for the Alliance that would require a statutory change.

Noted

Chairman's Announcements

32. The Chairman made reference to the business that had been considered by members over the past year and noted that he had attended several informal meetings with the Commissioner, accompanied by the Lead Officer. He had also visited the Wiltshire Police and Crime Panel which had been organised by South West Councils. The Chairman was now considering liaising with the Devon and Cornwall Panel. He informed members that there was now a dedicated web page for the Dorset Police and Crime Panel and could be found at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/police-and-crime-panel>

Noted

Dates of Future Meetings and Programme of Future Business

33. The Panel considered and agreed its work programme for the remainder of the year 2014.

Resolved

34.1 That the next meeting of the Panel be held on Thursday 11 September 2014 at 10.00am.

34.2 The dates for future meetings be agreed as follows:

- Monday 10 November 2014, 10.00am
- Thursday 11 December 2014, 10.00am, Training and Development session for all members
- TBA January 2015, Finance Workshop for all members

Questions

35. No questions were asked by members.

Meeting Duration: 10.00am – 1.30pm