

DORSET COUNCIL - POLICE AND CRIME PANEL COMPLAINTS SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 15 AUGUST 2019

Present: Iain McVie (Chairman), Bobbie Dove, Barry Goringe, Les Fry and Bill Pipe

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Marc Eyre (Service Manager for Assurance) and Fiona King (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

6. Apologies

No apologies for absence were received at the meeting.

7. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2019 were confirmed and signed. The PCP meeting at their meeting on 9 July 2019 accepted the minutes.

The Chairman advised that his aim was to hold a meeting of the Sub-Committee annually, as a stand-alone meeting, with other meetings being arranged on an ad hoc basis to consider current complaints.

Resolved

That the Sub-Committee meet on an annual basis with ad-hoc meetings being arranged to consider any current complaints.

8. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting.

9. Public Participation

There were no statements or questions submitted from Town and Parish Councils at this meeting.

There were no public statements and questions submitted for this meeting.

10. Terms of Reference

Members of the Sub-Committee discussed their Terms of Reference and agreed that they were fit for purpose at the present time, aside from a minor amendment to reflect the frequency of meetings discussed at Item 7 above.

Members felt the Sub-Committee should be made aware of all complaints that were received and noted that it might be helpful to receive an overview of the type of complaints being raised.

The Chairman made reference to a recent complaint that had been considered which had provided a good test of the effectiveness of the Protocol. Whilst it was generally seen to be effective, learning from the complaint suggested that there could be greater transparency for members of the sub-committee on complaints received at an earlier stage in the process.

The Chairman highlighted that at the Police and Crime Panel meeting on 9 July 2019, Bobbie Dove had been appointed Vice Chairman and therefore it was timely to elect a new Vice Chairman for this Sub-Committee. Following a discussion, the Sub-Committee elected Bill Pipe as their Vice Chairman.

Resolved

That Bill Pipe be elected as Vice-Chairman for the Sub-Committee for the remainder of 2019-20.

11. Complaints Protocol

The Committee considered and discussed the current Complaints Protocol in light of lessons learned from a recent complaint.

Members considered the protocol's flowchart and discussed at what stage members of the sub-committee should be made aware of a complaint. It was agreed that the Chairman should be copied into the acknowledgement on receipt of the complaint. At the point of 'Yes' or 'No' on the flowchart officers would notify the complainant, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Executive OPCC and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Complaints Sub-Committee.

At the 'No' point the Chairman/Vice-Chairman would satisfy themselves that there was no requirement to hold a sub-committee meeting.

With reference to updates on complaints that were given at the Police and Crime Panel meetings, members felt this should come directly from the Chairman of the Complaints Sub-Committee and not from officers.

The Chairman felt there needed to be clarity about how a review and any subsequent fieldwork for this should be facilitated, should this become necessary. The Monitoring Officer would be asked to consider this and to reflect the decision in both the Terms of Reference and Complaints Protocol.

Resolved

1. That the Complaints Protocol and flowchart be updated as discussed.
2. That the Monitoring Officer be asked to consider how a review and any subsequent fieldwork needed would be facilitated.

12. Update on Complaints

Members received an update on both new and outstanding complaints. It was agreed that at the annual meeting of the sub-committee it would be helpful to analyse an overview of all complaints that had been received and dealt with.

The Chairman highlighted the following:-

- Complaint 1 - Issues had now been concluded and the complainant had been informed that should there be any recourse the only route of appeal would be through the Local Government Ombudsman.
- Complaint 2 – the Monitoring Officer had written to the complainant to arrange for him to meet with the complainant to discuss her concerns. A further update was expected at the next meeting of the Dorset Police and Crime Panel on 24 September 2019.
- Complaint 3 – The Service Manager for Assurance updated members on the nature of the issue and confirmed that an acknowledgement had been sent to the complainant. The Chairman advised members that he had been involved with this complaint from the point of receipt, mirroring the approach agreed for future handling in the updated protocol.

Resolved

That the Service Manager for Assurance would liaise with the Monitoring Officer regarding the process for Complaint 3.

13. Urgent items

There were no urgent items of business.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 10.50 am

Chairman

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