

Police and Crime Panel for Lancashire

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 8th March 2016 at 10.00am in Meeting Room A, Town Hall, Blackburn.

Present:

Chair

Councillor Andy Kay, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council (Acting Chair)

Committee Members

Councillor Ben Aitken, Fylde Borough Council
Councillor Roger Berry, Wyre Borough Council
Councillor Robert Boswell, Preston County Council
Councillor Peter Gibson, Wyre Borough Council
Councillor Terry Hill, Ribble Valley Borough Council
Councillor Brendan Hughes, Lancaster Borough Council
Councillor Adrian Lythgoe, Rossendale Borough Council
Councillor Liz Oades, Fylde Borough Council
Councillor Ivan Taylor, Blackpool Borough Council
Councillor Paul Walmsley, Chorley Borough Council
Paul Richardson, Independent Co-opted Member
Altaf Baghdadi, Independent Co-opted Member

Also in attendance

- Clive Grunshaw, Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire
- Angela Harrison, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Sian Roxborough, Council Solicitor, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
- John Bremers, Senior Projects Consultant, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
- Phil Llewellyn, Executive and Councillor Support Manager, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

1. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

As the Chair had submitted apologies and there was currently no Vice Chair of the Panel, Sian Roxborough requested nominations from those in attendance to act as Chair for this meeting. The Panel agreed that Councillor Andy Kay act as Chair for this meeting.

Councillor Kay reminded Panel Members that there was currently a vacancy for Vice Chair of the Panel, but bearing in mind this was the last meeting of the current Municipal year it would be appropriate to receive nominations and appoint a Vice Chair at the AGM meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from the Chair, Councillor Alastair Bradley and from Councillors Paul Elms, Julie Gibson, Tony Harrison, Miles Parkinson, David Whipp, Kev Wright and Altaf Baghdadi.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 25th January 2016

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 25th January 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

5. Public Questions

No public questions had been received.

6. Police and Crime Commissioner Draft Annual Report 2015/16

The Commissioner's draft Annual Report was submitted for the Panel's views and feedback before the report was published. Angela Harrison explained that at this stage, the report was a high level draft, which gave Panel Members an early opportunity to look at it. In the event of a different Commissioner being elected in May clearly the report would be re-presented.

The Commissioner highlighted key elements of the report, and in particular focussed on work undertaken to Champion Victim Rights and on the work undertaken relating to Early Action / Prevention.

The Commissioner took a number of questions and comments on the report, as summarised below.

In terms of the breakdown of percentage of detectives in Lancashire in comparison to neighbourhood police officers, the Commissioner advised that support varied depending on the level of demand and there needed to be flexibility to focus on key areas of concern but that there was a 24/7 Neighbourhood Policing Team in Lancashire.

In response to comments about the lateness of the report, Angela Harrison advised that the report was draft because of the elections, and there was no obligation to present it now but it was felt it would be an opportunity for the Panel to look at it, and the lateness of the report was not down to the Commissioner, and apologised on behalf of the Office. It was suggested that a small group of Members may want to look at the report in more length. The full report and performance data would be circulated in good time ahead of the next meeting, and Members would then have the opportunity to send questions in advance of the meeting.

In response to a request for more details about rural crime initiatives, the Commissioner advised that work was ongoing with farming communities, and often the criminals involved were repeat offenders, carrying out a number of different crimes in rural areas.

In terms of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes and the approach Pan-Lancashire, the Commissioner indicated that he felt that more work was needed, looking at existing schemes and the role of citizens in policing, and seeing which approach worked best.

In relation to the approach to Domestic Abuse, the Commissioner outlined the work undertaken and this had been a particular focus during his period in office. A serious concern going forward was partner support in the context of the ongoing cuts and the potential support of these.

RESOLVED – That the draft report be noted and once the final report and performance data was available, Members of the Panel to email questions to the Commissioner's Office.

7. The Police and Crime Plan Performance Monitoring Report

Members of the Panel received a report which provided an update on progress in delivering the Police and Crime Plan (the Plan) for Lancashire 2013-2018 including a performance report in relation to the success measures contained with the Plan and a brief outline of other key commissioner activity.

The report covered the time period 6 January to 29 February 2016.

The report was presented in three sections as follows:

Part 1 – an update on progress for each of the objectives listed in the plan.

Part 2 – a quarter 2 performance monitoring report.

Part 3 – a brief outline of the PCC's key activity in relation to role and function not captured in parts 1 or 2 of this report.

Due to the short time since the last meeting, a full updated report would be presented to the next meeting of the Panel (the AGM meeting) in June 2016.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8. Police and Crime Commissioner Decisions

The Panel received a report highlighting decisions made and published by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire in the period since the last meeting of the Panel on 25 January 2016.

Since the Panel's last meeting, the Commissioner has published 8 decisions.

In accordance with its statutory duty, the Panel had the opportunity to scrutinise and review the decisions made and published.

In response to a question from Councillor Andy Kay, the Commissioner advised that delegated Officer Decisions were not currently published on the website but that a list could be provided. In response, Councillor Kay asked that Officer Decisions taken be incorporated into reports in future.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

9a. Police Complaints Process - Lancashire Task and Finish Group

Members received an update on progress of the Task and Finish Group set up to scrutinise the Police Complaints Process in Lancashire.

As agreed at the meeting in October, a short term Task and Finish Group was set up to scrutinise the operation of the Police Complaints process in Lancashire in the context of the Police and Crime Commissioners role in holding the Chief Constable to account for the operation of quality services to the public of Lancashire. This was one of the items agreed by the Panel for inclusion in its Forward Plan.

The following Panel Members were appointed to serve on the Task and Finish Group – Andy Kay, Terry Hill, Tony Harrison and Julie Gibson.

Initial key lines of enquiry (questions) were identified by the Task and Finish Group following its initial meeting on 16th February 2016 and shared with the Commissioner.

At the meeting, Panel Members felt that due to the short time available before the next meeting of the Panel on 8th March, it was more appropriate to build in more time to do the topic justice, and therefore they would continue their work which would conclude later in March and submit a report with conclusions and recommendations to the next meeting of the Panel (the AGM meeting).

The Task and Finish Group would meet with the Commissioner at the rise of the Panel on 8th March and receive a presentation and responses to these initial lines of enquiry then meet privately to finalise their report for consideration at the next Panel meeting.

RESOLVED – That the Panel note the work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group to date and note that a full report with recommendations will be submitted to the AGM meeting.

9b. Scrutiny of Protecting Vulnerable Persons Priority

A report was submitted which provided an update on the progress of scrutiny of one of the Commissioner's key priorities – Protecting Vulnerable Persons.

As agreed at the meeting in October, scrutiny of the Commissioner's work on one of his key priorities – Protecting Vulnerable Persons would be undertaken during 2015/16 and included in the Forward Plan.

Rather than setting up another Task and Finish Group , full Panel scrutiny was the agreed process, to be delivered on a 'virtual' basis – ie. via submission of questions and key lines of enquiry by email.

The Commissioner's Office had offered to provide Panel members with scrutiny papers that would be submitted to the next Commissioner's Scrutiny meeting on 26th February, where plans and strategies that link to vulnerable people would be scrutinised. Sian Roxborough advised that the report stated that these papers had not yet been made available, but it appeared that there had been a misunderstanding between the Council and Commissioner's Offices, and that these papers were available.

It was suggested that the Panel continue their work and submit a report with conclusions and recommendations to the next meeting of the Panel (the AGM meeting) in June 2016.

RESOLVED – That the Panel note the report and note that a full report with recommendations will be submitted at the AGM meeting.

10. Annual General Meeting and Change of Date

The Panel were requested to approve a change of date for the Annual General Meeting.

Members were reminded that the Panel had a Forward Plan and had set up Task and Finish Groups, but for 2015/16 this had been a compressed process, due to the Forward Plan only being agreed in October 2015 and also the final Panel meeting in 2015/16 being brought forward a month to today's meeting so as not to fall into the Purdah period for the PCC Elections.

For 2016/17 onwards it was suggested that the AGM meeting be held early in June each year to enable the Panel to set up scrutiny groups and start work sooner and therefore ensure enough time can be allocated to each scrutiny topic.

It was therefore suggested that for 2016/17, the AGM meeting, scheduled for Monday 4th July, be brought forward to Monday 6th June 2016, and that going forwards the AGM be held in early June each year.

RESOLVED – That the Panel agree a change of date for the Annual General Meeting – from Monday 4th July to Monday 6th June 2016.

11. Panel Budget 2015/16

A report was submitted which outlined Panel expenditure to date in 2015/16 and confirmed expenditure for 2014/15.

The Government committed to provided limited funding to cover the costs of maintaining Police and Crime Panels. The host authority for a Police and Crime Panel in a police force area would receive annually up to £53,000 for costs of administering Panels and up to £920 for expenses per member (maximum 20 Panel members). This had been confirmed

again by the Home Office for 2015/16 but no commitment had been made to funding for future years at this stage.

Home Office funding was provided via a grant agreement which was paid in arrears to Blackburn with Darwen as the host authority.

As part of the agreement to fund Police and Crime Panels, the Home Office had stipulated that for 2015/16 onwards a transparency requirement was now attached as a condition of the single grant payment to allow public scrutiny of PCP spending. This now required PCPs to publish, as a minimum on their website, details of all their expenditure including all panel administration costs and individual panel member claims for expenses and allowances.

Attached at Appendix 1 was a breakdown of projected costs and expenditure for 2015/16, along with the breakdown for 2014/15 for transparency purposes.

Peter Gibson enquired about the rotation of host authority between LCC / Blackburn and Blackpool and was advised that a report would be submitted to the AGM Meeting in June on this matter.

RESOLVED – That the Panel note the expenditure for 2015/16 to date and expenditure for 2014/15, which would be published on the PCP website.

12. Review of the procedure for dealing with complaints about the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner

Ahead of this item the Chair confirmed that there were no new complaints to report.

The Panel received a report which reviewed the current procedures for dealing with complaints against the PCC, and recommended a procedure for adoption by the Panel as regards the handling of such complaints.

The Complaints Procedure was last considered by the Panel at their meeting on 7th July 2014, when it was agreed that the Complaint Procedure should be reviewed every two years.

The Secretary had been delegated the responsibility for the handling of all complaints at the initial stages, and for reporting the outcome direct to the Panel.

Furthermore the Panel at their meeting on 28th November 2012 set up a Complaints Sub Committee to consider informal resolution of complaints which the Secretary considered should be dealt with by the sub-committee under Regulation 28. The sub-committee could also consider complaints referred back to the Panel by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC). It was felt that the sub-committee was still the best way of handling such resolution matters.

The Procedure as set out in the Appendix had been amended to try to make it easier for the public to understand and to reflect experience and issues that have arisen over the last two years.

The procedures follow closely the guidance issued by the Secretary of State and accorded with the regulations.

A number of notes had been added to the procedures to:

- a) Explain briefly the role of the PCC
- b) Emphasis that the Lancashire Constabulary Professional Standards Department handle complaints against individual police officers, not the PCC and not the Panel.
- c) That the Secretary may decide not to register a complaint, if the complaint is one that falls within the expectation or is outside of the Panel's remit
- d) That if the complaint is investigated by the IPCC then the IPCC produce a report and the report outcome is not a matter for consideration by the Panel.

A flow chart had been added to assist those making a complaint.

John Bremers advised that an additional paragraph would need to be added at No. 28 of the Appendices (page 34 of the agenda) to say non-criminal matters would be dealt with under the usual complaints procedure.

John Bremers also clarified that references to the Deputy Commissioner position had been maintained in case one was appointed in the future.

The Commissioner, in relation to a question about his use of a police fleet vehicle from Cllr Peter Gibson outlined the position and confirmed he did not claim mileage, nor use a fuel card or claim car parking fees and he did not travel first class to London on the train, his office booked train travel and there was a limited budget for hotel accommodation and that he did not claim tube fares etc.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and the procedure as set out in the Appendix be adopted.

Ahead of the forthcoming elections, Councillor Taylor thanked the Commissioner for his work as Commissioner during his four years in office.

13. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

14. Date of Next Meeting

As agreed at Agenda Item 10, the Annual General Meeting would be held at Blackpool Town Hall at 10.00am on the 6th June 2016.

SignedChair
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