

Police and Crime Panel for Lancashire

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 15th October, 2013 at 10.00 am in Meeting Room A, Town Hall, Blackburn

Present:

Chair

Councillor Kate Hollern, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Committee Members

Councillor Alyson Barnes, Rossendale Borough Council
Councillor Pam Barton, Hyndburn Borough Council
Councillor Simon Blackburn, Blackpool Council
Councillor Alistair Bradley, Chorley Borough Council
Councillor Margaret Brindle, Burnley Borough Council
Councillor Robert Boswell, Preston City Council
Councillor Margaret Foxley, Pendle Borough Council
Councillor Peter Gibson, Wyre Borough Council
Councillor Ian Grant, West Lancs Borough Council
Councillor Stuart Hirst, Ribble Valley Borough Council
County Councillor Jennifer Mein, Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Liz Oades, Flyde Borough Council
Councillor David Smith, Lancaster City Council
Councillor Malcolm Thomas, Lancaster City Council
Paul Richardson, Independent co-opted member
Shiraj Vali, Independent co-opted member

Also in attendance

- Ms Sian Roxborough, Secretary to the Police and Crime Panel.
- Mr S Finnegan, Chief Constable, Lancashire Constabulary.
- Ms Karen Edwards, Lancashire Chief Inspector, Lancashire Constabulary
- Mr C Grunshaw, Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire.
- Ms M Carruthers-Watt, Chief Executive - Office of the PCC.
- Ms Lisa Kitto, Chief Finance Officer, Office of the Police and Crime Panel.
- Mr Mark Aspin, Community Safety Manager, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
- Mr Phil Llewellyn, Executive and Councillor Support Manager, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council.

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair, Councillor Kate Hollern, welcomed all present to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Councillors David Eaves, (Fylde Borough Council), Margaret Smith, (South Ribble Borough Council) and Julie Cooper, (Burnley Borough Council).

2. Minutes of the Meeting

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8th July 2013 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

In response to a question on the closure of the Police Station in Accrington, the Commissioner advised that a replacement Police Station on the edge of Accrington town centre was on track and in the budget.

It was also reported that decisions had now been taken on the location of the divisional headquarters, with the headquarters for Western Division in Blackpool, East Division in Blackburn and South Division in Preston.

3. Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were submitted.

4. Appointment of Secretary of the Panel

Further to the decision taken at the meeting on 8th July that Blackburn with Darwen would act as host authority for the Panel, a report was submitted which recommended that Sian Roxborough, Council Solicitor/Head of Legal Services for Blackburn with Darwen Council be appointed as Secretary to the Lancashire Police and Crime Panel.

Resolved: That the appointment of Sian Roxborough, Council Solicitor/Head of Legal Services for Blackburn with Darwen Council as Secretary to the Lancashire Police and Crime Panel, be approved.

5. Terms of Reference and Administrative Update for the Police and Crime Panel

An update was provided on the terms of reference and administration arrangements following the report to panel at the last meeting on the 8th July 2013 relating to Constitution, Terms of Reference, Panel Arrangements and Operational Procedures for the Panel.

Following discussions on proportionality at the last meeting, the Secretary to the Panel had written to the Home Secretary on the 6th September 2013 to notify his office of the revised Panel arrangements to satisfy political balance requirements. The Secretary updated the Home Office on developments regarding a change in calculation of the political balance and to the hosting of the Police and Crime Panel for Lancashire, including support from the Secretary and dealing with administrative costs.

Following the change to hosting arrangements agreed at the last meeting, it was confirmed the Terms of Reference of the Panel remained unchanged.

In terms of the Panel Arrangements and Operational Procedure, it was reported that the Panel Arrangements had been revised as highlighted in italics within the report, to reflect the change to hosting and political balance.

The Operational Procedure at Appendix C had been altered at paragraph 9 to include sub committees as well as task groups, in accordance with the regulations and guidance.

The amendment agreed at the last meeting to the Operational Procedure in order that the County Councils Standing Orders regarding the rules of debate at Committees be adopted in relation to future meetings of the Panel had been made and highlighted in the appendices to the report.

With regards to Allowances, Lancashire County Council would be making arrangements as the former Host Authority to make payments for 2012/13, to members of the PCP.

For 2013/14 Blackburn with Darwen Council would arrange to claim the payments from the Home Office and pay the PCP the payments in February 2014.

In response to a query on the costs of the Panel referred to in Appendix A of the report submitted, the Chair indicated that the advice received was that the costs of the Panel would not be borne by the Constituent Councils, but would be met from the funding received from the Home Office.

Resolved: That the Police and Crime Panel:

- i. Note the Home Secretary's office had been notified of the revised constitution of the Police and Crime Panel for Lancashire on the basis set out in the report and the appointments to the Panel which have been made by constituent authorities;
- ii. Note the Terms of reference of the Panel remain unchanged;
- iii. Approve the amended Panel arrangements;
- iv. Note the minor alteration to the Operational procedure to include reference to sub committees as well as task groups.
- v. Note the Panel will continue to adopt the standing orders of Lancashire County Council, as set out in their Constitution and that the Operational Procedure had been updated to confirm the Panel had adopted Lancashire County Council's Standing Orders, insofar as they related to the rules of debate at Committees; and
- vi. Note the arrangements for payment of allowances.

6. Monitoring of Complaints

The Police and Crime Panel received a report which set out the current position with regard to complaints received to date in relation to the Police and Crime Commissioner and confirmed approval of the nomination to fill the vacant position on the Complaints Sub Committee.

Since the last report there have been four complaints made against the Police and Crime Commissioner, a summary of which were set out in the appendix.

The Panel were asked to note the current position regarding the complaints.

A vacancy had arisen on the Complaints Sub Committee, following which a nomination was received and agreed by the Secretary to the Panel. Accordingly, the Panel was requested to note that the Complaints Sub Committee currently had full membership confirmed.

Resolved:

1. That the updates in relation to the complaints be noted; and
2. That the nomination to fill the vacancy on the Complaints Sub Committee as agreed by the Secretary be noted.

7. Public Questions Procedure

A report was submitted which contained a proposed procedure to enable members of the public to submit questions to the Lancashire Police and Crime Panel.

Resolved: That the procedure for Public Questions attached at Appendix 1 of the report be approved and implemented with effect from the next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel.

8. Update from the Police and Crime Commissioner

The Commissioner verbally updated the Panel on various ongoing areas of work.

A particular current focus was the need to make savings, and to date savings of nearly £40m had been realised with a similar amount still to be saved which would inevitably lead to less Police Officers on duty. There was a need to work in partnership with local authorities in tackling key issues and ensuring that the residents of Lancashire were kept safe.

Chief Constable Steve Finnegan gave further details of the impact of the cuts, and the loss of significant numbers of Police Officers and staff which had led to the erosion of Neighbourhood Policing. In spite of this, the focus was still on delivering quality services and keeping people safe. There was now an emphasis on high victim impact crimes, rather than focusing on statistics.

The Commissioner in response to a question on the use of Specials, outlined the three strands of an approach involving Cadets, Volunteers and Specials, and the good links that existed with Uclan in terms of students getting involved. Some reservations were raised during discussion on this matter about increased expectations of Specials as a result of the cuts.

There was a discussion on how residents who paid Council Tax, the majority of whom did not enter into town centres at night were effectively funding the deployment of large numbers of Police resources to deal with alcohol related issues. It was suggested that the alcohol industry and licensing authorities would need to do more to address alcohol related crime, which could often lead to other crimes such as domestic violence, and that the Commissioner would need to be proactive in working with local authorities on this issue.

In response to a question on intelligence and modern technology, the Chief Constable confirmed that the cuts had affected this area and that analysts would be lost in an area that Lancashire was at the forefront nationally, in terms of the use of the National Intelligence Model.

Following discussions on health and the minimum pricing of alcohol, the Commissioner advised that it was essential that Health were involved in any approach to tackling alcohol related issues. It was suggested that the Commissioner should work with other Commissioners throughout the County to lobby the Government on licensing hours and the price of alcohol and the Commissioner confirmed that this was already happening, as other areas faced the same issues.

There was further discussion on the impact of the cuts and in particular the fear of crime and the need for expectations be realigned and of the need for greater collective working and innovation. The Commissioner confirmed that fear of crime was a crucial target and would remain so inspite of reduced police numbers.

In response to a question on the location of the headquarters in Blackpool for the West Division, it was confirmed that the existing headquarters would be used until a new building was constructed.

The Chief Constable confirmed that whilst crime had been on a downward trajectory since 1995, issues such as alcohol, violence and mental health all consumed a large amount of police time and as referred to in a recent presentation by Assistant Chief Constable Andy Rhodes crime such as international crime, exploitation and cyber crime were increasingly taking up police resources.

The Commissioner advised that in recognition the 12 month anniversary of PCC, a number of announcements would be forthcoming on what had been achieved in the first year of operation and he gave a brief overview of these to the Panel.

Resolved: That the updates provided by the Commissioner and Chief Constable be noted.

9. Financial Outlook for the Police and Crime Budget 2014/15-2017/18

The Commissioner submitted a report that looked ahead over the next four years and considered the potential scale of the financial challenge facing the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Lancashire over the period 2014/15 – 2017/18.

Police and Crime budgets had already been reduced significantly over recent years and in Lancashire savings of £35.8m had already been delivered over the last 3 years. The level of the financial challenge over the next four years was driven by a reduction in resources and an increase in cost. Costs were forecast to increase by £18.8m or 6.8% whilst at the same time, funding was expected to fall. In discussing this item, there was a significant debate on the potential 2% Council Tax increase referred to in the report and the fact that this would be against several Councils stated position – ie no increase on Council Tax. The Commissioner advised that the 2% figure quoted was a guide only, and that any potential increase may be less than this and that he would be guided by consultation and the budget demands being looked at.

The Chair in summarising the debate indicated that the Commissioner needed to discuss this matter with the Panel and prioritise accordingly.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

10. Police and Crime Commissioner Funding and Commissioning Framework

The Commissioner reported on a Funding and Commissioning Framework document, which sets out the principles and standards that the Commissioner would apply to the commissioning of services and projects that supported the delivery of policing and community safety priorities as detailed in the Police and Crime Plan. To assist the Commissioner in the allocation of this resource a funding and commissioning framework had been developed, establishing the key principles to be followed and outlining the approach to be taken to the commissioning of services.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

11. Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner Forward Plan

A report was submitted on a structure for the Commissioner to make decisions and to hold the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of efficient and effective policing services in Lancashire. The Forward Plan was driven by the PCCs Police & Crime Plan and Strategic Planning Sessions with the Constabulary, the LCJB and Community Safety Partners including the Commissioner's PCC Forum with leads from Community Safety partnerships from all Authorities in Lancashire.

The introduction of a single directly elected Police and Crime Commissioner necessitated a shift away from the Committee structure model of decision making previously utilised by the Police Authority.

In preparing for transition, the Transition Board considered and approved the governance arrangements and a structure had been now developed and approved by the Police and Crime Commissioner. All decisions of the Commissioner were made at a Decision Meeting.

It was reported that in order to provide the public with transparency regarding decisions to be taken and work which was due to be undertaken by the Police and Crime Commissioner to support the Police and Crime Panel, these decisions and a forward plan were published on the Commissioner's website.

A copy of the current forward plan was attached as an appendix to the report.

In discussing the report, there was debate on the Lockside Office Park Lease item and possible future locations for the Commissioner's office.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Sian Roxborough
Secretary to the Police and Crime Panel

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Town Hall
Blackburn