

Police and Crime Panel for Lancashire

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 6th July 2020

Present:

Chair

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Chorley Borough Council

Committee Members

Councillor Geoff Driver, Lancashire County Council
Councillor Mohammed Khan, Blackburn with Darwen BC
Councillor Alistair Sinclair, Lancaster CC
Councillor Jackie Oakes, Rossendale BC

Also in attendance

- Clive Grunshaw, Police and Crime Commissioner
- Steve Freeman, Office of the PCC
- David Fairclough, Secretary
- Asad Laher, Head of Governance
- Phil Llewellyn, Governance and Democratic Manager
- Jill Readfern, HR Manager

1. Appointment of Chairman

The Secretary of the Panel, David Fairclough, welcomed all to the remote meeting and explained the protocols for participation.

The Secretary then asked for nominations for Chair of the Panel for 2020/21.

Councillor Mohammed Khan moved Councillor Alistair Bradley, which was seconded by Councillor Geoff Driver. No other nominations were received.

RESOLVED – That Councillor Alistair Bradley be appointed Chair of the Panel for 2020/21.

(Councillor Alistair Bradley in the Chair).

2. Appointment of Deputy Chairman

The Chair requested nominations for Deputy Chair of the Panel for 2020/21.

Councillor Geoff Driver nominated Councillor Roger Berry, which was seconded by Councillor Alistair Bradley. No other nominations were received.

Councillor Berry was not present in the remote meeting, but was watching as an attendee, and during the meeting e-mailed to confirm his acceptance of the position.

RESOLVED - That Councillor Roger Berry be appointed Deputy Chair of the Panel for 2020/21.

3. Membership 2020/21

As previously reported, in Lancashire the Panel was initially made up of 15 Elected Members, one from each Authority. Up to an additional 3 elected members could be added in order to achieve the 'balanced appointment objective' so that when taken together the Members of the Panel represented the political make up of all the relevant local authorities for the police area and had the skills, knowledge and experience necessary for it to discharge its functions effectively.

Having considered the provisions in the legislation and options available for applying a political balance to the Panel, it was agreed that the constitution of the PCP for 2012/13 be based on calculation of the then political balances across the whole membership of authorities, with the Independent Members being grouped together as a whole. At that time, it was also agreed to appoint an additional three Elected Members to achieve political balance and the Home Secretary subsequently approved this basis in order to achieve the political balance objective. This was the arrangement up until last year (2019/20) when the Panel could not agree the appointment of the additional 3 elected member seats to assist the political balance.

In December 2019 the Panel decided that the appointment of these 3 seats be revisited at the Annual General Meeting for the year 2020/21.

It was also previously agreed that Council Members of the Panel would serve a 12 month term on the Panel and that the political balance of the Panel would be reviewed after the Local Elections each May. After the elections, each Council being invited to nominate their representative for the Panel. Although there had been no elections, the Councils had still been requested to confirm their nominations for this new municipal year given the previous agreement that Council Members would serve 12 monthly terms.

In addition to the above Members, the Panel also appointed 2 Independent Co-opted Members, who are not elected representatives, to serve on the Panel. Both these Co-opted seats had become vacant in recent months and a recruitment process for these seats was set out separately in the Agenda.

From nominations received for 2020/21 the Panel's core membership of 15 Councillors (plus 2 co-opted members) resulted in a political balance of

Labour 10	Conservative 4	Lib Dem 1	Independent Member 0
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As discussed last year, the Regulations and Guidance however required the Panel to seek to be politically balanced. To assess the balance, all the current council seats held from across Lancashire, were added together to identify the target balance that would achieve political balance which would be:

Labour 6	Conservative 6	Lib Dem 1	Independent Member 2
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As discussed at previous meetings, the Regulations and Guidance then provided for the Councils as a first step in terms of seeking to address any such issue arising, invite the core member councils to reconsider their individual nominations to see if this would bring the balance more into line, i.e. to seek to achieve the political balance objective.

At the AGM last year and subsequently as discussed by Lancashire Leaders, however it was reported no Council in 2019/20 was agreeable to changing their nomination.

In anticipation that the position may remain unchanged from last year, the next step, was to then seek to add councillor membership up to the maximum of 18 elected members to seek to address the political balance objective. The additional 3 seats proposed and the names of those proposed additional councillors required however the unanimous agreement of the 15 Council's core membership. These Councillors would also require the approval of the Home Office with an explanation of the reasoning for their appointments.

An 18 seat (Councillor membership) would result in an amended ideal political balance of:

Labour 8	Conservative 7	Lib Dem 1	Independent Member 2
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As referenced above in the absence of a council(s) under stage 1 of the process not wishing to agree a change of nomination a proposal was presented to the AGM for the following utilisation of the potential additional 3 seats for 2020/21 (subject to Home Office approval):

18 Elected Members (plus 2 Independent persons) on the following basis

Labour 10	Conservative 7 (+3)	Lib Dem 1	Independent Member 0
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The Secretary advised the Panel that whilst the option did not make it possible to achieve the exact political balance, the Local Government Association ['LGA'] Guidance on Panel Arrangements and the Balanced Appointment Objective stated that the balanced appointment objective must be secured 'as far as is practicable'.

The Secretary has also advised that the Local Authorities combined must 'agree' to the balance of the Panel and that the Home Office had powers to intervene and make appointments if agreement cannot be reached locally, though it has been made clear that the best Panel arrangements were those which were locally determined.

Given this and subsequent advice from the Home Office relating to the Membership in 2019/20, the Panel were asked to confirm their membership for 2020/21 as a minimum of the current 15 members plus 2 independent persons or in the alternative the Panel could review co-opting additional elected members, under the balanced

appointment objective. These additional 3 seats would need to be agreed by the whole Panel and then be approved by the Secretary of State.

In addition given there was no induction process in 2019, the Panel was requested to agree the final membership once approved attend an Induction and Briefing on the role and function of the Police and Crime Panel in advance of the next full meeting of the Panel.

Members discussed the report and agreed with the proposals presented (plus see Minute Number 18 for discussion and confirmation of the three 'top up' places from Fylde, Wyre and Ribble Valley (additional Conservative nominations, meaning those Councils have two Members on the Panel during 2020/21).

RESOLVED -

1. That the political balance of the Panel 2020/2021 – be confirmed as 15 Elected Members, plus 3 'Top Up' Conservative Places (plus 2 Independent persons);
2. Note that the Induction and Introduction to the role and function of the Police and Crime Panel be scheduled for the agreed Panel Membership prior to the next meeting of the Panel.

4. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillors Simon Hore. It was reported that a number of Panel Members were trying to access the meeting, but were having difficulties, and that a number were watching the meeting on-line, but were unable to participate. An e-mail was sent to Members asking them to reply if they had any comments or issues they wanted to raise on the agenda items.

5. Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED - The Minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

6. Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were submitted.

7. Public Questions

No public questions had been received.

8. PCC Annual Report

The PCC presented his draft Annual Report, welcoming the first investment back into the service in 10 years, whilst confirming he would be campaigning for fair funding for Lancashire. Of the announced twenty thousand extra officers nationally, the PCC

wanted to ensure as many as possible were returned to the Lancashire streets where they had been taken from following the cuts that began 10 years ago.

The Commissioner reported that he was delighted with progress over the past 12 months, which included the successful 'Our Lancashire' initiative, plus national recognition of the great work on Diversity, with the Constabulary recognised as a Stonewall Top 100 employer, and also being recognised in the Inclusive UK Employers Awards. In particular the Commissioner highlighted the rating of 'Outstanding' by the HMICFRS for effectiveness and efficiency.

Members of the Panel made comments on the report, with Cllr Driver advising of a missing figure on page 18 and also clarifying whether the HMICFRS 'Outstanding' rating was for effectiveness and efficiency, or just efficiency. The Commissioner confirmed that the rating was for efficiency, but commented that effectiveness and efficiency went hand in hand.

Councillor Oakes requested information on the next steps in recruiting the extra police officers, with the Commissioner confirming that 153 officers had been initially allocated, out of a bid for 340, and that future allocations had not been decided yet, but he wanted as many officers back on the streets of Lancashire as possible after the cuts had left 750 less officers on duty compared to 10 years ago.

The Chair referred to an e-mail received from Councillor Aitken, who had commented that last year Ratepayers were asked to pay extra rates in order to pay for extra police officers - the amount received hasn't been budgeted separately and Councillor Aitken was requesting if it was possible for this to be targeted and the resulting spending shown as a separate item, whilst noting that 100 extra Officers had been recruited.

RESOLVED – That the draft Annual Report be noted and amended as discussed.

9. Police & Crime Plan Performance Monitoring Report

The Commissioner introduced the latest Performance Monitoring Report, noting that the figures reported had been skewed by the Covid-19 pandemic, and also reflecting on positive work with partners on the Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF). New legislation as a result of Covid-19 had also led to challenges for the Force. Crime was generally down in the period, with the exception of Domestic Abuse and Cyber Crime, with over 50% of all crime now having a digital footprint. The easing of Lockdown had already led to crime levels rising back to pre Covid-19 levels.

The Chair asked whether the extra Police Officers available could be utilised to deal with public order related matters, with the Commissioner confirming that the Task Force officers now on-stream were already reinforcing Neighbourhood Policing, particularly in more rural/isolated areas.

Councillor Khan stated that the LRF had been very effective and highlighted the great leadership by ACC Terry Woods, particularly in helping support the community in Blackburn after the recent tragic murder, and also highlighted the need to ensure the Force received the necessary training in light of recent events in the USA.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10. PCC Decisions

A report was submitted on decisions made by the Commissioner and the Director since the last meeting of the Panel on 9th March 2020.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

11. Recruitment of Independent Members

The Chair introduced a report advising of the need to recruit two Independent Members of the Panel, following the end of term appointment of Mr A Baghdadi, and resignation of Mr A Mulla.

The report set out the recruitment process, and stated that the both appointments would be for a four year term.

The Chair made reference to the excellent service to the Panel by Mr Baghdadi and Mr Mulla and asked the Secretary to write to both expressing the thanks of the Panel.

RESOLVED – 1. That the arrangements outlined in the report for the appointment of replacement independent members be agreed; and

2. That five Members of the Panel be selected to form the appointment selection panel, noting the interview date of 10th September 2020.

12. Task and Finish Groups Update

The Chair referred to the written update provided by Councillors Berry and Whipp on the work of the Frontline Policing Task and Finish Group. In view of both Councillors being unable to join the meeting, it was suggested that they could report fully at the next meeting along with other Members updating on the progress of their groups. The Chair also suggested that Covid-19 recovery and Community Cohesion were areas of the scrutiny the Panel may wish to look at during 2020/21.

RESOLVED – That the written report be noted and that a full update would be provided at the next meeting when the relevant Members would be in attendance.

13. Forward Plan Update

The Secretary reported that due to the current situation it would be sensible to revisit this item at the next meeting, and in the meantime he would write to all Members and seek any items of interest for 2020/21.

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan for 2020/21 be further discussed at the next meeting.

14. Lancashire PCP Budget Update 2019/20

A report was submitted which outlined Panel expenditure to date in 2019/20, containing a breakdown of projected costs and expenditure as submitted to the Home Office in early March for the Grant Claim for 2019/20.

RESOLVED – That the expenditure for 2019/20 be noted and that the report and breakdown be published on the PCP Website.

15. Timetable of Meetings 2020/21

A report was submitted which set out the proposed Timetable of Meetings for 2020/21.

RESOLVED – That the Timetable of Meetings for 2020/21 as set out below be agreed:

DATE/TIME/VENUE
Monday 6th July 2020 –AGM – Virtual Meeting
Wednesday 16th September 2020 10am Council Chamber, Chorley Town Hall.
Monday 7th December 2020 6.30pm Meeting Room A, Blackburn Town Hall.
Monday 18th January 2021 (Precept only) 6.30pm Cabinet Room 'C' The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston.
Tuesday 2nd February 2021 (if required –dependant on Precept decision) 10am Cabinet Room 'C' The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston.
Monday 8th March 2021 6.30pm Council Chamber, Chorley Town Hall.
Monday 5th July 2021 – AGM & Annual Induction Session 10am Blackburn Town Hall, followed by Annual Induction after lunch.

16. Annual PCP Conference November 2020

Phil Llewellyn gave details of the Annual PCP Conference at Warwick University that would be taking place on 24th November 2020, which the Chair noted was a regular event to which the Panel had sent representatives and which had been useful events.

RESOLVED – That Phil Llewellyn circulate details to Panel Members to see if any are interested in attending the Conference.

17. Monitoring of Complaints

Members received a report which set out the current position with regard to communications relating to potential complaints received up to 31st May 2020 in relation to the PCC.

RESOLVED – That the update in relation to communications and complaints be noted.

18. Urgent Business

The Commissioner advised that the Chief Constable had tendered his resignation with effect from 6th April 2021, and advised of the recruitment process that would commence in the next few weeks, and which would involve the Panel.

The Commissioner and Chair praised CC Rhodes for his excellent service to Lancashire Constabulary.

Cllr Sinclair asked the Commissioner for his view on how the 4th July weekend had gone in terms of public behaviour when the pubs re-opened. The Commissioner advised that the weekend had been quieter than expected, possibly due to the weather, but there were some concerns if there was a long dry summer, pointing to issues elsewhere in the Country, and the need to work with the local community.

The Chair referred to a question/statement received on-line from Cllr Sue Bibby, regarding the Membership of the Panel and supporting the political balance of 8 Labour, 7 Conservative and 1 Liberal Democrat and stating the case for Ribble Valley to have an additional place on the Panel as had happened where additional ‘top up’ places were available.

The Secretary requested suggestions on where the additional 3 ‘top-up’ Conservative Councillors, with Fylde, Wyre and Ribble Valley suggested by the Chair and supported by Cllr Driver.

19. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Panel would be held on Wednesday 16th September 2020 at Chorley Town Hall.

Signed.....Chair
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