

## **Police and Crime Panel for Lancashire**

### **Minutes of the Annual General meeting held Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

#### **Present:**

#### **Chair**

Councillor Jackie Oakes, Rossendale Borough Council

#### **Committee Members**

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Chorley Borough Council  
Councillor Jan Alcock, Ribble Valley Borough Council  
Councillor Qesir Mahmood, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council  
Councillor Gareth Dowling, West Lancs Borough Council  
Councillor Peter Hunter, Blackpool Council  
Councillor Mark Townsend, Burnley Borough Council  
Councillor David Whipp, Pendle Borough Council  
Councillor Peter Edwards, Hyndburn Borough Council  
Councillor Pat Varty, Preston City Council  
Councillor Roger Berry, Wyre Borough Council  
Councillor Catherine Armistead, Lancaster City Council  
Miranda Carruthers-Watt, Independent Co-opted Member.

#### **Also in attendance**

- Andrew Snowden, Police and Crime Commissioner
- Ian Dickinson, Office of the PCC
- Asad Laher, Secretary
- Phil Llewellyn, Democratic and Scrutiny Lead

### **1. Appointment of Chair 2023/24**

The Secretary of the Panel, Asad Laher, welcomed all to the meeting and announced the next item of business, which was the Appointment of Chair for 2023/24.

The Secretary requested nominations for Chair of the Panel for 2023/24, Councillor Qesir Mahmood nominated Councillor Jackie Oakes, which was seconded by Councillor David Whipp. No other nominations were received.

**RESOLVED** – That Councillor Jackie Oakes be appointed Chair of the Panel for 2023/24.

*(Councillor Jackie Oakes in the Chair).*

### **2. Appointment of Deputy Chairman**

The Chair requested nominations for Deputy Chair of the Panel for 2023/24 and nominated Councillor Roger Berry, which was seconded by Councillor Quesir Mahmood. No other nominations were received.

**RESOLVED** - That Councillor Roger Berry be appointed Deputy Chair of the Panel for 2023/24.

### **3. Membership Review 2023/24**

The Secretary presented a report which advised that the Lancashire Police & Crime Panel consisted of 15 Elected Members, one from each local authority and 2 co-opted Independent Members (non-political). In addition, up to 3 other Elected Members could be co-opted in order to achieve the 'balanced appointment objective' (as far as reasonably practicable), and best represented the overall political make up of all the 15 local authorities in the police area. There was also a requirement for the membership to have skills, knowledge and experience necessary for it to discharge its functions effectively.

In accordance with the legislation and available guidance, the political balance of the Panel been determined from an overall calculation based on the current political composition of all 15 local authorities in the police force area. For the purposes of the political balance calculations, the 'minor' political groups from all the 15 local authorities had been grouped together as 'Other' and similarly, all the 'Independent' elected Members from the 15 local authorities had been being grouped together. The Panel's Arrangements enabled additional elected members to be co-opted to achieve the 'balanced appointment objective', provided the total membership did not exceed 20. Based on the information provided by the 15 local authorities, the overall political composition for the police area was:

Lab	48.71%
Con	34.34%
Lib	6.47%
Ind	5.45%
Green	5.03%
Total	100%

This represented the following composition for a politically balanced Panel of 15 elected member seats:

<b>Lab</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Con</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Lib Dem</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Ind</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Green</b>	<b>1</b>

The Panel haD appointed 2 Independent Co-opted Members, who were not elected representatives to serve on the Panel: Richard Glover and Miranda Carruthers-Watt .

The nominations received from the 15 local authorities for the 2023/24 Panel membership of 15 elected members was:

Lab - 9  
Con - 5  
Lib Dem- 1

In light of this and in accordance with guidance, the 15 local authorities (via their Leaders) were invited to review/change their nominations in order to correlate closely with the politically balanced composition, as detailed above (and achieve the 'balanced appointment objective'). To date, no confirmation had been received.

The next step therefore was to co-opt additional elected members up to the maximum of 18 elected members, in order to address the 'balanced appointment objective' (as far as reasonably practicable). This had previously been agreed by the Panel to consider, and closely align the composition of the Panel with the overall political composition of the police force area. The additional 3 seats proposed and the names of those proposed additional elected members required the unanimous agreement of the 15 elected core membership (i.e. those nominated by the 15 local authorities). This would be subject to notification and approval of the Home Office, with an explanation of the reasoning for their appointments.

On the basis that 15 local authorities' nominations remain unchanged, and applying the 3 co-opted additional elected member seats the full composition of the 2022/23 membership for the Panel would be as follows:

**Lab - 9** (as nominated): [50%]  
**Con - 6** ( 5 as nominated + 1 co-opted additional elected member seats): [33.33%]  
**Lib Dem - 1** (as nominated): [5.55%]  
**Ind - 1** (co-opted additional elected member seat): [5.55%]  
**Green - 1** (co-opted additional elected member seat): [5.55%]

**Independent co-opted (non –political) - 2**

**Total – 20 seats (maximum).**

It was advised that the Local Authorities combined must 'agree' to the composition of the Panel and that the Home Office had powers to intervene and make appointments if agreement could not be reached locally, however, it had been made clear that the best Panel arrangements were those which were locally determined.

Balancing the geographical, political make-up of the 15 local authorities, and the skills and experience needed for the Panel to discharge its functions effectively, the following 3 co-opted additional elected members were suggested to the Panel:

1. Wyre Borough Council - a Conservative co-opted additional member from this area of the police force would assist towards achieving a more balanced Panel. The Council's political composition comprises: Lab 15, Con 30, and Independent 3. Councillor Peter Le Marinel could be nominated as their co-opted additional member, having previously served the Panel and would possess the necessary the skills and experience.
2. Lancaster City Council - a Green Party co-opted additional member from Council would also assist towards achieving a more balanced Panel. The Council's political composition comprises: Lab 24, Con 5, Lib Dem 7, Green 21, MBI 3, Non-aligned 1.
3. Fylde Borough Council – an Independent co-opted additional member from the Council would again assist to achieve a more politically balanced Panel. The Council's political composition comprises: Lab 2, Con19, Lib 2, Independent 12, and Non-aligned 2.

Members then discussed the report and moved to the vote.

#### **RESOLVED – That the Panel:**

1. Confirm the Panel Membership for 2023/2024 as 15 core Elected Members (plus 2 co-opted Independent Members ) plus agree, subject to Home Office approval 3 additional co-opted elected members as set out in this report, to achieve the 'balanced appointment objective' (as far as reasonably practicable).
2. Subject to 1 above, to note that the Secretary will notify the Home Office of the 3 additional co-opted elected members and the reasons how their appointments would assist in meeting the 'balanced appointment objective'.
3. Note the Panel's governance arrangements as published on the Host Authority's website (contained in the report).

#### **4. Host Authority and Secretary to the Panel**

**RESOLVED** – That Blackburn with Darwen continue as Host Authority for 2023-24, and that Asad Laher be continue as Secretary to the Panel for 2023-24.

#### **5. Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Councillors Green, Dixon, and Flannery, and from the Independent Co-opted Member, Richard Glover.

#### **6. Minutes of the last meeting**

**RESOLVED** - The Minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

## **7. Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were submitted.

## **8. Public Questions**

No public questions had been received.

## **9. PCC Annual Report 2022-23**

The Commissioner submitted his Annual Report for 2022-23, which provided an opportunity to review the work carried out over the last financial year to deliver the priorities set out in the Commissioner's Plan, which was launched in 2021. The Commissioner highlighted some of the key parts of the report and asked for any comments from Members.

In response to questions from Councillor Whipp on the Commissioner's confidence in the accuracy of data on reported incidents and offences of page 15 and 16 of the report, the Commissioner referenced under reporting of Neighbourhood ASB figures, as such information would always need a caveat, and the figures involved multi-agency reporting, with different systems, and his office were currently recruiting a data analyst to look at such data sets. In terms of the Constabulary data collected, the PCC advised that external inspection results led to confidence in the data.

Councillor Whipp, referencing page 18 of the report, which detailed the PCCs commitment to tackling Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, questioned why the Commissioner had axed funding for Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs), when they played an integral part in the process. Councillor Whipp indicated that it was vital that the funding was reinstated. The Commissioner advised that DHRs were not budgeted for, and had been funded via Reserves, and that funding of £130k still continued. The Commissioner also referenced forthcoming new responsibilities for PCCs relating to Serious Violence. The PCC confirmed that funding would continue ahead of reviews by local Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and that he would together with them. The PCC also agreed to share correspondence with Andrew Ridgewell, Chair of the Lancashire CSP on this issue.

Finally, the Commissioner advised that residents registering with 'Lancashire Talking' was a key way to get residents to report crime, and even if not all crime was able to be investigated, the system allowed for feedback to them. Operation Centurion also helped drive up registrations.

## **RESOLVED –**

1. That the report be noted; and

2. That the PCC submit a report to the next meeting of the Panel on funding for Domestic Homicide Reviews.

## **10. PCC Update Report**

The Commissioner submitted a report which provided Members of the Panel with an update on progress in developing the Police and Crime Plan for 2021-2025 and also highlighted some of the activity of the PCC and his Office.

Members of the Panel asked a number of questions and made comments in particular on:

- The increase in Firearms Offences and Knife Crimes
- The impact of the withdrawal of Police support for local events
- Victims being let down by low convictions, length of prosecution process
- The need for more PCSOs

The Commissioner responded to the questions and comments, advising of Police activity to target gun and knife crime, with knife crime particularly leading to more serious injuries, this including additional Police patrols, Stop and Search, and additional funding to educate and prevent.

In terms of support for local events such as Remembrance Sunday, the PCC advised that this had come about following 2018 guidance from the National Police Council that traffic management/road closures was not a Police role, unless it was an emergency situation. The Commissioner was aware of the costs of traffic management via private companies, and discussions were ongoing with the Police and LCCAM about the possibility of introducing an accredited volunteer scheme.

In relation to Victim Support, the PCC agreed with the concerns expressed, but advised that figures were reducing, and outlined new measures involving dedicated Police investigators for each case and the hope that the same could be achieved with CPS lawyers. The PCC also advised that some victims did not want Police action. The Commissioner also advised of tailored support via Victim Services. At this point, Cllr Varty gave details of her own recent traumatic experience involving ASB and knife crime, and the lack of follow up by Victim Services, and the PCC agreed to pick this up outside the meeting. The Commissioner also referenced ongoing work with CSPs on increased use of Civil Powers.

Finally, in terms of PCSOs, the PCC noted their success, and advised that numbers were currently down, and more were needed, along with more Special Constables.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

## **11. PCC Decisions**

A report was submitted on decisions made by the PCC or Director, or authorised officer, under delegated authority in the period since the last meeting of the Panel on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

Further to discussions earlier in the meeting, Cllr David Whipp requested that Decision Reference 2022/48 be reviewed – Funding for Domestic Homicide Reviews, which was seconded by Cllr Gareth Dowling.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted, and that the Commissioner be requested to review Decision Reference 2022/48.

## **12. Task and Finish Groups 2023-24 and Forward Plan 2023-24**

Members discussed the Task and Finish Groups for 2022-23, which had been agreed as:

- DRSA Teams – violence against Women and Girls
- £700k Rural Crime Team Funding

It was noted that membership of the Panel, and therefore Task and Finish Groups, had changed, and Members discussed progress and membership.

Councillor Mark Townsend, Chair of the DRSA Teams – violence against Women and Girls Task and Finish Group, advised that the Group had completed their work, and that he would submit a report to the October meeting of the Panel.

Miranda Carruthers-Watt advised she would happy to assist the Rural Crime Task and Finish Group along with Councillor Jan Alcock.

In terms of new Task and Finish Groups, Cllr David Whipp suggested the 101 Service and the DHR funding, with Members agreeing that the 101 Service should be looked at later in the year, and the DHR funding was already subject to further scrutiny via the main Panel as agreed earlier in the meeting.

Cllr Dowling suggested a future item for the Work Programme could be Retail Crime.

**RESOLVED** - That the Work Programme for Task and Finish Groups for 2023-24 be submitted to the next meeting, with work continuing in the meantime on the Rural Crime Group.

## **13. Budget Statement 2023/24**

A report was submitted which outlined Panel expenditure in 2022-23 containing a breakdown of costs and expenditure as submitted to the Home Office for the Grant Claim for 2022-23.

Members were also requested to consider the payment of allowances to Independent Co-opted Members.

**RESOLVED –**

1. That the expenditure for 2022/23 be noted and that the report and breakdown be published on the PCP Website.
2. That a report be submitted to the October meeting containing recommendations for the payment of allowances to Independent Co-opted Members.

**14. Monitoring of Complaints**

Members received a verbal update from the Secretary, who had advised that no complaints had been received since the last meeting of the Panel.

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

**15. Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

**19. Date of next meeting**

The Panel noted the meeting dates for 2023-24, with the next meeting taking place at 4pm on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023 at Blackburn Town Hall.

Signed.....Chair  
2023