

Police and Crime Panel for Lancashire

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 3rd October 2023

Present:

Chair

Councillor Jackie Oakes, Rossendale Borough Council

Committee Members

Councillor Roger Berry, Wyre Borough Council
Councillor Christopher Dixon, Fylde Borough Council
Councillor Alan Cullens, Lancashire Country Council
Councillor Peter Edwards, Hyndburn Borough Council
Councillor Quesir Mahmood, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Councillor Mark Townsend, Burnley Borough Council
Councillor Alistair Bradley, Chorley Borough Council
Councillor Pat Varty, Preston City Council
Councillor Gareth Dowling, West Lancs Borough Council
Councillor Peter Le-Marinel, Wyre Borough Council
Richard Glover, Co-Opted Independent Member

Also in attendance

- Chris Rowley, Chief Constable
- Angela Harrison, Office of the PCC
- Steve Freeman, Office of the PCC
- Ian Dickinson, Office of the PCC
- Asad Laher, Secretary
- Phil Llewellyn, Democratic and Scrutiny Lead

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was noted that due to technical issues, the meeting could not be webcast.

Apologies were received from Councillors Green, Hunter, Alcock, Flannery, Armistead, Whipp, Lee, Maddocks, the PCC, Andrew Snowden, and Independent Co-opted Member Miranda Carruthers Watt.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED – The Minutes of the Meeting held on 18th July 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

Under Matters Arising, it was noted that the PCC had circulated a number of documents ahead of the meeting relating to Domestic Homicide Funding, and that the matter was still under discussion and alternative funding was being pursued.

The Secretary, Asad Laher, updated the meeting on the additional three Members of the Panel who had been appointed to help achieve political balance, and these were Councillors Matthew Lee (Fylde), Sally Maddocks (Lancaster) and Peter Le-Marinel (Wyre).

3. Declarations of Interest

Miranda Carruthers-Watt and Richard Glover had declared an interest in Agenda Item 9 – Allowances Co-opted Members. Miranda Carruthers-Watt was not present, having given apologies, and Richard Glover took no part in discussions or voting on that item.

4. Public Questions

No public questions had been received.

5. Chief Constable Verbal Update

The Chief Constable (CC) presented his annual update to the Panel. Key areas highlighted included:

- Implementation of a New Operating Model
- A reduction in recorded crime
- An increase in positive outcomes
- Operation Defender – Residential Burglary work
- Operation Warrior – Targeting Organised Crime Groups
- Operation Centurion – Targeting ASB in a number of hotspot areas.

The CC also emphasised the focus on 'Right Care, Right Person' to keep officers on the streets and work with Mental Health practitioners in this regard.

After the Presentation, the CC received a number of questions from the Panel.

These ranged in topics, including: Operation Centurion – spreading the message to residents, following up on properties that have a history of drug use, the criteria for how areas were chosen, as residents felt that a particular area was a 'no go' area and use of overtime rather than funding of new officers. Panel Members also referred to the success of Operation Vertebrae in targeting a number of motoring offences including drink and drug driving, mobile phone use and vehicle safety. Panel Members also raised issues with bikes and e-scooters as drug transport, an issue relating to a victim of crime and lack of support, a question about back-office changes to support the officers who were receiving overtime to target crime in areas, the ongoing Court backlog, issues relating to Children's Homes, particularly with children from other areas and Business Crime issues.

In response, the CC advised in terms of spreading the message about the visibility of the Police, a system was being developed to show where officers had been on patrol in the last 24 hours. As regards properties with a history of drug use, the PCC advised that intelligence was key, and Police had the information, they could revisit properties. The criteria for how areas were targeted for ASB would be circulated to the Panel, with the Commissioner advising that he was very concerned to learn of a

'no go area' and this would be discussed with the relevant Commander. In terms of overtime for officers under Officer Centurion, the CC advised that the funding was for two years, so permanent officers could not be recruited. The CC advised that it was very hard to police bikes and e-scooters and that once again, intelligence was very important and usually properties were targeted. In relation to the victim of crime referred to, the CC agreed to look into this. The CC advised that back-office support had not increased to support Operation Centurion, instead, bureaucracy was being reduced and efficiencies being focussed on. The CC agreed that the Court backlog was a significant issue and the time cases took to come to court had a major impact on the victims. In terms of issues relating to Children's Homes, there were some issues with people going missing/trying to return to their original area, but that younger children were in the minority of such cases. In terms of Business Crime, the Police worked with takeaways and supermarkets to respond to violent individuals, whilst at the same time acknowledging that businesses still needed to make a profit, so high value items were often placed near entrances and exits of shops etc.

RESOLVED: That the CC be thanked for the update, and that the presentation slides be shared with the Panel.

6. Performance Update

The Panel received an update on progress in developing the current Police and Crime Plan for Lancashire 2021-2025.

Angela Harrison advised that a lot of the update had been covered in the CC's presentation, and agreed to circulate the criteria for selection of hot spot areas to Councillor Mark Townsend, and additionally, in relation to a query from the Chair about use of POCA funding for a community group who had been asked to match fund the amount, Angela also would be in touch with the Chair about this.

Angela Harrison also agreed to get details to Councillor Townsend about the make up of a Panel discussing Violence against Women and Girls that took place on 19th July 2023.

Finally, the CC outlined the involvement of the force in the recent 'Super Complaint' with Lancashire one of several forces selected and reviewed on a number of different crimes, with the force performing well in some areas and needing to improve in some others.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. PCC Decisions

A report was submitted highlighting decisions made by the PCC and Chief Executive, or authorised officer, under delegated authority, in the period since the last meeting of the Panel on 18th July 2023.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8. Task and Finish Groups – Verbal Updates from the Chairs and Work Programme 2023-24

The Panel received an update on the progress of the Task and Finish Groups and also received the relating Work Programme for 2023-24.

Councillor Mark Townsend reported on the ongoing work of the Violence against Women and Girls Task and Finish Group, advising that more Panel Members were required and that it was intended that the refreshed group would like to speak to a Victim's Group again, as well as the PCC early in the New Year, with submission of the final report to the March meeting of the Panel.

In the absence of Miranda Carruthers -Watt and Councillor Jan Alcock, who had given apologies, Phil Llewellyn reported that the Rural Crime Group was considering relevant data and also information provided by the PCC's Office, and that the group required another member, and also intended to report back to the March meeting.

In relation to the 101 Service group, it was agreed that the re-established of the group would be discussed at the December meeting.

RESOLVED –

1. That the updates and Work Programme for the Task and Finish Groups as submitted be agreed;
2. That the following members of the Panel agreed to join Task and Finish Groups as follows:

Violence against Women and Girls – Peter Le-Marinel and Richard Glover.
Rural Crime – Richard Glover.

9. Allowances – Co-opted Independent Members

The Panel received a report containing recommendations that allowances be paid to Independent Co-opted Members of the Police and Crime Panel for Lancashire.

At the AGM Meeting in July, it was noted that there were now two Independent Co-opted Members on the Panel, and that it was an appropriate time to consider the payment of allowances to Co-opted Independent Members, and the Panel agreed that a report be prepared for the October meeting.

Having considered the existing level of allowances referred to above, and also similar payments made to Independent Co-opted Members of Blackburn with Darwen's Standards Committee (which were agreed to be £400 per municipal year following recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel earlier this year), it was considered appropriate that a payment be made of £400 per Independent Co-opted Member on an annual basis, after the last main Panel meeting each year. This would be a single allowance, meaning if more than one role was undertaken (ie.Task and Finish Group Chair or member) only one payment of £400 would be made. The payment would also be subject to regular attendance at meetings.

If agreed, the payment would recognise the preparation undertaken ahead of meetings, attendance at main Panel meetings, and any participation in Task and Finish Groups. The payment would also ensure that Independent Co-opted Members got some recompense for expenses.

For clarity, as per the existing arrangements in place, Councillors could claim expenses relating to attendance at Panel meetings from their own local authorities, via Members Allowances, and the local authority could then re-claim these costs back from the Host Authority as appropriate, unless the Panel Member was already receiving a payment as Chair of the Panel, Vice Chair of the Panel, or a Task and Finish Group Chair or member, in which case those payments also covered any other expenses arising.

It was also suggested that the level of payments made to Panel Members for all the roles identified in this report be reviewed at the AGM on 1st July 2024, as it would have then been three years since the original figures were agreed.

RESOLVED –

1. The Panel agree the payment of allowances to Independent Co-opted Members at the rate of £400 per Co-opted Member after the final main Panel meeting each year, this payment being a single allowance as referred to in the report, subject to regular attendance and covering all expenses; and
2. That the level of all allowances payable be reviewed at the AGM meeting on 1st July 2024.

10. Complaints Update

The Secretary advised that no complaints had been received since the last meeting.

11. Urgent Business

There are no items of urgent business.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The Panel noted that the next meeting would be held on Monday 4th December 2023 at 4pm at Blackburn Town Hall, with a briefing session on Finance ahead of the meeting to be delivered by Steve Freeman at 3pm.