

Police and Crime Panel for Lancashire

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 4th December 2023

Present:

Chair

Councillor Jackie Oakes, Rossendale Borough Council

Committee Members

Councillor Roger Berry, Wyre Borough Council
Councillor Peter Hunter, Blackpool Council
Councillor Christopher Dixon, Fylde Borough Council
Councillor Michael Lee, Fylde Borough Council
Councillor Michael Green, Lancashire Country Council
Councillor Peter Edwards, Hyndburn Borough Council
Councillor Qesir Mahmood, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Councillor Mark Townsend, Burnley Borough Council
Councillor Alistair Bradley, Chorley Borough Council
Councillor Catherine Armistead, Lancaster City Council
Councillor Pat Varty, Preston City Council
Councillor Jan Alcock, Ribble Valley Borough Council
Councillor James Flannery, South Ribble Borough Council
Councillor Gareth Dowling, West Lancs Borough Council
Councillor Peter Le-Marinel, Wyre Borough Council
Richard Glover, Co-Opted Independent Member
Miranda Carruthers-Watt, Co-Opted Independent Member

Also in attendance

- Andrew Snowden, PCC
- Andy Pratt, APCC
- 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.

Apologies were received from Councillors Whipp and Maddocks.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED – The Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd October 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

Under Matters Arising, the PCC advised that the Drink & Drug Driving Campaign had been launched on Friday 1st December.

The PCC also reported that in terms of the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR), Community Safety Partnerships had agreed arrangements with the support of the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), with Angela Harrison reporting that funding was being looked at with all CSP Partners, such as local authorities who were contributing into the pot, with the OPCC looking at administering the fund when a DHR occurred, with OPCC also contributing, and continuing to maintain previous DHR funding support. An application had been made relating to a Government Pilot starting in January.

Angela Harrison agreed to find out if wider Partners in the CSPs were contributing to the DHR funding pot.

Cllr Mark Townsend thanked the PCC/CC for recent positive actions undertaken in the Queensgate area of Burnley following concerns raised at the last meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were submitted.

4. Public Questions

No public questions had been received.

5. Panel Membership Update

The Panel were provided with an update on the membership of the Police and Crime Panel for 2023/24, following the Panel's approval at the AGM on 18th July of the Membership Review.

Since the AGM on 18 July, there had been some political changes, mainly at Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and Burnley Borough Council. These changes together with some other minor changes, represented the following political composition of the police force area:

Lab	45.49%
Con	33.91%
Lib	6.15%
Ind	4.15%
Other	5.29%
Green	5.01%

Total	100.00%
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This would represent the following composition for a politically balanced Panel of 18 elected member seats:

Lab	8
Con	6
Lib Dem	1
Ind	1

Other **1**
Green **1**

Members were advised that in order to achieve a politically balanced Panel the local authorities who had nominated a representative from their Labour group and also had a 'Other' minority political group could be asked to consider changing their nominations. Alternatively, as there was also a requirement for the Panel membership to have skills, knowledge and experience necessary for it to discharge its functions effectively, the Panel could take the view to continue with its current membership until the end of 2023/24 to ensure continuity in its work programme.

Following discussion, the Panel's view was that the relevant authorities be contacted and asked to continue with their existing nominations to ensure consistency of membership and the retention of skills and experience.

RESOLVED: That Panel note the update to the Membership following recent changes in political compositions mainly at Blackburn with Darwen, and Burnley, and that relevant authorities be requested to continue with their nominated Members during 2023/24.

6. Performance Update

The PCC presented an update on progress in developing the current Police and Crime Plan for Lancashire 2021-2025, highlighting key performance headlines, including items discussed at the two most recent Accountability Boards, including decreases in recorded crime, the doubling of seizures of cash over the same five month period the year prior, progress of the Targeted Operating Model and successes in disrupting organised gangs through Operation Warrior, and ASB through Operation Centurion, and distribution of funding through the latest Safer Streets funding.

The Royal College of Policing had released its report following its independent review into the Police handling of the Nicola Bulley investigation. A report was expected from the Chief Constable in the New Year, setting out his implementation plan in relation to the report's recommendations. This report would be shared with the Panel during at one the remaining meetings of the 2023/24 cycle of meetings.

Panel Members discussed the report and the following topics/issues were highlighted, which the PCC, and APCC responded to as follows:

- Decrease in Crime Under Operation Centurion – There had been a decrease in crime across multiple categories, with ASB reducing in hot spot areas, traditionally ASB had been vastly under-reported.
- ASB in Penwortham – Cllr Flannery raised concerns from Penwortham Town Council relating to Kings Fold, and the PCC agreed to look into this.

- 101 Calls – The PCC explained the graphs in the performance report, with Members discussing issues relating to call abandonment, with people abandoning 101 call and calling 999 instead. The PCC advised that people re-presenting calls was a known issue, and there was ways of tracking this, and to monitor the abandonment rate.
- Delays in charging Adult Rape suspects, and in cases going to Court – with it taking 249 days on average to charge a suspect, with only 7% leading to a charge, with the time taken for a case to go to Crown Court increasing to 462 days in Lancashire, which was a concern. The PCC and APCC gave further information, highlighting the 3 dedicated Rape and Serious Sexual Assault Teams, with outcome rates increasing, processes with the CPS needed to improve, including dedicated solicitors at CPS. Due to the length of time taken, or the individual circumstances of a case, some victims chose not to support police action.
- Reporting of crimes – If a number of crimes took place on the same place, in the same location, these were reported as the same incident, whereas multiple crime across different locations would be individually reported.
- 20mph/30mph enforcement – this was working well, with volunteers being trained to enforce in 20mph zones, and the Police in 30mph areas.
- Targeted Policing – Police not being seen in not hot spot areas – the PCC outlined ongoing recruitment to fill PCSO vacancies, with each area having a dedicated Beat Manager, officers receiving overtime to walk the beat under Operation Centurion, and investment in rural taskforces.
- Unauthorised entry into land – Police not using new powers to an acceptable level- the PCC agreed that the Police response needed to more robust and was something that the Chief Constable would be reporting back on to the PCC.
- Police Morale – This was generally good according to the Annual Survey, but there were pockets of issues.

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 3rd October 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.

Councillor Mark Townsend reported on the ongoing work of the Violence against Women and Girls Group, which included recent meeting with Victims Support, and Cllr Townsend had recently attended an on-line national seminar on the topic, which was very informative. The Group wanted one more meetings with a Victims Support Group, before meeting with the PCC again in the New Year, ahead of production of a final report.

Miranda Carruthers Watt gave an update on the work of the Rural Crime Task and Finish Group, with information being received from the OPCC about targeted thefts and recovery of goods, and a meeting was planned in the New Year to talk to the OPCC and colleagues.

RESOLVED – That the updates be noted.

9. Annual PCP Conference 2023

The Panel received a report and verbal updates from the Chair, Vice Chair and Phil Llewellyn on their attendance with the Secretary at the Annual PCP Conference held on 8th and 9th November 2023 at Warwick University.

Once again, the Conference was a great networking opportunity and an opportunity to hear about best practice and experiences elsewhere.

Key takeaways from these sessions included, to assist scrutiny, the Panel should be provided with statistics as to how Lancashire's crime and ASB figures and percentage increases/decreases compared with other forces and be supplied with the reports of HM Inspectorate of Forces on the Force. Other ideas were having in depth presentations on specific subjects and members visiting the Control Room.

Lines of questions to the Commissioner should include whether the Commissioner was checking the right culture and attitudes were operating within the Force and that the recruitment process supported this. The Commissioner should be asked what themes were emerging from meetings with his Commissioner colleagues and what he was doing on the national scene.

The operation of the Control Room was a key driver to public confidence in the Force and suggested innovations include a call back system and having a portal for the public to report in suspicious activities/conduct.

The PCC was supportive of the feedback and suggestions and gave examples of the existing approach in these areas.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10. Complaints Update

The Secretary advised that there had been one potential complaint, which was a Police Operational matter, and at the present time it did not constitute a complaint.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

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 31st January 2024 (Precept) at 4pm at Blackburn Town Hall.