



HERTFORDSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Thursday 17 March 2016
Watford Borough Council

MINUTES

Present

Cllr T Hutchings, Broxbourne Borough Council (Chairman)
Cllr Ms S Batson, Stevenage Borough Council
Cllr P Choudhury, Hertsmere Borough Council
Cllr A Franey, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Cllr T Hunter, North Hertfordshire District Council
Mr I Laidlaw-Dickson, Co-opted member
Dr M Ramsay, Co-opted member

Also Present

Mr T Hewins, officer of the Police and Crime Panel
Mr D Lloyd, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
Mr D Gibson, Deputy PCC
Ms N Villa, PCC Deputy Chief Executive
Dr A Birkhamshaw, PCC Head of Policy and Engagement
Two members of the public

1 INTRODUCTION, APOLOGIES AND WELCOME

Apologies

Cllr Mrs A Brewster, St Albans City and District Council
Mr B Jones, Co-opted member
Cllr Ms I Imarni, Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr R Martins, Watford Borough Council
Cllr S Reed, East Herts District Council
Cty Cllr P Ruffles, Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr A Scarth, Three Rivers District Council
Dr M Verlot, Co-opted member
Cllr S Gaygusuz (substitute), St Albans City and District Council
Cllr M Haley (substitute), Watford Borough Council
Mr R Wilsher, PCC Chief Executive

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF 28 JANUARY 2016

The minutes of the meeting were agreed.

3 MATTERS ARISING

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's report on an unannounced inspection visit to police custody suites in Hertfordshire is available from this link:

<http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2015/11/Hertfordshire-police-custody-Web-2015.pdf>

The Chairman confirmed that the Panel has published its report to support the Commissioner's proposed precept of £147 for Band D properties on the Panel's website. The Commissioner has also responded to the Panel's report.

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

No questions.

5 QUESTIONS TO THE PANEL AND PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No questions.

6 UPDATE ON COMPLAINT RAISED ABOUT THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

The Chairman thanked Councillor Franey and the subgroup for reviewing the complaint made about the Commissioner. The subgroup found that the majority of the complaint fell outside the Commissioner's remit and, consequently, the review. The allegation that the Commissioner breached the 'Nolan Principles' of Public Life is a subjective observation and, in the subgroup's opinion, not justified. However, the subgroup did find that the manner in which the complaint was handled took too long and have made recommendations as to how the Commissioner's office procedures could be amended to improve these aspects of customer service.

END OF TERM UPDATE FROM THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

The Commissioner reflected on his term in office. The Police and Crime Plan, called “Everybody’s Business”, will be measured by the electorate at the Police and Crime Commissioner election in May 2016. The policing precept has not increased at any point during the term. The cost of the policing estate has decreased by working with other parts of the public sector. Collaborative working with Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire police forces will achieve savings over the next few years.

The Commissioner advised that the way crime is recorded has improved to provide a greater level of confidence with policing. There is a more robust method of measuring cybercrime. Incidents which are important to the public, such as fly-tipping, are now routinely recorded.

The Commissioner advised that the neighbourhood policing model has been retained with a Chief Inspector and neighbourhood policing team in each borough. This has gained recognition from Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary. There will be a total of 126 new police officers by the end of 2015/16, a net gain of around 10 police officers. Police community support officers (PCSOs) have also been retained.

The Commissioner noted that mental health sufferers are often taken to the cells but this does not happen in Hertfordshire. A psychiatric nurse is located in the force control room during the night. The Hertfordshire victim care centre called Beacon has helped thousands of people since it opened. A virtual courts system has been established which means offenders do not need to leave custody to attend a Magistrates Court.

Mr Laidlaw-Dickson observed that the focus has been on local policing and asked how strategic issues such as terrorism, domestic violence and child abuse are also focussed on. The Commissioner advised that collaboration at a regional level in the Eastern Region takes place regarding strategic issues.

Cllr Martins welcomed that PCSOs will be retained, as they contribute towards keeping Watford safe, but raised concerns about the pressures faced by PCSOs. Cllr Martins also asked whether the Commissioner could confirm the future of Watford police station. The Commissioner advised that the majority of employees in the public sector have to do more and it is no different for the police. In other parts of the country, such as Essex, there are no longer PCSOs. The Commissioner noted that there is generally some confusion between Watford police station and the custody suite. A report commissioned on the long term future of the custody suite has been sent to the Major/Leader, Chief Executive and Member of Parliament in Watford, Three Rivers and Dacorum. The closure of the custody suite has not had a significant impact but this decision will be reviewed again in three months. Each borough or district has a police station and there will be a police station in Watford.

The Chairman raised that the police station in Broxbourne is closing and comments made by the local sergeant at a neighbourhood forum were disappointing. The Chairman asked the Commissioner if he could ensure officers

are briefed so they can give a decent response at public meetings. The Commissioner noted the comments made.

Cllr Hunter highlighted some concerns about the road safety fund and its application. The Commissioner welcomed the feedback but advised, as he is not responsible for operational policing, he cannot instruct where a camera will be installed but he can say this funding will be used to change driving behaviour. The Chairman advised this could be a topic for the Panel's work programme next year.

Cllr Batson raised concerns about the number of people volunteering for the Drive Safe initiative, as the overall number of volunteers has decreased. This may be because people's expectations are not being met. The Commissioner advised that the funding is not limitless and expectations need to be managed as people make bids which are considered on their individual merits.

Dr Ramsay noted that there have been more fly-tipping reports this year which can be attributed to the reduced opening hours at the Household Waste Recycling Centres and the introduction of white van permits at the same sites. The Commissioner advised he believed the main issue was people fly-tipping as a business and it required more enforcement and joint working between the police, Hertfordshire County Council and the districts to resolve the issue.

The Chairman noted that participation in the Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel is not uniform across the county. The Commissioner advised that the Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel still requires more members.

8 **EMERGENCY SERVICES COLLABORATION (POLICING AND CRIME BILL)**

The Chairman advised that there is the possibility of bringing blue lights under the remit of the Commissioner as part of the Policing and Crime Bill. The Commissioner advised that in some areas the boundaries of policing and fire do not overlap, whereas in other areas this proposal would be simple to implement, such as in Bedfordshire. This discussion has taken place in Hertfordshire and it is helpful to review whether police and fire can work more effectively together.

9 **REVIEW UPDATES**

Victim support

Cllr Batson noted she could not get in to the event at the courts during Victim Awareness week in February and suggested more notice of planned events may be helpful in future years.

The Chairman welcomed the excellent Beacon presentation by Mr McGetrick at the Panel's meeting held on 28 January 2016.

Statistics

Dr Ramsay advised he will write to Deputy Chief Constable to arrange a meeting to discuss performance and statistics with relevant staff at the Constabulary.

10 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Commissioner advised that the Chief Constable's term of appointment expires on 5 June 2016. As it would be unhelpful to start a recruitment process immediately prior to an election, the Chief Constable has been asked to extend his contract by one year. The Commissioner is able to extend the Chief Constable's contract by three years and then annually without informing the Panel. If re-elected, the Commissioner intends to keep the Deputy Commissioner in his role.

The Chairman thanked the Commissioner for attending all of the Panel's meetings during his term of office.

11 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 26 May 2016 – meeting to be held at Broxbourne Borough Council's offices