



HERTFORDSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Thursday 13 November 2014
Broxbourne Borough Council

MINUTES

Present

Cllr T Hutchings, Broxbourne Borough Council
Cllr A Franey, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Cllr C Goldstein, Hertsmere Borough Council
Cllr N Harden, Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr R Henry, Stevenage Borough Council
Mr I Laidlaw-Dickson, Co-opted member
Dr M Ramsay, Co-opted member
Cty Cllr P Ruffles, Hertfordshire County Council
Dr M Verlot, Co-opted member

Also Present

Cllr C Storer (substitute), Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Mr G Miles, officer of the Police and Crime Panel
Mr T Hewins, officer of the Police and Crime Panel
Mr D Lloyd, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
Mr D Gibson, Deputy PCC
Mr R Wilsher, PCC Chief Executive
Cllr K Ayling, Broxbourne Borough Council
Cllr K Brown, Broxbourne Borough Council
Cllr J Metcalf, Broxbourne Borough Council
Cllr M Mills-Bishop, Leader of Broxbourne Borough Council
Cllr J Pearce, Broxbourne Borough Council
Cllr Mrs L White, Broxbourne Borough Council
Cty Cllr D Hewitt, Hertfordshire County Council
Mr C Connolly, Hertfordshire Constabulary

14 members of the public attended.

1 INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES AND WELCOME

Apologies

Cllr M Alexander, East Herts District Council
Cllr Ms S Bedford, Three Rivers District Council
Cllr Mrs A Brewster, St Albans City and District Council
Cllr S Gaygusuz, St Albans City and District Council
Cllr T Hunter, North Hertfordshire District Council
Mr B Jones, Co-opted member
Cllr R Martins, Watford Borough Council
Cllr Ms S Taylor, Stevenage Borough Council
Cllr J McNally, North Hertfordshire District Council
Mr J Stack, Broxbourne Borough Council
Ms D Currie, PCC Deputy Chief Executive

2 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

The Panel appointed Cllr Tim Hutchings, Broxbourne Borough Council, as Chairman. The Panel also appointed Cllr Malcolm Alexander, East Herts District Council, as Vice Chairman.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 19 JUNE 2014

Mr Miles advised the Panel that a member of the public had commented that the Commissioner's Deputy and Chief Executive agreed with the Commissioner that the statutory reports are published on the Commissioner's website, but this was not recorded and so was not included on page two and three of the minutes. The Chairman noted the comments and the Panel agreed that as the Panel's role is to scrutinise the Commissioner this was not a material omission and the minutes would not be amended.

Cllr Ruffles noted on page seven that reference to 'Barkley' should in fact be the village of Barley.

4 MATTERS ARISING

Cllr Ruffles suggested it would be helpful for some members of the Panel to attend police and crime panel meetings elsewhere, such as Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire. The Chairman welcomed this idea and asked Mr Miles to arrange.

5 UPDATE FROM THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

The Commissioner welcomed the opportunity to provide an overview of his activities. The report is substantive and a number of things have happened between when the report was written and this meeting. The Commissioner advised that his proposal next year will likely be to freeze the precept level. The budget setting takes place in January and will be reported to the next meeting of the Panel. He advised the panel that stop and search is an issue of concern to him and, although members of the public do not write to the Commissioner about this, local people will be recruited to look at the Constabulary's records to see if stop and search is being undertaken correctly.

The Commissioner confirmed a new website will hopefully be live by the Panel's next meeting. A pilot is starting in Dacorum to ensure local groups, ranging from parish councils to church meetings, receive a monthly crime update on what is happening locally. The independent review of what happens to victims of abuse and how they are supported will be published on 1 December 2014. The report shows the wide area of work the Commissioner is involved in, from holding the Constabulary to account to commissioning services for victims. The funding for victims' services in Hertfordshire, which is worth £1.2 million a year, is being devolved in stages from central Government to the Commissioner's office, with full responsibility transferred from 1 April 2015. The Commissioner advised he is leading nationally on blue light collaboration, which includes collaboration with other police forces, local authorities, the voluntary sector and the private sector.

Mr Laidlaw-Dickson asked that following the recent data protection leak what assurances can be given that victims' details will not be leaked in future. The Commissioner agreed that the incident was a very serious breach and a discussion will be held at the next Strategic Executive Board meeting on 19 November 2014 with the Constabulary's Director of Resources. The system must be secure so partner organisations use it more. It is part of a national system which is not well used and 25 people had accessed the data, although they may all have been police officers. Sensitive information has not been disclosed widely. A risk assessment on vulnerable cases has been undertaken, partner organisations have been briefed, members of the public affected have been called or written to and the information security team have reviewed the incident to ensure it does not happen again. The Information Commissioner has also been informed. The Commissioner advised he was satisfied that it is a safe system.

Dr Verlot asked once the restorative justice strategy is finalised whether it could be discussed. The Commissioner welcomed a conversation at a future meeting of the Panel. Hertfordshire University has been engaged to ensure academic rigour to the process. It continues the victim focussed approach.

Cllr Ruffles asked if the Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat takes into account the wellbeing agenda which supports mental health. The Commissioner confirmed the answer is yes. The Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat is Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner's idea and police and crime commissioners are at the forefront, hence why the Commissioner requested to be involved with the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Cllr Ruffles raised concerns with the Community Remedy and that victims of crime will have a say in the sanctioning of offenders. Pressure may be put on victims of crime to be involved in something they are not ready for, it risks a shortage of impartiality, victims may be frightened or confused, and it is potentially open to abuse or people not reporting crimes so they do not have to engage with the offender. The Commissioner advised the Community Remedy is victim led, it does not make people more fearful and it is linked to restorative justice, rather than the processed led and 'crime against the state' ways of the past.

Cllr Ruffles noted there are other victim support groups beyond the national charity, Victim Support. The Commissioner acknowledged that there are a wide range of

victim support groups. All sorts of groups apply for the £1.2 million funding available in Hertfordshire.

Cllr Ruffles asked whether engagement would extend to groups not associated with the criminal justice system, such as Homestart, Mencap and Mothers' Union. The Commissioner agreed engagement with a wide range of groups was important.

Mr Laidlaw-Dickson noted that in the transparency report on the Commissioner's website the freedom of information item was coded red (not complete). The Commissioner advised that his Chief Executive would clarify and respond to Mr Laidlaw-Dickson.

6 PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Mr Briggs advised he attended the Broxbourne and Wormley Area Forum on 15 October and was told to email the Commissioner, which he did on 17 October, with two questions regarding the use of police sirens and the issue of speeding during the early hours of the morning in the vicinity of Wormley High Road. The Commissioner noted both questions relate to operational matters in terms of how the police are discharging their duties, which is not part of the Commissioner's remit. This matter should be raised with the local police and the Commissioner's Chief Executive will ask Chief Inspector Dean Patient to copy the Commissioner into his response to Mr Briggs.

Mr Jones queried whether the Constabulary's computer systems are up to the level recommended by the Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Mr Tom Winsor, particularly following the incidents in Rotherham and Essex where police reports have not been actioned. The Commissioner advised that the Athena system will be fully implemented over the next 12 months and data mining systems piece information together. The Commissioner acknowledged it is always a work in progress but did not accept Hertfordshire or the majority of other police forces did not have fit for purpose computer systems. The Constabulary ensures systems talk to each other, but there are always lessons to learn, and an improvement plan is in place. The Chief Inspector of Constabulary has commented that Hertfordshire could do more but significant improvements have been made since the last report. Dr Ramsay commented that there are 43 police forces in England and Wales and the underlying point from the Chief Inspector of Constabulary was that there is little commonality between their computer systems and there is a long way to go to integrate the systems.

Mr Sykes pointed out that the current Neighbourhood Watch stickers, which include a picture of a meerkat, undermine the Neighbourhood Watch scheme and requested the stickers are changed. The Commissioner advised that he gives money to the county Neighbourhood Watch branch so they are able to purchase materials, but does not authorise what they do. Mr Keith Bachelor leads the Neighbourhood Watch committee and is responsible for the stickers.

Cllr Metcalf noted anecdotally that people in Broxbourne believe crime is committed in the area by people who live in London and queried whether cooperation between police forces is robust enough. The Commissioner advised the Constabulary works with neighbouring police forces which helps keep crime

low and Hertfordshire has one of the lowest crime rates in the country. The Constabulary works on an eastern regional basis with six other police forces, as well as close working specifically with Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire. The computer systems are better integrated which shows the close working is paying dividends. There is a need for strong working between neighbouring police forces as criminals do not recognise geographical borders.

7 PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO THE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

No questions from the public.

8 POLICE CRIME DATA REPORT OF THE PCC

The Commissioner introduced the report on police crime data, which the Deputy Chief Constable first raised at the Panel's meeting in June. The inspection carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) is helpful in holding the Constabulary to account but needs a preface in the context of crime coming down, as demonstrated by the British Crime Survey. It is important people have confidence in police crime recording. Not all crime is recorded currently and crime will increase because of improved National Crime Recordings Standard compliance, as shown in appendix A. In particular, bilking (not paying for fuel at a petrol station), incidents where the police previously did not want to criminalise an offender (such as a fight in a bar or consensual sex between 15 year olds) and fly-tipping (previously the public were asked to report to their district or borough council) will all see notable increases. It is anticipated the total number of reported crimes will go up by 10 per cent, although this does not mean a 10 per cent increase in crime or a 10 per cent increase in victims of crime.

Cllr Harden asked for clarification and cited an example of 15 people involved in a brawl. If this was previously reported as one crime, would this now be reported as 15 crimes? The Commissioner confirmed it was determined by when incidents are reported. For example, if a sexual assault happened 15 times and was reported at once by the victim, it would be classified as one crime, but if the victim reported them on separate occasions, there would be more than one crime logged. The outcome will be that multiple crimes will be reported now whereas in the past they were logged as one crime. The new system will mean all reports will be logged and then if no evidence is found a crime can be discounted with reasons.

Cllr Harden queried whether this was similar to the reporting arrangements the police were encouraged to follow 10 years ago. The Commissioner advised that 10 years ago the system changed and national reporting standards were introduced which resulted in an increase in the number of crimes reported. The HMIC report clearly states the standards are not being met. The changes will ensure all crimes are taken seriously and investigated.

Cllr Goldstein noted this may cause concern if people know if they report a crime they will be criminalised, such as acting in self-defence, which may encourage people to report less crime. The Commissioner acknowledged this concern but it is not as dangerous as not including all crime on the system, which results in things being missed and a less professional approach. The police will be proportionate, as they always have been with their response. He added that it is the incident which is criminalised, not the person at this stage.

Dr Verlot agreed with the Commissioner that universal recording is important so the police know what to do. Dr Verlot suggested it would be helpful for the Panel to consider both the data recorded by the Constabulary and the data from the national crime survey in a dashboard format so comparisons can be made with other police forces. Dr Ramsay acknowledged there is no perfect way of measuring crime. The Office for National Statistics publishes both sets of data at the same time and, in principle, there should be sufficient data published as part of the national crime survey to compare different police forces. The police have not been interested with this data previously. It is inevitable that police forces record things differently so it is difficult to compare like for like between police force data sets.

The Commissioner advised he would need time to reflect on what data would be useful for the Panel to hold him to account and what data would also be useful for the Commissioner to hold the Chief Constable to account. Dr Verlot suggested it would help the Panel support the Commissioner. For example, the Commissioner has identified stop and search as a priority, so it would be helpful to see how Hertfordshire compares with other police forces. Mr Laidlaw-Dickson reminded the Panel that their role was to hold the Commissioner to account and the statistics have to be used in way which assists. The situation is more opaque now than before and a further report which reflects the changes in numbers will be needed from the Commissioner.

Mr Laidlaw-Dickson noted concerns raised by HMIC about the resources allocated to crime recording and asked how back office cuts has affected crime recording. The Commissioner advised it was predominantly a cultural issue. Cllr Harden pointed out at the Dacorum Community Safety Partnership a different answer was given. The Commissioner advised it was a concern if the Constabulary are stating something different to the Commissioner.

9 INQUIRY BY THE COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE

Mr Miles introduced the consultation by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) on accountability, leadership and ethics in local policing. The CSPL has invited the Panel to submit answers to the questions raised.

Dr Verlot suggested the system to hold the Commissioner to account is opaque and it is difficult to ascertain which organisations do what so any clarity would be helpful. Mr Laidlaw-Dickson noted the report does not refer to the Independent Police Complaints Commission, the National Audit Office or HMIC. They have more powers than the Panel. The courts have also been involved with holding police and crime commissioners to account, for example, in Lincolnshire.

Dr Ramsay noted that the crime statistics referred to in the answer to question four cannot be used to make a comparison between different police forces as it misses important information.

Mr Laidlaw-Dickson suggested a sharper response would only cover aspects related to police and crime panel functions and there is a role for the Association of Chief Police Officers for other questions. Mr Laidlaw-Dickson noted the powers the Panel does have are 'toothless' and do not help, citing the ability to reject the precept level and the veto of the Chief Constable.

The Chairman commented that the public needs to understand the Commissioner's role and that, although the Panel does not have powers, it does have influence.

Dr Verlot observed that the role of the Panel to support the Commissioner via a procedural approach is riddled with contradictions. For example, the Panel has an interest in vulnerable adults, but less of an interest in the appointment of the Commissioner's Chief Executive.

The Chairman asked the Panel to forward any comments to Mr Miles and he will compile a response on behalf of Members and circulate for further views, before submitting the final response.

10 PROPOSALS OF THE PCC FOR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE POST

The Commissioner introduced the report on the structure and staffing position in the Commissioner's office. The current part-time seconded arrangement for the role of Chief Executive expires at the end of March 2015. The team has been strengthened with the appointment of the Policy Development and Engagement Manager and further appointments will be made in the roles of Deputy Chief Executive, Customer Services Manager and Policy Support Officer. The overall cost of the office will be slightly less than the cost of the former Police Authority's office.

The Commissioner concluded that the part-time Chief Executive model in which the post holder has a principal focus on strategic partnerships is effective. The recruitment process for this role will be open and transparent. To ensure business continuity within this statutory role, a precaution has been taken with agreement from the Hertfordshire County Council Employment Committee to extend the current Chief Executive if required up to June 2016. The Commissioner noted that the uncertainty about the future role of police and crime commissioners may impact the market response to job advertisements.

Cllr Harden queried what a part-time Chief Executive could do that a full time Deputy Chief Executive could not do. The Commissioner advised that the role of part-time Chief Executive is cost effective and offers an overview of the office, partnership working and strategic oversight, whereas the role of Deputy Chief Executive oversees the day to day work and the operation of the office. The Commissioner's Executive Board needs a broad team to develop ideas.

Cllr Harden questioned whether there could be a scenario with a full time Chief Executive in post. The Commissioner advised the answer was yes but the current set up works well.

The Chairman pointed out that the Commissioner is fortunate at the moment as he has a well-qualified individual in the role of Chief Executive. The Commissioner agreed and explained the purpose of this report was to update the Panel on developments with the staffing structure and the recruitment process will be outlined to the Panel at a later date. Mr Laidlaw-Dickson noted the proposition and requested information about the formal role of the Chief Executive when a decision is made by the Commissioner about the recruitment process.

11 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr Laidlaw-Dickson queried what the £370 expense paid to the Institute of Directors by the Commissioner was for. The Commissioner advised it was a yearly membership fee and that he will also be renewing his annual membership to the Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The Police and Crime Plan is 'Everybody's Business' and it is important to keep links with business.

The Commissioner apologised but he had inadvertently booked a holiday to coincide with the Panel meeting in June 2015 and hoped the Panel would be able to reschedule the meeting. Afternote, this will be rearranged for 9 July 2015.

12 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETINGS**

7pm, Thursday 29 January 2015 – at Hertsmere Borough Council