



HERTFORDSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Thursday 19 June 2014
North Hertfordshire District Council

MINUTES

Present

Cllr A Franey, Welwyn Hatfield District Council
Cllr C Goldstein, Hertsmere Borough Council
Cllr T Hunter, North Hertfordshire District Council
Cllr T Hutchings, Broxbourne Borough Council
Mr B Jones, Co-opted member
Mr I Laidlaw-Dickson, Co-opted member
Cllr R Martins, Watford Borough Council
Dr M Ramsay, Co-opted member
Cty Cllr P Ruffles, Hertfordshire County Council

Also Present

Cllr J McNally (substitute), North Hertfordshire District Council
Mr G Miles, Broxbourne Borough Council
Mr T Hewins, Broxbourne Borough Council
Mr D Lloyd, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
Mr D Gibson, Deputy PCC
Mr R Wilsher, PCC Chief Executive

7 members of the public attended.

1 INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES AND WELCOME

Appointment of a Chairman

Cllr Franey suggested it would be helpful to appoint a Chairman at a meeting when a greater number of members are present and instead appoint a temporary Chairman for this meeting only.

The Panel appointed Cllr Peter Ruffles, Hertfordshire County Council, as Chairman for the meeting.

Introductions

Cllr Tim Hutchings, newly appointed member for Broxbourne Borough Council, attended his first meeting. Cllr Rabi Martins is the newly appointed member for Watford Borough Council. Broxbourne Borough Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, North Hertfordshire District Council and Watford Borough Council have selected new substitute members.

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 N Harden, Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr R Henry, Stevenage Borough Council
Cllr Ms S Taylor, Stevenage Borough Council
Dr M Verlot, Co-opted member
Mr J Stack, Broxbourne Borough Council
Ms D Currie, Deputy PCC Chief Executive

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF 13 FEBRUARY AND 24 APRIL 2014

The minutes of the meetings were agreed.

3 MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman queried whether the Commissioner had received the audit of rape and sexual offences report, as recorded on page five of the minutes of the 13 February 2014 meeting. The Commissioner advised he had and would comment further later in the meeting.

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Mr Ryan advised that since April 2013 he has brought to the attention of the Commissioner's office and the Panel the issue of what he considered the Commissioner's non-compliance with certain statutory reporting duties, in particular a number of incomplete items. Mr Ryan indicated he had not attended the Panel's meetings for over six months to allow time for the issue to be resolved, but he considered the Commissioner is still not compliant. Mr Ryan asked the Commissioner why this was the case. The Commissioner explained that as far as

he is aware the statutory reports are published on the Commissioner's website (www.hertscommissioner.org/pdf/TransparencyReview.pdf) and it is possible to click on all of the reports specified by the Home Office.

Mr Ryan queried why the gifts and hospitalities register listed no gifts received by the Commissioner's staff, as these details are provided on other police and crime commissioners' websites. Mr Ryan noted the Elected Local Bodies Order (amended 12 August 2013) changed the requirements that certain expenditure below £500 should be published by police and crime commissioners. This was in response to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cumbria driving around in a chauffeur driven vehicle. Mr Ryan asked why these details are not listed on the Commissioner's website. The Commissioner advised that all staff have declared gifts and the reason why all staff are not listed is because the majority of staff are not offered gifts. If something is required to be published, it is available on the Commissioner's website.

It was confirmed after the meeting by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire that the information referred to by Mr Ryan, as required by the amendment to the Elected Local Bodies Order, is published on the Commissioner's website. Two subsidiary pieces of information need to be added to the list, but the travel expenses paid are available as item 1(d) on page two of the transparency review: (www.hertscommissioner.org/pdf/TransparencyReview.pdf).

Mr Haughey noted the lack of representation by the Constabulary at the meeting was disappointing and asked the Commissioner what assurances he could provide to reduce speeding in Barley and its surrounding villages, and how the Commissioner would do this. The participants in the DriveSafe scheme in the Barley area do not feel they are receiving the required support from the Constabulary.

The Commissioner pointed out that the Panel holds him to account, not the Police, which is his role and the reason why it is not often a representative from the Constabulary would be present at the Panel's meetings. He noted he was aware of the issues in Barley, as this location was the pioneer of speed awareness and the DriveSafe scheme which has now spread across the County. It is a concern if the scheme is not working as it should. Many people are concerned about speeding which is why the DriveSafe scheme was established. Cllr Hunter was responsible for securing funding to pay for the verge to be hardened which enabled a speed van to be located in Barley. The Commissioner advised he will remind the Chief Constable of his commitment to use volunteers properly, as one of the biggest concerns in the county is related to anti-social behaviour which includes speeding related anti-social behaviour.

Mr Haughey acknowledged he was guided through the process by Cllr Hunter and asked how it was possible to reinstate the speed van in Barley. The Commissioner advised that he was not responsible for operational policing but he would ask why the speed van is no longer located there. Policing must reflect what the public wants but there is a balance to be achieved as there is a danger this is not the policing required.

5 PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO THE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Mr Ryan asked to clarify a point of order in regard to the Panel's meeting held on 24 April 2014. The meeting was not attended by a quorum of members and Mr Ryan understood that the Panel's Rules of Procedure prohibit a formal meeting taking place. Mr Ryan queried how minutes of the meeting could therefore be issued. Mr Miles explained that an informal public meeting had been held with informal recommendations made, as noted in the minutes of the meeting.

Mr Ryan noted his concerns at the lack of attendance from members of the Panel. The Chairman shared his disappointment as did members of the Panel. The Chairman advised extra efforts have been made to improve attendance at meetings. The majority of constituent councils have appointed a senior member of their Council as their representative and a member outside their executive as their substitute member. It is hoped attendance will improve at future meetings. Cllrs Hunter and Goldstein confirmed this was the situation at their local authorities, as two senior members had been appointed to the Panel which meant if there was a clash of meetings both members could not attend the Panel's meeting.

Mr Ryan noted the Panel asked for and received a report on compliance with statutory transparency data. Mr Ryan asked the Panel to confirm whether the expenditure related to the Elected Local Bodies Order (amended 12 August 2013) has been published by the Commissioner. Mr Laidlaw-Dickson confirmed that it was agreed at the Panel's meeting held in February 2014 that Annex A of the transparency report would be available on the Commissioner's website, but he could not find it on the website. Annex A does adhere to the statutory requirements but Mr Laidlaw-Dickson did not believe it included expenditure below £500. It would be helpful if there was an obvious link to the statutory reports displayed on both the Commissioner's and Panel's websites. Mr Wilsher indicated the intention is to add a button to the Commissioner's website but the staff member responsible for the website has been on sick leave. The link to Annex A is:

www.hertscommissioner.org/pdf/TransparencyReview.pdf

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Mr Turner advised that other villages have stopped participating in the DriveSafe scheme and it seems like the Police have a deliberate policy to not support the initiative. The Chairman thanked Mr Turner for making the Panel aware of his issues with the scheme which the Commissioner has said he will talk to the Chief Constable about. Cllr Hunter advised that he has consistently made contact with the Police about the Barley situation and, despite correspondence back and forth, it appears no action has been taken. There are no powers for a councillor except lobbying until something happens. Cllr Hutchings noted a similar issue in the Borough of Broxbourne which received a less than enthusiastic response from the Police. Cllr Martins asked whether it would be reasonable for the Commissioner to put an emphasis on the policy aspects of speeding.

A member of the public from Ashwell supported the concept that volunteers are not being heeded, as for example it took the Police 19 weeks to supply a battery. The Chairman reminded members of the public that they can contact the Commissioner in between meetings of the Panel. Cllr Goldstein summarised that the Panel are concerned about speeding and hoped the Commissioner would speak to the Police about this matter.

6 **PANEL RULES OF PROCEDURE**

Co-opted members

The Panel appointed Mr Brian Jones and Dr Malcolm Ramsay as independent co-opted members of the Panel.

Work programme

Mr Miles noted that members had suggested the schedule of meetings should be established for more than one year. It is also suggested that the November meeting is moved to October, but not this year as this will enable the Panel to consider the national report on crime data by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary.

The Panel approved the work programme and dates of meetings for 2014/15 and the nearest dates for future years other than the November date being moved to October after 2014/15.

Rules of Procedure

The Panel agreed to change the quorum requirement from half to one third of the members to be present.

Other steps to improve attendance

The Chairman noted that the Hertfordshire County Council scrutiny of the Panel suggested the webcasting of future Panel meetings, although it was recognised that this facility was not available everywhere. Mr Miles advised that it could be disadvantageous to not hold meetings at all local authorities in the county as different members of the public attended each meeting. Mr Laidlaw-Dickson suggested webcasting could be used on an ad hoc basis depending on whether the host venue had the capability. Webcasting will become more widespread as local authorities embrace the technology. The benefits are that anybody would be able to watch the meetings. Cllr Hunter welcomed the arrangement of meetings being held around the county, as it enables people to attend, subject to them being aware of the meetings in the first place.

The Chairman asked how the Panel meetings are publicised. Mr Miles advised meetings are publicised via the Panel's website and the issuing of press releases to the media and local authorities in Hertfordshire. Dr Ramsay suggested it may be helpful to send press releases to specific contacts in the local press. The Chairman noted that not all police and crime commissioners answer public questions at police and crime panels, but it is good practise.

Member training requirements

Mr Miles advised that forming sub-committees to carry out some specific work could be useful. For example, specific topics could include finance, crime data statistics or volunteering. It would enable the Panel to look at topics in more depth. The Chairman noted that the Hertfordshire County Council scrutiny of the Panel suggested a programme of one day scrutiny sessions be developed covering aspects of the Commissioner's policing policy. Mr Laidlaw-Dickson advised he was reluctant to see a proliferation of sub-committees. Cllr Martins advocated task and finish sub groups where appropriate. Mr Laidlaw-Dickson and Dr Ramsay volunteered to be part of a crime data statistics sub-committee. Mr Jones volunteered to be part of the finance sub-committee. Cllr Hunter volunteered to be part of a speeding sub-committee. The Chairman asked members to inform Mr Miles of their interest in a particular topic.

The Chairman queried whether members reported back to their respective local authorities on the activity of the Panel and suggested it could be considered as part of the training process. Cllr Martins outlined that activity of the Panel has been reported to the Watford Community Safety Partnership which is used as a forum for feedback. A semi formal link could be made between the Panel and the community safety partnerships.

7 POLICE CRIME DATA REPORT OF THE PCC

Mr Miles advised it was originally anticipated that the Constabulary would receive a debrief from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) in advance of the Panel's meeting but this has not happened. The full national thematic HMIC report, the Hertfordshire specific HMIC report and the Constabulary's response will be available for the Panel's November 2014 meeting. The Deputy Chief Constable's report provides an update on crime reporting, highlights some concerns nationally and makes clear what the Constabulary is doing in terms of crime recording standards.

Mr Laidlaw-Dickson noted the extent of under recording does not look great. It would be helpful if the Constabulary were asked to 'reverse engineer' the figures to see what changing historic figures in line with the findings of the current review meant, and report the findings to the Panel's next meeting. The Commissioner welcomed this suggestion and advised he was determined to make sure all crime is reported. This year will be a recalibration year, as the crime figures will increase, partly because fly-tipping, 'bilking' (customers driving off without paying at petrol stations) and other crimes will be included in the figures for the first time. The number of crimes reported to date in quarter one of 2014/15 has increased by 10 per cent. The number of police officers and PCSOs employed has also increased. However, it is important not to lose focus on victims. HMIC's outlook predominantly considers the correct classification of a crime rather than whether the victim has been dealt with properly.

Dr Ramsay suggested that it is vital the Constabulary engages with the national crime survey as it provides an alternative picture from the victim's perspective, which can be learnt from. The Commissioner agreed it was quite right to use the crime survey as it showed trends.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PCC

The Commissioner introduced his Annual Report. It was a good year for policing. Hertfordshire continues to be a safe place to live and work, as overall crime fell by 1.6 per cent over the 2013/14 policing year. The key achievement was to ensure greater working efficiencies but also protect local policing and the structure of neighbourhood policing teams. The precept was not increased. Partnership working with the community safety partnerships has seen reports of anti-social behaviour decrease by 27.4 per cent in 2013/14.

The Commissioner confirmed he had received the audit of rape and sexual offences report, which broadly reflects the discussion at the Panel's meeting in February 2014 and will be taken forwards as part of the crime data reporting work.

The Commissioner identified volunteering as a key part of the Police and Crime Plan and was disappointed to hear certain aspects are not working as they should, but this does not reflect volunteering across the county.

Public questions on the Annual Report

Mr Turner asked whether page 10 includes the DriveSafe scheme in Barley as it does not describe the reality of the situation in Barley and he did not receive an invitation to the special event at the Police Headquarters. The Commissioner viewed the volunteering schemes as generally working well. He apologised if Mr Turner did not receive an invitation to the event.

Mr Turner asked whether he could arrange a meeting with the Commissioner as no response has been received from his request in writing. The Commissioner advised that he had already met with Mr Turner on more than one occasion and apologised if Mr Turner did not receive a response to his request. An appointment will be arranged when mutually convenient.

Mr Ryan highlighted the finance section on page 17 and the cost of the Commissioner's office which is £1 million per annum. This includes two seconded officers, which are the Chief Financial Officer for one day a week and the Chief Executive for two days a week. The Police and Crime Commissioners for Surrey and Bedfordshire both employ a full time Chief Executive. Mr Ryan asked why the cost of the Commissioner's office was so high.

The Commissioner advised the cost to the taxpayer represented good value and the Chief Financial Officer and Chief Executive were possibly the most cost effective in the country. It cost £1 million per annum to operate the former Police Authority which the public had not heard of. The current set up offers better value for money and holds the Police to account very effectively. For example, the Commissioner noted he was fully aware of what was now happening in Barley, which showed democracy in action. The Commissioner's office has also taken on commissioning budgets, which totals £1.7 million to commission services for victims.

Mr Ryan raised a concern that the Commissioner was the only police and crime commissioner in the country to employ part time staff in statutory roles, in particular

the roles of Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer, and this did not seem to represent value for money. The Commissioner advised that if all the required work is undertaken with part time staff then the taxpayer benefits. It is likely that if a full time Chief Financial Officer was appointed there would be criticism for him doing so.

Panel consideration of the Annual Report

Cllr Hutchings suggested partnership working is essential to the success outlined in the Annual Report and this could be described in more detail in future years. The Commissioner advised this was a matter of style and agreed partnership working cannot be underplayed.

Mr Laidlaw-Dickson queried the difference in the number of complaints appealed against which were upheld by the Professional Standards Department compared to the Independent Police Complaints Commission, how this works and what this means for public confidence in policing. Dr Ramsay asked whether details such as the regularity that police officers are complained about are looked into. The Commissioner advised that the introduction of the tri force aspect of the Professional Standards Department is a positive as it provides an independent view. The Commissioner has resurrected the dip sampling approach previously adopted by the Police Authority as part of his specific role with complaints, which provides a helpful overview. The level of disconnect between the percentage of appeals upheld respectively by the Professional Standards Department and the Independent Police Complaints Commission needs to be considered more closely. It is more important that the complainant had their complaint resolved, although some complaints cannot be resolved, such as neighbourhood disputes.

Cllr McNally congratulated the Commissioner's approach of placing the priority on the victim. In terms of the performance measures on page 20 and in respect to objectives 1.1, 1.2 and 3.3, as this is the Commissioner's second Annual Report Cllr McNally queried why there were technical difficulties in providing the baseline figures. The Commissioner advised the baseline figures are not available due to changes with the system that deals with repeat victims of crime. When reporting systems are changed it is not possible to compare like for like and it is better to be upfront about this. It is anticipated the technical difficulties will be resolved this year. Dr Ramsay noted the national crime survey measures the extent of repeat victims and drug use.

Cllr Hutchings commented that not many of the 2018 targets had been met, which is fair enough as this is still several years away, but it would be helpful to produce figures to show the trends. The Commissioner advised the performance targets are set year on year and is how the Chief Constable is held to account. The headline figure of reducing crime by two percent was not met, as crime only reduced by 1.6 per cent. However, Hertfordshire was one of only five areas of the country where crime decreased in 2013/14. Crime reduction has slowed and crime has begun to increase in 2014/15. This has to be put in the context of the reduction of crime from approximately 100,000 reports in 2000 to approximately 50,000 reports last year. The national crime survey also shows this trend.

Cllr Hutchings noted that the 30.3 per cent increase in the number of recorded serious sex offences gives the uninformed person concerns. The Commissioner

agreed but it is a positive that more people feel able to report sex offences following the Jimmy Savile investigation.

Cllr Hunter welcomed the local Police using their quad bike innovatively. Normally 15 youths would gather in the local park and disperse when the police arrived. An interesting outcome of the Police patrolling the area with a quad bike has seen the local youths approach the quad bike and talk to the police. Cllr Hunter highlighted that since the localism agenda was introduced there is the possibility of volunteer fatigue as it is the same people giving their time and efforts. The Commissioner noted the use of the quad bike and commented that there are various ways of engaging with the community. Organisations, including Hertfordshire County Council, the district and borough councils and the Police, are asking for more and more from volunteers. Broadly volunteers are happy to contribute their time.

9 **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE ON COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE PCC**

The Panel noted the report.

10 **HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL SCRUTINY REPORT ON THE PANEL**

The Chairman advised he reminded Hertfordshire County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee that they have no control of the Panel and the Panel does not have to answer to the recommendations they have made. The recommendation to make the most appropriate councillor, who has an interest in the area, time to attend meetings and is able to contribute fully, a member of the Panel has been undertaken by Hertfordshire County Council and is up to each local authority how they proceed. The other recommendations have been discussed as part of item six.

The Panel notes the recommendations made by Hertfordshire County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

11 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman wanted to express gratitude on behalf of the Panel for the work undertaken by Cllr Hannam in his role as Chairman since the inception of the Panel.

Cllr Martins queried what the arrangements are for the Chairman role. The Chairman advised he was acting as a temporary Chairman for the meeting only and had no interest in taking the role permanently. It was helpful having the Chairman from the host authority, Broxbourne Borough Council, but it was unreasonable to propose Cllr Hutchings acted as the Chairman at his first meeting. Under normal circumstances, the Vice-Chairman would have assumed the Chairman's role for the meeting, but he was absent. It is understood that Cllr Alexander is happy to remain as Vice-Chairman but does not wish to take the Chairman's role.

12 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETINGS**

7pm, Thursday 13 November 2014 – venue to be confirmed