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MEETING OF THE HERTFORDSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Tuesday 2nd February 2023- 6:00pm

Borough of Broxbourne Council

MINUTES

(Please note the minutes are a brief summary of the discussion and not intended to be verbatim)

Members Present: Cllr S Monaghan (Chair), Broxbourne Borough Council
Cllr P Choudhury (Vice Chair), Hertsmere Borough Council
Cllr G Adeleke Dacorum Borough Council
Dr M Ramsay, Independent Member (Independent member)
Cllr J Hollywell, Stevenage Borough Council
Cllr Ranger Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr J Taylor, St Albans City and District Council
Cllr A Scarth, Three Rivers District Council
Cllr A Dychton, Watford Borough Council
Cllr R Trigg, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Also Present: Mr David Lloyd, Police and Crime Commissioner
Mr Lewis Cocking, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
Mr Chris Brace, Chief Executive, PCC
Dr Amie Birkhamshaw, Director of Strategy, PCC
Mr Ian Rooney – Chief Finance Officer PCC
Mrs N Boateng, Clerk to the Police and Crime Panel
Mr Elliot Free, Solicitor Apprentice – Broxbourne Council

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Police and Crime Panel meeting.

2. APOLOGIES and DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Apologies received from Cllr Sam North (North Herts District Council), Cllr Rishi Fernando (East Herts District Council).

No declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 17th November 2022

The minutes were agreed.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

No matters arising.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO THE PANEL

No questions received.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

No questions received.

7. THE PROPOSED POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S PRECEPT AND REPORT ON PRECEPT CONSULTATION

DL summarised the Precept and Consultation reports, with reference to legitimacy in the Police Force. The summary is attached at 'Appendix 1'.

Legitimacy

Dr R asked DL whether the David Carrick case had changed his view on the vetting process.

DL – it has underlined how difficult it is to ensure we get vetting right, process should assess 'values' in addition to the usual vetting procedures.

Cllr GA asked questions regarding the composition of the Police recruitment vetting board, whether serving Police Officers are re-vetted and commented on the high dismissal rate asking whether this was an indication that the initial vetting wasn't robust enough.

DL – All Officers are put through a 'data wash' every 10 years, or every time an Officer is promoted or changes job, to ensure they are still appropriate to continue in the force. DL Confirmed vetting included reviewing candidates personal history, criminal offences, financial affairs, the Officers family are vetted also. With regard to dismissal rates, DL responded that they were due to Hertfordshire being pro-active in the re-vetting process.

Cllr JH – asked about reviewing Officers online activity.

DL – younger officers have a greater online presence; this is a difficult issue as everyone has a right to a private life. However, PSD check online activity. WhatsApp and other social media platforms are closed therefore more difficult to monitor.

Cllr AD – Asked DL if he would join with her to lobby central government for additional funding to rebuild the public trust in the Police Force.

DL – Advised he always likes working with local Councillors however, did not think public trust was about lack of funding.

Cllr SM – with reference to the HMICFRS report asked whether there were any findings, DL was surprised by.

DL - The report was broadly good, highlighted successes, such as Prevention first. The report found Hertfordshire to be one of the better forces. There are improvement to be made, such as responding to the public. There is an improvement plan in place and DL will hold the Chief Constable to account on this.

Precept Report

Cllr SM – Thanked Ian Rooney for new layout of the report, which the Panel thought, was much better.

Dr MR – asked about the level of borrowing edging upwards and the additional risk this presented.

DL – Explained as a Public Authority the PCC can borrow at a low rate and considered the risks to be manageable and was satisfied that this was a sustainable budget.

Cllr RR – Made reference to the HPCC having one of the lowest precepts and asked how this compares to crime levels, does Hertfordshire have corresponding low crime rates.

DL and CB provided summary of crime rates for Hertfordshire confirming crime rate reduction was comparatively good.

Cllr GA – Asked questions regarding the difficulty in recruiting new Officers and which Force had the lowest precept.

DL – Advised of the general problem of recruiting as in the rest of the public sector. Of the Officers recruited only 1 in 10 make it all the way through the process. DL praised the excellent work of the recruitment team for the numbers they have managed to recruit. DL confirmed the lowest precept area was Northumbria.

Cllr AS – Asked whether there would be a point when the Force would be happy with the numbers recruited so that the level of precept could go down.

DL – the Precept level depends on treat, need and harm. Do not think we could ever say there are enough Officers. The level of crime is the measure for the number of Officers.

Cllr AD – Advised that she works in the NHS and often sees Officers in A & E dealing with mental health issues. Also referred to the number of PSPOs falling.

DL – Agreed that many Officers are called to deal with matters that are actually mental health issues, DL is an advocate for more mental health nurses.

We need to retain and recruit more PSPOs, a lot of PSPOs move across to becoming Police Officers when there is a recruitment drive.

Cllr JT – Referred to last year’s precept and a question she raised at that time regarding allocation of funding to benefit all the districts in Hertfordshire. Commented that there was an increase in certain types of crime in St Albans.

DL – Queried the crime figures referred to and indicated that the best forum for a discussion of operational matters were the RAG meetings.

Cllr PC – asked whether PCC would continue to match fund Councils for PSPOs.

DL – confirmed that he would.

Cllr SM – Thanked the Panel for reviewing the reports and asking such probing questions.

DECISION OF THE PANEL

The Police and Crime Panel voted to accept the Police and Crime Commissioner’s Precept.

8. COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE DELIVERY PLAN – (REPORT FOR NOTING)

The Panel noted the report; Cllr SM indicated that the Panel would like to discuss this report at a later meeting.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

10. NEXT MEETING AT 22 JUNE 2023 AT 6PM AT ST ALBANS CITY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES