



HERTFORDSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Thursday 24 January 2013
Council Chamber
Hertsmere Borough Council

MINUTES

Present

Cllr M Alexander, East Herts District Council
Cllr Mrs A Brewster, St Albans City and District Council
Cllr M Bright, Hertsmere Borough Council
Ms A Francis, Co-opted Member
Cllr A Franey (substitute), Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Cllr R G Hannam, Broxbourne Borough Council (Chairman)
Mr I Laidlaw-Dickson, Co-opted member
Cty Cllr P Ruffles, Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr R Seabourne, Three Rivers District Council
Mayor D Thornhill, Watford Borough Council
Dr M Verlot, Co-opted Member

Also Present

Mr D Lloyd, Police and Crime Commissioner
Mr A White, PCC Chief Executive
Mr J Bugg, PCC Deputy Chief Executive
Ms D Currie, Commissioner's Office
Cllr S Gaygusuz (substitute), St Albans City and District Council
Mr J Hurley, Commissioner's Office
Mr G Miles, Broxbourne Borough Council
Ms G F Clelland, Broxbourne Borough Council
M J Walker, Broxbourne Borough Council
17 members of the public including members of the Hertsmere Community Safety Team and press

1 APOLOGIES

Dr R Frosh, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
Cllr Mrs T Cowley, North Hertfordshire District Council
Cllr J Dean, Welwyn Hatfield District Council
Cllr N Harden, Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Ms S Taylor, Stevenage Borough Council

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2012 Agreed.

3 **MATTERS ARISING**

(a) **Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman**

In response to Cllr Seaborne, the Chairman confirmed that the appointment of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman was for a term of office of one year. The rules of procedure provide the Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be appointed annually in June.

(b) **Review of proposed appointment of Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner**

Mr Ian Laidlaw Dickson noted that a member of the public had complained about the Panel's process for this review. He did not believe that the process should be re-run and he had no doubt about the outcome, but had concerns about aspects of how it had been achieved. The meeting was in public but he considered it would have been unclear that a confirmation meeting was to take place. He did not believe a formal report had been given to the PCC from the Panel.

Mr Laidlaw Dickson was advised that the format of the report from the Panel is not prescribed in the legislation and that the Panel does not have to hold a separate meeting nor a briefing in advance of its consideration of the matter. The Panel decided it would have the confirmation hearing; it did report to the Commissioner orally and published its report through the medium of its minutes. Mr Gavin Miles advised the meeting that all the statutory requirements on the Panel were met.

4 **QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

The Panel received a written question from Cllr Ann Harrison (Hertsmere Borough Council) on the means by which the public were informed of the meeting.

It was indicated that the annual programme of the Panel's meeting is published on the Panel's website, sent to the press directly and distributed to all principal local authorities in Hertfordshire for local publication and dissemination. The same process is followed for each individual meeting with the publication of the agenda and papers for each meeting.

In response to supplementary questions, it was confirmed that the Panel would utilise social media such as Facebook and Twitter and contact local parishes for their assistance in publicising meetings too. The Chairman welcomed the public interest in the Panel's work and invited support in publicising this from all the constituent authorities and affiliated bodies too.

5 **POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S DRAFT POLICE AND CRIME PLAN**

The Commissioner introduced the circulated report and slides.

The Commissioner outlined the three key areas for development –

- Public focus
- Offender pays
- Good business sense.

The Commissioner proposed better partnership working with all relevant agencies. He intends to meet with the leaders of local authorities quarterly and portfolio holders on a monthly basis in an informal 'cabinet'. He recognised that joint working takes place across a number of tiers and his liaison with the probation service, health partners and the local judiciary will be close and strengthened. The community is policed by and for the community and the Commissioner recognised the importance of voluntary work by members of the community such as specials. He intended that the community will have a say in the development of the community payback programme.

On the theme of business sense, the Commissioner referred to the programme of market testing back office functions and securing value for money. On making sure that offenders make good for their crimes, the Commissioner outlined plans to secure payback in cash or in kind to aggressively pursue criminal assets and to develop paid rehabilitation programmes. The Commissioner believed that people who use the services should pay (rather than the tax payer in general).

Cllr Bright wanted the Plan to be well considered and well tested. Mr Laidlaw Dickson expressed concerns about aspects of the Commissioner's ideas on the offender pays which he felt are matters for the wider judicial process. He identified challenging measurement issues in devising robust performance indicators. Ms Francis drew attention to the role of the probation service and queried some of the Commissioner's comments on mental health and the criminal justice system. She felt that the business case for charging offenders for services is not clear.

The Commissioner recognised the need to ensure his proposals will work. He confirmed he will be a member of the Criminal Justice Board. The Commissioner recognised the issues of the measurement of performance and he made it clear that his proposals will be explained when the full Plan is published shortly. The Commissioner indicated that his ideas reflect the kind of society the public wants to see and he felt he has a duty to express ideas on behalf of the wider community. The Commissioner explained that he must give voice to the needs of victims. He recognised the role of the probation service in the period of changes facing the service. A step change is anticipated in the interface between crime and health agendas. His deputy will advise the Commissioner on the health landscape, getting drugs and alcohol policies right and reducing domestic violence.

Dr Verlot expressed support for the Commissioner's thinking on child exploitation. He asked the Commissioner to drive police engagement with this issue. He suggested that measuring domestic abuse needs like for like comparisons with similar forces and communities. Good business sense suggests prior assessment is needed before expensive investments are made in pilot of drug testing, etc. The Commissioner recognised the need for comparison with other similar forces and confirmed that this was commonly undertaken in the Constabulary. The Commissioner also recognised the advantages of localism expressing what the people of Hertfordshire want.

Cllr Brewster thought the Commissioner's proposals were brave and refreshing. Based on her City's experience, she urged caution and care in implementing schemes for volunteers. Mayor Thornhill welcomed new ideas about victims and welcomed the Commissioner's willingness to explore what people want. However, effective communication with the public is crucial. She welcomed the challenging questions from panel members at this

meeting. In due course, full details will be needed to hold the Commissioner to account. Cllr Salih Gaygusuz (St Albans) expressed support for the Commissioner's ideas about making occupiers of cells pay.

The Panel received the Commissioner's report and noted that full details will be available at the next meeting on 14 February. The Plan will be published in March.

6 THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S PROPOSED PRECEPT

The Commissioner outlined the circulated financial report. The Commissioner proposed to freeze the precept for 2013/14 and sought the Panel's agreement to the unchanged precept he proposed.

The Commissioner wanted to make it clear that front-line officers are not being reduced. Other specialist teams are being increased. The force will be more efficient with reductions in back office roles. The Commissioner suggested the discussion needs to be moved away from police numbers towards the police force's current needs. The impact of the precept freeze cannot be expressed in terms of simple number of police offices.

From his recent election to office, Cllr Bright recognised the Commissioner has a strong mandate. In coming years, a freeze in the precept is unlikely, so in future years he envisaged that the Commissioner will ask the public what they want. The Commissioner agreed that this is an important point. In future years, more time will be available than the truncated period available this year. In 2014, the Commissioner will work through his proposals over the longer period available.

Cllr Alexander sought an assurance the Commissioner has looked elsewhere for potential support other than the council tax payer – such as parishes' New Home Bonus.

In response to a query about how much money has been foregone by a freeze – the Commission advised a reduction of £1.9 million, exclusive of the Government freeze grant.

Mayor Thornhill found the financial report to the Panel clear and readable. In future reports, she sought a summary list of issues faced.

In response to Cllr Hannam's queries, the Commissioner explained that PCSOs appointed to other posts are being replaced. The term 'core establishment' is no longer relevant to the number of PCSOs and there can be discussions around the right numbers of PCSOs for the local community.

Corporate budgets are managed centrally – allowances (£6 million) £3.2 million capital finance; £0.6 million insurance; redundancy costs; pension payments.

In response to questions from members of the public, Mr Hurley confirmed that two errors in the values set out on Table 4 and 6 will be amended. (A copy of the corrected report is attached to these minutes and has been posted on the PCP website.)

The Commissioner explained the potential source of economies of scope and scale for outsourcing payroll services, etc. The Commissioner confirmed that the external audit

letter for the PCC will be published and shared with the Panel. The Commissioner recognised the truncated period of time which is available on this first financial cycle which is due to the special circumstances of this first year of the Commissioner's term of office.

It was moved, seconded and agreed that the Commissioner's proposals to freeze the precept for 2013/14 be accepted by the Panel and the formal report to the Commissioner will be prepared accordingly.

7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7pm, Thursday 14 February 2013 – Three Rivers District Council.

MJW/LP
25/01/13