



WATFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL



MEETING OF THE HERTFORDSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Thursday 31 January 2019

Hertsmere Borough Council
3 Elstree Way, Borehamwood WD6
1WN

MINUTES

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

Members Present: Cllr P Boylan, East Herts District Council
Cllr P Choudhury, Hertsmere Borough Council
Mr Chris Cowdrey, Independent Member
Cllr S Hodgson, St Albans City and District Council
Cllr T Hutchings, Broxbourne Borough Council (Chairman)
Mr Ian Laidlaw-Dickson, Independent Member
Dr M Ramsay, Independent Member
Cllr Roger Trigg, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Cllr A Scarth, Three Rivers District Council

Also Present: Cllr Jeremy Pearce, Broxbourne Borough Council
Mrs N Boateng, Clerk to the Police and Crime Panel
Mr D Lloyd, Police and Crime Commissioner
Mr C Brace, Chief Executive, PCC
Mr Ian Rooney

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Cllr Jackie Hollywell, Cllr Tony Hunter, Cllr I Imarni, Cllr Rabi Martins, Cllr C Woodward.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF 31 January 2019

Agreed

3 MATTERS ARISING

1. Item 10, the PCP Chairman wrote to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, concerning the increased employer's pension contribution and the impact this would have on Police funding (copy attached). The Chairman reported that a response had been received (copy attached).

2. Dr Malcolm Ramsay raised a concern from the last meeting, “Given the lack of any consistent information as to changes in the level of crime in Hertfordshire for your period of office, which ultimately makes it difficult to judge the adequacy of the police force budget, might you or your staff wish to engage in further dialogue with the Panel as to the value of drawing on the information available from the National Crime Survey? (While this would involve aggregating data for three year time periods, you have now been in post for two such timespans.) ONS have recently reconfirmed the validity of this approach.”

Chris Brace – he would attempt to organise a presentation on this topic for the next meeting of the Panel.

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Question posed about the effectiveness of publicity for the Police and Crime Panel meetings, to increase public participation in the meetings it was agreed to write to all the District Councils advising of meeting dates and also announce meetings on OWL.

A question was posed by Barbara Gibson regarding the status of Athena and any issues or difficulties with retrieving information.

DL, Athena is a strategic information management system. One of the issues in the past was that information in forces across borders wasn't shared very well. Athena is one of the ways of solving this problem. The uploading of information has taken time to bed-in. We are in a far better position with Athena.

5 QUESTIONS TO THE PANEL AND PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Cllr R Butler – the public want to know what they will get for the extra £24.

DL - continue to get the excellent Policing they already have and an increase in the number of Police officers on the street.

6 THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S CRIME PLAN – ORAL UPDATE

Legally required to provide one plan every 4 years, but I like to prepare refresh reports in between.

Themes emerging over the next few years:-

- London Crime in Hertfordshire
- Travelling criminality
- County lines
- Knife crime
- Concerns of the public and partners

DL is undertaking consultation to engage with citizens around Hertfordshire. Responses to the consultation are included in the Plan.

7 THE PROPOSED POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S PRECEPT

The Police and Crime Panel sent a list of questions to the PCC prior to the meeting, highlighting the areas the Panel wanted the Commissioner to clarify. (Questions attached).

DL summarised the precept report with reference to the questions from the Panel.

DL 77% of the public was in favour of an increase of £24.

Important to look at demand, the rise and complexity in demand across all Police centres, particularly 999 calls, serious and organised crime.

DL, I have claimed reserves are too high for a number of years. Not sustainable to continue at that level. Having increased to £24 will reduce this. I have used the money in reserves to keep the number of officers up.

DL, I have set a 2% savings target.

SH, has your thinking on the budget changed?

DL, the reserves were built up previously which put us in a good position. Government expectations have changed. The precept system means changes cannot be made in the year, so have to forward think.

SH, asked a question about the JR and what would be the impact if successful.

DL, reluctant to respond in public as this matter is part of a JR.

PC, referred to the medium term financial plan and asked how are you going to achieve this level of savings.

DL, we have set a challenging savings target of 2% but achievable when you take into account normal staff turnover and collaboration initiatives.

CC, balance sheets from last year shows an unfunded pension scheme liability of circa £1.9b not funded by this budget so any annual shortfall between receipts and payments will ultimately be funded by central government?

DL, the Treasury have re-assured that the comprehensive spending review will pick up any shortfall.

CC, there is a considerable capital estates program over the next few years, are loans for developing property ever paid off? Are they interest only loans or are they long term repayment loans or something else?

DL, some long term loans, we can go to the market or go to the public works board for cheaper rates. We use the spare estates we have and use that to repay loans. Also important for us to look at other ways to bring income in.

TM, asked question about empty Police stations.

DL, we have a Police station in each district. We have some surplus sites across the county which are part of the estates strategy.

TH, asked whether the S151 officer was happy with budget.

IR, confirmed that he was.

AS, asked whether DL would bring forward a ½ yearly report on the budget.

DL, confirmed he would be willing to do this

TH, moved that the Panel approve the precept budget.

Panel – approved unanimously.

8 Any other Business

Cllr Pervez Choudhury asked for the PCC to give an update on the Athena rollout?

I would particularly like to know:

- Are there still issues providing crime stats for local authorities?
- Have the other issues discussed at the last meeting about delays caused by Athena been addressed?

A written response was provided by DL (attached)

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 7:00PM THURSDAY 11 April 2019 AT NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTE 7 REFERS

Police and Crime Panel Precept Budget Questions

Questions

1. The medium-term financial plan (Table 19 page 38) shows an annual savings target of 2% resulting in a cumulative saving of £12.8m pa saving by 2022. How confident is the Commissioner this is achievable?
2. This will show my ignorance here but can the Commissioner confirm that the unfunded Pension Scheme liability of circa £1.9b is not funded by this budget so any annual shortfall between receipts and payments is ultimately funded by central government?
3. There is a considerable capital estates program over the next few years. So again, please excuse my ignorance but are loans for developing property ever paid off? Are they interest only loans or are they long term repayment loans or something else?
4. I was confused by the statement in 5.9 where it states the additional capital financing cost in 2022/23 will be £4.3m pa but in table 9 it seems to show the increase will be £2.2m in 2022/23 unless this table only shows annual increases and not cumulative.
5. The Panel would like in future to receive from the Commissioner quarterly budget summary updates (revised outturn).
6. What were the pressure points in last year's budgets?
7. How did the projections go from last year?
8. They spent more reserves than they were expecting last year- why?
9. Why were there some underspends?
10. How did last year's budget stand up, how much did they go into reserves?
11. Savings – one million pounds of savings predicted last year (page 21/22) was this achieved?
12. Ask why PCC chose 6 million as the general reserve figure?
13. Why are no predictions given for other reserve categories?
14. Do they have capital reserves?
15. Is budget balanced, does it leave the PCC with adequate reserves.

16. Doesn't say what "provisions" are included in the figures (credit/debtors)?
17. What evidence is there of the new officers that were budgeted for last year?
18. How is VFM demonstrated in the budget?
19. Spending variations on capital?
20. Why are there partially utilised premises e.g. the Bishop's Stortford Station on the top floor, once two courts and associated rooms that are now just used for occasional meetings. The Station was also built for a larger Police establishment (possibly not the only one) as well as the Courts.
21. There are several empty police stations in Hertfordshire, what are the PCCs plans for them?
22. Councils are limited to 2.99% but PCC has gone up by approx 14% - is this justified?
23. What are the PCCs income streams (e.g. other than Government grant and council tax)?
24. Over spent on operational support (taken from annual statement of accounts 17/18) but PCC was underspent?
25. Financial benchmarking (page 9 of last year's budget report) how plausible are the comparisons with Hertfordshire?
26. How much did the PCC spend on the attempted collaboration with the fire service?
27. Does the medium term financial plan make clear any funding shortfalls?
28. How do you decide what to invest in, how do you know they are value for money?
29. Is the increased precept justified? Why?
30. Savings proposals (cost shunting) has this been done? e.g. savings in back office and passing on administration to frontline officers.
31. Councils are limited to 2.99% but PCC has gone up by approx 14% - is this justified?
32. 8.3 million pounds to deliver what PCC did last year (standstill) what are we going to see for the additional 6.7 million?
33. What does the Commissioner see as the strengths and weaknesses in the force, what are the things he thinks have gone well/not well, in terms of what was budgeted for over the next few years.
34. Will this budget deliver the Commissioners plan?

MINUTE 8 REFERS

Could we ask for the PCC to give an update on the Athena rollout?

I would particularly like to know:

- **Are there still issues providing crime stats for local authorities?**
- **Have the other issues discussed at the last meeting about delays caused by Athena been addressed?**

There are no issues providing crime stats to local authorities. Full submissions have been made to the Home Office since August 2018.

Whilst BCH staff have found the transition to Athena a culture change, and there have been technical issues to resolve, it is clear that these were far less than earlier force implementations.

A staff survey focused primarily on Athena has been conducted with the purpose of analysing views and confidence levels by role and location, allowing more targeted support for areas in most need, and assisting in shaping future training needs and future upgrade roll outs. 1,100 staff have responded and the results are currently being analysed.

The main issues that have arisen are in custody due to the change in process, CTC due to the increase file build time, and criminal justice with a reduction in case performance. These have all been dealt with by staff redeployment and further training.

Whilst the system has stabilised following Kent go-live in November, there was a system crash in early January following an update which had to be withdrawn. More robust processes for ensuring full beta testing and stability checks before updates go live have subsequently been introduced.

A continuous improvement programme is being put in place to prepare for the implementation of version 6 and enhancement of mobile data solutions. This will also deliver the Partnership Problem Solving Platform which will make a step change improvement to the case building functionality and introduce a direct interface for the public to report and update online.