



HERTFORDSHIRE Police and Crime Panel

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HERTFORDSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 2013/14

Introduction

This report covers slightly more than one year as the Panel started with the Police and Crime Commissioner, David Lloyd, taking up his appointment on 22 November 2013. The Panel consists of 14 members: 1 nominated by each of the 11 major local authorities in Hertfordshire, 2 independent co-opted members as required by statute and 1 additional co-opted member chosen by the panel nominated by the county Labour Party to meet the requirement to meet the political balance objective as far as practicable. Prior to the election of the PCC the appointed members of the panel had met as a 'shadow panel' to agree how it would work and to recommend co-opted members to the first public meeting of the panel for appointment. In addition, a training session was held kindly hosted by the Chief Constable to brief members on policing issues in Hertfordshire and generally, police finance, the role of the panel and the role of the PCC.

At its first public meeting in December 2012 the Panel approved its rules of procedure and work programme. The work programme is based around the statutory responsibilities of the panel with an outline timetable of a meeting in January to consider the proposed precept of the PCC and make a report to the PCC. A further meeting to consider any report back from the PCC and revised precept if required in February. The first Police and Crime Plan was also to be considered in February. A meeting was scheduled for June to consider the membership of the panel in the light of the local elections and any revisions necessary to the rules of procedure, complaints against the commissioner and a review of progress against the Police and Crime Plan. The next meeting to take place in November is to provide advance notice of any precept setting issues and again to consider progress against the Police and Crime Plan. Further meetings were scheduled for January and February 2014 to review the precept and if necessary to consider a revised precept.

Details of all meetings, the panel arrangements agreed by the 11 authorities and the rules of procedure of the panel can be found at its web site here:

<http://www.hertspcp.org.uk/default.aspx>

Meeting of December 2012

In addition to the anticipated work set out above, the Panel was notified that the PCC intended to appoint Dr Rachel Frosh as Deputy PCC. The meeting reviewed that appointment as required by law. The notes of the meeting can be found here:

<http://www.hertspcp.org.uk/Papers/2012-12-06/Minutes%20-%206%20December%202012.pdf>

The Panel must make a report to the PCC after the review including whether the panel considers the appointment should be confirmed. The PCC must consider the report but need not follow it. The panel supported the proposed appointment.

It was also decided that the panel's role in handling complaints against the PCC should be delegated as far as permitted to the PCC's Chief Executive Officer and an annual report on the subject be provided to the June meeting of the panel. A protocol for working with the PCC and his office was approved which sets out how the 2 parties will work together for their mutual benefit.

Meeting of January 2013

The panel was asked about the publicity of its meetings and following discussion and contributions from the public (there were 17 members of the public in attendance) agreed to add Twitter and Facebook communications about the panel and to add parish and town councils to the circulation list for information of meetings. The PCC introduced his draft plan and proposed freezing the precept for 2013/14. The panel reviewed these. The minutes including details of the discussions can be found here:

<http://www.hertspcp.org.uk/Papers/2013-01-24/Minutes%20-%2024%20January%202013.pdf>

The panel supported the proposed precept.

Meeting of February 2013

The PCC introduced his Police and Crime Plan 'Everybody's Business'. The panel's discussion and questions to the PCC as well as public questions (there were 15 members of the public present) can be found here:

<http://www.hertspcp.org.uk/Papers/2013-02-14/Minutes%20-%2014%20February%202013.pdf>

Meeting of March 2013

This meeting was required after the PCC notified the panel of another proposed statutory appointment: his Chief Executive Officer. The proposal was unusual as it involved a secondment of the county council Director of Community Protection, Roy Wilsher, rather than a stand-alone appointment. The discussion and questions can be found in the minutes here:

<http://www.hertspcp.org.uk/Papers/2013-03-14/Minutes%20-%2014%20March%202013.pdf>

The panel must review the proposal and make a report to the PCC on whether the appointment should be confirmed and the PCC must consider the report but need not

follow it. The panel supported the proposed secondment on the basis that it was to be reviewed in about 12 months.

Meeting of June 2013

The panel was notified of some changes to membership by the constituent authorities. The panel approved changes to the rules of procedure, particularly to increase public participation. It was agreed that as well as a public question session to the panel, there would also be a public question session for the main statutory duties of the panel; the review of the precept; the review of the Police and Crime plan and the review of the PCC's annual report. The PCC also offered to take a public question session to himself at each meeting. The panel considered issues raised by the public and at the House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee and requested a report from the PCC on compliance with statutory transparency requirements.

Meetings of July 2013

The Panel was notified of a proposed statutory appointment, namely a Deputy PCC, David Gibson and so held a confirmation hearing prior to the main meeting scheduled. The PCC outlined that this appointment proposal has been the result of an open competition following advertisement. The main areas the panel probed were the need for a Deputy Commissioner, whether the fact the PCC and proposed Deputy lived close by was an issue and the skills the proposed Deputy would bring. Full details of the discussion can be found here:

<http://www.hertspcp.org.uk/Papers/2013-07-25/Confirmation%20Hearing%20Minutes%20-%2025%20July%202013%20-%20with%20amendment.pdf>

The Panel voted by a majority to support the appointment.

At the scheduled meeting the panel considered the report on compliance with the statutory transparency requirements. Other topics discussed in public question time included partnership working to reduce crime, police morale and public engagement with policing. In questions to the panel the discussion included the role and training requirements of the panel (leading to a training session facilitated by the Centre for Public Scrutiny in November), the panel's view of the main issues facing policing and the PCC's statutory reporting requirement. The PCC then presented his annual report. Public questions covered the positive aspects of the report, domestic violence, information sharing between partners and reliability of statistics.

The panel considered the report of the Chief Executive on complaints made against the PCC. The panel explored further the issue of domestic violence, street lighting and the effect on crime and feelings of safety, volunteers keeping Abbots Langley Police Station open for the public and police collaboration plans. Full details of the meeting can be seen here:

<http://www.hertspcp.org.uk/Papers/2013-07-25/PCP%20Meeting%20Minutes%20-%2025%20July%202013.pdf>

Meeting of November 2013

The PCC introduced a report to the panel that is intended to meet a request of the panel to bring statistics as well as commentary in the format of the annual report to allow continuous monitoring of progress and issues the Panel needs to be aware of to hold the PCC to account on behalf of the public. In public questions to the PCC the topics of reliability of police crime statistics and the risks of crime reduction targets were raised. The panel was asked about its monitoring of statutory transparency information from the PCC and requested a further report from the PCC in the New Year. In the Panel's review of the PCC's report the issue of the reliability of the crime statistics was pursued further and the PCC agreed to share with the panel some work he had requested of the Chief Constable to validate the figures he was reporting. Other issues explored included the PCC's consultation starting on his proposal to increase the precept by 3.4%, how he might report complaints about the constabulary to the panel, crime reduction targets, call handling by the constabulary, the cost of his office move to Harpenden, police station front office public availability and the PCC's proposed business forum.

The full details of the discussion can be found here:

<http://www.hertspcp.org.uk/Papers/2013-11-21/PCP%20Meeting%20Minutes%20-%2021%20November%202013.pdf>

Meeting of January 2014

The PCC presented his proposed precept freeze to the panel and took public and then panel questions. The issues raised included the risk balancing the PCC had carried out, the reason why he had reverted from his initial proposal to increase the precept, and his view that the improved settlement, achievement of savings and better than anticipated collection rates meant that the Hertfordshire model of neighbourhood policing could be maintained.

The Panel supported the proposed precept.

Meeting of February 2014