

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

Monday, 19 June 2017, - 2.00 pm

Minutes

Present:

Cllr Brian Wilcox (Chairman), Cllr Joe Baker, Cllr Bronwen Behan, Cllr Sebastian Bowen, Mrs Carole Clive, Cllr Roger Evans, Cllr Mike Johnson, Cllr Karen May, Mr A P Miller, Cllr Juliet Smith, Cllr Emma Stokes, Cllr Dave Tremellen, Colonel Tony Ward OBE and Cllr Michael Wood

Also attended:

John Champion, West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner
Andy Champness, Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner
Amanda Blakeman, Deputy Chief Constable

Tim Rice (Health and Well-being Manager, Directorate of Adult Services and Health), Sheena Jones (Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager) and Samantha Morris (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)

Available Papers

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);
- B. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 February 2017 (previously circulated).

(A copy of document A will be attached to the signed Minutes).

208 Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed the new Panel members to the meeting.

As this was Councillor Miller's last meeting as Vice-Chairman, the Chairman thanked him for his support. A new Vice-Chairman would be appointed at the next Meeting.

Thanks were also recorded to all those members who had just left the Panel, particularly Councillor Middlebrough for his contribution to the Panel since its inception, particularly for chairing the Budget Scrutiny Task Group.

The changes to the Panel's Substantive Membership were:

Karen May had been appointed in place of Roger Smith (Bromsgrove District Council)
David Chambers had been appointed in place of Phil Grove (Malvern District Council)
Joe Baker had been appointed in place of Yvonne Smith (Redditch Borough Council)
Michael Wood had been appointed in place of Keith Roberts (Shropshire County Council)
Mike Johnson had been appointed in place of Lynne Denham (Worcester City)
Emma Stokes had been appointed in place of Paul Middlebrough (Wychavon District Council)
Stephen Mackay had been appointed in place of Tony Miller (Worcestershire County Council)

The co-option of Gerald Dakin (Shropshire County Council) was unanimously agreed and ratified by the Panel.

209 **Named Substitutes**

The named substitutes were:

Councillor Tony Miller for Councillor Stephen Mackay (Worcestershire County Council)
Councillor Bronwen Behan for Councillor David Chambers (Malvern District Council)
Councillor Dave Tremellen for Councillor Kevin Turley (Shropshire County Council)

210 **Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

Apologies were received from Councillors David Chambers, Gerald Dakin, Rajesh Mehta, Stephen Reynolds and Kevin Turley.

A declaration of interest was made by Colonel Tony Ward who was a member of the OPCC's Trust, Integrity and Ethics Committee.

211 **Public Participation**

None.

212 **Confirmation of the Minutes of the previous meeting**

Councillor Evans pointed out that he had been present at the Meeting but was not listed as being present in the Minutes.

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) drew attention to the reference to Body Worn Video on page 5 and confirmed that the vast majority officers would have Body Worn Video allocated.

The Minutes were otherwise agreed to be a correct record of the previous meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

**213 Police and
Crime
Commissioners
: Fire and
Rescue
Functions**

The Chairman apologised for changing the meeting date of the Panel and the inability to webcast the meeting due to the room change. The changes were made to facilitate an early opportunity for the Panel to consider PCC's draft Initial Business Case for the joint Governance of Police and Fire and Rescue services in Hereford and Worcester and Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin. This had, unfortunately, been un-necessary as the Consultation had been published the previous week.

In his introduction, the PCC explained that he had wanted the Panel to have the opportunity to consider the Consultation at the earliest opportunity and was keen to understand a range views on changes, which he believed would significantly improve local police and fire services, whilst saving the taxpayer £4m a year.

If the proposals were approved, it would mean that the PCC would take on governance of both Shropshire and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Services, there would be no changes to front line police and fire crews as a result of the changes to governance.

Expert analysis suggested that the changes would help drive forward police and fire collaboration, improving services to communities, whilst delivering significant back-office efficiencies. The plans would also help protect frontline services, whilst retaining each organisation's individual identity and specialist skills.

It would mean that:

- the two local fire and rescue authorities would be disbanded
- there would be a single body holding chief police and fire officers to account, providing a strong voice on behalf of communities
- West Mercia Police, and the two fire and rescue services (Shropshire and Hereford & Worcester) would continue to operate as individual organisations with their own professional skills
- the services would share more back office functions and information, to improve efficiency and focus resources on the frontline

This proposal was about delivering the best long term results for communities and emergency services. The PCC felt that Fire Authorities had laid some good foundations, but that communities were not getting the most effective, efficient services they could which could only achieved by making this change.

The Consultation commenced on 12 June and would end on 11 September (3 months), there would be two weeks to review responses and amend the Business Case in light of those responses with submission to the Secretary of State by 1 October. If the Business Case was accepted, the new arrangements would come into effect on 1 April 2018. If there were objections to the proposals and one of the 'top tier' local authorities did not support the proposals, the Secretary of State would arrange for an independent review.

During the discussion, the following main points were made:

- At its meeting on 20 October 2015, the Panel Members at that time generally agreed that they were in favour of closer collaboration between the emergency services, but considered that the operational heads of the two services should remain autonomous under the overall strategic control of the PCFC (Police, Crime and Fire Commissioner)
- In response to the Panel's request to see the results of the Consultation, the PCC confirmed that the results would be published on the PCC's website
- In terms of the alignment of boundaries of the West Mercia and the two fire authorities, the PCC confirmed that the Business Case could only be proposed if the boundaries were co-terminus
- The PCC believed that by assuming the role of the two Fire Authorities and doing things differently, local police and fire services could be significantly improved whilst saving £4m
- There was a concern that there was very little financial information or information on the operational savings to be made and there was a feeling that the changes were heading towards being one organisation eventually. In response, the PCC pointed out that a number of options were considered and the Business Case was giving a flavour of what could be achieved if the Joint Governance option was adopted
- It was suggested that the Business Case was a proposal rather than a Consultation, there had been no input from service staff or representative bodies, no evidence to substantiate the £4m projected savings and that two weeks was a short period of time in which to analyse responses
- The PCC stated that there was a lot of detail, a

considerable amount of engagement was being undertaken and the more responses received the stronger the Business Case would be

- Concern was reiterated about the timescale and how the Panel could consider the Business Case properly. The PCC pointed out that the Panel's role was to hold the PCC to account; not to influence the proposal and that a briefing could be arranged for the Panel before submitting the case if required
- The PCC referred to paragraph 6.3.4 of the Business Case which outlined the possible implications of the proposal on back office staffing, there would however need to be a review
- In response to the suggestion that the Chief Fire Officer posts would merge over time, the PCC confirmed that the Chief Officer posts would not be affected by these proposals as the Police and Fire service needed to be run by experienced professional officers who were experts in their field
- The PCC confirmed that the figures detailed in paragraph 6.3 had been endorsed by the PCC's Chief Financial Officer and any changes to staffing structures would not affect front line service staff
- In response to the question as to whether there was a 'Plan B', the PCC confirmed that the Fire Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan was 'Plan B'.

In summary, the Panel considered and made comments on the Initial Business Case considering the Governance of Shropshire Fire and Rescue, Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Services by the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner. It was agreed that the final proposal would be considered by the Panel at its next Meeting on 26 September, prior to submission to the Secretary of State on 1 October 2017.

214 Current and Non-Recent Sexual Offences

The Panel was asked to consider the Briefing Note provided by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner in respect of current and non-recent sexual offences and determine whether it would wish to make any comment to the Police and Crime Commissioner for consideration.

At its last meeting on 7 February 2017, the Panel requested an analysis on the increase of cases of sexual violence differentiated by current and historic cases including the resource implications (both time and

**215 Police & Crime
Plan Activity
and
Performance
Monitoring
Report (January
2017 - March**

monetary), together with the effect on other crime investigations and any other consequential outcomes.

Deputy Chief Constable Amanda Blakeman advised that the information provided for 2012-2016 gave a breakdown of rape and other sexual offences and child sexual exploitation (CSE) offences (any offence assigned a CSE interest marker), by current and non-recent. Current offences were those recorded on police systems within 28 days of the committed date; non-recent offences were those recorded on police systems more than 28 days after the committed date.

It was very difficult for the Police to quantify the time and resources allocated to cases, as it would vary considerably on a case by case basis. However, a considerable amount of work had been carried out to encourage victims to feel confident to report these crimes, ensuring that the crimes were recorded properly and then investigated appropriately.

Overall, demand in this area was increasing but in other areas decreasing, so support was being allocated accordingly. It was a very challenging area and investigations could take a number of years.

During the discussion, concern was expressed about the increased number of cases being reported and the resource implications for staff. Reassurance was given to the Panel that there were sufficient specialist trained staff and work planning and modelling to be able to deal with the cases and meet demand and that the figures were demonstrating improved outcomes. Despite the reassurance the PCP remained concerned about the resource implications. The PCC responded that he was willing to consider further information requests from the Panel where such requests did not stray beyond holding his position to account.

The Chairman thanked the PCC for the offer and it was agreed to seek a further report with specific reference to the impact on resources of the increase in cases.

The Panel was invited to consider the Police & Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report for January 2017-March 2017 and determine whether it would wish to carry out any further scrutiny or make any comments.

The Report provided the Panel with an overview of activity undertaken in support of the Safer West Mercia

2017)

Plan and an update on police performance.

The PCC's Chief Executive and staff were continuing to develop a delivery plan to strengthen monitoring and assurance of the Safer West Mercia Plan. Earlier in the year, a decision was taken to move away from a shared delivery plan with the Warwickshire PCC's office and to redraft a delivery plan solely focused on the objectives and commitments contained within the Safer West Mercia Plan. Progress against individual elements within the plan was updated in line with an agreed timeline for each element and the delivery plan was subject to monthly scrutiny.

The delivery plan was a substantial document and therefore a summary extract of had been produced for the Panel. The summary provided a concise overview of activity supporting the plan commitments, an accompanying commentary and details of the oversight mechanisms in place. The extract contained updates to the end of May. Any progress updates previously reported to the Panel were not included.

During the discussion, the following main points were made:

- Although the number of Firearms Temporary Licenses were reducing, concern was expressed that at the end of March there were 4339, which was high. The PCC acknowledged that the performance was not good enough but that the number was reducing and he was confident with the Recovery Plan
- In response to the question about why policing area comparison by crime type had increased in Telford and Wrekin, the Panel were advised that some of the issues were related to social issues from when Telford was built. The PCC added that he considered the role of Community Safety Partnerships to be important in helping deliver solutions to problems such as drug misuse, increase employment and improvements to housing
- Further to this, a member suggested that police officer involvement in commenting on planning applications from a crime reduction/prevention perspective had reduced. The PCC agreed to follow this up.

216 Draft Annual

The Panel was invited to consider the Draft Annual Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner for West

Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia

Mercia and determine whether it would wish to make any recommendations to the Police and Crime Commissioner for consideration. The Report for 2016/17 provided a high-level overview of the PCC's work over the last financial year

Under Section 12 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the PCC was required to report to the Police and Crime Panel (the Panel) on the exercise of his functions in each financial year. Specifically, the Annual Report should report on:

- a) the exercise of the PCC's functions in each financial year, and
- b) the progress which has been made in the financial year in meeting the police and crime objectives in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan.

In accordance with the Act, the Panel was required to review the Report and to make any recommendations to the PCC for consideration. The PCC must then respond to any report or recommendations that the Panel make prior to publishing the final version on the report.

The PCC thanked the Chief Executive and his Staff for their hard work and the Panel for its contribution, support and challenge. The PCC believed that what had been promised had been delivered in a transparent way and that there was progress towards some outcomes. He was ensuring that the service was being led effectively by the appointment of an exceptional Chief Constable and commended the Draft Report to the Panel.

During the discussion the following main points were made:

- In respect of the £4.8m from secured confiscation orders, the PCC confirmed that there was a complicated formula in relation to how the income was dealt with

The Panel considered the report and did not make any recommendations to the PCC for consideration prior to publishing the final version of the Report.

217 The Formation of a National Association of Police and Crime Panels

The Panel was asked to consider the feedback provided from the Exploratory Meeting held on 17 February about the formation of an Association of Police and Crime Panels.

Discussions had taken place at the Police and Crime

218 Work Programme

Panel Conference, Regional Networks and Panel meetings regarding the formation of a National Association for Police and Crime Panels. It was felt that Panels had struggled to make their voice heard in their dealings with the Home Office in relation to the lack of clarity of the role and lack of any real powers to be able to hold Police and Crime Commissioners to account.

At its meeting on 7 February 2017, the Panel agreed that Councillor Sebastien Bowen, Herefordshire Council would attend an exploratory meeting on behalf of the Panel regarding the formation of an Association of Police and Crime Panels on 17 February 2017 and report back to the Panel.

The Panel considered the feedback provided. There were mixed views at this stage about whether an association would be especially productive. The Panel agreed to note the current situation and wait for further details before giving a view about this.

The Panel was asked to:

- a) Consider the proposed work programme;
- b) Determine any additional items that it wished to include in the work programme;
- c) Determine the purpose and membership of any Task and Finish Groups that it wished to establish.

It was agreed that suggestions for the Work Programme would be considered at the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 4.10 pm

Chairman