

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

Tuesday, 20 October 2015, Shirehall, Hereford – 1.30pm

Minutes

Present:

Cllr Brian Wilcox (Chairman), Mrs Helen Barker, Cllr Charlotte Barnes, Cllr Sebastian Bowen, Cllr Sally Chambers, Cllr Pauline Dee, Cllr Paul Middlebrough, Cllr A P Miller (Vice Chairman), Cllr Stephen Reynolds, Cllr Hilda Rhodes, Cllr A C Roberts, Cllr Keith Roberts, Cllr Yvonne Smith and Cllr Michael Wood

Also attended:

Suzanne O'Leary, Kate Griffiths, Timothy Rice, Bill Longmore, Barrie Sheldon, David Shaw, DCC Bangham, Andy Champness and Elizabeth Hall

Available Papers

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);
- B. A copy of the presentation for Item 10; and
- C. The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2015 (previously circulated).

A copy of documents A-B will be attached to the signed minutes.

124 Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman agreed to take Item 10 (Strengthening and Deepening the Alliance) before Item 8 (Proposed Work Programme 2015-2016).

125 Named Substitutes

None.

126 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Cllr. Phil Grove, Cllr. Margaret Sherrey and Colonel Tony Ward.

Cllr Stephen Reynolds and Cllr Keith Roberts both made a declaration of interest as they were members of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service. Cllr Andy Roberts declared that he received a pension from Hereford and Worcestershire Fire Service. Cllr Sally Chambers declared an interest as she was the sister of John Champion.

127 Appointment of co-opted

It was unanimously agreed that Cllr Hilda Rhodes, from Telford and Wrekin, be co-opted onto the Panel in order

	elected members	to achieve better geographical and political balance.
128	Public Participation	None.
129	Confirmation of the Minutes of the previous meeting	<p>Helen Barker pointed out that she had been recorded as a councillor in the minutes of the last meeting which was incorrect. Barrie Sheldon mentioned that the number of recorded crimes which had an outcome in 2014/15 had been minuted as 550,000 when it should have read 55,000.</p> <p>With these corrections the minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and would be signed by the Chairman.</p>
130	Enabling closer working between the Emergency Services - Consultation	<p>The Chairman explained that the Panel could respond to the Home Office consultation about closer working between the emergency services. Firstly the issue was whether Panel members and their organisations wished to support the principle of increased joint working and secondly whether Panel Members agreed with the suggestion of a joint appointment for the top level of management.</p> <p>Panel members made the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some members stated that the length of the consultation meant they had not had sufficient time to consult their organisations and were therefore unable to vote on the recommendations • It was generally agreed that the principle of closer working should be supported. There was already evidence of the police and fire service working together in West Mercia although the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) had not been involved in such an arrangement before • Working together could produce cost efficiencies but governance issues could cause problems • There was a query how joint working could progress when working cross border with Welsh fire and rescue and police services. The Panel highlighted the problem of boundaries in general, which are particularly complex • There was disappointment that there was not more in the proposals about the relationship with Ambulance Services; there was a desire to explore these links further • Cllr Miller reported that the Chairman of Worcestershire Fire Authority was not in favour of

- more change or joint positions at the higher levels
- Members did wonder whether the public would be consulted

The Chief Constable commented that he was proud of his joint working with Hereford and Worcestershire Fire Service. He also worked with Warwickshire and Shropshire and they had found there were operational benefits which meant a better service for the public. He agreed that the timescale was short but the consultation would not lead to a commitment for a particular action but rather showed an indication of a future direction. He did have concerns about the possibility of a joint Chief for Fire and Police.

The Chairman summarised that generally Panel Members were in favour of closer collaboration but there were concerns about joint posts at the top level. Members were requested to consult with their organisations and send any further responses to the Democratic Governance Manager by Friday 23 October.

131 Proposed Work Programme 2015 - 2016 and Future Meeting Dates

The Chairman proposed keeping to the previously agreed work programme up to March 2016 and highlighted the focus on safer roads at the next meeting. It was suggested the Panel hear from the Safer Roads Partnership and consider both speed and road design.

The elections for a new PCC in May 2016 gave an opportunity for the current PCC to give a report on his term of office at the February meeting.

It was suggested that two task and finish groups be established. One, as in previous years, to look at the precept, and one to examine the current Police and Crime Plan. The groups would meet in private but would report back in public at the February Panel meeting. Groups should consist of 3 or 4 members and would include one independent Member.

Members who volunteered to join the Budget Task and Finish Group were Cllr. Middlebrough and Cllr Bowen.

Members for the Police and Crime Plan Task and Finish Group were Cllr Wood and Cllr Dee.

Mrs Barker would speak to Colonel Ward about which group they would be members of.

Cllr Middlebrough requested that Panel members from Local Authorities speak to their respective policy officers to see if they could provide support to help with the Task

**132 Police & Crime
Plan Activity
And
Performance
Monitoring
Report**

and Finish groups.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman had agreed to have 6 monthly meetings with Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel Chairman to mirror the co-operation of the police.

The Chairman highlighted the meeting dates for 2016 and asked whether Panel members preferred to meet at different locations around the area or whether it would be best to always meet at County Hall, Worcester. The majority agreed that they would prefer meetings to be held at Worcester.

The Police and Crime Commissioner explained that the comprehensive report in the agenda showed the progress made in West Mercia and confirmed it was one of the safest areas in the country.

In response to questions the Panel were informed:

- Around 20 staff had been recruited a month in the last year. The Office of the PCC noted that the Panel felt communications with new members of staff could be improved,
- The numbers of crimes had increased due to a change in recording methods, an increase in the numbers of sexual abuse being reported and an increase in domestic abuse. This is despite a national consultation document claiming crime had decreased. There had been an increase after a decade of decreasing figures and the police were planning for higher demand in the future. The increase in West Mercia was sharper than in some areas and included on-line crime
- There had been a review of the Safer Roads Partnership, refreshed governance arrangements and terms of reference were being developed
- The police were preparing for Syrian refugees to come to the area and were aware there could be some social tensions and that the refugees could have high needs
- The Strategic Policing Requirement was a national responsibility. West Mercia was able to provide their share and had the ability to mobilise the required numbers when necessary. A national review was underway of specialist capabilities
- A review of strategic roads policing was almost complete, outcomes would be reported to the Commissioner shortly.

**133 Strengthening
and Deepening**

Deputy Chief Constable Anthony Bangham and Gereint Stoneman, Programme Director of the Warwickshire and

the Alliance

West Mercia Police Programme of Change, gave a presentation about StraDA – Strengthening and Deepening the Alliance.

The DCC ran the programme along with Warwickshire DCC, Karen Manners. The Change programme used a blend of police experience but key appointments such as Mr Stoneman brought fresh ideas.

The programme began by looking at the Vision and Values rather than the finances as it was accepted that things needed to be looked at differently in the future. The basic vision being 'to protect the public from death, injury, loss and distress'

The main points of the operating context were that there would be funding reductions in the range of 20-40% and an increased interest in the integration of blue light services. They would continue to provide good services to the public and to do so the Alliance must be flexible and maximise the opportunities available through Partnership working.

Gereint Stoneman explained they had carried out research so that they were operating from a strong evidence base. There was a significant volume of incoming demand which was increasing all the time and services were needed twenty-four hours a day.

The project would move from transactional change, which made existing work as efficient as possible. Then transitional change, which introduced new systems and capabilities, to transformational change, which would revisit all service areas to challenge why the police were there, what they wanted to achieve and how things were done.

Panel members felt the Change Programme was an admirable aim but it needed all staff to be committed to it. The Panel asked questions about new IT systems and the programme's relationship to the Police and Crime Plan.

DCC Bangham replied that the IT systems needed updating; they were not innovating in IT at present. They also recognised that ensuring all staff were supportive of the transformation would be difficult but they were working on that area. The Police and Crime Plan was the starting point for the StraDA plan and priorities were set using the Police and Crime Plan.

In response to further queries, DCC Bangham responded

134 Confirmation of the Chief Finance Officer

that:

- All officers now needed to be trained in cyber-crime as it was more common than it used to be and specialist trainers would be brought in as necessary
- There was a mix of uniformed police officers and civilians working in the control room
- HMIC had recently graded West Mercia as Good on the extent to which the force was efficient at keeping people safe and reducing crime, whilst recognising its future financial challenges. The demand mapping work done by StraDA had been explained to HMIC

The Chairman thanked DCC Bangham and Mr Stoneman for their presentation. The Panel would revisit StraDA in due course.

Andy Champness explained that the agenda gave details of the recruitment process for the Chief Finance Officer. As the PCC was near the end of his term it was decided not to appoint to a permanent position and Elizabeth Hall had been offered a 12 month position. She had come well recommended and Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel (PCP) had held a confirmation hearing where they had approved the appointment. The West Mercia Police and Crime Panel now needed to affirm the appointment. It had not been possible to include members of the Police and Crime Panels in the interview process as it would have been impractical to include that many people. It was confirmed that a confirmation hearing by the Panel would have been required anyway.

The Chairman asked Ms Hall to comment on what she saw as the major financial challenges facing the PCC. Ms Hill highlighted the issues raised by the StraDA programme in relation to demand; the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR); and changes in crime and managing public expectation as the main challenges. Currently the quarterly and monthly reports showed an underspend and the Force had achieved the majority of its savings from efficiencies.

In a brief analysis Ms Hall expanded on the fact that the Offices of the Police and Crime Commissioners were in a strong position for the next 2 years and held substantial reserves. The challenges included that it was another month from finding out details of the CSR so they were not sure whether reductions would be 20% or 40%. The funding formula had been published and 'could be worse' for West Mercia although many factors were still to be determined.

She understood the different financial positions of Warwickshire and West Mercia and felt that, like any collaboration, it would require determination to make the role possible but that she could make it work.

Ms Hall gave details of her qualifications which included being the Director of Finance and Section 151 officer for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and Durham City Council. She also explained a short break in her career history.

Andy Champness explained that whilst originally only a recommendation from CIPFA had been obtained, a second reference had since been received from Ms Hall's former employer, Blackburn and Darwen Council. He assured the Panel that it was a very good reference.

135 Exclusion of Press and Public

The Panel agreed to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following item as it was likely that exempt information relating to any individual would be disclosed and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

136 Proposed Appointment to the role of Chief Finance Officer of the Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner

The Panel reviewed the proposed appointment. Some concern was expressed that two references had not been obtained originally and that neither had been seen by the Panel in advance of the confirmation hearing.

The Panel agreed to recommend that the PCC confirm the appointment of Ms Elizabeth Hall to the post of Chief Finance Officer for the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner.

[The above is a fair summary of the proceedings and there are no additional exempt minutes]

The meeting ended at 3.45pm

Chairman