

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

Wednesday, 7 December 2016,

Minutes

Present:

Cllr Brian Wilcox (Chairman), Cllr Sebastian Bowen, Mrs Carole Clive, Cllr Lynn Denham, Cllr Roger Evans, Cllr Phil Grove, Cllr Ian Hardiman, Cllr Paul Middlebrough, Cllr Tony Miller (Vice Chairman), Cllr Stephen Reynolds, Cllr Keith Roberts, Cllr Yvonne Smith and Colonel Tony Ward OBE

Also attended:

Kate Griffiths, Tim Rice, Police and Crime Commissioner Mr John Champion, Chief Constable Anthony Bangham, Andy Champness and Elizabeth Hall

186 Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed back Colonel Tony Ward to the meeting as an Independent Lay Member. He welcomed the new Independent Lay Member Carole Clive to her first meeting.

187 Apologies and Named Substitutes

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs. Denaro, Sahota, Turley and Wood. Cllr. Wood had sent apologies for his late arrival.

188 Declarations of Interest

Declarations of interest were made by Cllrs. Grove and Roberts who both received police pensions and Colonel Tony Ward who was a member of the Trust, Integrity and Ethics Committee.

189 Public Participation

None

190 Confirmation of the Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting on 5 October 2016 were agreed to be a correct record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

191 Recruitment of Independent Lay Members

Cllr Sebastian Bowen, as Chairman of the Independent Lay Member Interview Panel gave a brief overview of the process. The Panel assessed, interviewed and appointed the 2 Independent Lay members for a 4 year term after following a rigorous and fair procedure. He thanked the other members of the panel Cllr Grove and Cllr. Reynolds for their involvement in what was an interesting process. Four candidates had been interviewed and 2 excellent

192 **Victim Charter / Board**

independent lay members had been appointed in Colonel Tony Ward and Carole Clive and the Panel was happy to endorse this co-option and welcomed them to the Panel.

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) explained that he said he would set up a Victims Board and that had been done. The focus was on ensuring the victims could get on with their lives and that the police treated them with compassion.

The first meeting of the Board had taken place a fortnight before with Andy Champness as the Chairman. 20 organisations were represented and they recognised that they could be more effective if they worked together.

Various points were raised by the panel:

- It was hoped that corporate and community crimes were also recognised, rather than just crimes against individuals
- It was queried why there were no representatives from housing, local councils or voluntary/community groups on the Board. The PCC explained that he did not want the Board to grow too big to be effective
- Many of the acronyms were not self-evident
- The PCC clarified that he did not differentiate between victims and witnesses and the force supported both groups,
- The PCC represented the entire West Mercia region and wanted a consistent service for victims to be available across the area.

The Chairman thanked the PCC for the information regarding the Victims Board and the report was noted by the Panel.

193 **Proposed Assurance Programme and Delivery Plan**

The PCC explained that the summary of the delivery plan was in the agenda. He was confident that the various methods of oversight would hold the police to account and would also assist the PCP in hold him to account.

During the ensuing discussion Panel members welcomed the report and the PCC's commitment to change. The following points were raised:

- The PCC agreed that the gender balance of Special Constables did not yet reflect the balance of the population. However the situation was improving with regard to the black and ethnic minority and gender spread. There was now more flexibility for Special Constables regarding the

number of hours they worked and their areas of work; this was leading to people wanting to work for more hours and staying in the position for longer

- When asked about the personnel who would be dealing with cyber-crime, the PCC responded it was for the Chief Constable to decide how to deal with the operational issue, while it was his role to hold the Chief Constable to account to ensure it was dealt with
- When asked for his plan on how to reach his recruitment aspiration the PCC responded that there were no targets and the numbers of officers were not increasing. There was an annual turnover of around 120 and strategies were in place to achieve diversity among officers and staff
- The number of speedwatch kits distributed to communities had doubled and the PCC worked with highways colleagues; who could provide engineering solutions; to change motorists' behaviour rather than just catching those who speed. It would be possible for communities to have permanent speedwatch signs if it was felt that these were effective
- Panel members were worried about the large number of boards/meetings that were listed as part of the oversight mechanisms and wondered if rationalisation was needed. The PCC felt that at present the structure was necessary and some meetings were statutory. He conceded that in future if he judged certain meetings to be unnecessary then changes would be made
- The performance framework was still being finalised and more information would be available in the Spring
- Following a query about young drivers being able to drive at Throckmorton the PCC explained that individuals paid £170 for the course but the courses were underwritten by the PCC
- The new equipment being brought in to aid the police, such as body cameras, had all been tested and proven in other forces, so West Mercia was catching up with technology rather than introducing bespoke solutions
- It was clarified that Neighbourhood watch was a national project which West Mercia supported. Stourport Neighbourhood Watch was praised by a panel member for having a thriving on-line presence. The Community messaging system was mentioned as being useful in some areas but patchy in others. The PCC replied that the

**194 Role of the
Deputy PCC
and
Ambassadors**

- messaging system would be monitored
- In the Wyre Forest area the local Councillor was impressed with the neighbourhood policing as a police representative attended Parish Council meetings and spoke about Smart-Water. The PCC confirmed that he believed in prevention and could provide some resources for the Smart-Water scheme but he needed communities themselves to contribute to and support the scheme
- The funding of community safety partnerships would be reviewed and more details would be available in the Spring,
- There was an action plan to deal with the backlog in gun licences and the PCC was receiving monthly updates of the progress,
- In response to a query regarding policing in different areas, the PCC replied that it was the nature of having many communities within one force area that there would be differences in the way local policing was managed. The Command Teams along with the PCC and Chief Constable ensured that any variances were questioned. However recording of crime was now more accurate and was showing a steady rise,
- The Chief Constable was disappointed that one of the Councillors in Shropshire was getting no communication from the police. He reassured the Panel that this would be sorted by the new Superintendent in the area
- The PCC assured the Panel that it was his responsibility to ensure that the right resources were available to meet the changing challenges of policing such as cyber-crime and sex offences. Multi agency safeguarding hubs (MASH) were part of the strategy for dealing with such crimes,
- Cyber-crime was not always recorded as a separate category – for example the crime may be recorded as 'theft' but with a cyber-crime element,
- The PCC promised to provide the number of outstanding complaints.

The PCC stated that although he was responsible for holding the Chief Constable to account and ensuring there was an effective and efficient police service he was not able to do everything himself and his Deputy and the PCC Ambassadors assisted him around the West Mercia area. He generally dealt with principal authorities and the Ambassadors kept in touch with parish councils. At present there was a vacancy for an ambassador in Worcestershire which they were hoping to fill in the New Year. The Ambassadors received a fund similar to the

195 Governance Report

WCC Councillors' Divisional fund to allow them to spend money in their areas to help them meet their objectives in line with the Safer West Mercia Plan.

The Governance report urged members to consider whether they were content with the existing work programme; whether they wished to implement the idea of Member Champions and whether the rules of procedure needed any amendments (although any changes to the last point would be necessarily reliant on the legislation).

During the discussion the following points were made:

- The Chairman noted that in the past, task and finish groups had been set up to complete discrete pieces of work but for various reasons had not managed to meet. If members wished to set up task and finish groups or introduce the idea of champions there would be an increased workload for panel members
- One panel member recognised that local authorities had limited resources and that this impacted on how effective the work programme could be. He suggested that perhaps member authorities should contribute to a part time scrutiny post to support the Panel and the member champions. It was pointed out that Champions already existed at District Council level and they were in contact with the Ambassadors. There was not much support for the Panel Champions proposal at present
- Other Panel Members felt that the work programme needed to be more proactive and until that was in place it was difficult to ascertain what resources would be needed
- Members generally considered that task and finish groups could be useful provided that they had a tight remit. It was agreed that a further report should be considered at a future meeting on the options for task and finish groups
- It was suggested that if independent members were asked to do a different or wider job than the job they applied for, remuneration should be re-considered
- The setting up of a budget task and finish group was supported with five members volunteering – Cllr Middlebrough, Cllr Bowen, Cllr Evans, Cllr Reynolds and Mrs Clive,
- With regards to the Rules of Procedure the Panel was generally content with them but it was

proposed that the requirement for the Chairman to alternate between Worcestershire and Non-Worcestershire members was no longer necessary and should be removed to allow for the best person to be appointed to the role despite which area they represented. The requirement for the Vice-Chairman to have a geographical counter-balance to the Chairman was similarly unnecessary and should be deleted. The office of Vice-Chairman should be open to all panel members, whether elected members or not. These proposals were agreed.

RESOLVED that the Police and Crime Panel:

- a) Further consider the future work programme of the Panel;
- b) Would not implement the role of Panel member Champions at present;
- c) Agreed to a Task and Finish Group being set up to consider the precept consisting of Cllrs Middlebrough (Chairman), Bowen, Evans, Reynolds and Mrs Clive;
- d) Should receive a report at a future meeting with suggestions for topic areas to be investigated by a task and finish group; and
- e) Agreed that the Rules of Procedure should be amended:
 - i. to state that The Chairman of the Panel should be elected from amongst the Members of the Panel but should not have to alternate between Worcestershire and Non-Worcestershire Members
 - ii. that the Vice-Chairman role be appointed from the members of the Panel (whether elected or not) and the geographical restriction be removed.

196 Other Committees and their Remit

Simon Mallinson explained the report and gave brief details of the Joint Audit Committee and the Trust, Integrity and Ethics (TIE) Committee established by the PCC, in order for the Panel to consider if the remit of the other bodies overlapped or complemented its own role.

Colonel Ward was a member of the TIE Committee and explained that it had 5 members who spent their first year receiving briefings and now each member looked after their own portfolio area. The role of the TIE Committee was to ensure that all decisions and actions taken by West Mercia and Warwickshire Police were taken ethically.

It was pointed out that the Chairman of the Audit

Committee had been invited to attend the previous Budget precept meeting. It was suggested that there should be a more formal arrangement in place rather than the existing one whereby the PCC would expect the Committees to co-operate with each other wherever it would be helpful. It was confirmed that the Audit committee would be meeting shortly and were considering updated terms of reference to include a formal expectation that they would co-operate with the PCP.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman had arranged to meet the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Warwickshire PCP and they proposed that they would discuss the best way of working with the joint Committees.

The meeting ended at 3.40pm

Chairman

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