

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

Tuesday, 26 September 2017, - 1.30 pm

Minutes

Present:

Cllr Brian Wilcox (Chairman), Cllr Joe Baker,
Cllr Sebastian Bowen, Cllr David Chambers,
Mrs Carole Clive, Cllr Gerald Dakin, Cllr Roger Evans,
Cllr Mike Johnson, Mr S M Mackay,
Cllr Stephen Reynolds, Cllr Juliet Smith,
Cllr Emma Stokes, Cllr Kevin Turley,
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
Anthony Bangham, Chief Constable, West Mercia Police
Cllr Eric Carter, Chairman of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire
and Rescue Authority
Mr P A Tuthill, Vice-Chairman of Hereford and Worcester
Fire Authority
Jon Scanlan, Police Strategy and Reform Unit, Home
Office
Kieran Martin, Police Strategy and Reform Unit, Home
Office

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. News Article from 14 June 2017 Shropshire Star relating to Joint Governance of Police and Fire and Rescue services in Hereford and Worcester and Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin (circulated at the Meeting)
- C. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 June 2017 (previously circulated).

(Copies of documents A and B will be attached to the signed Minutes).

219 Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting including the new Panel Members, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Cllr Eric Carter, Chairman of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority, Cllr

		Paul Tuthill Vice-Chairman Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority, Peter Tromans, Warwickshire Deputy PCC, Jon Scanlan, Police Strategy and Reform Unit, Home Office and Kieran Martin Police Strategy and Reform Unit, Home Office.
220	Named Substitutes	None.
221	Apologies and Declarations of Interest	<p>Apologies were received from Councillors May and Mehta.</p> <p>A declaration of interest was made by Colonel Tony Ward who was a member of the Trust, Integrity and Ethics Committee.</p>
222	Appointment of Vice-Chairman	<p>Cllr Michael Wood was proposed and seconded as Vice-Chairman. There were no other nominees.</p> <p>Cllr Wood was appointed as Vice-Chairman until July 2018.</p>
223	Public Participation	None.
224	Confirmation of the Minutes of the previous meeting	The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 June 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
225	Joint Governance of Police and Fire and Rescue services in Hereford and Worcester and Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin	<p>The Panel was asked to consider and comment on the report from the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) providing a summary of the initial findings from the West Mercia Fire and Rescue Governance Consultation which had finished on 11 September 2017.</p> <p>At its last meeting, the Panel considered the 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.</p> <p>Following the initial comments made by the Panel, the PCC was invited to return to Panel with final proposals prior to the submission to the Secretary of State on 1 October 2017; which had been extended to 9 October</p>

2017.

A Report from the Chief Executive on behalf of the PCC was provided to the Panel outlining an initial analysis of the Consultation results. The Panel was advised that the Report didn't include the PCC's formal response to the Consultation, which would be published in due course.

The Chairman invited the Chairman of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority and Vice-Chairman Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority and the Officer from the Police Strategy and Reform Unit, Home Office to address the Panel.

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
(Councillor Eric Carter)

Councillor Carter suggested that as result of various recent discussions, he thought it was important to look for agreement on a local basis for collaborative working as suggested by the Fire Minister. He urged the PCC to take into consideration the views of the constituent authorities, none of which were in favour of the proposal for a Police, Crime and Fire Commissioner and take into account that they represented a large number of people. He also circulated a newspaper article from the Shropshire Star, which had run an online poll to ask if readers agreed with the PCC running the fire service. 22% said yes and 78% said no. He further made the point that only two local authorities in the Country were actually in favour of the proposal.

Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority

Councillor Tuthill highlighted various examples of collaboration between the Police and Fire services eg the new Bromsgrove Police and Fire Station, new stations at Malvern, Worcester, Evesham and the Headquarters of the Fire Authority which were moving to the West Mercia Police Headquarters at Hindlip, Worcester which would result in some economies and integration of control systems eventually. There had already been significant savings from joint working: in 2010 expenditure was £32m and was now £31.7m. Councillor Tuthill suggested that services should continue to collaborate further and then the situation should be reviewed in 3 years' time.

Officer from the Police Strategy and Reform Unit, Home Office (Jonathon Scanlan)

The Officer explained how:

- Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) could make proposals to take over fire authority governance responsibilities within their police area;
- PCCs prepared a business case and must consult with constituent fire authorities;
- The Secretary of State decided on proposals;
- If a constituent local authority did not support the proposal, the Secretary of State must arrange for an independent review of the proposals.

During the discussion, the following main points were made:

- The concern remained about how the projected £4m savings would be made, especially as there was now the added complication of the effect that alleviating the public sector pay cap would potentially have on the capacity to make those savings. The PCC confirmed that further detail of the financial appraisal was currently being worked up and acknowledged that any increase in pay would have a resultant cost pressure
- As Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority had already identified £2m worth of savings, it was suggested that there would be an element of double counting in respect of the £4m projected savings. The PCC reiterated that the analysis of the Consultation was still taking place and that there would be options for doing things in different ways
- The Panel was keen to understand its role in the formal process of the Consultation but as the PCC advised, its role was as stated in the Panels terms of reference which was to scrutinise the actions of the PCC. The PCC confirmed that he was happy to respond to the Panel's questions but wasn't necessarily expecting an opinion from the Panel as such. If it was decided that Business Case would be submitted to the Secretary for State, the Panel could consider the case afterwards if deemed necessary
- The PCC was on record as saying that he would decide whether to submit the Business Case based on the results of the Consultation. It was pointed out that although 61.9% of respondents who completed the questionnaire were in favour of the proposal this was in fact 792 out of 1279 residents and didn't take into account the constituent authorities' responses, who were not in

support of the proposal and represented larger numbers of people than the Consultation respondents

- The PCC was urged to think carefully before moving forward with the Business Case, especially as joint working was already happening. The PCC suggested that there were examples of collaboration of front line services but not the supporting functions
- It was suggested that a better first step would be to consider merging the two fire authorities and then considering the governance at a later date
- The PCC reassured the Panel that the Consultation had followed and was compliant with the Cabinet Office principles and that he would take the decision very seriously and would be considering all views before making the final decision
- On reflection of the Consultation Process, the PCC remarked that double election purdah and two new Fire Authority Chairmen who had not been involved in the early discussions had been unhelpful to the process. It was important to improve things whilst continuing to protect the public; it was not a merger but a strategic alliance with two Fire Authorities
- As the enabling services for West Mercia were allied with Warwickshire, any changes would need to be discussed with Warwickshire
- The PCC confirmed that a huge weight would be given to the response of the constituent authorities
- A member pointed out to the Panel that at its last meeting, it had discussed the draft Business Case at length and the PCC had confirmed that the analysis of the Consultation was currently being carried out and a great deal of work to be done. It was therefore unfair for the Panel to expect that the final Business Case would be available and discussed at the meeting when it was not ready. It was suggested that the focus of the Panel should be to ensure that front line services were protected, money was being saved and that there was joined up working and as that appeared to be the case, the Panel should be offering its support to the PCC
- It was suggested that since the Government was encouraging collaboration between all the blue light services, consideration would need to be given to collaboration with the ambulance service. The PCC responded that better joint working with the ambulance service was desirable and whilst a

duty to collaborate existed, it was not part of the current consideration

- A suggestion was made that as the final Business Case was work in progress and the previous draft scrutinised by the Panel at its June meeting was based on discussions with previous Fire Authority Chairmen, the Panel was unable to scrutinise the current plans. The PCC acknowledged that he had engaged with Fire Authorities at the beginning of year, but was now working on responding to the Consultation prior to deciding whether to submit a Business Case
- It was noted that the financial details were still "in hand"
- If a constituent local authority did not support the proposal, the Secretary of State must arrange for an independent review of the proposals. The Panel were advised that this could take up to 6 months
- In response to the concern about how the PCC would find time to do this job, the PCC advised that the Police was run by the Chief Constable and he wouldn't be considering it if he didn't believe that the Service could be delivered to a high standard
- It was proposed that in the light of the detailed Consultation responses and in particular the opposition of the constituent authorities, the Panel did not consider that the case for change was made out and recommended that the Police and Crime Commissioner withdrew his proposals in relation to fire governance
- On being put to the vote the motion was carried by 11 votes in favour, two against with one abstention.

226 Current and Non-Recent Sexual Offences

The Panel was invited to consider the PCCs Report on current and non-recent sexual offences and determine whether it would wish to make any recommendations to the PCC for consideration.

At its June meeting, the Panel received a briefing paper on current and non-recent sexual offences, following which the Chairman requested that the PCC provide the Panel with a more detailed response to address the Panel's concerns about the increased volume of sexual offences, the number of offences resulting in action being taken and the resource related concerns.

The Chairman thanked the PCC for the Report which

227 Police and Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report (April 2017-June 2017)

addressed most of concerns raised except for the query regarding whether there was a reduction in other criminal investigations or policing caused by the substantial rise in such cases, which the PCC advised that that it was not possible to estimate or quantify.

The PCC confirmed that the grants made to other organisations to support victims of sexual violence had been protected and in some cases increased. Coping and recovery of survivors of sexual crimes was vitally important and although it was early days in terms of being able to provide quantifiable victim satisfaction work some work had been commissioned in this area.

In response to the question about why there was an overall upward trend for rape and other sexual offences, the PCC advised that there was no proven answer but society had changed its attitude toward sexual violence and victims were now more confident to report crimes in this area. Also, the attitude of the Police towards victims had changed and victims now believed that they would be taken seriously. Reporting standards and recording was more accurate and although the figures were continuing to rise, this wasn't necessarily an indication that that the crime was rising.

It was confirmed that specialist training was provided to all staff involved in this area.

In view of the Panel's concern for this area of work, the PCC agreed to consider enhancing the Sexual Offences section in the Performance Summary to provide more detail.

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

During the discussion, the following main points were made:

- In considering the success of PACT meetings, the PCC advised that they varied considerably according to the area but what was important was what worked for a particular community. He also thought that there was always more that could be done to support the process
- A concern was raised about the worsening performance trends eg confidence in the police was ranked 8 out of 8 (against the Most Similar

Group (MSG)), increasing numbers of offence volume above average and an increase in the number of crimes. The PCC was asked what actions he was taking to address this and reverse the trends. The PCC explained that this was an area of concern and that there are a number of factors to take into account eg some areas were better than others but even so, good practice needed to be replicated to ensure consistency across all areas. The PCC was carrying out 'Holding to Account' sessions and this was one of the areas of focus. The Police Force were being asked to prepare action plans to address these types of issues and the PCC was confident that the Chief Constable understood the issue and was taking appropriate action

- It was suggested that it would be helpful if the Performance Summary (without making the report burdensome) could capture some actions to demonstrate outcomes and improvements. The PCC agreed to give the request some thought
- Paragraph 4.8 of Appendix 2 Delivery Plan Extract was referred to and an update on progress requested. The PCC advised that the Strategy was now in place and there was a Police Force Lead Officer but that he would provide a more detailed response
- The PCC was thanked for his support in respect of Community Speed Watch (Paragraph 2.5, page 33). It was suggested that in order to improve the effectiveness of the Scheme that signage should be put up when entering a village with a Community Speed Watch Scheme rather than at the start of where the speed was measured from, this it was suggested would encourage compliance with the speed limit rather than drivers merely slowing down at the point when speed was being measured and then increasing speed afterwards. The PCC was also asked if he could support the towns and villages by sending an advisory warning letter when a speed limit had been exceeded. The PCC agreed that this was something he would support and would look into
- The general increase in crime figures was referred to and whether there was an underlying trend or a blip. The PCC advised that this was an increase in total recorded crime but that he was not able to advise whether it was an increase in actual crime, it was a complex area where recording of crime had significantly improved
- It was suggested that the Police response to low

228 Cyber Crime Strategy

level crime was worsening. The PCC reassured the Panel that the service standards were exceeding targets although he was mindful that perception and managing expectations was a big issue. The PCC recommended that Councillors should contact their local Sergeant initially to report problems in the first instance, details of which were available on the website

- Although the Panel understood that the format of report was a standard document, a request was made to include a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rating on the summary page. The PCC agreed to look into this
- Track My Crime had not yet implemented but was a priority.

The Panel was asked to consider the Cyber Crime Strategy and determine whether it would wish to make any comments to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Nationally, cyber crime was recognised as one of the greatest risks facing the Country and was a key element of the Strategic Policing Requirement. At a Force level the threat from cyber crime was identified in the Alliance Control Strategy as one of the highest risks faced by the Alliance.

In 2016 the Force signed off the Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police Cyber Crime Strategy 2016. This document set out at a strategic level the 4 P's (Prevent Pursue, Protect, Prepare) approach that was currently being implemented across the Alliance.

Shortly after the Strategy was implemented operational requirements led to a number of changes in senior police personnel responsible for the implementation of the Strategy. On a day to day basis the Force approach to cyber crime was now the responsibility of a Superintendent.

During the discussion, the following main points were made:

- There were insufficient resources to prevent individuals becoming vulnerable and more work was needed in terms of safeguarding as it was an area which changed and progressed so quickly. The resources that were available however were being spent efficiently working with the alliance and across the region to share expertise. There also needed to a joined up approach from a

		<p>national perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PCC was confident that they were able to recruit suitably qualified people to deal with cyber crime, he did however suggest that opportunities were arising in this area in a volunteer capacity • Cyber crime did have the potential to affect front line services, but the PCC was aware of this and intended to be as efficient as possible and was actively managing it.
229	Sixth Annual National Conference for Police and Crime Panels	<p>Members of the Panel were asked to indicate whether they would be interested in attending Sixth National Conference for Chairs, Members and Support Officers of Police and Crime Panels on Monday 6 November 2017 from 10am-4pm at Scarman House, Warwick Conference Centre CV4 7SH by advising the Scrutiny Officer by 6 October 2017.</p>
230	Police and Crime Panels - Consultation on Proposals for National Representation	<p>The Panel was asked to consider and comment on the Consultation on Proposals for National Representation. The views of the Panel would be fed back to the Chairman of Hertfordshire PCP who was co-ordinating a response on behalf of all Police and Crime Panels.</p> <p>The paper set out three options for consideration: an Association, a Special Interest Group or a Combination of the first two options.</p> <p>The plan was to seek the views of Police and Crime Panels and issue a revised document in mid-October to inform a discussion and agreement on the way forward at the National Conference on 6 November 2017.</p> <p>The Panel agreed that it supported the principle of forming a national group. Members of the Panel referred to the PCCs having their own organisation and that it would be appropriate for the Panels charged with scrutiny of the PCC's to have a collective voice too.</p> <p>Of the options set out in the Consultation paper, the Panel considered that the Special Interest Group within the LGA would be the most appropriate. All authorities represented on the Panel were all members of the LGA.</p>
231	Work Programme	<p>The Panel considered and agreed the proposed Work Programme.</p> <p>It was also agreed that a Task Group would be established to look at the Budget. Councillors Stokes, Reynolds, Bowen and Wood indicated that they would be interested in joining the Task Group.</p>

**232 Future Meeting
Dates**

It was agreed that the 2018 meetings would be held on Tuesdays in February, June, September and November. Dates would be circulated to the Panel in due course.

The meeting ended at 3.35 pm

Chairman