

CUMBRIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cumbria Police and Crime Panel held on Monday, 14 October 2019 at 10.30 am at Control Room, Cumbria Fire and Rescue HQ, Carleton Avenue, Penrith, CA10 2FA.

PRESENT:

Mr W McEwan (Cumbria County Council) (Chair)

Mr RK Bingham, Cumbria County Council
Mrs J Cooke, Independent Co-opted Member
Ms G Dinsdale, Copeland Borough Council
Miss HJ Fearon, Cumbria County Council (Vice-Chair)
Mr KR Hamilton, Barrow Borough Council
Ms D Holden, Eden District Council
Mr MA Johnson, Cumbria County Council
Mr P McSweeney, South Lakeland District Council
Mr K Meller, Carlisle City Council
Miss L Vance, Independent Co-opted Member

Also in Attendance:-

Mr H Cox	- Policy and Scrutiny Officer
Ms F Daley	- Chair - Joint Audit Committee
Mr T Gale	- Senior Policy and Scrutiny Project Officer
Mrs L Harker	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Mr R Marshall	- Joint Chief Finance Officer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Mr P McCall	- Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
Mrs G Shearer	- Deputy Chief Executive - Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Mr B Spencer	- Group Solicitor/Deputy Monitoring Officer
Ms V Stafford	- Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

PART 1 – ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Ms M Bellis and Mr A Kirkbride.

16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Ms L Vance declared a personal interest in agenda item 8 – Support for Victims (minute 22 refers) as she was a Trustee of Safety Net.

17 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED, that the press and public be not excluded from the meeting for any items of business on this occasion.

18 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no items of public participation to be considered at this meeting.

19 MINUTES

With reference to minute 10 – Serious Violence and County Lines the following amendments were agreed:-

- (1) The reference to 'Board' at the top of page 11 should read 'Panel'
- (2) 'Public Accountability Committee' at the top of page 11 should read 'Public Accounts Committee (Select Committee of the House of Commons)'.

RESOLVED, that with the inclusion of the above amendments the minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

20 JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

The Panel received the Joint Audit Committee (JAC) Annual Report 2018/19.

Members were informed that during the 2018/19 financial year, Committee members had considered over 91 reports covering matters of governance including 18 internal audit reviews and the Commissioner and Chief Constable's Statement of Accounts.

It was explained that work included undertaking a substantive review of key elements of the governance framework, challenging and monitoring the approach to risk management, making key recommendations

regarding its improvement and scrutinising the effectiveness of arrangements to secure value for money. Members noted that in addition the Committee had continued to consider the assurance arrangements following the introduction of the Joint Chief Finance Officer and had made a number of recommendations to ensure a robust approach to assessing the ongoing effectiveness of the arrangement.

The Panel was informed that the annual review had concluded that the Committee met the CIPFA criteria for being highly effective.

Members noted that for 2019/20 the Committee had prepared an action plan to help ensure that the work of the Committee was proactive in focusing on new and emerging issues of governance. It was explained this would look to support and monitor the OPCC and Constabulary plans to address the increasingly stringent funding environment; support and challenge any new governance arrangements, for example, from restructuring and capacity reviews, greater collaboration with other organisations or joint working on delivery of services; improve the Committee's awareness of the work of the Police and Crime Panel and the Ethics and Integrity Panel where appropriate, and improve the Committee's strategic awareness of the Police and Crime Plan.

A Member raised a question regarding the audit process for the use of stingers. The Panel was informed that this would be an internal audit which would be followed up by the JAC.

Whilst the Panel agreed there was a need to have a clear understanding of JAC's remit it was felt there was not a need to receive specific details of their work acknowledging a need for clear demarcation lines between the role of JAC and the Panel. It was suggested that in future members be provided with the report but that this did not form part of Panel meetings.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

21 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING - QUARTER 1

a Constabulary Revenue Budget Monitoring 2019/20

The Panel received a report from Cumbria Constabulary which provided details of the Constabulary's Revenue budget monitoring 2019/20 forecast for Quarter 1 as at 30 June 2019.

Members were informed that the current forecast of net expenditure amounted to £121.243m compared to a revised budget of £121.258m. It was explained that the variance amounted to a forecast underspend of £15k (0.01%) and was made up of a forecast overspend on expenditure

budgets of £97k (0.08%) an increase in income of £112k (1.69%). The budget had been adjusted to reflect an agreed reduction in the planned drawdown from the budget support reserve in 2019/20.

The Panel was informed that the forecast Constabulary underspend was due to a number of factors across several different headings. It was explained that one of the reasons for the underspend on police pay was due to an increase in the number of officers who had decided to opt out of the police pension schemes. Members were informed that the Chief Constable had expressed concerns regarding the number of officers opting out of the scheme and had provided advice on this.

The Panel drew attention to the Government's decision to recruit an additional 20,000 police officers over the next three years and asked whether the full on-costs had been taken into account. The Joint Chief Finance Officer (OPCC) confirmed that he was confident the model which had been submitted to the Treasury and Home Office included all of the on-costs.

The Commissioner welcomed the additional officers and informed members it was anticipated Cumbria would receive approximately 140 over the three year period. He explained additional officers were allocated on the current funding formula and that Cumbria would receive 51 police officers in the first year. Members were informed that the number of officers for the following two years was uncertain but every effort would be made to secure more funding in the future for as many additional officers as possible. The Panel welcomed the additional workforce and offered their support in securing funding.

The Panel was provided with an update regarding the recruitment process. Whilst the challenges around the Police Education Qualification Framework was highlighted members were informed that Cumbria was the first county to have recruited nine of the additional police officers due to an intake of resources six weeks ago. It was explained recruitment had been successful and further officers would be joining the Force in the near future.

During the course of discussion a concern was raised regarding policing in the rural areas and it was confirmed that this was taking place.

Members highlighted the increased powers of all police forces to stop and search and it was confirmed this was having a positive impact.

The Panel welcomed the report noting that the funding position was still evolving and would be reflected in future budget reports.

RESOLVED, that the Constabulary's Revenue budget monitoring 2019/20 forecast for Quarter 1 as at 30 June 2019 be noted.

b Commissioner's Revenue Budget Monitoring 2019/20

The Panel considered a report by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner which provided the Commissioner's Revenue Budget Monitoring 2019/20 forecast as at 30 June 2019.

Members noted that the current forecast of net expenditure amounted to £103.797m compared to a revised budget of £103.742m. It was explained that the variance amounted to a forecast overspend of £55k (0.05%) and was made up of a forecast underspend of £15k (0.01%) in respect of Constabulary budget and a forecast overspend of £70k (0.40%) on budgets managed by the Commissioner.

The Panel was informed that the financial position would be affected by the Government's decision to recruit an additional 20,000 officers nationally, which was announced post production of the report. It was explained that the costs of recruitment and funding position for the additional officers were still evolving and would be outlined in future financial reports to the Panel.

RESOLVED, that the Commissioner's Revenue Budget Monitoring 2019/20 forecast as at 30 June 2019 be noted.

22 SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS

The Panel considered a detailed report by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) which summarised the Commissioner's work in relation to support for victims of crime and abuse. Members also received information regarding commissioning of victim services, sought the views of people affected by crime and holding to account of the Constabulary on how they dealt with victims.

The Panel's attention was drawn to the Quality Assessment Framework which had found that some victims were not being offered the chance to make a Victim Personal Statement (VPS) which affords victims the opportunity to be heard in the criminal justice process. It was explained that a low update of this provision had been recognised nationally, therefore, a Task and Finish Group had been developed to review and address the issues identified and members were informed of the key actions undertaken to improve compliance.

Members were informed that work was ongoing with the Constabulary's 'Red Sigma' project team to ensure there was a mandatory action in the new Red Sigma Crime Management System, to prompt officers to ascertain whether victims would like to give a VPS where relevant.

The Panel noted that the Victims' Advocate in the OPCC had attended all initial police officer training, raising awareness of the importance of a VPS and their impact. It was explained that a VPS briefing document had also been developed and circulated amongst criminal justice agencies drawing upon national guidance.

It was explained the uptake of VPS would continue to be monitored through the Quality Assessment Framework to ensure the work undertaken had improved the situation.

The Panel was given an update on the 'Community Trigger' which enabled victims to hold their local agencies to account. Members were informed the OPCC had requested the Constabulary to review the arrangements in place across Cumbria, linking in with relevant agencies to ensure there was a standardised and transparent process and everyone was aware of their statutory responsibilities.

Members were informed that during 2018-19 the OPCC had worked with partner agencies, in particular Cumbria County Council, to commission a new integrated support service for victims of crime and abuse. It was explained that the service, which was provided by Victim Support Cumbria, had been developed in response to feedback from victims regarding improving their journey to obtain support after a crime.

The Panel noted that the service was available across the county for children, young people and all adults, whether or not they had reported to the police and for any type of crime. Members were informed that the service included an out of office hours support through the national 24/7 Support Line and a new Live Chat facility provided by local staff via the Victim Support website. It was explained that the uptake of the Live Chat service had been positive.

During the course of discussion concerns were raised regarding the availability of the Live Chat facility for victims who had no web access. Whilst officers appreciated this concern they assured the Panel that victims of crime did have personal contact with a police officer who would offer appropriate support.

The Panel raised their concerns regarding the lack of signposting to support available for victims, therefore, making it difficult for them to seek help. It was suggested that a map be made available indicating what support was available in each area of the county.

The Panel was informed that in terms of commissioning the service, the OPCC worked closely with partners through Safer Cumbria and as a joint funder, Cumbria County Council was heavily involved with this. Members raised their lack of awareness of the involvement of Cumbria County Council and suggested that information on future joint working should be made available.

Whilst members welcomed the report the Panel also noted that in addition to receiving specific assurances from the Commissioner's Office papers containing updates and general information were essential for them to maintain their understanding of key policing issues in the county.

RESOLVED, that the Commissioner's work to put victims first be noted.

23 UPDATE ON COMPLAINTS

The Panel considered a report by the Monitoring Officer which advised members of any complaints received in accordance with the Panel's Complaints Procedure. The report outlined where appropriate, what, if any, action had been taken in respect of the complaints.

Members were informed that as at the date of the report there were no ongoing complaints.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

24 PANEL UPDATE REPORT

Members received a report which provide an update on key issues and developments that had occurred since the last meeting of the Panel. It included progress on actions agree at the July meeting, National Policy Developments and the Panel's Work Programme.

The Panel held a detailed discussion regarding the use of tasers by police officers. The Commissioner explained to members that the protection of officers and crime prevention was paramount and felt that tasers would assist. He highlighted to members that the use of them was an operational decision and was the responsibility of the Chief Constable. He explained that an assessment was being undertaken across the Force to determine where they would be most beneficial.

During the course of discussion concerns were raised regarding the deployment of tasers and negative effect this could have on the public. It was felt that a better environment should be encouraged to avoid the necessity for them. It was confirmed that tasers were deployed very rarely and were mainly used as a deterrent.

A concern was raised regarding the lack of youth facilities in the Barrow area which had attributed to an increase in anti-social behaviour. The Commissioner confirmed that he would support youth organisations to investigate new initiatives in the area. The local members for Barrow invited the Commissioner to future meetings of the Youth Action Zone in their area.

Members suggested that following recruitment of the extra police officers consideration be given to establishing neighbourhood policing teams.

A discussion took place regarding venues for future meetings and it was suggested that community centres be considered.

The Panel asked that the Commissioner send a letter of thanks and appreciation to Inspector Jim Bailey for his involvement with the British Legion parade in Barrow.

The Panel congratulated the Commissioner on his recent appointment as the Honorary Colonel of Cumbria Army Cadet Force.

RESOLVED, that

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the future work programme include the following topics for discussion as soon as possible:-
 - Out of Court Disposal
 - Unseen Policing.

25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Panel would be held on Tuesday 28 January 2020 at 10.30 am in the Gunson Meeting Room, Ingwell Hall, Westlakes Science Park, Moor Row, Cumbria.

The meeting ended at 11.44 am