

Minutes

Joint Committee to agree Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel Arrangement

Minutes of the Joint Committee to agree Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel Arrangement held on Thursday 19 April 2012, in Committee Room 1, Wycombe District Council, High Wycombe HP11 1BB, commencing at 5.00 pm and concluding at 5.55 pm.

Members Present

Councillor Dorothy Brown (South Oxfordshire District Council), Noel Brown, David Carroll, Councillor Anita Cranmer (South Buckinghamshire District Council), Trevor Egleton, Councillor Peter Geary (Milton Keynes Council), Councillor Jesse Grey (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead), Councillor Bill Jones, Councillor Iain McCracken (Bracknell Forest Council), Councillor Sohail Munawar (Slough Borough Council), Councillor Barry Norton (West Oxfordshire District Council), Councillor Tony Page (Reading Borough Council), Cllr Barrie Patman (Wokingham Borough Council), Councillor Pam Pearce (Aylesbury Vale District Council), Councillor George Reynolds (Cherwell District Council) and Councillor Bob Timbs (Oxford City Council)

Officers Present

Graham Britten (Legal Representative), Olwen Dutton (Bevan Britten), Clare Gray, Val Johnson (Oxford City Council), Sara Turnbull and Susie Yapp

1. Election of Chairman and Apologies for Absence

Members were asked for nominations for election of Chairman for the Joint Committee. Mr D Carroll proposed Mr T Egleton which was seconded and agreed by the Joint Committee.

RESOLVED

That Mr T Egleton be elected as Chairman for the Joint Committee to agree Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel Arrangements.

Cllr Kieron Mallen (Oxfordshire County Council) and Cllr Stansfeld (West Berkshire Council) were not in attendance. Cllr Bains attended as an observer from Slough Borough Council.

2. Panel Arrangement Document

Olwen Dutton, Independent Legal Adviser, Bevan Brittan presented the draft Panel Arrangements document which had been circulated to all Members of the Steering Group and all Lead Officers from across the Thames Valley. The Panel arrangements document should be read in conjunction with the draft Rules of Procedure. The Joint Committee agreed that this document will be updated in light of Home Office regulations expected to be published in late Spring 2012.

Members were reminded that the intention was to finalise the Panel Arrangements document at the meeting, subject to the delegation to the Chief Executive of Buckinghamshire County Council to amend the draft in the light of the discussions, and the possibility that changes might have to be made as a result of Home Office regulations.

Members' attention was specifically drawn to Clause 3 and the proposed arrangements for appointment by the Authorities to the Panel and the need to secure as far as is reasonably practicable that the balanced appointment objective is met. In respect of the political balance element of the balanced appointment objective, Members were reminded of the current non-statutory guidance produced by both the LGA and the Home Office each of which suggests that Authorities should consider appointments by taking into account the proportion of councillors from each political party across the Thames Valley, whilst recognising the practicalities of doing so. It was agreed that the Panel Arrangements would leave each Authority to give consideration to all elements of the balanced appointment objective – including geographical; and skills, knowledge and experience – which would need to be observed each time Authorities made appointments to the Panel

Going through the document Members made the following points:-

Membership Amendments

- 3.4 Remove 'or Members' as each Authority could only appoint one Member.
- 3.6 A Member suggested removing this paragraph as it repeats what is in paragraph 3.2 and this is the preferred wording. It was then agreed that the paragraph is left in and the word 'renewed' taken out.
- 3.10 --- the Secretariat should recommend to the relevant Authority that due consideration is given to removing the Member from office immediately and replacing them.
- The Member from Reading Borough Council commented that the same rules of non-attendance did not apply to co-opted members and that there should be a mechanism of removing co-opted members if they did not attend meetings. He suggested that the co-opted members should have the same rights as elected Members. Members were referred to 3.18 where the Panel may terminate the appointment of a co-opted member for two reasons; one being if they were unable or unfit to discharge their functions. The Panel could reach a view that notice should be given.

Amendment

- 3.1 That an additional clause be added to ensure that the same rules apply to co-optees as to elected members in relation to the termination of appointment. Exact wording to be inserted in line with 3.10.

Host Authority

- The Member from Bracknell Forest Council referred to the situation where no Councils were happy to put themselves forward as Host Authority and that the Authority where the Chairman came from should host. Bucks County Council would be the host authority until such time as there is a change at the Annual Meeting or whether a change is triggered by the Panel or by the Host Authority itself. Olwen Dutton commented that it would be helpful to have some fall back arrangements in place where no Authority was putting themselves forward, hence suggesting the Chairman's Authority; the Act specified that the Panel could not operate without a Host Authority. The Member from West Oxfordshire District Council expressed concern about the word 'shall' as this could not be enforced and it should be changed to 'expect'.

Amendment

- 4.2c In the event that no Authority comes forward to act as Host Authority it shall be expected that the home Council of the current Chairman of the Panel shall be the Host Authority.

Allowances and expenses

The Member for Bracknell Forest Council reported that at the last Steering Group he had referred to the need to be fair and that the costs included in the draft budget for a development day and webcasting should be put aside to cover the cost of co-optees expenses. Members

were of the view that Home Office expenses were excessive and should be brought into a corporate pot. The other change was for a full time scrutiny officer. The Chairman reported that this detail still required discussion and no final decision had been made. It has been agreed at the last Steering Group meeting that a revised budget should be agreed by the Panel at its first meeting.

The Committee reconfirmed the view at the last meeting that no allowances should be paid to Members from Home Office funding and it was up to each Authority whether they gave a Special Responsibility Allowance for their representative on the Police and Crime Panel. In terms of the co-opted members, the Panel would issue an advert with no reference to allowances and reassess the situation at a later stage. However, reimbursement of reasonable expenses should be paid for co-optees from the Panel's budget.

Amendment

- 6.1 --- without reimbursement – to be removed from the end of the sentence.
- 6.2 Remove reference to the payment of an allowance to co-optees.

RESOLVED

- 1. To agree the Panel Arrangements Document as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.**
- 2. To give delegated authority to the Chief Executive of the Host Authority to update the Panel Arrangements Document in light of discussion at the meeting and any subsequent statutory regulations, with notification given to the local authorities and subsequently the Panel of any such changes.**
- 3. To require all Thames Valley Authorities to notify the Host Authority Secretariat by 31 May 2012 of their appointment to the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel.**

CHAIRMAN