

Minutes

Minutes of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel held on Thursday 6 December 2012, in The Oculus Aylesbury Vale District Council, The Gateway Gatehouse Road Aylesbury Bucks HP19 8FF, commencing at 11.00 am and concluding at 12.40 pm.

Members Present

Councillor Mark Booty (West Oxfordshire District Council), Noel Brown (Chiltern District Council), Terry Burke (Co-opted Member), David Carroll (Wycombe District Council), Councillor Anita Cranmer (South Buckinghamshire District Council), Trevor Egleton (Buckinghamshire County Council) (Chairman), Councillor Peter Geary (Milton Keynes Council), Councillor Jesse Grey (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead), Councillor Bill Jones (Vale of White Horse District Council), Councillor Kieron Mallon (Oxfordshire County Council) (Vice-Chairman), Councillor Iain McCracken (Bracknell Forest Council), Councillor Barrie Patman (Wokingham Borough Council), Councillor Pam Pearce (Aylesbury Vale District Council), Councillor George Reynolds (Cherwell District Council), Councillor Bill Service (South Oxfordshire District Council), Councillor Mohammed Sharif (Slough Borough Council), Councillor Dee Sinclair (Oxford City Council) and Rajinder Sohpal (Co-opted Member)

Officers Present

Reece Bowman, Anne Davies (Buckinghamshire County Council) and Clare Gray

Others Present

Paul Hammond (Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner), Anthony Stansfeld (Police and Crime Commissioner) and Sara Thornton (Chief Constable, Thames Valley Police)

Apologies

Councillor Tony Page (Reading Borough Council)

1. Declarations of Interest

David Carroll declared an interest in item 7 and left the meeting as he had been nominated as the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, and the Confirmation Hearing for this post was to be held at item 7.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the Panel meeting held on 14 September 2012 were agreed as a correct record subject to amending the name of Jesse Grey.

3. Chairman's Update

The Panel Chairman introduced this item. He explained that the role of the Panel was to scrutinise the performance of the Police and Crime Commissioner and to scrutinise his policies. The legislation requires a light

touch approach to scrutiny and a requirement to “support the Police and Crime Commissioner”. They would not be dealing with operational issues and would adopt a critical friend approach. The Thames Valley was a huge area and the Panel aimed to have six standard meetings a year, involving looking at the budget and Police and Crime Plan. The Panel would rotate venues across the Thames Valley. The final version of the Police and Crime is due to be scrutinised by the Panel on 22 March 2013. The budget precept will be scrutinised by the Panel on 1 February 2013.

4. Introductory Speeches

The Police and Crime Commissioner outlined his roles and responsibilities and vision for future. He has been in the post for two weeks, since his election and has been looking at the delivery of priorities, which is still in its early stages. He outlined what he had done in the last fortnight:-

The PCC had been briefed by the following people:-

- Chief Constable
- Deputy Chief Constable
- Three Assistant Chief Constables and the Assistant Chief Constable who deals with Special Constables.
- Home Office and Home Secretary on a variety of things including terrorism and insurgency. A large amount of funding will go towards these areas
- Director of Finance
- Director of Information Science and Technology
- Head of Human Resources

The PCC has visited:-

- One Community Safety Partnership in Oxford
- One Local Police Area in (Oxford City)
- One Neighbourhood Action Group
- Organisation relating to victims of crime, involving meeting with victims of crime.

The PCC has also been setting up his office, which will be a long process. The budget and Police and Crime Plan has already been worked on by the Police Authority, of which the PCC was originally a Member. There will be a few changes to these but nothing major. They are now available for the Panel’s comments which he will take into account as much as possible.

The PCC has a detailed visit programme coming up which will include meeting/visting:-

- All Local Police Areas
- Superintendents
- Dog and Horse Units
- Serious Organised Crime Squad
- Councils
- Safer Community Partnerships

In terms of visits and meetings it will be difficult to cover the Thames Valley in a short timescale bearing in mind the number of different organisations:-

- 21 Constituencies
- 18 Councils
- 9 Health and Wellbeing Boards
- 14 Local Police Areas
- Over 100 Neighbourhood Action Groups
- 17 Safer Community Partnerships

It will be a huge task for the PCC and his appointed Deputy. One of biggest problems will be setting up the best system in communicating with the public, otherwise he could be overwhelmed by letters and emails and visits. In addition, the staffing structure of the Office of the PCC needs to be addressed.

One of the main issues in reducing crime is drug and alcohol problems and the Police can only play a part in this. The main part they play is in catching criminals. There are problems with the late night economy, violence, anti social behaviour, sexual crimes and domestic abuse. These are derived outside of the policing system and are connected to schools, parenting, to how Councils organise themselves, the Safer Community Partnerships, the Criminal Justice System and the Crown Prosecution Service. Councils and Safer Community Partnerships have a large role to play in how these big issues are tackled. For example with burglary, many persistent offenders can be drug abusers. So there will be a large focus on Drug and Alcohol Teams and Safer Community Partnerships.

The funding for this year will not be altered but will be reconsidered in further years. The PCC will be looking to build relationships with the Criminal Justice System and the Crown Prosecution Service and has visits planned. Rural crime is an issue – some people feel very vulnerable and this will need to be tackled.

Chief Constable

The Chief Constable set out the respective roles of the PCC and the Chief Constable. One of the documents that underpins the Act is the Policing Protocol which defines each role. The Chief Constable went through the additional points from her slides (included on the website) :-

The Policing Protocol Order 2011

- Emphasis with relationship with the electorate and shaping the strategy
- Parliament set out risk inherent in strategy and being clear about the roles.

PCC Responsibilities

- PCC will work with regional colleagues to deal with serious threats.
- Change in way complaints dealt with – PCC deals with complaints against the Chief Constable. The Chief Constable deals with complaints against the Deputy and her assistants. A Memorandum Of Understanding has been agreed with Hampshire Constabulary – they will deal with Thames Valley Senior Officer complaints and vice versa. The PCC has a key role with crime reduction. Given the breadth of Thames Valley this will be a challenge.

Chief Constable Responsibilities

- Thames Valley Police hold the office of constable under the Crown and it is important how this is operated under the rule of law.
- Strategic Policing Requirement – adjunct to the legislation which sets out five areas of activity of national concern eg organised crime, counter terrorism, public disorder. A sensible scheme of delegation has been agreed with the outgoing Police Authority so that the Chief Constable does not have to get agreement with the PCC on small financial matters.

Developing the Relationship

- The relationship must not be cosy – there is a constitutional tension inherent in it, which is in the interest of the public. It is important to be clear about different roles and the clearer that is the more effective the partnership.
- Police and Crime Plan – the Police Authority have endorsed the work so far. The PCC wants to reflect issues on rural crime, concerns about licensing and also to make sure that the mandate from the electorate is reflected in the Plan.
- Budget – previously endorsed by Police Authority. The budget settlement is awaited and the Home Secretary will make an announcement on 19 December.
- Media handling – the PCC has an important outward facing role. He has done a lot of work looking at press and media. A protocol has been drafted to ensure consistency and also to ensure that the PCC and Chief Constable do not contradict each other. The PCC is the lead on the budget and Police and Crime Plan. If it is operational it will be the Chief Constable's staff. One gray area will be significant operational issues where they both need to comment. Consistency of message is key.

- Meetings need to be bureaucracy light but need to be accountable and minutes published. Ahead of the Police and Crime Panel meetings it would be helpful for the PCC and the Chief Constable to have a bi-monthly meeting to which the public are invited. The PCC can hold the Chief Constable to account and then he can be scrutinised by the Panel.
- The level of correspondence is large and if a matter of strategy it will be the PCC responsibility. There may be strategic issues involved in a particular case which both roles will need to address so that the PCC can give a formal response on what the Police Force has done.

Performance; Cutting Crime

Recent data to June 2nd show the Thames Valley with the best reductions in England and Wales and this has been maintained in the Autumn. National surveys show satisfaction from victims of crime in the Thames Valley being top of 2nd quartile for victim care. In September 87.6% of victims were satisfied and that places the Force 2nd in the family of eight forces. This has been going up making sure victims get a prompt and professional response and also that those responsible are caught.

5. Questioning of Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley

The following questions were put to the PCC.

There is concern around the allocation of funding to partners. What is the method of allocation?

The funding system for community safety partnerships will not be altered for 2013/14. It is a small part of the Police budget, less than 1%. It will not be changed unless there is something fundamental. It will be reviewed next year once the PCC can identify what is working and what is not. The most important thing is to reduce crime and the importance of areas such as working with the DAT and Health and Wellbeing Boards.

If Council Tax is raised above a certain level a referendum must be held. The maximum percentage increase in the Council Tax precept that is being allowed by Government is 2% and if you go beyond that it is a referendum scenario – if the 2% precept increase is not taken this year in 2013/14 the resultant reduced level of funding will be fixed in the base budget so there is no maneuverability for 2014/15. The PCC quoted an assumed precept increase of 2.5% in 2014/15. If Council Tax funding continues to be cut, it will start hitting the frontline and referendums are expensive to administer.

Looking at a complex budget of £380 million a year a Member proposed that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman have delegated authority to set up a Working Party of 5 Panel Members to look at the budget in detail. On a vote being taken the Panel agreed that a Working Party should be set up.

RESOLVED

That a five Member Working Party be set up to look at the budget in detail including Mr T Egleton, Mr M Booty, Mr T Burke, Mr I McCracken, Mr B Patman

In terms of relationships with the public how do you intend to communicate with the electorate?

This is a huge area and the Police and Crime Plan outlines what the PCC is going to do – it is a public document which will be the basis of communication. There is other paperwork such as the Annual Report and Council Tax leaflets. In addition there is the website, bi-monthly meetings with public, this Panel meeting, media briefings, Twitter/Facebook/You tube will soon be up and running. The PCC will endeavour to do a huge number of visits. There is an email address and he will do his best to answer them all. In terms of location there is a central office at Kidlington and there will be an office in Berkshire and Buckinghamshire. The PCC will do his best to communicate and will put in extra resources if required.

On communication – the strategy will be put forward for the Thames Valley as a whole. How will you communicate with the District Councils – different areas have different problems and needs and one method of communication may not suit all interested parties?

In the previous structure the District Councils did not have any voice on the Police Authority. The PCC hopes to visit all 18 Authorities in the next year if possible. If the Council Leader would like to visit the PCC, they are welcome to do so. The PCC will also visit the Local Police Areas in the next two months so he can understand each District Council's problems by talking to the Local Police Area Commanders in charge.

In terms of the Community Safety Partnerships (CSP's) how do you intend to work with them?

They vary quite noticeably over the three Counties, for example Oxfordshire has one central Committee. Berkshire is different with unitaries. There needs to be an overriding County-based Committee that brings them together to report into the PCC. It is early days and the structure needs to be addressed. The PCC was keen on the Oxfordshire model.

The Chairman reported that there is an overarching Committee in Buckinghamshire but not all the District Councils are Members.

CSP's undertake many projects and some make a tremendous difference to the community in particular public perception and awareness. What will happen to them? How will you prioritise and fund?

Funding comes through the PCC and there are no changes this year, the following year depends on the Government. Drug and Alcohol Teams and the Youth Offending Service are critical to reducing crime. Members of other organisations need to contribute to reducing crime and future funding can be moved to where it is most needed. If possible it would be good to increase funding in this area.

In terms of prioritising policing and the work of Community Safety Partnership's it is important to recognise Local Police Area funding which makes things happen in the community. Funding is so important to crime diversion.

There is no intention to cut funding on this at all. The PCC has the ability to move money into priorities e.g household burglary in urban areas to tackle a specific problem. The Superintendents sit on the CSP's and the PCC will listen to their advice. The CSP's play a vital part in reducing crime. The CSP have knowledge of the local area and local crime and they have an important local input into crime including drugs, terrorism and domestic violence. Local Police Area Commanders are well aware of the issues as they take part in CSP's.

In the PCC's introductory speech he referred to Health and Wellbeing Boards of which there are nine in the Thames Valley. They will play a crucial part. CSP's report into Health and Wellbeing as part of their remit. How will you work with them?

As they were still being set up it was not clear at the moment how they will work. The Thames Valley have 9 whereas other areas only have one in their area. He planned to attend the Boards next year. They were critical to reducing crime.

A Member commented that each Health and Wellbeing Board was not structured in the same way. Most Boards have Sub Boards such as health improvement etc. Rather than attend meetings it may be better to develop informal links. There could also be a cross over of Membership from other Groups where Members sat on CSP's etc. The PCC commented that it was important to be clear about the structure and like the CSP there could be one overarching Committee which could include them. In the meantime informal links could be used while the Boards evolve. It would be helpful if the Members of the Boards made contact with the PCC.

There are many successes in neighbourhood policing. The PCC has attended one NAG – and an invite was made to the Oxford City NAG. Neighbourhood policing was the bedrock to reducing crime. Do you view this as a priority?

One of the PCC's first jobs as a new Member of the former Police Authority was the introduction of neighbourhood policing. PCSO's were introduced very rapidly and now a good system was working. This is the basis of policing - neighbourhood policing helps you identify local networks. There were some good NAGs some bad NAGs. The Police Houses and Stations have reduced which kept officers in the same area and knowing their patch is critical. Neighbourhood policing is a priority.

What about PCSO's having a consistent approach across the Thames Valley and consistent powers. One size does not fit all. Will you have some flexibility?

Every area is different. This is an operational area. There is a divergence of opinion about PCSO's having more powers but that makes them more like police officers.

Chief Constable

The Home Office have been endlessly reviewing powers – there are the core powers and also flexibility. PCSO's can detain people but nothing more. The Thames Valley have given them a moderate role. In terms of budget 417 are currently funded by the Neighbourhood grant and about 100 funded through partnerships. The area

where there is flexibility is the 100 or so PCSO's partnership funded – where there is no match funding the PCC will not continue to fund. Neighbourhood policing however is crucial and the Force relies on PCSO's e.g they have helped with victim care which is shown in the satisfaction survey.

The same onus is placed on you as the Police Authority regarding safeguarding duties in the Children's Act. In terms of Safeguarding how will you engage with Boards across the area?

Looking after vulnerable people is important and this is a critical job. The Police get involved often when things have gone wrong but they are not social workers. The PCC is getting briefed by various organisations as safeguarding is a big issue. Acting in partnership was crucial.

The PCC is in a strong position in influencing organisations?

The PCC does have a political mandate and has a more powerful voice with the Crown Prosecution Service and the Criminal Justice System so he can stand up and say if things are wrong publically. It is difficult for the Chief Constable and in the past was difficult for the Police Authority to do this.

What are your thoughts on partnership working with other Police Forces?

Thames Valley has three Counties in one Police Force and is ahead of the game. There are thoughts for and against regional police forces. The Thames Valley is leading on combining services eg Hampshire roads policing and IT. There can be some local resistance with smaller forces. The Thames Valley have the same Management Team as a neighbouring force a sixth of our size. The National Police Air Service has combined helicopters as it is more efficient to spread these types of assets over a bigger area. The Thames Valley is leading the way in this area.

Preventative measures e.g terrorism and drugs – do you have any plans?

The police Force is always preventative. There are specific areas where assets are put in where required. The Chief Constable reported on terrorism the prevention agenda is important when there is a threat and intelligence led partnership work helps prevent things getting out of hand.

The Chairman thanked the PCC and the Chief Constable for giving practical and honest answers which addressed concerns at a high level. The Panel recognise that the PCC has a big job looking after the Thames Valley and that he has reassured the Panel that this excellent partnership working will continue. The major concern of Members is prevention and funding of enforcement.

On behalf of the Panel he thanked them both.

6. Confirmation Hearing - Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner

The Panel considered the report and following questioning the main points are summarised under the three questions below:-

What will Cllr Carroll contribute to police governance that the Commissioner alone would not?

- He has been a Member of the Thames Valley Police Authority and the Chairman of its Complaints and Professional Standards Committee.
- He is an experienced councillor, being the Executive Deputy Leader of Wycombe District Council and a Member of Buckinghamshire County Council and therefore has extensive experience of engaging with, and acting as the advocate of, the communities he serves.
- He was an experienced magistrate, being appointed in 1987 and serving for over 4 years and therefore has knowledge of the Criminal Justice System.
- He owned a small business which has been very successful
- He has played a large role in community safety. One example was the role he played in addressing the terrorist incident in High Wycombe. At the time he was Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and he was personally thanked by the Minister for the work he undertook liaising with the community and the police.

How will the Deputy work alongside the Commissioner and complement his role? What delegated powers will the Deputy PCC have?

- Shares the Commissioner's values and respects the tradition of non-politicised British policing, as well as his view that the primary role of the police service and the Commissioner acting on behalf of the public is to cut crime and improve crime detection rates.
- Complements the Commissioner's own experience, skills and knowledge in terms of his governance experience as the Chairman of the Police Authority's 'Complaints and Professional Standards Committee', whereas the Commissioner's experience and skills focussed on performance management and holding the Force to account as Chairman of the Authority's Performance Review Committee.
- They have worked together on the Police Authority for a number of years and have a good working relationship.
- Appendix 1 makes it clear what responsibilities are delegated to the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner - the areas that cannot be delegated are agreeing the precept, Police and Crime Plan and dismissing the Chief Constable.
- He will act as a critical friend and liaise with Community Safety Partnerships.
- There will be an appraisal system but this is a new role. The roles and responsibilities of the Deputy PCC should be put into the Police and Crime Plan. An Association of PCC has clearly defined their roles. A copy can be submitted to the Panel.

Will the Deputy PCC have any particular responsibilities in terms of partners, specific locations etc?

- David Carroll's specific background knowledge of the views of the communities of Buckinghamshire will complement the Commissioner's knowledge of those across Berkshire. Together, their combined experience as members of the Police Authority will also inform their understanding of the service needs of the communities across Oxfordshire in particular and of the balance required between urban and rural communities in general across the Thames Valley.
- Whilst David Carroll has knowledge of one particular locality he will be acting as the Deputy for all areas. However, it was not a good use of taxpayers money for the Commissioner to be driving 120 miles a day across the Thames Valley, so where appropriate David Carroll will be dealing with those local issues. However, there would be a balance of representation across all three communities.
- A Member made a point that one of the areas to address in the future was the co-ordination of Community Safety Partnerships across the Counties and to look at Joint Commissioning arrangements.
- Thames Valley is a huge area and the proposal is to appoint the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner part time – other Authorities are appointing more than one Deputy in much smaller areas than the Thames Valley. This however may be reviewed in the future.

The Panel discussed the report and agreed that Mr Carroll met the criteria for the appointment of Deputy PCC. They welcomed the report and on taking a vote agreed (with one abstention):-

RESOLVED

- 1. The Panel considered the information provided by the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley (see Appendix A of the report) on the proposed deputy Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley**
- 2. Following questioning, the Panel agreed to the appointment of David Carroll as Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley**
- 3. That the Panel delegates to the Panel Scrutiny Officer, in consultation with the Panel Chairman, the development and submission of the report to the Commissioner containing the Panel's recommendation on the appointment of the proposed deputy Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley**

7. Dealing with Complaints against the Police and Crime Commissioner

The Panel has a role in dealing with non-criminal complaints against the PCC which is contained within the written report. The Chairman reported on the need to set up a Sub-Group and the following Members volunteered:-

- Mr Terry Burke

- Mr Rajinder Sohpal
- Mr Mark Booty
- Mr Mohammed Sharif
- Mrs Pam Pearce
- Mr Iain McCracken
- Mr Jesse Grey

On a vote being taken (which was unanimous) the Panel made the following resolution.

RESOLVED

That the Panel:

- 1. Make the delegations to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Chief Executive set out in section 3.1 of the report.**
- 2. Make the delegations to the Panel's Scrutiny Officer and a Complaints Sub-Committee set out in section 3.2 of the report**
- 3. Make the delegations to the Panel's Scrutiny officer and a Complaints Sub-Committee set out in Section 3.5 of the report and approve the complaint handling process detailed at Appendix A of the report**
- 4. Make the delegations to the Panel's scrutiny officer as set out in section 3.7 of the report**

8. Date of Next Meeting

1st February 2013 at Oxfordshire County Council

CHAIRMAN