

# Minutes

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**Minutes of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel held on Friday 16 May 2014, in Council Chamber Wycombe District Council Queen Victoria Road High Wycombe HP11 1BB, commencing at 11.00 am and concluding at 1.00 pm.**

## **Members Present**

Councillor Noel Brown (Chiltern District Council), Councillor Trevor Egleton (Buckinghamshire County Council), Councillor Jesse Grey (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead), Councillor Bill Jones (Vale of White Horse District Council), Councillor Pat Kennedy (Oxford City Council), Councillor Iain McCracken (Bracknell Forest Council), Councillor Barrie Patman (Wokingham Borough Council) and Councillor Quentin Webb (West Berkshire Council)

## **Officers Present**

Michael Chard (Buckinghamshire County Council), Helen Fincher and Clare Gray

## **Others Present**

David Carroll (Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner), Francis Habgood (Thames Valley Police), Paul Hammond (Chief Executive Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner), Anthony Stansfeld (Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner) and Ian Thompson (Acting CFO Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner)

## **Apologies**

Councillor Bill Bendyshe-Brown (Wycombe District Council), Councillor Mark Booty (West Oxfordshire District Council), Terry Burke (Independent Co-opted Member), Councillor Anita Cranmer (South Buckinghamshire District Council), Councillor Kieron Mallon (Oxfordshire County Council), Councillor Tony Page (Reading 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), Mr Rajinder Sohpal (Independent Co-opted Member), Councillor Cec Tallack (Milton Keynes Council) and Sara Thornton (Chief Constable Thames Valley Police)

### **1. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **2. Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 March 2014 were agreed as a correct record subject to amending Councillor Jesse Grey as an apology.

### **3. Confirmation Hearing - PCC Chief Finance Officer**

Members noted that the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 stated that the PCC must notify the Panel of his proposed appointment to the post of the Commissioner's Chief Financial Officer. Under the Act the PCC must notify the Panel of the following information:-

- The name of the person proposed to be appointed to the post of Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Chief Executive (i.e Mr Ian Thompson).
- The criteria used to assess the suitability of Mr Thompson for the appointment including why he satisfies the criteria (as set out in the report).
- The terms and conditions on which Mr Thompson is to be appointed (included within the Annex to the report).

The Panel asked the following questions:-

What performance standards would the post be working to?

The Chief Executive reported that the job description and the roles and responsibilities of the post were included in the report. Under a separate system officers have a Performance Development Appraisal with interim reviews. Corporate and personal objectives are set for each postholder . This was a standard system used within the Police Force.

What is the split of responsibilities between the Deputy Chief Executive and the Chief Financial Officer (CFO)?

For the CFO the bulk of the work was financial management which was a statutory requirement. In order to create resilience it was important to have a Deputy Chief Executive. The post holder would contribute to the Statutory and Corporate Management for the OPCC.

Did the Structure have too many primary roles?

Ian Thompson had his own designated Deputy. The OPCC had rationalised its structure and taken out an unnecessary posts and reinvested this funding into other priority areas to build capacity and capability.

Why has it taken so long to make this appointment?

When the structure of the OPCC was being looked at a 'bottom-up' approach' was taken. It was important to undertake a comprehensive review of organisational need before this appointment the Job Description of this key statutory post was finalised and an appointment made. The PCC reported that there were a number of fundamental changes happening within the OPCC such as responsibility for commissioning victim support and restorative justice services and the award of grants from the Property Fund. Some Services may only be given a small amount of funding but it could take a disproportionate amount of time to administer.

The Chairman asked for a briefing note on how the OPCC would operate in the future, including a structure chart.

Two Members proposed and seconded the recommendation which was agreed unanimously.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the Panel recommends to the Police and Crime Commissioner that Mr Ian John Thompson be appointed to the position of the PCC's Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Chief Executive.**

#### **4. Review of the Police and Crime Plan 2013-17**

At the last Meeting the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner had informed Members of the PCC's intention to publish a refreshed Police and Crime Plan that incorporates emerging new, additional, prioritised issues/risks.

The PCC reported on the following issues:-

##### **Cyber Crime and Fraud**

The PCC reported that crime was changing. Whilst residents were properly concerned about burglary, in fact the impact of it costs less than £10 million each year across the Thames Valley. In comparison the Home Secretary estimates that the cost of Cyber Crime was up to £50-60 billion for the Country. The PCC therefore estimated

that £1-2 billion of this must relate to the Thames Valley and yet was largely unreported. As a result of this some companies could suffer financial losses, particularly small and medium sized companies many of which exist in the Thames Valley. Cyber crime was dealt with centrally by the City of London Police. The PCC took fraud cases in his area very seriously. It was a difficult area as the victim and the perpetrator could be in different counties or countries even.

#### Female Genital Mutilation

This was another area of concern as there were so few prosecutions but one area which is particularly looking at this issue was Slough. There was a conference in Slough on Monday 19 May on this issue. Another area of concern was 'false' marriage.

#### Relationship with Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

The PCC reported that there was a new Chief Crown Prosecutor for CPS Thame and Chiltern named Adrian Foster and it was important to develop a good relationship with the CPS in order to ensure that there was an efficient and effective system between the Police Force and the Crown Prosecution Service. Previously cases had been rejected because the quality of files and evidence were not seen as adequate and feedback from the CPS had been too late to address such deficiencies. It was important that there was adequate forward planning and that for the benefit of victims and witnesses, the case was not abandoned at a late stage shortly before the trial date.

#### Dealing with road traffic accidents

The Force would be looking at how serious road traffic accidents were dealt with. Roads often had to be closed for a long period of time which disrupted the local economy. They would be looking at collecting evidence more quickly.

#### Late night drinking

Some localities were better than others in dealing with late night drinking related problems and the PCC referred to the Purple Flag Scheme and the late night levy. Community Safety Partnerships would benefit from the late night levy scheme and it was up to Local Authorities to address this.

#### Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes were moving forward with the establishment of their Hubs but no solution had been found for Berkshire. The Leaders of the Berkshire Local Authorities had asked for individual Hubs but there were not enough police resources for this structure. The Police were putting forward the option of having two Hubs across Berkshire.

#### Victim Services

The PCC was developing a combined referral service to be commissioned in collaboration with the Sussex and Surrey PCC's (whereas Hampshire and Kent were organising their own arrangements for commissioning Victim Services).

#### Police Integrity and Leadership

There have been a number of high profile cases in the Country in which the police have been seen not to have acted as they should have, such as Hillsborough and the case with Stephen Lawrence. Cases of this type have not happened within Thames Valley Police but nevertheless the PCC and Chief Constable have set up the Complaints, Integrity and Ethics Panel.

During discussion Members made the following comments:-

A Member asked how a Local Force could address the huge issue of **cyber crime** which was a global activity. He asked whether any extra resources were required and whether this would be co-ordinated centrally. The PCC commented that this area of crime needed to be investigated properly. Cases would be reported centrally to the City of London Police but may then be allocated to local forces for local investigation. It was also important to alert local residents to this crime threat as for example older people could be targeted. It was important to promote keeping personal bank account information and computers secure.

**Do you hold CSP's to account with agreed actions and targets?**

The PCC replied that to date CSP's were not reporting back in detail on how they spent their funding but if the PCC was not happy with the way the CSP was operating he would not give them any funding the following year. Members commented that any organisation who had been given funding should have a business plan outlining value for money and outcomes.

#### **How far back would the Complaints, Integrity and Ethics Panel go back on previous cases?**

The PCC reported that it depended on what issues the Panel was discussing. Some complainants continued to write into the Police over a number of years and the PCC commented that the system was open to abuse. It was important to draw a close to a complaint and to not cause a disproportionate amount of work e.g. over a historical parking offence. The Deputy PCC reported that the first meeting would set the scene for Members and look at training. They would report back to the Panel on their Work Programme once established. A Member expressed concern about reopening old complaints and that the Panel had limited resources.

#### **Was the PCC working on track for setting up Victim Services?**

The PCC confirmed that they were working towards October 2014 for taking over responsibility for allocating grants for specialist service providers and April 2015 for commissioning and implementing the generic referral services, as per Ministry of Justice timetables and deadlines .

#### **Were there any obstacles to the delivery of the Plan?**

The PCC commented that some performance was difficult to measure and also some areas were not reported eg FGM, cyber crime and fraud. He would like to set clear targets e.g. how soon a road was opened after a traffic accident. Last year it was easier to monitor as he had three main priorities:-

- Burglary was now at a 40 year low and burglary in Reading had reduced by 40%. There was only one area where there was a 'red' performance indicator and this was in burglary where the figures were so low it was difficult to make an impact. To reduce the figures any further the Force would have to spend a disproportionate amount of time for little gain. It was important now to look at other areas of crime.
- Rural Crime was difficult to measure but on what information the Force had obtained there was a reduction of 20%. Feedback from residents has been very positive. Rural crime could also be a front to serious organised crime and intimidation and it was important to show a police response.
- MASH – this was proceeding well apart from the issues in Berkshire

The Member recognised this issue but also commented that it was essential that the Panel received a full report on performance which could include a dashboard of performance measures with red-amber-green highlights. This information was important to the Panel in order to assess whether the PCC was achieving his targets. Local Area Commanders could assist with this information. The PCC commented that he did not like performance being measured through a dashboard and used the example of burglary which showed red even though they were performing well in this area. Two extra burglaries could have a huge impact on the statistics as the figure was already low. This document could be misinterpreted by the public.

#### **Has the Government given PCC's adequate funding for Victim Support?**

The PCC reported that it was difficult to comment on at the moment. The Chief Executive said there was no evidence either way that the funding was insufficient. Ministry of Justice money had been given to PCC's to enable them to take responsibility at a local level for commissioning victim services that had previously been supported and delivered under a national system of victim support. There would be greater clarity as to the adequacy of funding when the PCC had undertaken a local needs assessment of what services victims require and the services had been subject to a competitive commissioning process. The PCC reported that historically Victim Support had got a loyal volunteer base and the OJEU Procurement Rules stated that they had to go out to contract which may introduce a risk that current volunteers may not or cannot carry out the work under whatever new arrangements are put in place. A Member commented that Local Authorities often gave grants to victim support and expressed concern that if this was not funded adequately the OPCC may look to Councils to help give extra funding, which they could not afford.

#### **Was the OPCC adequately staffed?**

The PCC had concerns about the sustainability of his small office and the impact on the office if a member of staff went on maternity or long term sick leave. It also helped to have the new appointment of Deputy Chief Executive to cover if needed. The OPCC had used a 'bottom-up' approach to their restructuring and had held staff workshops looking at the legislative obligations on the PCC and how this transcribed into day to day activities. They had looked in detail at the capacity and capability of the office and the level of resource and skill required to discharge roles and responsibilities. It was a collective effort to draw up a structure which was fit for purpose. Once job descriptions had been drawn up they had gone through a staff slot-in process and looked at pay evaluation for the new posts. They had been running a number of vacancies since November 2012 until all decision had been made on the new structure. No extra resources would be employed until they were sure that there was a demonstrable deficiency in the new structure.

#### **What about the change in Government taxation?**

The Chief Finance Officer reported that this issue of additional employer national insurance costs would be addressed in the next Medium term Financial Plan and commented that it affected Local Authorities as well.

**The Chairman concluded by acknowledging the challenges ahead. He informed the PCC that performance against targets was an essential piece of information for the Panel in order to scrutinise his performance effectively. He would discuss how this could be taken forward with the PCC so that there could be success measures for each objective.**

**Action: Chairman/PCC**

**The Panel agreed the refresh of the Police and Crime Plan 2013-17.**

#### **5. Police and Crime Plan - overview of delivery**

The Police and Crime Commissioner reported on Strategic Objective 1.

- Anti-Social Behaviour - At the end of 2013/14, 118 cases had been identified, of which 78 were closed and 40 remained open. They had met the target set out in the Plan. Reference was made to the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 which was expected to be implemented in October 2014.
- Domestic and other inter-personal abuse, inc. child sexual exploitation – There are currently 19 ongoing investigations across most of the Thames Valley area relating to possible child exploitation which are at varying stages of investigation. The Force approach to the protection and investigation of children at risk from sexual exploitation is captured in a specific Child Exploitation Strategy. The Strategy is given effect through a detailed Action Plan and contains 31 specific actions and initiatives. The Serious Case Review for the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board is due to be completed in July/August.
- Safeguarding vulnerable adults, children and young people – The Buckinghamshire MASH is expected to go live in September and the Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes MASH hubs are due to go live later in the Autumn. The Berkshire model has yet to be agreed. The Force has recognised the impact of offenders who can be classified as 'Crime Magnets'. A response will only be used for serious offences.

During discussion the following points:-

- A Member referred to the Community Trigger which gives victims and communities the right to request a review of their case and bring agencies together to take a problem solving approach to find a solution. Recommendations for application of a Community Trigger across TVP were being drafted and considered by the Force in June and he asked if the document was ready to be circulated. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that it was being discussed at local level by the CSP's and the PCC was waiting for their views. The Member commented that it would be useful to see an overview of comments for the Thames Valley. The Chief Executive commented that it would

be useful for each Member to chase their own Local Authority for any responses, which could be co-ordinated by the Panel.

- Reference was made to the Berkshire MASH. The PCC commented that there were not enough Police Officers to resource six separate hubs and they only had resources for two hubs. The system needed to be sustainable and Council Leaders needed to discuss this further.
- A Member referred to the Troubled Families initiative and commented on the success of one agency dealing with all the issues rather than having to engage in lots of groups. This helped to remove barriers. CSP's have the best ability to reduce anti-social behaviour so it was important to retain the funding in this area. With joint working with the Police anti-social behaviour could be significantly reduced. There had been an excellent response to Anti-Social Behaviour in Chesham with four convictions. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that lead agencies were better placed in dealing with anti-social behaviour working with the community. He referred to 'Dfuse' which was a small charity that provides training in defusing social conflict and responding to crime and ASB which had recently provided training events in three areas in the Thames Valley. The root causes of ASB needed to be addressed. The PCC responded that resources for policing were limited and it was important to work with other agencies to address this area. An example was given of the work undertaken by Positive Futures in Oxford. The Chief Executive reported that they would be working with CSP's to look at priorities and how the funding was utilised in the most effective way using local knowledge. A Member commented that it was important to have a clear system in place for ASB.
- A Member asked for a briefing on the new ASB legislation. The Chief Executive reported that once they had received the relevant guidance from Government they would pass this onto Members.

The report was noted.

## **6. The Integrity of Crime Data in the Thames Valley**

The PCC reported on the recent press coverage of the recent Interim Report by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary regarding crime recording by the police service at national level. The Interim Report drew on its findings from visits to 13 police forces, which did not include Thames Valley Police. Recording crime is very subjective e.g. if a 12 year old beat up his sister should this be recorded as a violent crime. Rape cases could also be reported incorrectly.

The Chief Executive reported that this Interim Report had attracted a lot of media coverage on the under reporting of crime. When Thames Valley were last inspected in September 2011 no significant issues were identified. He wanted to give assurance to Panel Members that the integrity of crime data was good so the PCC had requested a report from the Chief Constable. Unfortunately the national report had undermined confidence in all Police Forces. The Regional Inspector was adopting a harder test with Forces this year so although a clean bill of health was given in 2011, this time around forces would be assessed against higher standards.

The Deputy Chief Constable reported that government stated that the rules concerning data were not complex. However, the guidance covers over a hundred pages and includes a number of processes. He commented that the Service to the public and the victim was the most important aspect rather than the crime being in the wrong category. According to the crime survey in England and Wales crime had reduced by 38% and this responds to figures recorded by the Forces. However, there would always be unreported crime. Hospital admissions have reduced significantly relating to violent crimes and police figures support this information as well. He was confident that the Force was doing their utmost to record crime accurately.

During discussion the following points were noted:-

- The problem was the perception of crime rather than the level of crime itself which was still high. The PCC reported that this was a difficult issue to address.
- Reference was made to the new Niche System and whether this would impact on figures. The new system was very powerful and linked to a number of databases. There was an adjacent system

alongside the new system to ensure a proper transition of data and the outcomes for crime recording would still remain the same.

- A Member commented that frontline police officers needed good training in terms of recording crime. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that frontline officers were trained on a basic set of rules. However, once the information was sent to the main desk, those officers had been trained specifically on how crime was recorded so they could enter the information correctly. There was a code of ethics on crime recording. When officers were trained on the new system these rules would be reinforced.
- Were the Force confident that they would satisfy Inspectors? The Deputy Chief Constable reported that the figures were monitored and audited on a regular basis so he expected standards to be maintained. He commented that the size of the sample being used was quite small but could seem significant at a national level.
- How could you reassure the public? The Deputy Chief Constable reported that this was difficult without a recent inspection and there was a general distrust with all national statistics. They had the evidence of the previous inspection and it was up to the resident to make up their own mind. The Force received high satisfaction levels when obtaining feedback from victims and hopefully this message would be passed onto the general public.
- Would the change in the system have any adverse impact on management and staffing? The Deputy Chief Constable reported that there would always be unfamiliarity with a new system but there had been no changes to call handling. This had dropped slightly at the beginning but had returned to normal.
- A recent survey had been conducted on resident priorities in Bracknell Forest and the perception of crime was third on the list alongside the environment and leisure. The Member then referred to domestic abuse and the importance of getting standardised information from the NHS. His Local MP who was also a GP was addressing this issue with Health England.

The Chairman thanked the PCC for this item and commented on the importance to the Panel and the public of the robustness of Thames Valley reporting procedures.

## **7. Proposals for Future Operation of the Police and Crime Panel**

The Chairman of the Police and Crime Panel reported on proposals for future meetings.

During discussion the following points were made:-

- There was a concern about the low attendance of Members at this meeting, obviously related to elections taking place and a number of Panel Members being involved.
- A Member expressed concern about having two venues but it was difficult to find a convenient meeting point for the Thames Valley. Whilst rotating did not work, having two venues would also be difficult. Another Member suggested not rotating around all venues but having more than two.
- A Member referred to public question time to Panel Members and how this would work alongside changing the venue arrangement. The Chairman reported that at the moment there was no facility for the public to ask questions of Members. This needed a structured process but it was unlikely there would be a huge number of questions put forward. The Panel could consider written questions as it was important to engage the public as much as possible. Another Member welcomed the idea of public questions which would be managed through the Panel.
- A Member welcomed the idea of undertaking more 'Task and Finish' work and expanding the 'overview' function of the Panel. It was important to both scrutinise and support the PCC.
- A Member welcomed the idea of having a themed meeting.
- The Chairman suggested that local issues were more Member led.

The Chairman suggested that as the attendance was low that the views of Members not present should be sought on the future working of the Panel and that they have a more focused approach to issues and perhaps a

themed meeting with external organisations providing presentations. A decision on future options for the Panel will be made at the next meeting.

## **8. General Issues**

The Panel received the report on national publications relevant to the work of the Police and Crime Panel.

A Member asked about the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) being disbanded and what would take its place?

The PCC reported that the Home Secretary was looking at disbanding ACPO and moving the funding to PCC's to set up alternative arrangements, as necessary and appropriate, on the assumption that ACPO was not delivering. Retired Army General Sir Nick Parker had been asked by PCC's to look into this area and one suggestion was having a Chief Constables Council which should be more open and transparent about national policing issues.

Have there been any further developments on merging blue light services?

There has been some national discussion. In some cases this would be easy to achieve with smaller, county-based, force areas. Ambulance Services have very different control rooms and systems. It would be unrealistic to have the same triage and expertise for all three services. There needs to be a further steer from the Home Office about what direction this is taking. A Member commented that once further direction had been obtained that a briefing could be given to Members on how this would be taken forward.

## **9. Work Programme**

The Work Programme would be amended according to revised priorities.

The Policy Officer reported that at the last meeting the Panel had agreed to set up a Task and Finish Group to investigate how the PCC could be supported in working in partnership with key stakeholders. A proposal/scoping template had been included within the agenda. Members were asked to volunteer for the Group and appoint a Chairman. The following Members volunteered; Barrie Patman, Iain McCracken, Quentin Webb and Jesse Gray. Other Members who were not present would be asked to volunteer via an e-mail.

## **10. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

11 July 2014 – South Oxfordshire District Council

**CHAIRMAN**