

Minutes

Minutes of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel held on Friday 16 December 2016, in Olympic Room, Aylesbury Vale District Council, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury Bucks HP19 8FF, commencing at 11.00 am and concluding at 12.30 pm.

Members Present

Councillor Patricia Birchley (Buckinghamshire County Council), Councillor Margaret Burke (Milton Keynes Council), Councillor Tony Ilott (Cherwell District Council), Councillor Trevor Egleton (South Bucks District Council), Councillor Kieron Mallon (Oxfordshire County Council), Curtis-James Marshall (Independent Member), Councillor Chris McCarthy (Vale of White Horse Council), Councillor Barrie Patman (Wokingham Borough Council), Councillor Dee Sinclair (Oxford City Council), Councillor Paul Sohal (Slough Borough Council), Councillor Quentin Webb (West Berkshire Council) and Councillor Ian White (South Oxfordshire District Council)

Officers Present

Clare Gray

Others Present

Matthew Barber, Paul Hammond (Office of the PCC), Lindsay Jopling (Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner), Anthony Stansfeld (PCC) and Ian Thompson (Office of the PCC)

Apologies

Councillor Julia Adey (Wycombe District Council), Councillor Derek Sharp (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead), Councillor Emily Culverhouse (Chiltern District Council), Julia Girling (Independent Member), Councillor Angela Macpherson (Aylesbury Vale District Council), Councillor Iain McCracken (Bracknell Forest Council) and Councillor Tony Page (Reading Borough Council)

76. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

77. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 October 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

Cllr Burke referred to the item on collaboration where she had asked for figures on the number of perpetrators who were foreign nationals who took part in Serious Organised Crime. The PCC reported that it was difficult to get this information as it was restricted. Cllr Burke asked for a general % figure comparing non British nationals. The PCC reported that the information recorded did not differentiate between specific areas but as an estimate he would say over 30%.

Cllr Burke then referred to the item on topical issues (page 8) and asked about the market price for the empty police house in Newport Pagnell. The Chief Constable commented that he would give her an update on this property after the meeting.

78. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

79. Draft Police and Crime Plan

Police and Crime Panels have a statutory duty to review and comment on the Police and Crime Plan and to make recommendations. They should particularly focus on the Commissioner's objectives, the accountability arrangements in place and expectations in terms of performance.

The Panel had a Plan Working Group which included Cllrs Quentin Webb (Chairman), Julia Adey, Barrie Patman, Tony Page and Trevor Egleton. They met on 21 October and 14 November to look at the draft Plan. Cllr Webb reported that the emerging themes were discussed at the first meeting and the draft plan at the second meeting. However the draft Plan at that time did not include the PCC objectives which made it difficult for Members to provide any constructive comments. On a presentational issue Members commented that the front page should include a small map to show the area covered by the Thames Valley. Other comments were included in the Panel report (page 15 of the agenda). A set of questions had also been drafted and sent to the PCC for a response.

The following questions were asked:-

Do you feel that the Plan is managing public expectations in terms of reductions in neighbourhood policing ?
The PCC reported that there had been minimal reductions in neighbourhood policing.

You have about 25 key aims in your report. With current budget pressures do you feel that they are achievable ?
The PCC reported that they were not all totally achievable particularly with current budget pressures but the Police Force would respond to all crime types. He particularly mentioned fraud as a priority area that deserved time and effort. In terms of priorities and aims in other Plans across the Country his number of key aims were about average and some areas had up to 41 aims.

What gaps are there in the plan ? What are the strategic risks of not setting these objectives and what processes are in place to manage and mitigate those risks ?
The PCC reported that for every type of crime he needed to use his policy judgement and the Force, operational judgement. The Plan covered the vast majority of crime.

Do you feel that the Plan is managing partner expectations and it is clear to them what they need to deliver and what the Force will deliver in terms of achieving your objectives ? To what extent is the delivery of the particular priorities set out in your draft Police and Crime Plan contingent on partnership working and what will you do if this is not moving forward ?
The PCC reported that partnership working varied in different areas across the eighteen authorities. In some areas partnership working had been extremely effective e.g tackling burglary in Reading and rural crime across the Thames Valley. Other areas such as setting up of MASH in the Thames Valley were outside of his political control but he would have preferred having fewer MASH in the Berkshire area. He generally had built up good relationships with partners such as Community Safety Partnerships, schools, NHS etc. If partnership working failed the police were generally used as the service of last resort.

Do you feel that your objectives are measurable and that the Panel will have enough information in order to scrutinise your performance and monitor your success ?
The PCC reported that he generally supported having measurable targets but that this had not been supported by the then Home Secretary who wanted the police force to use their own judgement rather than be target

driven. One target could be crime figures rising but this could be down to factors outside of his control. One example he gave was domestic homicides where often the victim had never been in contact with the police.

What were the Chief Constable's comments on the draft Plan ? Have you included them within the document ? Did you take into account the comments of the Plan Working Group ? What are the views of Community Safety Partnerships on the draft Plan ? Will you be carrying out any further consultation ?

The Chief Constable did not have any major issues with the Plan. He had taken into account the comments of the Plan Working Group. In terms of Community Safety Partnerships they had welcomed the fact that the PCC was still allocating grant funding to them which was being top sliced by the PCC to commission any services where there were gaps. There would be no further consultation on the Plan.

Did you feel that the consultation was self selecting or were you happy with the consultation process ? What will you do next time to get more engagement from hard to reach groups? Did you offer to translate the Plan in different languages?

The PCC commented that it was more effective to use CSP's to liaise with hard to reach groups as they had more detailed knowledge of local communities. He had not translated the Plan into any different languages. He also commented that sometimes Community Leaders of hard to reach groups were not able to represent their community fully and it was people on the edge of the group who needed to be reached but were difficult to identify.

Do you feel that this Plan is balanced and meets the needs of all the areas of the Thames Valley ?

The PCC reported that he thought that the Plan was balanced and met the needs of all areas but that Thames Valley was a large area to cover. He took account of all the CSP's Strategic Assessments and Plans.

You refer to increasing the dialogue between the public and local police teams and to improve safeguarding of vulnerable people in relation to exploitation but how do you intend to do this with reductions in neighbourhood policing (page 51)?

The PCC commented that compared to other areas neighbourhood policing had not really been reduced by much. They had altered the operational structure to help ensure a more efficient and effective service but this had not impacted much on numbers.

Do you feel that this Plan will meet the needs of the increasing ageing population, particularly looking at the increase of cyber crime and fraud ? How will you be developing further links and strategic partnerships with business such as banks ? Do you feel that your office has adequate resources to do this across the Thames Valley?

The PCC reported that this was a difficult area and particularly expressed concern about the number of scams being used on the older population which were very clever. This was a national problem and it was difficult to educate people about the dangers of digital crime. Action Fraud were doing an excellent job considering the resources they were given but more needed to be invested into this area bearing in mind the financial loss to local people and the Country. The PCC reported that he attended some local business meetings but as yet had no associations with banks. In terms of his office, he had one of the most cost effective offices in the Country and he had made the decision to keep the office smaller so that more money could be spent on the Force. The PCC then referred to increasing responsibilities being given and particularly referred to the Crest Report which advocates a rebalancing of power between central government and local areas on criminal justice policy and also the Mayor/PCC model in Manchester.

In your draft Plan it says that nearly 80% of respondents to your survey feel that their children are safe online? Do you agree with this ? You have a key aim to improve public awareness of cyber crime but how will you be implementing this key aim and in particular be targeting parents ?

The PCC expressed concern that 80% of parents felt that their children were safe online and that more needed to be done in showing the dangers of digital crime to the elderly and younger population. The PCC and local partners had undertaken high profile campaigns to warn of the dangers of digital crime.

One of your key aims is to tackle FGM in the Thames Valley. However does this depend on children reporting on their family? How do you intend to increase the possibility of prosecuting perpetrators and is this an issue where health services could contribute further to provide evidence ? When will the Panel be able to hear about the wider strategy you are developing for tackling FGM threat ?

The PCC commented that this was one area where partnership working was key particularly with the NHS and schools being proactive in this area. He expressed concern that victims and organisations were not reporting this crime therefore it was difficult to prosecute. He also referred to FGM parties. The MASH were also instrumental in providing information on this area. He commented that he liked the French system where they inspect children and prosecute straight away.

Out of your key aims how high a priority is unsolved crime which you have commented that you are concerned about in the local press ?Your Plan states that Thames Valley recorded violent crime with injury increased by twice the national average compared to the year before (page 47). Young people are also being used for County lines and cuckooing where vulnerable people accommodation is being used to sell drugs ? If crime remains unsolved how will these perpetrators be stopped ?

The PCC reported that they had been successful in a number of areas such as burglary and rural crime however other areas were unsatisfactory. It was important to look at specific areas to ensure the right focus was being given to priority objectives.

To help CSP's support the delivery of the PCC's aims in relation to elder abuse and gang related knife crime, would the OPCC be able to provide a breakdown of data by LPA to show the scale of the issues?

The Chief Constable would provide a written answer to this.

Action: Chief Constable

How much impact do you think the Policing and Crime Bill and the national Policing Vision 2025 will have on the key aims listed in your draft Plan ?

The PCC was waiting for the Policing and Crime Bill to become legislation and if any changes needed to be made to the Plan this would be undertaken through the Refresh process.

The Chairman, Cllr Egleton welcomed the Plan particularly the fact that it could be identified as the PCC Plan with his own personal statements rather than a corporate document, which provided clear direction on a number of areas.

The Vice Chairman, Cllr Mallon also welcomed the Plan, particularly the section on vulnerability and prevention. He referred to hidden crime such as honour based crime, forced marriage and exploitation of the caste system from India. The PCC reported that tackling honour based crime was very difficult as it was hidden in the community where some women did not speak English and it was difficult to meet them. They could also be ostracised by their own community. Cllr Mallon referred to the previous point that often the wrong focus was given to community leaders as there was easy access to them rather than speaking to the community as a whole and people who were vulnerable. A partnership approach to this issue was welcomed.

Cllr Birchley referred to page 33 of the agenda 'What you told us' which said that 57% said they had been a victim or witness to a crime, which seemed very high. The PCC commented that this may relate to the fact that they had a separate survey for victims and also that people would not respond to surveys if they were happy with the service they were being given and had not been a victim of crime. Cllr Sinclair commented that near this figure there was a comment about people feeling safe which looked illogical next to the figure of 57% being a victim and the PCC agreed to look at how the information was compiled and presented.

Action: OPCC

Cllr Sinclair asked for a breakdown of the consultation figures according to geographical area/urban/rural and ethnicity. Some of this information had been presented to the Plan Working Group.

Cllr McCarthy referred to 'Your Police Area' and asked about the number of PCSO's. The Chief Constable reported that they had been included in the police staff number and the PCC agreed to break down this figure to provide more information in the Plan.

Action: OPCC

Cllr White suggested that the Plan be checked for acronyms or that a glossary be provided.

Action: OPCC

Cllr Egleton referred to the comment that many people would like to see more police officers patrolling the streets. He asked about the changes to the neighbourhood policing structure and how this would impact on police visibility. The Chief Constable reported that the new operating model had not yet been officially communicated as he needed to speak to the PCC on this issue. However, the background to the new operating model had been reported to the Panel and no changes had been made to the basic building blocks. Cllr Egleton asked how the pilot schemes for neighbourhood policing had worked in the Thames Valley and the Chief Constable commented that he would be happy to provide further information on this area.

Action: Chief Constable

The Chairman thanked the Plan Working Group for their report and the Panel welcomed the new draft Plan.

80. Topical Issues

National Association for Police and Crime Panels

There have been discussions about the potential benefits of Police and Crime Panels having a national association which would mean having a recognised voice to represent views at a national level and provide support and development. Members fully supported this idea as long as it did not become an overly bureaucratic organisation and would be good at promoting information sharing, addressing any changes in legislation and lobbying Parliament.

Mental Health

The PCC reported that mental health was an important priority and that they had been addressing it in the following ways:-

- Mental Health Crisis Concordat Partnership had been rolled out across the Thames Valley. A formal review of the Concordat Partnership takes place at least every two years.
- A Force level mental health triage partnership group had been established which considered both strategic and operational best practice
- Respective service commissioners ensure availability of sufficient, appropriately equipped and fit-for-purpose Health based Places of Safety, including contingency considerations.
- Each partner has designated a senior manager from their organisation to be responsible for operational service monitoring.
- TVP Special Constable mental health training package is now complete for delivery in the New Year.
- Targeted work is underway with the South Central Ambulance Service to identify possibilities for improved commissioning and provision of ambulance transfer.
- The number of Section 136 detentions by police officers has reduced and the triage partnership schemes have freed up a considerable amount of TVP officer time and resources.

Cllr Mallon referred to the paragraph in the OPCC report (page 67) regarding ongoing challenges. The report highlighted that there was a potential significant risk to continued funding of schemes across Berkshire, which are currently part funded by the relevant Clinical Commissioning Groups and funding may be withdrawn in 2017.

Cllr Mallon also asked whether the position of the proposed Deputy PCC would help liaison with the nine Health and Wellbeing Boards in the Thames Valley. The PCC reported that it was difficult to liaise with that number of

Boards and also expressed concern that he had written letters to them but did not receive many replies. Cllr Burke commented that the PCC should write again to those Councils who had not replied. Cllr Sinclair reported that it was important to identify which Boards were not responding.

Mr Marshall commented that he was a Special Constable and he said approximately a third of his calls were relating to mental health issues and that working in partnership was crucial. He asked whether special provision was made for individuals less than 18 years of age or whether they were taken to a police cell as the last resort? The PCC reported that if they could not get assistance from the health service then they had to obey the law and take them to a place of safety. The Chief Constable referred to Section 136 which related to detaining people in custody. He reported that there had been a significant reduction in the use of Section 136 but that there were still pressures on provision for places of safety which needed to be addressed and provision of beds varied across the Thames Valley. He commented that this needed to be balanced against the fact that the individual may be a threat to society and cause harm. The Chairman commented that it was important that there was consistent provision and that all areas worked in partnership on this important issue rather than protecting their budgets.

Cllr Birchley asked about training for officers in dealing with vulnerable people. The Chief Constable reported that there was general awareness training and also that police officers went out on shift with mental health practitioners which helped develop further skills. He referred to an email he had recently received from the ambulance service which had praised a police officer on the empathetic way the officer had handled a person with mental health problems.

The PCC reported however that it was important for police officers to protect themselves foremost if the person has a weapon and is looking to attack the officer. Mr Marshall commented as a Special Constable that use of force was sometimes necessary if a vulnerable person was looking to harm someone irrespective of whether they had mental health problems.

101 service – the police non-emergency number

Cllr White commented that concerns had been raised by his local Parish and District Council regarding delays and issues around the use of the police non-emergency number. The Chief Constable reported that it was difficult to predict demand and also have control over operator vacancy rates. He commented that often skilled operators would leave to train to become police officers and that priority had to be given to emergency 999 calls. He informed the Panel that new technology was being implemented in this area which would bring improvements in the future. Cllr White asked if the Panel could undertake a site visit to the Centre and the Chief Constable reported that he would be happy to arrange this.

Action: Chief Constable

Cllr Birchley referred to the new technology for contacting the police and asked whether the emergency number would remain the same, as vulnerable people would need to use this in an emergency. The Chief Constable reported that this would still be available however, they wanted to make other forms of contact available such as webchat which was a much more efficient way to deal with the public e.g dealing with four queries rather than one. This would mean that the Force could then spend more time with vulnerable people who were at risk.

Members noted the report.

81. Report of the Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation Sub-Committee

The Scrutiny Officer gave a summary of the report and recommendations of the meeting held in November where two Safeguarding Board Chairmen had attended to provide information to the Sub-Committee.

Cllr Mallon, the Vice-Chairman of the Sub Committee reported that it was an excellent meeting where recommendations had been made on the following:-

- To ask the OPCC whether they would be prepared to host a Thames Valley wide meeting involving all MASH looking at information sharing, particularly current challenges and promoting areas of good practice. The PCC agreed that this was an area that needed to be looked at but would need to look at the cost of hosting this.
- That the PCC ask the Chief Constable what the current perpetrator profile was for successful prosecutions and whether it would be possible to develop some profiling work similar to that of the East Midlands Network.
- That the PCC should consider writing a letter to the Department of Education about the loophole in legislation which should be jointly signed by the Safeguarding Board Chairmen.
- That a Thames Valley wide meeting should be organised with all Taxi Licensing Authorities to consider a consistent approach including the possibility of a regional database.
- That the PCC give an update on the Hotel and Night Watch Scheme roll out in the Thames Valley

Members agreed the recommendations in the report.

82. Future Operation of the Panel

Members had made comments on the previous report which was submitted to the October meeting of the Panel on the future operation of the Panel. Reference was also made to the Recommendation Monitoring report which had been submitted to the October meeting and that there should be further follow up of recommendations to ensure that they were implemented where possible.

Members agreed that there should be a mixture of themed meetings and proactive scrutiny sessions (within the Panel meeting) to question partners on policing and crime issues to develop the scrutiny and support of the PCC. Members were encouraged to send in ideas of areas that they wished to look at in more detail.

83. Work Programme

Members agreed the Work Programme. The Chairman reported that an area of focus was on the Local Criminal Justice System which was an area of increasing additional interest for the PCC. Members were asked to send in any other requests on the Work Programme.

84. Date and Time of Next Meeting

3 February 2017 at 11am

CHAIRMAN

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