

MINUTES of the meeting of the **SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL** held at 10.30 am on 6 February 2014 at Ashcombe Suite, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting.

Members:

Mrs Dorothy Ross-Tomlin (Chairman)
Borough Councillor Terry Dicks (Vice-Chairman)
Borough Councillor John O'Reilly
Borough Councillor George Crawford QPM
District Councillor Margaret Cooksey
Borough Councillor Victor Broad
Borough Councillor Colin Davis
Borough Councillor Charlotte Morley
District Councillor Ken Harwood
Borough Councillor Pat Frost
Borough Councillor Bryan Cross
Independent Member Anne Hoblyn MBE

Apologies:

Borough Councillor Richard Billington

1/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Richard Billington.

The Panel congratulated Independent Member Anne Hoblyn on the news that she had been awarded an MBE in the New Years Honours List.

The Panel were informed that Independent Member Maria Gray had tendered her resignation from the Panel, which had been accepted. The Panel thanked Maria Gray for her contribution.

2/14 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING [Item 2]

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

3/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were no declarations of interest.

4/14 PUBLIC QUESTIONS [Item 4]

There were no public questions.

5/14 CHIEF CONSTABLE UPDATE [Item 5]

The Chairman welcomed the Chief Constable, Lynne Owens, to the meeting of the Surrey Police and Crime Panel, and invited her to provide the Panel with an update on reviews currently being undertaken by Surrey Police.

- The Chief Constable informed the Panel that she had been in the role of Chief Constable of Surrey Police for two years and remained committed to improving policing within Surrey. Since taking up the post there had been a number of reviews completed due to budget pressures, the need to respond to risk, the changing pattern of crime, and to ensure Surrey Police were able to respond to future challenges. The Chief Constable conceded there had been recent challenges with historic cases which had required resources to be moved to investigate them appropriately.
- The Chief Constable stated she was fully committed to Neighbourhood Policing as she believed it had led to an increase in confidence in policing and a decrease in anti-social behaviour. The intention was to replace 60 Community Support Officers with 60 Police Officers which responded to the public wish for more warranted Officers. The Panel were informed that the Police had done some engagement online with local communities, but that there had not been any specific engagement on the topic of Community Support Officers. The Chief Constable was keen to not put junior constables in neighbourhood roles due to the challenges of these roles and envisaged more experienced Officers would be placed within Neighbourhood Policing.
- Further reviews had looked at custody provision in the county, CID provision, IT and HR within Surrey Police, and the work done with other Police forces such as Sussex Police. In addition, Surrey Police

were taking part in a work stream which looked at the 999 services in Surrey. At present there were currently 13 different call centres across the county at a cost of £45million, and there was a need to work together and to share resources and information.

- The Chief Constable explained there were two elements of Zero Tolerance – a change of attitude and investigating crime properly. She informed the Panel that there had been a round of briefings for all senior officers regarding improvements to behaviour and appearance of Officers.
- Panel Members questioned whether crime levels were dropping, as there was evidence to suggest that a number of crimes went unreported and raised concerns that there was a risk of complacency. The Chief Constable stated that her Officers used both the national crime survey and the police recorded crime figures. There was a Crime Registrar whose role it was to look at both sets of data and integrate the figures. It was important that crime was recorded as resourcing decisions were informed by these figures. Furthermore, she was clear that she expected all officers to work with integrity and had stopped the process of multiple cautions and had changed the way in which community resolutions were utilised as they had affected the crime figures.
- Members were concerned that fraud below £0.5million was not investigated by Police and enquired how white collar crime would be easier to report in future. The Chief Constable conceded that current reporting procedures were difficult, but that Officers were looking into making the process easier for victims.
- The Panel raised concerns regarding the custody strategy within Surrey, as closing Woking custody cells would increase the time it took Officers to transfer people to other custody suites, in particular on Friday and Saturday nights. The Chief Constable informed the Panel that the Woking custody cells had not been closed, but usage was being reviewed as they were often underutilised.
- The Panel enquired how the Chief Constable made the decision on which reviews to commission and were informed that the decision was made in relation to risk assessments and finances. The Police were keen to ensure there was no duplication and had employed a Head of Change to look oversee the process, 55% of which is funded by Sussex Police.
- The Chief Constable expressed her frustration that residents were being directed to make Freedom of Information (FOI) requests by Officers as the number of FOI requests has increased significantly and more resources were being used to respond to these.
- Members queried whether Surrey Police had a mental health strategy and were informed that Constables were frustrated that they were being called out due to other agencies not being available. There was not strategy, but this was an area which the Chief Constable hoped to

see an improvement and had begun discussing her wish list with Clinical Commissioning Groups.

- The Panel raised concerns that Neighbourhood Watches were no longer receiving the same amount of information from the Police which enabled them to inform residents of threats and risks within their area. The Chief Constable informed the Panel that the intelligence function was currently being reviewed to make a more streamlined process. Senior Officers had now been placed within the localities and it was hoped this would assist in information sharing and communication, to create a consistent approach across the county.

The Panel adjourned from 11.30am to 11.35am.

6/14 POLICE AND CRIME PLAN UPDATE [Item 6]

The Chairman explained that the Commissioner had notified the Panel that he wished to update his Police and Crime Plan and, in accordance with the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act, the Panel had a duty to consider the proposed changes.

- Members expressed concern that the Assistant Commissioner for Victims had not attended a Panel meeting since June 2013 and requested that she attend the next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel.
- The Panel enquired whether the cost of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) was still less than the previous Police Authority, as the report provided to the Panel stated that 'the budget was comparable'. The Commissioner confirmed that his aspiration had always been to not increase the budget to more than the Police Authority, though it was important to recognise that the Police Authority was largely a scrutiny body whereas his role was wider in remit with far more engagement work involved. He informed the Panel that he had become the national lead for Victim Support for PCC's which required funding from his office until he received government funding for this role. He confirmed that the OPCC did everything possible to keep costs to a minimum. The PCC's Chief Finance Officer reiterated that it was not possible to make a direct comparison due to the responsibilities being largely different, however he would provide the Panel with details of the costs of the Police Authority and OPCC.
- Members queried how much public resources were going into raising awareness of the chronic underfunding of Surrey Police and who the PCC was working with to address the issue. The Commissioner stated that he felt that cooperation was necessary, and to that end he had written to the Police Minister, the Home Office, the Treasury and all Surrey MPs to make them aware of his concerns. He had since been invited to take part in a review of the funding formula by the Police Minister. Furthermore, he had spoken to the Leader and Deputy Leader of Surrey County Council, and 70% of Surrey MPs, and had submitted a copy of the Commissioners commissioned Oxford Economics report to MPs and the Home Office.

- The Panel enquired when someone would be held account for the failings of the Project Siren IT project. The Panel was informed that the Commissioner was still awaiting the final independent audit report, which he would share with the Panel once he received it. Furthermore he confirmed he would continue to share the outcome of the audit into Project Siren with the Panel once available. The Commissioner notified the Panel that a new IT system had been implemented which worked with Sussex's system.
- Members questioned whether the Commissioner still felt that having no numerical targets in his Police and Crime Plan was effective. The PCC stated that he wanted to see qualitative improvements within Surrey Police and that numerical targets were not the right approach to achieve this.
- Members raised concerns regarding allocation of Community Safety funding as it appeared there was duplication across Surrey. The Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner stated that he was disappointed that many Community Safety Partnerships did not apply for funding last year and hoped that this would change in the next round of funding. However, all the funding had been distributed for this year. He confirmed that there was a large amount of duplication across Surrey, and that he was working with the High Sherriff to cut down the volume of duplication. The feedback he had received so far had been that the application form had been made simpler which he hoped would encourage applications.
- The Panel were informed that the new post of Communications Officer was to do more engagement work, rather than the previous reactive work. It was the intention that the role would enable the Commissioner to communicate better with the public, with improvements to the website, Facebook and Twitter. It was hoped that better communication would enable the Commissioner to influence organisations better.

Resolved:

- That the amendments to the Police and Crime Plan be noted.
- That the Commissioner provide the Panel with the total annual cost of running his Office and how this compares, in pure financial terms, to the former Police Authority.
- That the Commissioner to share the outcome of the audit into Project Siren once available.

7/14 SURREY POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER'S PRECEPT SETTING PROPOSAL FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2014/15 [Item 7]

The Panel were informed that with the announcement of the precept ceiling the Commissioner's precept proposal had been amended to be 1.99% rather than the 2% stated within the report. This amendment meant the precept would be £211.68 for a Band D property for the financial year 2014/15. This would result in a £9,433 loss in funding which would be made up by reserves.

- Members suggested that the manner in which the budget was formed did not lend itself to making savings.. The Panel felt that the Commissioner could have taken a zero-based budgeting approach to inform the amount of precept required, as opposed to a simple incremental increase The Commissioner stated that he anticipated cuts to the Police budget, with increases to National Insurance and pension contributions, and so felt he would need a 2% rise. Furthermore, a £1.2 million top slice had taken place which caused further problems, however the reserves would continue to be maintained. The Commissioner stated that he was keen to use the experience of the Panel to inform decisions for the next financial year.
- The Panel queried whether the financial schedules provided to the Panel were the ones used by the Commissioner to hold the Chief Constable to account. The Commissioner confirmed that he regularly discussed the budgets with the Chief Constable. The Chief Finance Officer informed the Panel that the appendices within the agenda were high level summaries of more detailed reports which the Commissioner discussed with the Chief Constable.
- Members were surprised that the majority of the budget appeared to be for 'business as usual' and that there did not appear to be any movement of funds to support the Commissioner's People's Priorities. The Commissioner stated that the majority of the budget was for 'business as usual' and that he saw the People's Priorities as a change in ethos rather than changes in budgets.
- Members stated that, similar to the previous year, they were still not comfortable with the level of detail being provided, and that this made it difficult to scrutinise the precept proposals. In particular, Members stated that the lack of actuals for 2013/14 made it hard to determine whether proposed budgets for 2014/15 were appropriate.
- Members queried whether there had been a pension under spend in recent years and were informed that every three years the Local Government Pension Scheme was reviewed.
- The Panel queried details around the Collection Fund Surplus, which had been recommended within the report to be used to make up a short-fall in funding if the precept ceiling had been lower. The Chief Finance Officer explained that the Collection Fund was a joint collection pot used by the precepting authorities in Surrey and went up and down during the year, with a final report being collated at the end of each year. He informed the Panel that he would provide them with details of the financial status of this fund.
- Members raised concerns that many residents did not want to see a rise in council taxes, but wanted to see improvements within Surrey Police. Concerns were raised regarding the increase in wages for the Assistant Police and Crime Commissioners with one being paid via a contract rather than a salary. The Commissioner explained that due to their effective work their hours had been increased and therefore the wages within the budget reflected this. The Assistant PCC for

Equalities was a self employed consultant and was paid through a contract.

- The Panel suggested that in the future the Finance Sub-Group work closely with the PCC to inform the development of the budget, to ensure they were able to effectively scrutinise and challenge. The Commissioner agreed that the Finance Sub-Group should meet with his office to discuss how the process could work.
- Members enquired how the PCC was attempting to increase income for Surrey Police and were informed that he was working to improve awareness of the funding formula problems. Unlike other police forces, Surrey Police had few opportunities to increase income as there were, for example, no Premiership football stadiums in the County which the Police could charge for policing. Surrey Police currently had an income from policing the Derby and assisting other forces, such as during the fracking protests in Sussex in 2013. The Commissioner was, however, working with Sussex to create training schools which could be used by other forces nationally for a fee.
- It was stated that the collaboration allocation was for use mainly with Sussex Police, and it was hoped that the benefit of this collaboration would be seen in revenue savings. The Commissioner agreed to share details of the expected indicative savings with the Panel.
- The Panel queried the membership amount the PCC paid to the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners as it was understood that Sussex PCC paid £19,000 last year compared to £30,000 paid by Surrey PCC. The Commissioner stated the membership fee was nationally set.
- Members queried why the Assistant PCCs had training budgets when they had been hired for their expertise within their specific areas. The Commissioner stated that this was a fair challenge and confirmed he would look into this detail.

The Panel adjourned from 1.05pm to 1.10pm.

- The Panel raised concerns that the details provided within the reports did not give them the opportunity to fully understand the budgets of Surrey Police, especially as they received the papers only a week before the meeting. The Finance Sub-Group stated they would have liked to have had more time and information to properly consider the finances, but understood that Surrey Police was chronically underfunded. The Members requested in future there was a more collaborative process between the OPCC and Finance Sub-Group when developing the budget and precept proposals
- The Panel voted, by a show of hands, on whether to approve the proposed precept for 2014/15. The result was:
 - For – 8
 - Against – 2
 - Abstained – 1

Resolved:

- That the Police and Crime Panel agree the proposed precept of £211.68 for a Band D property for the financial year 2014/15.
- That in future years the Commissioner look to involve the Panel in the development of his budget and precept proposals, as opposed to the very late scrutiny required by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act.
- The Panel receive details regarding the Collection Fund and its financial statuses.
- The Panel receive details regarding expected savings made from collaboration with Sussex Police.

The Panel adjourned from 1.15pm to 1.40pm.

8/14 CONFIRMATION HEARING FOR THE TEMPORARY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND MONITORING OFFICER FOR THE OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER [Item 8]

The Commissioner informed the Panel that his Chief Executive, Alison Bolton, was expecting a baby and so he was required to fill the post of Chief Executive within his office during her maternity leave.

- The Commissioner proposed that Johanna Burne fill the post of Chief Executive during this period due to her extensive experience within the Police and experience of covering the role during times illness and annual leave. Johanna Burne was the Senior Policy Officer within the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner in Surrey.
- The Panel were surprised by the salary the interim Chief Executive would receive, however were informed by the Commissioner that as she would be filling the role she would receive what was considered an adequate wage especially as she was changing elements of her private life to take on the role.
- Members enquired what would be happening to the role of Senior Policy Officer during this time and were informed that the Commissioner intended to back-fill the post through an open recruitment process.
- The Panel congratulated Alison Bolton on her news.

Resolved:

- That Johanna Burne be appointed interim Chief Executive within the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

9/14 COMPLAINTS RECEIVED SINCE THE LAST MEETING [Item 9]

The Chairman informed the Panel that one complaint had been received since the last meeting, details of which could be found in the agenda.

Resolved:

- That the report be noted.

10/14 RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 10]

The Panel reviewed the recommendations tracker and forward work programme. Members requested that the Panels suggestion of a closer working relationship between the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Police and Crime Panel, with regards to the budget, be included within the recommendations tracker. It was requested that work with the Commissioner started in September 2014, at the latest.

Members requested a report on Community Safety Funding, specifically in relation to how the Commissioner would prevent duplication of funding within Surrey.

Resolved:

- That the Panel requests a closer working relationship with the Commissioner on the building of the 2015/16 precept proposals.
- That the Panel requests a future report on Community Safety Funding within Surrey, specifically in relation to duplication of funding.

11/14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 11]

It was noted that the next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel would be on 29 April at 10.30 am.

Meeting ended at: 1.50 pm

Chairman