

MINUTES of the meeting of the **SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL** held at 10.30 am on 5 February 2015 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)
District Councillor Ken Harwood (Vice-Chairman)
Borough Councillor John O'Reilly
Borough Councillor George Crawford QPM
Borough Councillor Richard Billington
District Councillor Margaret Cooksey
Borough Councillor Victor Broad
Borough Councillor Terry Dicks
Borough Councillor Charlotte Morley
Mrs Pat Frost
Borough Councillor Beryl Hunwicks
Independent Member Bryan Cross

Apologies:

Borough Councillor Colin Davis
Independent Member Anne Hoblyn MBE

1/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Independent Member Anne Hoblyn, Borough Councillor Colin Davis, Assistant Police & Crime Commissioner Shiraz Mirza and Assistant Police & Crime Commissioner Jane Anderson.

2/15 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING [Item 2]

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

3/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

None received.

4/15 PUBLIC QUESTIONS [Item 4]

None received.

6/15 SURREY POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER'S PRECEPT SETTING PROPOSAL FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2015/16 [Item 5]

Key points raised during the discussion:

The Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) briefly introduced the report providing Members with the rationale behind his decision to seek an increase in the precept to £215.89 for a Band D property equating to a rise of 1.99% on the 2014/15 precept of £211.68.

- The Panel was made aware that market research conducted by the OPCC to assess public support for a referendum there is certainly not enough support among Surrey residents to hold a referendum to raise the precept above the 2% cap. The PCC, however, stressed that he would continue to argue the case for raising the precept above the 2% threshold and may seek a referendum in the future if research suggested support among the Surrey public for his proposal. The Panel endorsed the PCC's decision not to pursue a referendum in setting the precept for 2015/16 and suggested that any future proposals to hold a referendum should be accompanied by a detailed business case which includes the costs incurred by holding a referendum.
- Panel members suggested that the PCC focus his attention on securing fairer funding from central government by highlighting the need for a review of the police funding formula. The PCC gave details of efforts made to implore the Home Office to rethink the outdated formula which includes drawing the Home Secretary's attention to independent research demonstrating that the force is under-funded by central government to the tune of £6 million annually. The Panel was further advised that attempts have been made to garner support on

the issue from Surrey MPs but that these approaches have gained little traction. Panel members committed to stand in support of the PCC's efforts to secure fairer funding for Surrey Police by making contact with the Home Secretary and lend the Panel's collective voice to the call for an urgent review of the police funding formula

- Concern was expressed that Woking residents have not been afforded the opportunity to articulate their views on the precept proposals put forward by the PCC and asked why Woking's Police & Crime Summit is not taking place until March. The Panel was informed that the schedule for each summit is contingent on the availability of officers and Members in the district and boroughs and that ideally all of the summits would have taken place before the PCC was required to submit his proposal for the precept rate. It was stressed, however, that the summits were just one of many methods used to gauge public support on the issue and that Woking residents were given the opportunity to make their views on the subject known through the wide-range of market research conducted.
- Panel members noted that the precept increase required to maintain current levels of service is 12% and enquired about the additional savings which have been earmarked to meet the budget gap created by a 1.99% precept increase. The deficit was confirmed at £6.9 million for 2015/16 excluding inflation and any money lost through top-slicing. The PCC drew the Panel's attention to the savings plan on page 4 of the report and indicated that these will ultimately have an adverse impact on the delivery of frontline policing in Surrey.
- There was a general consensus among Panel members that much of the rhetoric used by the PCC to generate public support for a 24% increase in the precept had been tantamount to scaremongering, especially given the Surrey Police's financial position in relation to other forces in England and Wales. The PCC stressed his responsibility to communicate to residents the implications that further budget cuts will have on the level of service that the police are able to provide and indicated that he will continue to highlight the consequences of continuing cuts to police funding. A Member of the Panel did highlight that, in his opinion, it is important for the Panel to be able to listen to concerns put forward by the PCC even if they are uncomfortable to hear.
- Attention was drawn to the £1.6 million that has been identified as a saving in local policing and the Panel enquired about the plans in place to mitigate these savings. The PCC confirmed that these savings would ultimately equate to a reduction in the number of staff working on local policing but that money would be taken from the reserve fund to train police to tackle a broader of range of crimes. The

impact of this, however, will be that neighbourhood Police Constables (PCs) will have less time to spend on developing relations with local communities while the loss of 37 police support staff will result in police officers being required to take on more administrative functions.

- The PCC was asked to expand on plans to increase the number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) given previous indications that there was to be a reduction in PCSO numbers. It was stressed that while PCSOs are considered a great asset their associated costs are not significantly less than that of regular PCs, despite PCSOs lacking certain powers, and so the general inclination has been to spending the small amount of extra money to employ PCs. The reason for this planned increase is that a number of backroom police staff have been given the opportunity to train as PCSOs or Police officers.
- Reference was made to a comment on page 2 of the report which claims that police officers and staff are being 'worked into the ground' and Members asked why so many officers and staff have second jobs if this is the case. The PCC conceded that this was an unfortunate choice of words and that the phrase should have been omitted from the report. In relation to those officers and staff with second jobs, the Panel was advised that there are no restrictions prohibiting those working for the police from having more than one job and in fact for many having a second job is a necessity due to the fact that they are not paid a living wage. This problem is particularly acute in Surrey where house prices and the cost of living are both so high. This coupling of low wages and the high cost of living has resulted in Surrey Police now having the worst attrition rate of any force in the country.
- The Panel requested assurances that, in light of the death of Surrey teenager Breck Bednar, the PCC is confident that the police budget is being spent in the right areas to address the challenges that arose from this case. It was advised that a further £1 million has been released from the reserves to improve training and to ensure that staff and officers are able to manage the increase in demand more efficiently. This raised questions amongst the Panel about plans to utilise the £13 million in the force's general reserves more widely to mitigate financial pressures. The PCC advised that, despite having more than the mandated 3%, Surrey Police has significantly less in its general reserve than many other forces. As well as training, there are also plans to use some of the additional money in the general reserves to reduce the force's pension deficit thereby reducing the interest they are required to pay on this.

- The Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC) highlighted the additional budget pressures created by top-slicing and indicated that the money levied by central government through top-slicing means the loss of the entirety of the money that would be raised through a 1.99% increase in the precept, as well as removing an additional £0.5 million from the police's budget. Members inquired as to whether Surrey Police get anything back from initiatives funded through top-slicing. It was confirmed that a bid was currently being prepared for submission to the innovation fund to provide money for a project being conducted by the OPCC on cybercrime, although indications were given that the innovation fund could be used to bail out police forces that are unable to balance the books and so slashing the amount of money available through this fund. In general, the PCC indicated that police forces across England and Wales derive little benefit from top-slicing but rather feel that it just further constrains their budget.
- The Panel asked whether the PCC had considered bringing in a management consultant to provide a fresh perspective on Surrey Police's spending. The PCC advised that consultants have already been brought in to look at specific areas such as operating models and that he would report back to the Panel on how the consultancy process is progressing.

The Panel voted by a show of hands to approve the proposed precept for 2015/16. The result was:

For – 12
 Against – 0
 Abstained – 0

RESOLVED:

1. That the Police and Crime Panel agree the proposed precept of £215.89 for a Band D property for the financial year 2015/16.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That if the Commissioner decides that he needs to increase the precept above the cap in 2016/17 which would trigger a referendum, that this be based on a detailed business case across all activities carried out by Surrey Police, to be shared with the Panel's finance sub-group.
2. That if the Commissioner decides that he needs to increase the precept above the cap in 2016/17 which would trigger a referendum, that he makes Surrey residents fully aware of the total costs of holding a referendum.
3. That the Commissioner consider an independent review of the expenditure of Surrey Police and report back to the Panel in due course.

ACTIONS/ FURTHER INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED:

None

PANEL NEXT STEPS:

None

7/15 POLICE AND CRIME PLAN UPDATE [Item 6]

Key points raised during the discussion:

A brief introduction to the report was provided by the PCC who indicated that some limited updates to the Police and Crime Plan are proposed around additional areas of focus which have been included in response to feedback from the public and in consultation with the Chief Constable.

- Further information was sought by the Panel on the effectiveness of local policing boards. The PCC conceded that local policing boards have not yet proven to be as effective as they could be, but that a new mechanism of receiving feedback from the boards was in the process of being implemented to help inform the strategic direction of the police.
- Particular concern was expressed by Panel members regarding the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), who inquired about the steps being taken by police to protect women in Surrey from FGM. The PCC highlighted that he shared the Panel's anxieties about the proliferation of FGM and that the police are working closely with partners to tackle views that give rise to this practice. Training is also being given to police officers to give them the tools to deal with FGM cases.
- Panel members raised the online crime reporting project being piloted by Surrey Police suggesting that it discriminates against those who don't own a computer or have access to the internet. The PCC advised the Panel that the 101 phone service will remain operational and that online crime reporting may actually aid the 101 service due to a reduction in the volume of calls being made.
- The Panel enquired about the possibility of Surrey Police capitalising on the proliferation of 'go-pro' cameras being worn by drivers and cyclists that are capturing incidents of dangerous driving. The Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner (DPCC) confirmed that the DriveSmart board is in the process of exploring mechanisms through which these cameras can help improve safety on Surrey's roads by giving greater bite to efforts by the police to take action against dangerous driving in the county. The DPCC further highlighted that the OPCC has allocated

an additional £40,000 worth of funding to the 'Safe Drive Stay Alive' programme to improve community awareness around the potential implications of dangerous driving. A report will be distributed to the Panel indicating decisions made by the Drivesmart board in regard to how footage from public operated cameras can be used by the police.

RESOLVED:

None

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- That the Police and Crime Panel comment on the draft Surrey Police and Crime Plan Update for 2015.
- To note the support for 'Safe Drive Stay Alive' from the OPCC and to suggest that it be explored to be extended to adults in future.

ACTIONS/ FURTHER INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED:

- That the OPCC distribute to the Panel a report indicating decisions made by the Drivesmart board in regard to how footage from public operated cameras can be used by the police.

PANEL NEXT STEPS:

None

8/15 DEPUTY AND ASSISTANT POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS' OBJECTIVES AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW [Item 7]

Key points raised during the discussion:

- The DPCC provided the Panel with a brief update on some of the work he has been doing since the last meeting (12 December 2014) and indicated that he had undertaken extensive work with the Amber Foundation which protects and provides opportunities for vulnerable children in Surrey. A short summary was also given regarding the DPCC's efforts to extend the Junior Citizens programme to all of the Districts and Boroughs in the County. Panel members were asked to promote the programme amongst their colleagues on local councils to help ensure it is rolled out county-wide.
- The Panel picked up on some of the work being conducted by Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner (APCC) Jane Anderson and asked whether workshops for victims of domestic abuse taken place as indicated at the meeting of the Panel on 12 December 2014. Speaking on behalf of the APCC, the Acting Chief Executive of the Office of the Police and Crime Panel confirmed that these workshops

have indeed taken place and that a report would be compiled and submitted to the Panel.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

None

ACTIONS/ FURTHER INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED:

That the OPCC compile information about the domestic abuse workshops for circulation to the Panel.

PANEL NEXT STEPS:

None

9/15 COMPLAINTS RECEIVED SINCE THE LAST MEETING [Item 8]

Key points raised during the discussion:

None

RESOLVED:

1. To note the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

None

ACTIONS/ FURTHER INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED:

None

PANEL NEXT STEPS:

None

10/15 RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 9]

Key points raised during the discussion:

None

RESOLVED:

1. To note the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

None

ACTIONS/ FURTHER INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED:

None

PANEL NEXT STEPS:

None

11/15 VERBAL UPDATE ON ONGOING INVESTIGATIONS INCLUDING DEEPCUT [Item 10]

Key points raised during the discussion:

The PCC advised the Panel that the Coroner is continuing the inquiry into the events at Deepcut barracks and that £1 million from the Surrey Police reserve fund has been made available to support this inquiry.

RESOLVED:

None

RECOMMENDATIONS:

None

ACTIONS/ FURTHER INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED:

None

PANEL NEXT STEPS:

None

12/15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 11]

It was noted that the next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel would be on 21 April 2015.

Meeting ended at: 12.35 pm

Chairman