

Police and Crime Panel for Lancashire

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 12th February, 2013 at 6.30 pm in Cabinet Room 'D' - County Hall, Preston

Present:

Chair

Councillor Kate Hollern, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Committee Members

County Councillor G Driver, Lancashire County Council
Councillor A Barnes, Rossendale Borough Council
Councillor P Barton, Hyndburn Borough Council
Councillor S Blackburn, Blackpool Council
Councillor R Boswell, Preston City Council (replaced Councillor P Rankin)
Councillor A Bradley, Chorley Borough Council
Councillor M Foxley, Pendle Borough Council
Councillor P Gibson, Wyre Borough Council
Councillor I Grant, West Lancs Borough Council
Councillor S M Hussain, Burnley Borough Council (replaced Councillor J Cooper)
Councillor L Oades, Fylde Borough Council
Councillor D Smith, Lancaster City Council
Councillor M Smith, South Ribble Borough Council
Councillor M Thomas, Lancaster City Council
Councillor R Thompson, Ribble Valley Borough Council (replaced Councillor M Ranson)
Mr P Richardson, Independent co-opted member

Also in attendance

- Mr I Fisher, Secretary to the Police and Crime Panel
- Mr R Jones, Assistant Secretary to the Police and Crime Panel
- Mr C Grunshaw, Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire.
- Ms M Carruthers-Watt, Chief Executive - Office of the PCC.

1. Apologies.

Apologies for absence were presented on behalf of Mr S Vali, Independent Co-opted member.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting.

Further to the discussion at the last meeting in relation to the sale of police properties the Commissioner reported that as part of the Estate Organisation Review properties in Cliviger, Gisburn and Over Kellet, together with the former Bacup Police Station had all been sold generating total capital receipts of £662,000.

Resolved: That the above update is noted and the Minutes of the meeting held on the 29th January 2013 confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3. Police and Crime Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan 2013-2018

The Commissioner presented a report on the draft Police and Crime Plan and informed the meeting that the Plan represented a strategic overview of his aims and priorities over the next five years and reflected the responses received following consultations with the Chief Constable, the public and partner organisations. Mr Grunshaw stated that he would continue to work with partners in order to develop the Plan in such a way as to be able to deliver on the identified priorities.

When considering the draft Plan the following points were raised by members of the Panel.

- The proposals to develop the role of Special Constables and Volunteers, together with the roll out of a Cadet scheme were all welcomed and the Commissioner reported that whilst budgetary constraints represented a challenge, his consultations with the public had identified protecting frontline policing as a priority.
- Reference was made to discussions at previous meetings in relation to the ongoing joint funding of Police and Community Support Officers (PCSOs) by local authorities across Lancashire. In response the Commissioner reiterated his commitment to match fund those PCSOs who were currently part funded by local authorities, though he cautioned that whilst he would try to fill many of the current vacancies for other PCSOs the need to secure further savings meant he could not give the same commitment in relation to those posts.

In response to a query the Commissioner also made it clear that if any local authority were to withdraw its funding for PCSOs then he would be unable to take on the full cost of providing those posts.

- Concern was expressed that the draft Plan represented a number of aspirations without providing details of specific measures which would be implemented in order to achieve those aspirations. In response the Chair reminded the members of the Panel of the limited timescale since the election in November in which the Commissioner had been required to prepare a budget and draft Police and Crime Plan. The Commissioner reiterated his previous comments regarding the draft Plan being an overarching strategic document that would develop over time.
- Further information was requested in relation to the work done by the Commissioner and Chief Constable to establish a series of measures which would enable the Constabulary's performance to be monitored.

The Commissioner reported that following discussions with the Chief Constable in relation to the priorities set out in the draft Plan a number of targets had been established against which performance could be measured. In the future this would enable the Commissioner to show what was being delivered against those priorities/targets and identify any areas where performance was not as expected.

- As the Commissioner would be working with a number of partner organisations in order to deliver the priorities set out in the draft Plan it was suggested that partners be given clear indications as to what would be required/expected of them. In response the Commissioner reported that he had already met with a number of organisations in the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector in order to establish what contribution they could make towards achieving the objectives. He added that all partners would be given a clear indication of what was required in order to ensure a consistent service provision across Lancashire.
- Concern was expressed in relation to the potential effectiveness of the proposed Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs. The Commissioner expressed his support for the two pilot schemes which he felt would work effectively to manage demands across the front line of all partner agencies and added that he would welcome an opportunity to discuss the establishment of additional Hubs elsewhere in Lancashire.
- It was noted that the draft Plan included reference to a capital programme scheme for the replacement of the existing Police Station on Bonny Street in Blackpool, though there was some concern that if the associated Courts did not also relocate the possibility of having a key site in the Town Centre available for redevelopment would be compromised.

The Commissioner recognised that there was a need to replace the existing Police Station in Blackpool and undertook to meet with the Leader of the Borough Council and representatives from the Constabulary and Ministry of Justice in order to discuss the matter further.

- As the Police and Crime Plan covered a five year period clarification was sought as to how often the Panel would receive updates. In response the Commissioner reported that the Plan would be reviewed and amended in the light of further consultations and changing priorities and he suggested that an update report would be brought to the Police and Crime Panel in six months time.
- It was suggested that lighter sentencing by the Courts was leading to an increase in reoffending and there was concern that external pressures such as the recently announced changes to the Probation Service would have an impact on the delivery and achievement of the priorities set out in the draft Plan. In view of the concerns the Commissioner undertook to look into whether there was any correlation between sentencing and reoffending and would bring a report back to a future meeting of the Panel.

The Commissioner also informed the meeting that, overall, the level of crime across Lancashire was falling, though he recognised that there were specific crimes/areas which had seen an increase. He referred to the link between deprivation and crime and suggested that the draft Plan would be flexible in order to adapt to future circumstances.

- In response to a query regarding cross border crime the Commissioner reported that serious/organised crime had featured little in the consultations he had with the public.

However, he acknowledged that in some areas this was an issue and assured the Panel that whilst the draft Plan would prioritise some areas it would not mean others were neglected.

The Commissioner also reported that he had been given private briefings regarding some of the issues/challenges associated with tackling organised crime and suggested that it would be helpful if the Panel could receive a similar briefing.

- With regard to community safety it was noted that the draft Plan referred to each local authority area having a plan which would assist with the delivery of services. The Commissioner informed the meeting that he would be meeting with representatives of District Councils on the 21st February to discuss this further and would bring an update report to the next meeting of the Panel.
- Clarification was sought as to how the proposed Community Action Fund would operate. Ms Carruthers Watt, Chief Executive from the OPCC, reported that the Fund would provide grants to local communities for projects/initiatives which would tackle neighbourhood issues and contribute to the priorities as set out in the draft Plan.

It was noted that when developing the Fund the Commissioner would draw on the experience of organisations such as the Lancashire Partnership Against Crime and local authorities which provided grants to community groups and Ms Carruthers Watt suggested that a report be brought to a future meeting of the Panel to clarify how the Fund would operate.

- The issue of Domestic Violence was discussed and it was recognised that service provision across Lancashire varied. The Commissioner informed the meeting that he would seek to identify current provision, establish the level of need and seek to provide a consistent level of service across Lancashire.

The proposal was generally welcomed though it was suggested that in seeking to achieve consistency the Commissioner should strive towards the highest level of service possible.

As there were no further questions the Chair thanked the Commissioner for his attendance and contributions.

Resolved:

1. That the draft Police and Crime Plan for 2013-2018, as presented, be noted.
2. That a progress report in relation be presented to the Panel once the Police and Crime Plan 2013-2018 has been in operation for six months.
3. That the Commissioner explore the possible link between lighter sentencing by the Courts and reoffending rates, together with the potential impact of changes to the Probation Service, and bring a report to a future meeting of the Panel.

4. That a report be presented to the next meeting of the Panel in relation to the development of specific community safety plans for each local authority area in Lancashire.
5. That a report be presented to a future meeting of the Panel in relation to how the Community Action Fund will operate.
6. That arrangements be made for members of the Panel to receive a private briefing in relation to the issues/challenges associated with tackling organised crime

4. Urgent Business.

There were no items of urgent business for discussion at the meeting.

5. Date of Next Meeting.

The Chair reported that the next scheduled meeting would be held on the 13th March 2013 at the Town Hall in Blackburn and suggested that the subsequent meeting in July be held in Blackpool.

Resolved:

1. It was noted that the next meeting of the Panel would be at 10.00am on the 13th March 2013 in Meeting Room 'A' at the Town Hall, King William Street, Blackburn.
2. That arrangements be made for the meeting on the 8th July 2013 to be held at the Town Hall in Blackpool.

Ian Fisher
Secretary to the Police and Crime Panel

Lancashire County Council
County Hall
Preston