

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 APRIL 2013 AT 2.00PM AT COUNTY HALL, WEST BRIDGFORD, NOTTINGHAM

MEMBERS PRESENT

(A denotes absent)

Chairman - Councillor John Clarke – Gedling Borough Council

Vice-Chairman - Executive Mayor Tony Egginton – Mansfield District Council

Councillor David Challinor – Bassetlaw District Council

Councillor Eunice Campbell – Nottingham City Council

Councillor Jon Collins – Nottingham City Council

Councillor Georgina Culley – Nottingham City Council - A

Councillor Eddie Fearon – Rushcliffe Borough Council

Christine Goldstraw – Independent Member

Suma Harding – Independent Member

Councillor Eric Kerry – Nottinghamshire County Council

Councillor John Knight – Ashfield District Council

Councillor Pat Lally – Broxtowe Borough Council

Councillor Keith Longdon – Nottinghamshire County Council

Councillor Alex Norris – Nottingham City Council - A

Councillor Tony Roberts MBE – Newark and Sherwood District Council

OFFICERS PRESENT

Jayne Francis-Ward – Monitoring Officer) Nottinghamshire

Keith Ford – Senior Democratic Services Officer) County Council
(Host Authority)

OTHERS PRESENT

Paddy Tipping – Police and Crime Commissioner

Chris Cutland – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner

Kevin Dennis – Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Sue Fish OBE – Nottinghamshire Police

Charlotte Radford – Treasurer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2013, having been previously circulated, were agreed as a true and correct record and were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Alex Norris.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

4. POLICE AND CRIME PLAN 2013-18

During discussions, Members raised the following issues:-

- it was felt that the targets within the Plan could have been expanded further and the overall document made more concise to assist with public engagement. In response, the Commissioner stated that his Plan contained more targets than many others that he had looked at and underlined that a number of these targets had been agreed with partner agencies, which was not always an easy process. Members recognised that the targets captured a particular moment in time and would continue to be developed. The Commissioner also highlighted that more detailed information on a district basis was available via the relevant Community Safety Partnership and that a summary of the Plan was available for public engagement;
- the Commissioner clarified that there would be separate performance monitoring processes for the Panel and for his own Audit and Scrutiny Panel;
- Members highlighted the success of fixed penalty notices for juveniles in addressing anti-social behaviour (ASB) and queried why this tool had been discontinued. The Commissioner clarified that Nottinghamshire had been one of the areas which piloted Penalty Notices for Disorderly Behaviour but these had not been widely used here or nationally. However, fixed penalty notices and other forms of restorative justice were still available. The Commissioner planned to hold a summit on restorative justice to discuss how such approaches could be made more effective. ACC Fish underlined that there was a range of tools available which needed to be used to address both initial behaviour and re-offending;
- with regard to Nottinghamshire County Council's 2012 Annual Residents Survey, the Commissioner agreed to write to Members to clarify how many of the 8,000 people within the sample group had responded to the survey;
- Members highlighted the importance of targeting a reduction in repeat victims of crime and ACC Fish agreed, underlining the Force's focus on victim / offender / location and the need to strengthen the work (including with partner agencies) around victims.

RESOLVED 2013/005

That the finalised version of the Police and Crime Plan 2013-18 and the amendments made as a result of consultation be noted.

5. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE

The Commissioner introduced his update report for discussions, during which the following issues were raised:-

- with regard to the Force's continuing underspend, the Commissioner clarified that this was largely due to officer vacancies. He reiterated his plans to undertake a base budget review, which he would like the Panel to feed into;
- The Commissioner outlined the changes within the Chief Officer Team and explained his decision to extend the Chief Constable's contract to 2017 due to his successful tenure and in order to enable some stability for the Force (in light of a number of such posts being advertised nationally currently). In response to Members' queries he explained that the changing pension arrangements were resulting in a high level of retirements both locally and nationally;
- Members commended the overall reductions in crime but underlined the need for such figures to be presented with contextual information including national figures. In response, the Commissioner stated that the national figures were not yet available but the national reduction was understood to be approximately 3%, with reduction levels in both the City and County currently surpassing that level;
- Members highlighted the increasing gap between the overall crime reduction figures for the City and the County and queried what was being done to ensure more consistent performance. The Commissioner recognised Members' concerns about this issue and ACC Fish added that discussions with partner agencies were underway to assist in sharing best practice. For example the work in 'Partnership Plus' areas such as Cotgrave had proven very successful, whereas priority wards in the City had not had the same level of focus. The Commissioner underlined that 50% of all crime in the City occurred in five wards and resources needed to be targeted more effectively to address this;
- Members highlighted that performance in a number of areas was beginning to dip slightly. In response, the Commissioner felt that some crimes were more cyclical than others and ACC Fish highlighted the very strong performance in the first half of 2012/13, which was partly a result of various external factors (including very poor weather and the 'Olympics factor') and underlined the general success in terms of progress being made. With regard to the drop in reduction of overall crime figures between December 2012 and February 2013, the Commissioner felt that this followed a regular pattern with reductions proving more difficult to maintain in the latter months of a year. He also emphasised that the initial wholesale reductions achieved by an improving force and new ways of doing things were often easier to achieve than subsequent further, relatively smaller, reductions. The Commissioner felt that the target set for next year of a further 10% reduction would be stretching but achievable. ACC Fish highlighted the 20% reduction which had been achieved in April 2012 and underlined the Force's desire to continue driving crime down;

- in response to Members' queries, the Commissioner confirmed that he would not be appointing a Youth Police and Crime Commissioner (as other Commissioners had done recently) as he planned to continue to drive down the costs of the Commissioner's Office. However, in terms of getting input from young people he would be consulting the Youth Councils of Broxtowe and Nottingham City;
- with regard to performance in Priority 3 – 'To earn your trust and confidence', Members reiterated the need for further contextual information to help assess performance, such as national performance figures and sample sizes;
- the Commissioner reported progress with police officer and Police and Community Support Officer (PCSO) recruitment. Over 2000 applications had been received for the former posts and although there had been an increase in the number of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) applicants, the increase was not as high as had been hoped and this was likely to reduce the number of subsequent successful BME candidates to below target. The amount received was slightly higher than the County's BME population. Recruitment events had been focussed on the City. The Commissioner underlined the need to learn lessons from this round of recruitment, in relation to communications, support and qualifications needed (the latter point would need to be addressed at a national level in terms of removing any cultural bias inherent within the recruitment process). Members felt that the lessons from the previous round of recruitment had not been learnt. They raised concerns about the track record of the relevant personnel officers on this issue and felt that this work should be outsourced to a Force with a good track record in this respect. The Commissioner stated that he had requested a full review to look at different processes and providers and was in discussions with West Midlands Police, the Metropolitan Police, Nottingham City Council and former members of the Police Authority in order to share best practice;
- Members highlighted that the differences between the top of the PCSO salary grades and the potential starting salaries of police officers could also be proving a deterrent to people wishing to progress within the Force. The Commissioner recognised this and discussions with the Chief Constable had revealed that few officers would start at the minimum point of £19,000, with previous experience taken as a contributory factor to their starting salary. ACC Fish confirmed that this message had been promoted via the staff associations and stated that many special constables, PCSOs and control operators had taken such posts as a route into police officer posts. Members requested an update to a future meeting on the successful work being undertaken around the recruitment and deployment of special constables. The Commissioner highlighted the plan to increase the number of specials from 400 to 1000 and for each parish to have their own special constable;
- with regard to the employment tribunal around the A19 process, final submissions were to be made in May 2013 and the findings were expected before the end of July 2013. The Commissioner felt whichever party lost was likely to appeal. A reserve fund had been set aside by the former Police

Authority and legal costs were being shared by the five Forces involved. Members commended officers for achieving the ongoing reductions in crimes and sickness levels against a backdrop of the loss of a large number of experienced officers. However, they raised concerns in relation to neighbourhoods where prolific criminals were returning after serving custodial sentences. The Commissioner highlighted his awareness of the areas in question;

- Members requested an update on the estate rationalisation process to a future meeting of the Panel. The Commissioner reported a number of developments in this respect including:-
 - he had a meeting planned for later that day with the City Council to discuss Central Police Station;
 - Harworth Police Station was being relocated;
 - a suitable site was being sought in Retford, having missed out on an opportunity to co-locate with the Fire and Rescue Service;
 - co-location with partner agencies was also being explored in Gedling and Broxtowe;
 - the joint youth centre in Rushcliffe also involved co-location and integration of services;
 - talks were continuing about a contact centre in Mansfield.

RESOLVED 2013/006

That the contents of the update report be noted.

6. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER ALCOHOL STRATEGY AND CONFERENCE

The Commissioner introduced the report and stated that the conference would take place in June (date to be confirmed). He had held initial talks with various partner agencies in order to consider the whole route of access to alcohol, from point of sale and licensing to the night time economy, including treatment programmes. It was hoped that the event would result in an action plan to progress the development of an Alcohol Strategy.

During discussions, Members raised the following issues:-

- the need to involve the City and County Health and Wellbeing Boards in this area of work was recognised and the Commissioner had held discussions with the Director of Public Health about this;
- Members referred to the previously successful 'Aegis Project' which had addressed the links between crime and drugs and suggested inviting relevant officers involved in that work to share lessons learnt. The Commissioner and Members recognised that a similar holistic approach had not been taken around the links between alcohol and crime previously, including only limited court referrals of offenders to accredited treatment programmes. Members also underlined the need for educational programmes and minimum prices.

They highlighted the recent successful approach in Ipswich whereby the large supermarkets had agreed to stop selling very high alcohol drinks such as white ciders and this had resulted in a reduction in violence in the area. A similar approach had been attempted in Nottingham but had not as yet been successful in gaining the full support of supermarkets. In response, the Commissioner recognised the importance of a minimum price but was keen to ensure that responsible drinkers were not penalised as a result. He commended the work of the licensing officers across the County and the Councillors involved in Licensing Panels;

- Members felt that further work was needed to fully utilise licensing powers to ensure effective enforcement (possibly through the use of by-laws). Issues to be addressed included street drinking and the sale of alcohol to people who were already intoxicated. Powers already existed to address such issues but further resources were needed to enable appropriate levels of management, which was the purpose of the proposed Night Time Levy in the City. The Commissioner stated that none of the District Councils had so far supported the Night Time Levy but were committed to using the existing licensing powers more stringently.

RESOLVED 2013/007

That the Police and Crime Panel jointly host an event with the Commissioner to inform and shape an alcohol strategy.

7. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP FUND 2013-14

The Deputy Commissioner introduced the report and the following issues were raised during discussions:-

- in response to Members' concerns that the length of the guidance notes and application form could deter applicants, the Deputy Commissioner explained that although the amounts of funding available were relatively small, legal requirements still needed to be met. The Commissioner's Office was able to advise prospective applicants, whilst other organisations offered similar advice on accessing funding. Charlotte Radford added that the guidance and application form were based on Home Office templates and these had not deterred groups from applying for similar amounts of Home Office funding in the past;
- in response to Members' concerns about the relatively small amount of funding available overall, the Deputy Commissioner clarified that further funding would follow in future and that the money could be used to access match funding. The money was limited at this stage as the future levels of government funding for the Commissioner were not clear at this stage. It was hoped that some of the future Proceeds of Crime Act income could also be redirected into this. The funding would be targeted towards organisations which had never obtained funding previously;

- Members underlined the need for the Police to access all available sources of funding, including that arising from the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 monies relating to property developments. The Commissioner acknowledged that the Police use of Section 106 monies had been negligible in the past;
- Members underlined the need to maintain ongoing relations with schools that had become Academies. The Commissioner stated that he would be visiting an academy in Worksop in the near future.

RESOLVED 2013/008

That the report be noted.

The meeting adjourned at 3.30pm and reconvened at 3.45pm.

8. FEEDBACK FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (LGA) POLICE AND CRIME PANEL EVENT (INCLUDING MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES)

Councillor David Challinor, Councillor Eddie Fearon and Keith Ford introduced the report and fed back from the LGA event which they had attended.

With regard to the issue of allowances, Members requested further details of what other Panels were doing about this issue. They raised concerns about a lack of allowances for independent members in particular, whereas elected members were often nominated onto the Panel due to having other related portfolio commitments (for which they already received a Special Responsibility Allowance). Members requested that this issue be raised with the Home Office.

Members requested that an informal meeting of the Panel be arranged to discuss allowances, to review membership ahead of consideration at the annual meeting in June and to consider the future focus of the Panel.

RESOLVED 2013/009

- 1) That the key issues raised at the LGA event be noted.**
- 2) That further work be undertaken to enable a report on a possible joint independent remuneration panel to be considered at the annual meeting in June 2013.**

9. WORK PROGRAMME AND DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Keith Ford introduced the report. With regard to the review of the Complaints Procedure scheduled for June 2013, Jayne Francis-Ward reported that one complaint against the Commissioner had been received so far but that this related to a principle of policy (rather than concerns about how the decision had been taken) and was therefore outside of the complaints scheme criteria. Further work would be undertaken to clarify this point within the Complaints Procedure.

RESOLVED 2013/010

- 1) That the work programme be noted.**
- 2) That the proposed dates of future meetings be agreed.**
- 3) That the proposed venues for future meetings be progressed.**

The meeting closed at 4.11 pm

CHAIRMAN
M_14April2013