

# **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

## **MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2021 AT 2.00 PM**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

(A denotes absent)

Christine Goldstraw OBE – Independent Member (Chair)  
Councillor David Ellis – Gedling Borough Council (Vice Chair)

Executive Mayor Andy Abrahams – Mansfield District Council - **A**  
Councillor Scott Carlton – Newark and Sherwood District Council  
Lesley Dalby – Independent Member  
Councillor Tony Eaton – Bassetlaw District Council  
Suma Harding – Independent Member  
Councillor Rob Inglis – Rushcliffe Borough Council  
Councillor Neghat Khan – Nottingham City Council  
Councillor Richard MacRae – Broxtowe Borough Council - **A**  
Councillor Francis Purdue-Horan - Nottinghamshire County Council  
Councillor Stuart Richardson (substitute for Mayor Abrahams) – Mansfield District Council  
Councillor Helen-Ann Smith – Ashfield District Council  
Bob Vaughan-Newton – Independent Member  
Councillor Linda Woodings – Nottingham City Council

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

Keith Ford - Team Manager, Democratic Services	}	Nottinghamshire County Council
Pete Barker - Democratic Services Officer	}	(Host Authority)
Jo Toomey - Advanced Democratic Services Officer	}	
Keith Palframan - Group Manager, Finance	}	

### **OTHERS PRESENT**

Paddy Tipping - Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)  
Craig Guildford - Chief Constable, Notts Police  
Rachel Barber - Deputy Chief Constable, Notts Police  
Kevin Dennis - Chief Executive, Office of PCC (OPCC)  
Emma Foody – Deputy PCC  
Mark Kimberley - Head of Finance, Notts Police  
Charlie Radford - Chief Finance Officer, OPCC

#### **1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING HELD ON 23 NOVEMBER 2020**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 23 November 2020, having been circulated to all Members, were taken as read and were confirmed, and were signed by the Chair.

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor MacRae.

Councillor Khan replaced Councillor Ayoola and Councillor Smith replaced Councillor Zadrozny. Councillor Richardson replaced Executive Mayor Abrahams for this meeting only.

Apologies were also received from the representatives of the Courts Service who had been due to attend the meeting.

## **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Smith asked whether all members of the Panel should be declaring an interest as residents of Nottinghamshire who would be affected by the levying of the precept. Officers agreed to clarify the situation for Members and would record relevant interests if required.

## **4. WORK PROGRAMME**

Mr Ford introduced the Work Programme report and drew members' attention to paragraph 6 of the report which referred to reviewing progress against the Police and Crime Plan. Mr Ford informed Members that a report elsewhere on the agenda would ask Members to consider how best to scrutinise the Plan in future.

Mr Ford referred to the National Police and Crime Panel (PCP) Conference that had been held virtually on 23-25 November and invited those members who had attended to feedback any comments to the Panel. The Chair reminded Members that the opening speaker at the Conference had been the Commissioner and informed members that the event had been very well organised despite the difficulties involved. The Commissioner confirmed that the attendees had posed some difficult questions on the day, which he welcomed, and stated that as the Conference had been held virtually the attendance had increased.

### **RESOLVED 2021/001**

**That the contents of the report be noted.**

## **5. PRECEPT AND BUDGET REPORTS 2021-22**

Prior to the meeting, the Panel had supplied the Commissioner with a number of questions around the themes of consultation, the Commissioner's justification for the increase in precept, savings and efficiencies, reserves, the Capital Programme, staffing and financial governance. The questions and the responses received are appended to these minutes. Some of the themes were further explored during the meeting.

The Chair thanked the Commissioner for the input of himself and his officers into the previous budget workshop and for the timeliness of the officers' written responses, which was appreciated by Members.

Within the meeting the Commissioner informed the Panel about the confirmation he had received from the Minister for Policing on the value of the settlement, which was consistent with the provisional information that was provided in December 2020. In that letter the Commissioner informed the Panel that the Minister had referred to the review of the funding

formula, indicating that it was not on the agenda at the current time. The Commissioner also stated that in the letter the Minister had indicated his belief that the proposition to increase the precept for a Band D property by £15 was an appropriate one.

The Commissioner referred to the uplift in the number of police officers, stating that the force was a year ahead of its intake numbers and the Commissioner reassured Members that the increased number of officers would not result in de-civilianisation. The Commissioner also described the areas into which the newly recruited officers would go, with the focus on public visibility. The Panel noted the proportion of officers from BAME communities, which they considered a positive achievement. As well as the additional officers, it was noted that the number of PCSOs would be retained, with an increase in police staff.

The Commissioner spoke about the efficiencies that police forces nationally would have to achieve and the mechanisms for doing that, including procurement savings and improved IT systems. The Panel noted that Nottinghamshire Police was on track to achieve the budgeted efficiency saving of £2m for the current year, with a further budgeted saving of £2.5m in the 2021/22 Budget.

With regard to consultation, the Commissioner explained that the Force was one of only a small number nationally to conduct ongoing surveys throughout the year. The recent focus groups had attracted 31 participants. The balance between the number of people who supported an increase and those who did not was narrow. The Commissioner also stated that once people were given a greater understanding of the financial arrangements for Nottinghamshire Police, it increased the number of people who were supportive of an increase in the precept.

The Commissioner recognised the financial impact of the pandemic on local people and referred to arrangements in place with regard to the collection fund, and an arrangement to recoup outstanding monies over a 3-year period.

The Panel noted the comments the Commissioner made regarding reserves, and how the past two years had seen a concerted effort to build reserves to enable two significant building projects.

During discussions the following points were raised:

- While recognising that 70% of other Police and Crime Commissioners nationally were proposing to increase the police precept by £15 for a Band D property, several Panel Members expressed concern about raising the precept in the current circumstances, both in monetary terms and as a percentage increase.
- Members asked about how savings would be distributed from the formation of multi-agency hubs as part of the rationalisation of the police estate.
- Reference was made to increases in reports of low-level crime and anti-social behaviour and the role and resourcing of neighbourhood policing to address those issues.
- Members recognised the demand that the Police Force faced and changes to that demand arising as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, including increases in cybercrime and access to domestic abuse support services.

- The Panel was advised of increases to the force fleet and work to grow the roads policing team and how it was being deployed.

The requisite number of Members requested a recorded vote and it was ascertained that the following 10 members voted '**For**' the motion :-

Lesley Dalby  
Councillor Tony Eaton  
Councillor David Ellis  
Christine Goldstraw  
Suma Harding  
Councillor Rob Inglis  
Councillor Neghat Khan  
Councillor Stuart Richardson  
Bob Vaughan-Newton  
Councillor Linda Woodings

The following 3 Members voted '**Against**' the motion:-

Councillor Scott Carlton  
Councillor Francis Purdue-Horan  
Councillor Helen-Ann Smith

The Chair declared that the motion was carried and it was:

#### **RESOLVED 2021/002**

- 1. That the contents of the precept and budget reports be noted and the views of the Panel be formally reported to the Commissioner.**
- 2. That the increase of the precept by £14.94 to £244.26 in Band D Council Tax be approved.**

#### **6. UPDATE TO POLICE AND CRIME DELIVERY PLAN 2021-22**

The Commissioner introduced the report which proposed a change to the frequency of Police and Crime Delivery Updates such that an update report on all 4 thematic areas would in future be brought to the Panel every 6 months. The Commissioner informed the Panel that a new plan would not be produced until after the PCC elections on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

The Chair confirmed the discussion that had taken place at the recent Budget Workshop and that Members had been consulted on the proposed change.

#### **RESOLVED 2021/003**

**That the revised approach to reporting progress to the Panel on the implementation of the Delivery Plan be approved.**

## **7. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE REPORT TO DECEMBER 2020**

The Commissioner introduced the report and drew Members' attention to the section on missing persons informing the Panel that much work and thought had gone into this area where the investigation costs had been reduced by 19%.

The Commissioner spoke of the new Command and Control system which had experienced a few glitches, with COVID posing a particular challenge, and informed the Panel that the aim was to be on track by March.

The Commissioner informed the Panel that the Force had acquired another drone and that in the long-term, the likelihood was that more drones would be purchased. The Commissioner informed the Panel about the discussions that had been taking place regarding the future of the national air service and the effect of drone technology on it.

The Commissioner spoke of his walkabout around Stanton Hill and informed the Panel that he was keen to work with partners in Ashfield and the potential to do more. The Commissioner referred to the Government-funded 'Safer Streets' initiative, with work primarily being carried out in the Newark and Sherwood area. The Commissioner informed the Panel that the Police Minister had recently visited the area virtually and had been impressed with what had been achieved. The Commissioner informed the Panel that the second phase of the initiative had been announced and that the Force was in a strong position to bid for monies.

The Commissioner next spoke of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Review which he anticipated would be published in a week's time. The Commissioner informed the Panel that he had spoken to the Home Office about the Review and in Phase 1 expected it to focus on raising the profile of PCPs and sharing best practice. The Commissioner informed members that Phase 2 would concentrate on the work undertaken in liaison with the probation service, youth offending teams, early intervention, the Courts Service and the Crown Prosecution Service.

The Commissioner then spoke about Operation Reacher and its good results, especially in the area of social media, and how it had brought communities together.

During discussions the following points were raised:

- The Commissioner informed the Panel that the underwater drone used at a recent incident belonged to the Environment Agency and the work there was a good example of various partners working together including the police, fire and ambulance services.
- Members thanked the Commissioner for the breakdown of figures that separated out the Covid and Non-Covid related anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents as requested at the last meeting. In response to a question on the subject, the Commissioner informed the Panel that ASB had increased by nearly 50% but much of that was Covid-related. The Commissioner informed the Panel that he had spoken to the Home Office about the extra £30m that had been made available to forces in the summer and that work was being undertaken to gauge the effectiveness of the extra funds. The Commissioner said that a campaign was underway to obtain a further £30m in April and stated that although he expected more funds to be made available, he did not think the figure would be as high as £30m. The Chief Constable confirmed that the Force's share of the central funding was £500k last time and that confirmation

of any further amount was pending. The Chief Constable informed the Panel that all Covid-related fines went into a central pot and not directly to the Forces levying those fines.

- Responding to a query about the increase in on-line fraud the Commissioner replied that the Force's approach was being reviewed and informed the Panel that the City of London had been granted extra resources, some of which may be distributed to the regions. The Commissioner agreed that prevention was a priority and confirmed that staff were working in this area and that work in schools would begin soon. The Chief Constable informed the Panel that the Force was the 6<sup>th</sup> highest in the country in terms of prosecutions and informed the Panel that the Force had changed its structure in this area and increased investment.
- The Commissioner acknowledged the problem of noise and stated that this was an issue that could be dealt with better and confirmed that he was keen to work alongside the City Council who had its own plans designed to tackle the problem.
- The Commissioner responded to a question regarding the response rates to '999' and '101' calls and informed the Panel that the Nottinghamshire Force received more '999' calls than most other forces in the country. In terms of '101' calls, the Commissioner informed members that the response rates were good and that this service was about to be re-tendered and that thinking had begun as to how the new service would look. The Commissioner informed the Panel that much hard work was needed before commencing the retendering exercise as 80% of the calls received were not for the Police. The Commissioner informed members that local authorities would be consulted.

## **RESOLVED 2021/004**

**That the contents of the report be noted.**

### **8. COVID-19: COURTS & CRIMINAL JUSTICE RECOVERY PLAN UPDATE 2020-21**

The Commissioner informed members that he had spoken to the Lord Chancellor before Christmas and the Courts Minister last month, both of whom had accepted that there was a problem with backlogs, and that although progress was being made there was still much to do

The Deputy Commissioner introduced the report and informed members that although the representatives from the Courts' Service had been unable to attend the meeting, she thanked the representatives for their help in producing the report. The Deputy Commissioner had had constructive discussions with them, that more discussions were planned and that members of the Panel were welcome to attend those discussions if they wished. The Deputy Commissioner thanked colleagues for all their hard work in this area and their commitment to improving the situation and increasing courts' capacity, remarking that although the picture was getting better many challenges remained.

The Commissioner stated that one of those challenges was the effect Covid was having on the capacity of the Courts. Other challenges stemmed from decisions taken nationally and included cuts in funding and the reduction in the number of buildings, staff and sitting days. The Deputy Commissioner informed members that the uplift in police officer numbers,

though welcomed, created a strain on those parts of the system which have not had increased investment.

The Deputy Commissioner spoke of the Justice Committee's priorities during lockdown which included sourcing alternative accommodation (Nightingale Courts), getting courts open, extending hours and maximising the use of audio and video, and informed the Panel that the report detailed the progress made. The Deputy Commissioner stated that some pilots of extended hours were running in other regions and that she hoped the initiative would be rolled out nationally. The Deputy Commissioner stated that the lack of Nightingale Courts had been a source of frustration and informed the Panel that around 200 were required compared to the 20 that were available. The Deputy Commissioner stated that it was positive that such a venue was under consideration for Nottinghamshire and informed members that the Commissioner's Office and the Force were there to provide support to partners to achieve this.

The Deputy Commissioner informed the Panel that government funding of £270m had been made available but that it was estimated that nearer £400m was required just to tackle the backlog in court cases and not including the needs of prisons, the probation service and the criminal justice system as a whole. The Deputy Commissioner emphasised the importance of members lobbying MPs to maintain the visibility of the issue. The Deputy Commissioner stated that despite the dedication of staff, there were grave concerns at the delays which had been expressed at a ministerial level and by Chief Constables nationally. The Deputy Commissioner informed the Panel that several reports had been produced on the subject including one by Her Majesty's Justice Chief Inspectors that highlighted the ripple effect of the backlog on the criminal justice system. The Deputy Commissioner informed the Panel that everyone involved had the shared aim of delivering justice and that a whole system approach to the problem was needed to help all those affected including victims, defendants and their families. The Deputy Commissioner thanked the Panel for its focus on the topic.

The Chief Constable stated that justice delayed was justice denied and praised the role of the Nottingham Recorder in progressing the work of the Crown Courts. The Chief Constable expressed his regret that the courts' representatives had not been able to be present to answer the Panel's questions. The Chief Constable commented favourably on the detail of the report and stated that it helped to define the size of the task ahead.

The Chief Constable referred to paragraph 3.7 of the report, which referred to the potential of a Police Led Prosecutions (PLP) Court sitting on a Saturday, which indicated that they had not progressed because the police had not been able to resource them. The Chief Constable stated that it was a situation that required an exchange / the swapping of a day, there was no lack of resource on the Force's part.

During discussions, the Panel raised the following issues:-

- The Panel shared the Chief Constable's disappointment at the absence from the meeting of the Courts' Service representatives and echoed the Deputy Commissioner's comments regarding the historic underfunding of the criminal justice system. The Deputy Commissioner informed the Panel that regular meetings were held with the representatives of the Courts' Service and that members of the Panel were welcome to attend the meetings and pose questions directly to the representatives.
- The Panel questioned the Deputy Commissioner about the concentrating of criminal hearings in Nottingham and queried whether this meant that justice was not being

administered locally. Mrs Harding informed the Panel of incidents where a case that would ordinarily be heard in Mansfield was due to be heard in Nottingham, but the case did not proceed as the witnesses and defendants had not travelled to Nottingham. The Chief Constable stated that similar problems were faced by the police concerning remands where some need to be held over as a result of the number of cases involved and this also resulted in an extra cost to the force. The Deputy Commissioner confirmed that the large reduction in the number of Magistrates' crime courts in Mansfield made it very difficult to respond to Covid and had an affected access to justice for people in the north of the county. The Deputy Commissioner commented positively on the fact that a Crown Court would be opening in Mansfield in the near future but stated that although the lack of hearings may be a short-term emergency response, there were long term consequences which needed investigating.

- The Panel invited comments on the delay between police initiating proceedings and the first hearing in court, which currently stood at over 4 months, and also invited comments about the reduction in out of court disposals. The Chief Constable stated that he shared the Panel's concern at the length of the delay, which increased the risk of attrition, worsened the experience of victims and increased the workload of those employed in the system. The Chief Constable confirmed that Covid had meant the reduction of some work around out of court disposals but highlighted the pilot being run at the Bridewell with a sergeant and several officers as evidence of the Force's commitment in this area and which had been well supported by partners.

At this point in the meeting the Deputy Commissioner was invited to respond to questions asked earlier regarding domestic violence:

- The Deputy Commissioner spoke of the increased demand for services in this area and informed the Panel that the demand was especially acute for advisers who support victims through the court process which at the moment was particularly challenging because of the increased timescales involved.
- The Deputy Commissioner spoke of the Helpline where calls were not necessarily new reports of abuse but often involved ongoing, complex, long-term cases where, because of Covid, anxiety that was previously being managed was now increasing.
- The Deputy Commissioner informed the Panel that when the last lockdown ended the demand for services increased and that providers would need to be prepared for a similar scenario at the end of the present lockdown.
- The Deputy Commissioner informed members that there had been an increase in those without children seeking refuge compared with those with families, and that the reasons for this needed to be investigated.
- The Deputy Commissioner informed the Panel that the Ministry of Justice had provided some extra support, but that this was only short-term money that needed to be spent in specific ways in the present financial year, which added to the strain on services. The Deputy Commissioner stated that £40m was to be made available next year but that no local breakdown of that figure were yet available. The Deputy Commissioner stated that long term funding was required in this area.

- The Deputy Commissioner was asked if it would be possible to provide a more detailed breakdown of those calling the Helpline so that the numbers of long-term cases and new calls could be ascertained to allow a real understanding as to what was happening and ensure the right resources could be put in place. The Panel informed the Deputy Commissioner that figures for repeat domestic abuse incidents were reported to the Panel in the past and that this was felt to be a good measure of success of the support services provided. The Deputy Commissioner was asked if the breakdown of the figures and the figures for repeat domestic abuse offences could be brought to the March meeting of the Panel and the Chair stated that it might be useful for Councillor Woodings and the Deputy Commissioner to discuss the matter further outside the meeting.
- The Deputy Commissioner was asked whether similar figures regarding new and repeat domestic abuse incidents involving male victims could also be brought to the March meeting. The Deputy Commissioner confirmed that the figures would be available for the March meeting and reminded the Panel that the Commissioner did commission a male survivors support line provided by Equation and though the volume of calls received was significantly lower than that received by the helpline for female victims, the numbers were increasing.
- The Chair ask Mr Ford if he would write to the Courts' Service representatives on the Panel's behalf thanking them for their contribution to the report but expressing the Panel's disappointment at their absence from the meeting. The Chair stated that the Panel would be expecting an update report on the situation at the March meeting with any discussions around how the Panel could further support the Commissioner to take place outside of the meeting.

## **RESOLVED 2021/005**

**That the contents of the report be noted.**

The meeting closed at 4.17pm

CHAIR