

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 NOVEMBER 2014 AT 2.00 PM AT COUNTY HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT

(A denotes absent)

Chairman - Executive Mayor Tony Egginton – Mansfield District Council - **A**
Vice-Chairman - Christine Goldstraw OBE – Independent Member

Rizwan Araf – Independent Member
Councillor Chris Baron – Ashfield District Council
Councillor David Challinor – Bassetlaw District Council - **A**
Councillor Eunice Campbell – Nottingham City Council - **A**
Councillor Georgina Culley – Nottingham City Council - **A**
Councillor David Ellis – Gedling Borough Council
Councillor Glynn Gilfoyle – Nottinghamshire County Council
Councillor John Handley – Nottinghamshire County Council
Suma Harding – Independent Member
Councillor Rosemary Healy – Nottingham City Council
Councillor Neghat Khan – Nottingham City Council
Councillor Pat Lally – Broxtowe Borough Council
Councillor Bruce Laughton – Newark and Sherwood District Council
Councillor Keith Longdon – Nottinghamshire County Council
Councillor Debbie Mason – Rushcliffe Borough Council
Bob Vaughan-Newton – Independent Member

OFFICERS PRESENT

Pete Barker – Democratic Services Officer,) Nottinghamshire
Democratic Services) County Council
Keith Ford – Team Manager, Democratic Services) (Host Authority)

OTHERS PRESENT

Paddy Tipping – Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
Chris Cutland – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
Kevin Dennis, Chief Executive, Office of PCC (OPCC)
Chief Constable Chris Eyre – Nottinghamshire Police
Charlie Radford – Treasurer, OPCC

CHAIR

In the absence of the Chairman, the meeting was chaired by the Vice-Chairman, Christine Goldstraw OBE.

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2014, having been previously circulated, were agreed as a true and correct record and were confirmed and signed by the Chair of the meeting.

It was reported that The Proceeds of Crime Act would no longer be the subject of a separate report to the meeting of the Panel on 5th January 2015 but would be covered in the future item on Priority Theme 5: Reduce the Threat from Organised Crime.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Executive Mayor Tony Egginton and Councillors Campbell, Challinor and Culley.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor Laughton declared a private and pecuniary interest as his wife works for Nottinghamshire Police, which did not preclude him from speaking or voting on any agenda items.

ORDER OF AGENDA

The Chair agreed to revise the order of the agenda to enable parts of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Update report to be considered first, in light of the media interest in issues to be covered within that item.

4. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE REPORT

Firearm Discharge

The Commissioner made it clear that there had been no cover up of this incident, which involved a young girl being injured during a visit to Force Headquarters. Both the Commissioner and the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) were informed of the incident immediately. The Commissioner had been criticised for not making public details of the incident earlier but he felt that this was an operational matter and therefore not appropriate for him to comment on. Many discussions took place internally about how the incident should be handled, with the Commissioner favouring an open approach. However, he felt Members should be aware that in this case the timing of when the information was released to the media was affected by the wish of the young families involved not wanting any publicity. Also, the IPCC were currently investigating the matter and therefore he felt it would have been inappropriate to comment upon details,

In response, Members raised the following issues:-

- the terminology being used to describe the incident was queried, with the Commissioner's press release referring to an 'accidental discharge' and the Commissioner referring to an "unauthorised discharge". The Commissioner acknowledged that he had used the latter term but confirmed that it was an 'accidental discharge' that was being investigated;
- the timescales for the IPCC to publish its findings were queried. The Commissioner stated that past experience had shown that IPCC

investigations could be lengthy although additional Government funding had been given to help speed up such issues. The Commissioner suggested that the Panel write to the IPCC to support the Commissioner's request for a quick turnaround. Members supported this suggestion;

- assurances were sought that the girl had fully recovered. The Commissioner confirmed that the Force was in regular contact with the family and that the child had physically recovered although any potential psychological effects would continue to be monitored;
- the extent of Health & Safety Executive (HSE) involvement was queried and the Commissioner confirmed that they were involved although they had not been notified immediately. He confirmed a voluntary referral had been made to the HSE.

The Chief Constable described the events in detail though made it clear that owing to the ongoing investigation there were some matters he could not discuss. The event at Force Headquarters was for school children who had won a colouring competition. It was pre planned and all activities had been risk assessed, for example including the presence of police dogs and tasers. It was not planned for live ammunition to be present at any time. However, towards the end of the event the children asked if they could examine some operational vehicles that had subsequently arrived on site after having been in service. One of the vehicles contained a firearm which the pupils asked to see. The officer followed the procedure to make the firearm safe, but unintentionally discharged the firearm into the ground. When this was done part of the bullet's casing struck one of the pupils in the lip (the pupil was standing some distance away). An occupational nurse was on site to administer treatment immediately. The Chief Constable spent time with the parents and children. The events were investigated on the day, in addition to the IPCC investigation. The officers involved have had their firearms removed in the meantime although they are not suspended from duty.

All Authorised Firearms Officers undergo a weapon handling test and training was found to be up to date. All the relevant officers were found to be aware of procedures. New procedures have since been issued which are even tighter than the previous ones. Training has been reviewed and the Chief Constable is satisfied that the standard remains high. Weaponry has also been reviewed and confirmed to be safe. Any similar visits in future will now require advance Chief Officer approval and appropriate risk assessments.

The Chief Constable added that there had been two other 'unintentional discharges' in 2013 when officers were making their weapons safe. One incident took place at the end of an officer's shift when he was cleaning the weapon. Following investigations that officer was removed from firearms duties. The other incident involved an officer who had tried to make sure his weapon was not heard when locked. This had also resulted in a discharge at the end of the shift. Following a subsequent review, the

officer was not removed from firearms duty permanently and has since provided input into training courses to highlight this particular issue.

In response to further queries raised by Members, the following issues were clarified:-

- the Commissioner confirmed that the further procedures put in place gave him assurance that such an incident would not reoccur in future. The Chief Constable added that firearms would still be used in engagement events but these would not contain live ammunition and underlined that any future visits would require Chief Officers' approval. In response to Members' concerns about use of firearms at any public engagement events, the Chief Constable underlined that weapons were a useful means of both engaging young people and also helping to address the bravado around weapons by highlighting the consequences;
- the Commissioner recognised how serious the incident was and did not underestimate the potential effect on the child, parent and school. He underlined that there had been a difference in views about informing the media about the incident and that he favoured to take a proactive approach. He welcomed the opportunity to make a statement at this Panel meeting. The Chief Constable reiterated that it had been his decision as to when to inform the media and he underlined his reasons for not doing so at an earlier stage;
- the Chief Constable confirmed that there was a national manual on handling firearms and that this included procedures for making a weapon safe. The Chief Constable outlined his experience in the use of firearms and in providing firearms training and stated that the correct terminology for such incidents was 'unintentional discharge' rather than 'unintentional and negligent' as previously.

Website

The Commissioner confirmed that the Force's public website had been hacked into on a Friday afternoon but that the site was operational again the same evening. The organisation behind the hacking had yet to be confirmed although it was thought that they were also responsible for hacking into the websites of other public organisations recently.

The Chief Constable emphasised that it was the public site that was hacked. This is separate from the internal police systems that were not affected and which are not accessible from the public site. Investigations were ongoing.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Keith Ford introduced the update report and confirmed that Priority Theme 1 – 'Improve the Efficiency, Accessibility and Effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System' and Priority Theme 2 – 'Protect, Support and Respond to

Victims, Witnesses and Vulnerable People' had been added to the agenda for the meeting scheduled for 5th January 2015.

During discussions, the following issues were raised:-

- with regard to the proposed budget workshop, Members agreed that this should be arranged for 16 January in light of the Commissioner's lack of availability on the 9 January. The Commissioner thought it would be unlikely that papers would be available in advance of the workshop, partly because the provisional grant settlement figures would be released by the Home Office during the Christmas holiday period.
- with reference to the recent national conference, the Commissioner invited Panel Members to get involved in discussions over broader budget priorities, looking at the wider financial context.
- it was agreed that a further budget workshop be arranged for Members in the week commencing 26 January 2015, with support from the host authority's Chief Financial Officer. The Commissioner and his officers would not be involved in this workshop. Keith Ford would e-mail members to arrange a convenient date.

RESOLVED 2014/028

1) That the work programme be noted.

2) That two budget workshops be arranged for:-

- a. 16 January 2015 – 10.00am – County Hall;**
- b. week commencing 26 January 2015 – County Hall (date to be confirmed).**

4 POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE REPORT (CONTINUED)

The Commissioner introduced the report and covered the following main issues:-

- the Commissioner felt that mental health must be made a priority area for investment both for the Force and the NHS. The success of the Triage car was illustrated by a 50% reduction in the number of people with mental health problems being taken into custody for care;
- the number of officers in the Public Protection Unit was being increased by 30 and there were plans to more than double that number in the future. These posts would need to be found from elsewhere in the Force. Child sexual exploitation and abuse was being given a high priority. Independent inquiries, for example into events in children's homes, could only begin after investment had been made and

prosecutions were at an end. Some work has been done into what these inquiries would look like but it was still too early for work to begin in earnest;

- the Commissioner had written to the Prime Minister asking for the fees for applying for firearms to be increased. These fees had been unchanged since 2001, cost £450k per year for the Force to process and only generate £56k per year in income.

During discussions, the following points were raised:-

- Members welcomed the positive developments highlighted in the report (notably the burglary and violence reductions) but raised concerns around Anti-Social Behaviour performance and the fact that recent visits by the Commissioner about this issue had focussed solely on City areas. Members felt that New Cross funded initiatives could take upwards of 2 years to deliver results, especially in areas housing transient communities who may not feel part of their area;
- Members highlighted the success of the Police activity around Hucknall Bypass in which over 500 vehicles were stopped, resulting in 27 arrests, and the benefits of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) in that area.
- Members expressed concerns that the survey indicated only 53.2% of people were satisfied that the Police and Councils were dealing with anti-social behaviour. Members also queried the survey methods and in response the Commissioner clarified that the figures came from questions included in the British Crime Survey and repeated locally through the Nottingham Crime and Drug Partnership's 'Respect' survey. The ability to compare figures was further complicated by the changes to the recording of statistics introduced in October 2014;
- the Commissioner recognised that there was a degree of healthy scepticism regarding the crime figures but felt that recording was worthless if not done properly. He stated that efforts would continue to make them as accurate and relevant as possible and he thought that subsequent compliance checks from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) would show Nottinghamshire continued to have one of the highest compliance rates nationally. The Chief Constable highlighted anomalies between British Crime Survey data and statistics gathered locally and gave examples of the types of issue which now needed to be recorded as crimes, including assaults by very young children under the age of criminal responsibility. He underlined that the way of recording violent offences that had resulted in actual injury had not changed;
- with regard to Violence Against Person crimes, which had increased in Nottinghamshire and the vast majority of other Force areas, the Commissioner felt that this was not entirely down to the new approach to recording such crimes;

- Members highlighted that many of those paying the firearms fee were working class people on limited incomes and perhaps other ways than increasing fees could be found, for example increasing the length of the licence or making firearm and shotgun licences co-terminous. The Commissioner stated that he had been talking with other forces about the possibility of merging firearms departments to reduce costs;
- Members highlighted the potential problem due to the policing of anti-social behaviour caused through excessive noise now being a matter for local authorities who, at a time of reducing budgets, are putting fewer and fewer resources into this area. Members suggested that the City's night car initiative could be piloted in other parts of the County. In response the Commissioner stated that complaints about noise were increasing and the inter-agency response to noise was not good, with local authorities' environmental health officers no longer available 24 hours a day. Discussions were ongoing with all districts but resources were very sparse in some County areas;
- the Commissioner was confident that the proposed efficiency savings would be achieved though it would be painful. There were problems with the levels of overtime being paid as operational issues had required it. A balanced budget overall would be achieved by year end, though the level of expenditure in various areas would not be as originally forecast;
- Members queried whether the Commissioner was happy with the pace of the investigation into alleged abuse in children's residential homes and whether the speed was being affected by budget and resource issues. The Commissioner said that he would like to have an end-date for this investigation but more victims kept coming forward. The Chief Constable stated that people were being encouraged to come forward and underlined the complexity of such investigations. He added that the Force had to balance resources between historical investigations and current inquiries, as well as other policing matters (recognising the reality that additional resources were not available);
- Members expressed surprise at the proportion of alcohol-related violent crime being described within the report as 'woefully below' the national average. The Commissioner acknowledged this was an inappropriate phrase and stated that good progress was being made in Nottinghamshire in reducing the level of alcohol related violent crime. The Force's Alcohol Policy was regarded as one of the best in the country. The Commissioner highlighted initiatives aimed at young drinkers being conducted in cinemas, pubs and clubs.

RESOLVED 2014/029

That the contents of the update report be noted.

6a. PRIORITY THEME 3 - PRIORITY CRIME TYPES AND LOCAL AREAS THAT ARE MOST AFFECTED BY CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR.

The Commissioner introduced this item, highlighting the increase in crime figures nationally (14 out of 43 forces had experienced an increase) in contrast to the findings of the British Crime Survey which suggested that crime was going down.

The Chief Constable introduced the presentation, highlighting compliance to HMIC standards was good but there was no complacency. He underlined that crime can only be solved by understanding the cause and the Force has been good at identifying causation. It was important though that the area was continually monitored as circumstances do change over time. The seasons influence behaviour so there were spikes depending on the time of year but the overall trend in crimes committed was downward

The Assistant Chief Constable, Richard Fretwell, gave a presentation on aspects of anti-social behaviour (ASB). Again this was an area that was seasonally affected. The trend had been downward until recently but the number of incidents had now increased by 9.5%. This increase had not been consistent between the City and County areas where the number of offences in the City had increased while in the County areas the number of offences had decreased. The Force was at the top of the list as regards an increase though, without being complacent, it is doubtful that other Forces had been approaching this area of work in a significantly different way to Nottinghamshire. It was important for the statistics to be studied and understood to ensure that the Force organised its people correctly on the ground. There needed to be ways of showing people how and where to report crimes, for example through the use of leaflets. Work had been undertaken with the City Council and there was now a shared understanding of how this should be happening.

Working with vulnerable people had been a particularly successful area of work which had been achieved through strong partnership working. Vulnerable people were identified using set questions and local authorities and partners also used the same nationally approved call handling techniques. Once a person had been identified as vulnerable, an officer would complete a risk assessment that would help shape the level of intervention and support.

During discussions, the following issues were raised:-

- in response to Members' queries as to whether there were explanatory leaflets for residents wanting to report ASB, Members highlighted a previous good example of a booklet available via John Mann's website Member suggested that this would be a good starting point for such a leaflet, although it would need updating to reflect the new legislation. The Commissioner agreed to visit the website and look into this;
- the Force appreciated that Nottingham was changing as a society and did work with different cultures, for example there was regular contact

with representatives of the Black and Asian communities as well as work commencing with European immigrants;

- though overall the level of anti-social behaviour was stable, this masked an increase in some areas. The Assistant Chief Constable agreed to meet Cllr Ellis and Cllr Lally outside the meeting to discuss specific problems in their areas.

6b PRIORITY THEME 7 – SPENDING YOUR MONEY WISELY

The Commissioner introduced the report and gave some details on the programme for the rationalisation of the Force's estate including:

- proposed move out of the Guildhall and into Byron House, Maid Marian Way;
- proposed sale of the stations in the Meadows and Sneinton. The Meadows site would be used for housing and discussions were ongoing with the City Council about a local neighbourhood base for the Police in the area. The Sneinton building would be modified and used as a library, with a Police base still within the building;
- there was now a timetable for the move into the Home Brewery building;
- in Bassetlaw, the new Harworth station would be opening soon there was a proposal for a joint use facility in Retford.

Work was ongoing with other East Midlands Forces regarding 'shared services'. Some limited progress had been made in sharing 'back office' functions and an agreement had been made with Northamptonshire and Cheshire to share services such as business support. There had not been much progress made with improvements to the Criminal Justice System as yet. The Commissioner said that there were no plans at present to form regional police forces but in the long he expected this topic to be revisited.

During discussions, Members raised the following issues:-

- the possibility of merging with the struggling Lincolnshire Force was queried and in response the Commissioner underlined that Lincolnshire had an agreement with the private provider GS4 which offered little scope for further sustainable savings in the future following initial reductions made. Members highlighted the example of East Midland Ambulance Service (EMAS) as a regional service which local people were no longer able to control and which subsequently, in their opinion, no longer provided a good service.

RESOLVED 2014/030

That the contents of the report and presentation be noted.

**6. RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE'S
'LOCAL POLICING – ACCOUNTABILITY, LEADERSHIP AND ETHICS'
– ISSUES AND QUESTIONS PAPER**

Keith Ford introduced the item seeking Members' views on questions vi a-
e in particular, which were related to the role and powers of Police and
Crime panels. Two members had already responded and Members were
asked to e-mail any other comments before the 30 November deadline.

RESOLVED 2014/031

The meeting closed at 4.05 pm

CHAIRMAN

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