



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Held: THURSDAY, 29 JULY 2021 at 2:00 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Taylor (Chair)
Councillor Master (Vice-Chair)

City Mayor Soulsby	Cllr Clair	Cllr Woodman
Cllr Cutkelvin	Ms M Lalani	Cllr Loydall
Cllr Harper-Davies	Cllr Mullaney	Cllr Phillimore
Cllr Stephenson	Cllr Whelband	Mr K Culverwell

In Attendance:

Rupert Matthews – Police and Crime Commissioner

Also Present:

Simon Down – Acting Chief Executive Officer

Paul Dawkins - Chief Finance Officer

Anita James Senior Democratic Support Officer

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14. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed those present and led introductions.

15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Malise Graham;
Kamal Adatia Monitoring Officer and Chief Constable Simon Cole.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to disclose any pecuniary or other interest they may have
in the business on the agenda.

There were no declarations.

17. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: 24TH JUNE 2021

The Chair advised that future agendas would include a item “progress against actions of previous meetings” to allow for updates on outstanding matters.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24th June 2021 be confirmed as an accurate record.

18. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions submitted.

19. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

Members of the Panel considered the draft Police and Crime Commissioner’s Annual Report 2020-21 that summarised the key developments over the course of the year in relation to the work of the previous PCC Lord Bach.

It was noted that the final version would incorporate the content of this report into a consistent format style and design suitable for a public facing document.

It was agreed that further detail of the Trauma Informed Strategy be provided to a future meeting.

Members of the Panel commented that the report included a lot of statistics and suggested that it would be helpful to see more information in future that explained increases in the data such as around the number of incidents or reports.

The Chair thanked officers for the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the PCC’s Annual Report 2020-21 be supported, subject to comments made by the Panel;
2. That further details about the Trauma Informed Strategy be provided to a future meeting;

20. OPCC PERFORMANCE REPORT

Members of the Panel received a report from the Police and Crime Commissioner explaining that performance reporting of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner was being reviewed with the aim of providing more accurate and meaningful details to the panel to enable them to hold the PCC to account in future.

It was noted that the format for reporting on performance was being revised and agreed to continue to feedback on the new format and report content at future meetings.

It was suggested that future reports should include where possible details of

performance across the areas of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to enable comparison as well as details of resources across each area.

The Chair thanked officers and looked forward to receiving the revised format of report at the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted and suggestions for improvement be taken into consideration for future reporting.

21. FORCE PERFORMANCE EXCEPTION REPORT QUARTER 4 2020-21

Members of the Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner that provided an update on the performance of the Leicestershire Police for the period 1st January 2021 to 31st March 2021.

Attention was drawn to several graphs at figures 3,4 and 6 within the report and it was noted that there had been improvements in the Forces efforts to be more representative of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

In terms of improving future reports it was commented:

- The correct abandonment rates now being reported were welcomed and that previous comments to improve this report had been taken on board.
- There was some concern that the data showed crime/incidents were increasing i.e. violence with injury had risen 16% but the report gave no context to that.
- More context to why particular crimes had gone up was sought and detail of what was being done to address that requested in future reports.
- An executive summary was requested in future reports to provide key highlights and to draw out one or two areas for more detail and context.
- That the data for missing people would be more helpful if it were specific with a breakdown into children and adults.
- Clarification about the violence with injury offences data was sought and whether that included the statistics for domestic violence. It was also suggested it would be helpful to see if there were patterns in types of offences occurring in certain settings, times of day etc to enable better scrutiny e.g. if victims were known to perpetrators for instance in homicide cases as well as violence with injury offences.

Officers confirmed that domestic abuse was included within the violence with injury data and agreed to provide a percentage of the violence with injury that were from domestic abuse in future performance reports.

There was a brief discussion around adverse childhood experiences, as well as the relationship or drugs and alcohol migrating through the public domain into domestic violence and whether there was any correlation to the data. Reference was also made to the Violence Reduction Network and the Trauma Informed Strategy.

The Chair noted the contents of the report and asked the comments of the panel to be taken into consideration for future reporting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the report be noted;
2. That future reports take account of the suggestions and comments for improvement above;
3. That a report providing greater detail on domestic abuse, addressing the points raised and how it impacts on other offences be brought to a future meeting.

22. RECRUITMENT PROGRESS REPORT

Members of the Panel considered a report providing further details around the recruitment and retention of police officers funded through the National Programme and those precept funded.

During discussion it was noted that although the report was on recruitment progress it provided no details about new female intake or BAME intake and it was requested this information be provided in future reports or updates on recruitment.

Clarification was sought on the number of PCSO's to be accounted for in the pre-cept for 2020-21. Officers referred to points 11 and 12 within the report to confirm the numbers being recruited across 2020-21 and into 2022 and confirmed that the additional 20 PCSO's had already been recruited.

It was noted that in terms of the National Programme for 2020-21, £2.5m of grant was dependent on recruiting the additional 89 officers and that target had been met and the grant secured. The force was now on track to recruit the number for this year (88) and that would then secure the associated grant funding of £1.5m for that too.

The Chair thanked officers for the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the report be noted.
2. That the Chief Finance Officer provide a full written response in relation to the recruitment of additional PCSO's funded through the pre-cept.

23. THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

Members of the Panel received a report updating on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and advising on the current context, assumptions, and underlying risks in relation to the MTFP.

The Police and Crime Commissioner Rupert Matthews (PCC) introduced the

report and reminded Members of the statement he made on 24 June 2021 in which he set out his concerns about the long term sustainability of the Police budget and the forecast large deficit for financial year 2024/25.

The PCC explained that where his predecessor was prepared to take a legitimate risk in terms of forecasting, this PCC had a more cautious approach and was not prepared to take those same risks. The PCC informed that there were different indications from the government now that might materially affect the medium term forecast and he was therefore bringing matters to the panels attention as it may be necessary to adjust some targets at a later point.

The Chief Finance Officer Paul Dawkins presented the report, explaining the position of the MTFP as it was at the panel's meeting on 27th January 2021 and set out the key financial risks identified in the budget report presented at that meeting, assuring members that those risks remained unchanged.

The Chief Finance Officer also set out the key assumptions that outlined the financial challenges medium term as presented at the meeting on 27th January 2021.

Members of the Panel noted the budget report had explained the spending planned for 2021-22, the former PCC's commitment to increase overall police officer numbers and the position on how those additional officers would be funded in terms of the national uplift programme and the local precept.

The Chief Finance Officer then provided details of the Budget Equalisation Reserve (BER) and the General Reserve and how those were being utilised.

It was noted there was no minimum level of reserve recommended or legislated for but there was a general accepted level that an organisations general reserve level should not fall below a 2% threshold. It was at the discretion of the PCC and the s151 Finance Officer as to how that was set out. Auditors had been consulted who confirmed there was no minimum reserve level and the level was set around risk, perception of risk and management of that risk.

Assurance was given that the former PCC had appropriately used those reserves during his tenure and abided by the rules. The Panel were reminded that at beginning of 2019 the government minister had written to the former PCC about the level of reserves being maintained on balance sheets and challenged how those would be used; part of this MTFP was also to show how reserves would be put to use and part of the decision of the former PCC was to put reserves towards growing the police establishment and that was effectively the position arrived at in the January meeting.

The Chief Finance Officer moved onto outline the position regarding efficiency savings and the effect of efficiency programmes in recent years. The panel noted that the process of achieving the £0.5m efficiency savings for this financial year had been very much started and achieved before the arrival of the new PCC.

The position following the January meeting was then set out including the significant changes which impacted upon the MTFP and how matters would be taken forward.

Members noted it was a priority area of work of the PCC to develop a detailed strategy and efficiency plan for the establishment to mitigate risks and it was recognised that there may be pressures moving forward.

The Chief Finance Officer assured Members that it was not unusual to recognise the challenges faced across the public sector such as austerity and public funding and it was not unusual to see gaps in future years. These details were all in the public domain and it could be seen through the work of the panel and auditors that Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland were one of the highest performing OPCC when it came to managing risk. The inspectorate also noted and spoke highly of that too.

The PCC informed the panel that the Home Office would be sending officers to assist, review books and the financial plan although they had not yet been advised of their terms of reference but that would be reported to the panel in due course.

Members welcomed the overall holistic overview given although there was some disappointment in the suggestion the report to the panel in January 2021 did not consider all of the financial risks and implications.

The ensuing discussion included the following comments:

The previous PCC challenged the Chief Constable to achieve £0.5m efficiency savings and it was suggested those stated in the MTFP were perhaps “accidental savings” arising from the Covid 19 situation which had impacted in several ways. There was an expectation to see more pro-active efficiency savings not accidental ones and assurance was sought as to what level those would be absolutely embedded for the next 3-5 years.

In response it was acknowledged that Covid 19 had impacted and there were different ways of working as a result, the savings achieved were set out in the report and those funds had been removed from the budget so the Force would have to manage those in future and avoid creep back.

In terms of staff working from home, it was queried how their working environments would be compensated and whether there were funds for people to have appropriate measures such as Display Screen Equipment (DSE). It was advised that the office was in the process of phasing returns to work and for those working from home (albeit in a part time way), risk assessments were being undertaken to identify if equipment was needed and to provide that.

Concern was expressed at the PCC’s announcement that the Home Office had been invited to undertake a review and that such a significant decision may have been taken without the Chief Constables involvement. It was queried

whether that was initiated by the PCC or Home Office and whether it was with the knowledge of the Chief Constable.

The PCC confirmed the review was at his suggestion following conversation with the Home Office between the PCC, Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Chief Constable. The Chief Constable had been made aware of this recently. The PCC gave assurance that the terms of reference of the Home Office review and the results of their review would in due course be reported to the Panel. The PCC also confirmed that there was no suggestion of financial mismanagement or activity at any time.

Assurance was sought in terms of police numbers and following through on the intention of the previous PCC to recruit additional officers. The PCC advised that he welcomed the current plans to increase police officers, however the general effectiveness of policing was not solely about police officer numbers but also the training they have and other staff e.g. those involved in the Violence Reduction Network.

The PCC made the point that the business of setting a budget was for one year only and that had been correctly done, however the MTFP was a longer forecast and that was where his view diverged from the previous incumbent. The PCC explained he was keen to avoid an approach where officers were recruited then in years to come to address a funding gap their number had to be cut. The PCC commented that it was preferable to recruit police numbers that they could be certain of retaining into the future.

It was suggested there was clearly a different approach to the previous PCC and enquired whether other PCC's were more inclined to this PCC's cautious approach. The PCC acknowledged his approach was more prudent and as to other PCC's, he indicated they shared concerns that revenue was consistently propped up by reserves which was not sustainable into the future.

In terms of reserve levels, it was noted that this varied across forces and was impacted by local spending decisions however at this moment in time there was an adequate level of reserves in LLR.

It was commented that partnership working was fundamental, and the Home Office visit should be seen in a positive light as a critical friend to provide an objective view.

Despite earlier comments there remained some concern that there may be an intention to reduce police numbers as well as concern about senior relationships and communication. The PCC responded that different people would make different assumptions and draw different conclusions, however no final decisions had been made about anything and emphasised his keenness was to address risk. The PCC commended the Chief Constable, assuring that he had great faith in him, and looked forward to working with him during his term of office.

Drawing discussion to an end the Chair commented that although the panel

was here to hold the PCC to account, assumptions were being made that might not be correct and it may be helpful for the Home Office to review the finances and if the review found a better way of doing it that was a positive. The Chair expressed her support for the PCC, the Chief Constable and the teams around them.

The Chair thanked the Chief Finance Officer for a thorough run through of the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the report be noted,
2. That the Terms of Reference of the Home Office review and the outcomes of that review be reported to a future meeting.

24. THE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

Members of the Panel considered the panel's first annual report which highlighted the activities undertaken by the Police and Crime Panel during the 2020-21 municipal year.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be taken as read and noted.

25. SCOPING DOCUMENT FOR REVIEW OF SECTION 106 FUNDING

Members of the Panel considered the scoping document for the s106 Funding Scrutiny Review which aimed to scrutinise the effectiveness of arrangements to obtain and use funding from developers to meet community policing needs.

Members agreed that the following members would be involved in the review:
Lift from doc plus Cllr Lucy Stephenson

Paul Dawkins, Finance Officer welcomed the review and support of the panel around this area of work.

The Chair summarised that she was pleased to see representation from each area and that this would be a key piece of partnership working.

RESOLVED:

1. That the scoping document be accepted,
2. That the membership of the working group shall be: Cllr Deborah Taylor (Chair), Cllr Les Phillimore, Cllr Kevin Loydall, Cllr Piara Singh Clair and Cllr Lucy Stephenson.

26. WORK PROGRAMME

- Budget review update to be included at December meeting.

- Police and Crime Plan – a first draft would be shared with Members outside this meeting. It was intended that public consultation would begin at end September.

RESOLVED:

1. That a Budget Review item be included on the agenda at the December meeting.
2. That a special meeting of the Police and Crime Panel be convened early September 2021, to consider and comment upon the draft Police and Crime Plan before the public consultation.

27. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the next ordinary meeting scheduled on Thursday 30th September 2021 at 1pm.

28. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair thanked those present for their contributions to the meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 4.02pm.