



Leicester
City Council

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

Held: MONDAY, 6 MARCH 2023 at 1:00 pm at City Hall

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Taylor (Chair)
Councillor Whelband (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Clair
Councillor Clarke
Councillor Cutkelvin
Councillor Graham
Councillor Harper-Davies
Councillor March
Councillor Mullaney
Councillor Phillimore
Councillor Woodman
Parisha Chavda – Independent Member
Salma Mansoor – Independent Member

In Attendance:

Mr Rupert Matthews – Police and Crime Commissioner
Mrs Rani Mahal – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
Mr Andy Champness – Acting Chief Executive Officer
Ms Kira Hughes – Acting Chief Finance Officer
Inspector Adam Street – Leicestershire Police

Also Present:

Mr Kamal Adatia – Monitoring Officer
Mrs Anita James – Senior Democratic Support Officer

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32. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed those present and led introductions.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Loydall.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any pecuniary or other interests they may have on the business on the agenda.

Councillor Phillimore declared an interest in relation to any discussion about rural policing in that his son worked for a rural charity, assurance was given that he retained an open mind for the purpose of discussion and any decisions being taken and he was not therefore required to withdraw from the meeting at that discussion point.

34. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: 1ST FEBRUARY 2023

Item 14 - Noted that the Chair on behalf of the panel had written to the Policing Minister about core funding concerns and a copy of that letter had been copied to panel members.

Item 16 – The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) updated that the Ethics and Transparency Panel (ETP) had a good initial meeting at which their Terms of Reference were discussed. The ETP had 5 members currently and steps would be taken to recruit more in due course.

As regards comments made at the last meeting the PCC clarified for the purpose of any doubt that he thought the ETP should be independent of him.

Item 10 – Noted that the minutes of the statement given by the Chair omitted to include that the PCC had refused to bring an interim chief executive appointment to the panel for a confirmation hearing. It was advised that the minutes were not a full verbatim account of the meeting however it was agreed due to the nature of this item that the additional comment should be included.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2023 be confirmed as an accurate record, subject to the comments made above.

35. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None received for this meeting.

36. POLICE AND CRIME PLAN UPDATE REPORT

Members of the panel received an update report providing an overview of the activities undertaken in delivering the Police and Crime Plan since May 2021.

The Chair commented that the lateness of reports was not satisfactory and impeded upon members ability to read them fully prior to the meeting. The Police and Crime Commissioner undertook to ensure all future reports were sent through on time.

The Police and Crime Commissioner introduced the report, briefly reminding members of the background to the plan and the 11 strands of themes and objectives that made up the plan

Attention was drawn to a number of the themes and activities undertaken which included the following points:

- The force had enhanced its recruitment of Special Constables to help fulfil a crucial role in policing of communities, providing an important link between professional police force and the community they serve, with the aim to reach 150 by March 2024
- A new post had been approved to introduce a Community Network Co-Ordinator to refresh the Watch schemes and bolster the existing Volunteers in Policing Team.
- The Violence Reduction Network (VRN) although not part of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner had been supported by the Police and Crime Commissioner to move to a more sustainable footing with the successful securing of a 3-year funding settlement for the VRN totalling £3.5 million over the next few years.
- The Trust and Confidence Strategy was being reviewed at the next Corporate Governance Board in May 2023 to re-invigorate standards across policing which have already begun.
- More work was being done to make young people aware of what the police do, this included secondary schools within serious violence locations having a named School Liaison Officer, the introduction of 9 Youth Engagement Officers who were available to speak to students in relation to the educational offer that had been developed and could also support the school and neighbourhood policing teams to assist with specific themes affecting students/staff.
- A pilot of the mini-police scheme had launched across 3 schools to increase the reach to primary school children, aiming to introduce a positive influence and allow early intervention to build trust in policing and instil age-appropriate safety awareness.
- The enhanced rural crime team introduced in July 2022 was making a good progress and now embedded in every Neighbourhood Policing Area (NPA) outside the city with at least one officer fully trained in dealing with rural and agricultural crime. All call handlers/staff within the crime bureau had also received training on rural, wildlife and heritage crime with another phase of training due to commence for new recruits soon.

- The issue of violence against women was very important both locally and nationally, and a heavy focus on tackling that with a number of programmes ongoing, such as supporting domestic abuse victims and addressing perpetrators, some of those programmes were funded through the OPCC
- The health and wellbeing of staff and officers continued to be a priority and the force now had its own occupational health section

The Chair welcomed the report and invited panel members to comment.

Members discussed the report which included the following:

The steps taken to improve rural and agricultural policing were welcomed and it was noted police were communicating more with people e.g., in village halls; with local farmers and generally building up good relationships. Aside from the impact of rural crime on the rural area there was also a human impact, and it was suggested there could be more consideration of that side.

There was some concern that the emphasis on rural crime did not take account of the issues affecting the market towns across LLR which had their own unique problems that did not sit into rural or urban and it was asked if more consideration could be given to bringing those into future discussion to see what work was happening there too. The PCC assured the panel that market towns were important, and acknowledged they had features of rural and urban, and the neighbourhood policing model was being used to address the type of policing needed.

In relation to the mini police scheme this was appreciated as a positive initiative for children. It was queried whether the longer-term impact of that would be assessed, e.g., to see if there was an impact later in life reducing involvement in crime. The PCC replied that the initial impact sought was on building a positive image of the police which was something that would be explored wider through the Trust and Confidence Strategy. In relation to feedback from parents and looking at cost value, sometimes it was subjective rather than objective, but the team would be doing more to look at the overall impact.

Whilst the report provided a list of activity it was felt there should be more data, metrics, and context to enable the panel to fulfil its role in scrutinising performance and delivery of the Police and Crime Plan. The PCC responded that he was responsible for providing the resources to enable delivery of the plan, in terms of commissioned services the OPCC did have metrics in place relating to performance and value for money and future reports could include that information, as regards other details a lot of that was available through other means such as HM Inspectorate reports.

There was further discussion about data and performance metrics that could be made available, and it was suggested that some of the information provided to CSP's or gathered through programmes such as Safer Streets and other

partnerships could be shared with the panel. It was also suggested that the Police and Crime plan should include milestones against the priorities and reports should show where things stood in terms of reaching those.

The Chair invited the PCC to consider how future reports were presented and how the OPCC might facilitate more data and information as requested.

The PCC was also reminded to ensure that financial, legal, and other implications were included in future reports too.

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the report be noted,
2. That the PCC consider how future reports are presented and how the OPCC might facilitate the inclusion of more data to enable scrutiny and measurement of performance against the Police and Crime Plan.

37. OPCC CORPORATE GOVERNANCE BOARD UPDATE

The Police and Crime Panel considered a report which provided an update of reports recently received by the Corporate Governance Board (CGB) and an overview of the Leicestershire Police performance.

The Police and Crime Commissioner introduced the report reminding the panel that the CGB was the mechanism by which he held the Chief Constable to account.

It was noted that:

- A report had been requested on Police Neutrality as the PCC had received several queries about perceived police neutrality and the PCC wanted assurance that when the police dealt with incidents that they were always strictly neutral; unfortunately, due to a miscommunication the report produced was around police neutrality in terms of politics and the forthcoming election. The PCC confirmed he had since been given assurance that the police were neutral when they dealt with incidents.
- Special Constables were increasingly taking on more demanding roles and required the level of support given to police officers, this was being pursued by the Police Federation nationally. The PCC had offered to pay the first 2 years of membership to the Police Federation for special constables to obtain the support required and allow time for matters to be resolved nationally.
- It was clarified that the Community Network Co-ordinator role would mostly entail working with various neighbourhood watch organisations.

- The Home Office had agreed, subject to detailed analysis being completed, to pay 85% of the additional costs caused to the Leicestershire police force by the disturbances that occurred in the city last year.

Members discussed the report finding the information provided useful although it was felt there could have been more detail.

Members noted the comments on e-scooters and commented it would be helpful if proper legislation was brought forward to enable e-scooters to properly be used on the streets.

The Chair thanked officers for the report.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

38. DOMESTIC ABUSE PERPETRATOR INTERVENTION PROGRAMME UPDATE REPORT

The Police and Crime Panel received an update report on the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Intervention Programme located at the Jenkins Centre in Leicester, the options for funding and the long-term sustainability of the programme.

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) briefly introduced the report.

The Acting Chief Executive Officer advised the current service provision was contracted until 31st March 2023. In January 2023 the Home Office released a round of funding for the period from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2025 and the OPCC had submitted a bid for one round of funding to maintain the work undertaken at the Jenkins Centre.

Members discussed the report noting that the OPCC were internally reviewing the current service provision and providing an evaluation to the Home Office and enquired when that was likely to be complete. The Acting CEO replied that the evaluation should be completed by mid-March 2023 and would be in line with the objectives of the contract to reflect on the number of victims supported with both the Partner Support Service and the wider Victim Service pathways.

The Chair requested a copy of the evaluation be provided to the next panel meeting in June 2023.

Members enquired what the position would be if funding from the Home Office was not received. The Acting Chief Executive Officer referred to option 2 that the Jenkins Centre be funded locally and option 3 the Jenkins Centre closes, as set out in the report.

The Chair expressed concern about reliance on match funding from the Community Safety Partnerships since their budgets had already been set and they would not be able to reattribute their funds in this financial year.

The Acting Chief Executive Officer advised there was not yet a full plan around local funding as they had committed to seeking the money from the Home Office and had approached the matter on basis that would be satisfied.

The Chair was dissatisfied with the situation as this programme had made a significant impact and commented that there should have been a proper contingency plan in the event of the funding coming to an end from Home Office.

Members commented that the CSP's had all signed up to the Domestic Abuse Partnership, and this was a perfect example where the panel should be seeing some information and data sets as the OPCC would have spent considerable time preparing report data and they should be able to show the strands coming together and show the programme having some impact but that had not been provided.

The Chair noted that the city was committed to continue to fund their element of the Jenkins Centre although funding had already been reduced throughout the city too.

Members were concerned that this was an important programme as so much of the work was deliberately targeted on the perpetrators, that was why this was a fundamental programme and therefore unsatisfactory to be at risk.

The Chair expressed her disappointment that the report provided insufficient information about alternative funding options and showed a lack of planning.

The PCC indicated that the OPCC should receive the Home Office response to the bid by 17th March 2023, if that was unsuccessful then the PCC would explore option 2 further.

Members commented that the Jenkins Centre had been discussed elsewhere so once PCC had confirmation of funding or not the panel were keen to know what the immediate action would be and to receive a written statement.

The PCC undertook to provide the panel with a short-written statement notifying the outcome of Home Office bid on 17th March 2023 and the immediate action to be taken thereafter.

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the report be noted.
2. That the PCC provide to panel members a short-written statement notifying the outcome of the Home Office bid and immediate action to be taken thereafter.
3. That a copy of the evaluation of the service be provided to the next panel meeting in June 2023.

39. EFFICIENCY SAVINGS REPORT

The Chair noted that this item had been on the panel work programme for some time; written reports had been requested several times but not made available to meetings. The Chair had therefore asked that a verbal report be given to this meeting to provide an update on the Efficiency Savings identified and achieved, in particular the savings achieved for 2022.

The Acting Chief Finance Officer gave a verbal update informing that a written report would be provided to the Corporate Governance Board in 2 weeks and then submitted to the next panel meeting.

The Acting CFO commented that the Force had identified £1.7 million savings for 2022-23 which was over the target set, and the specific detail around that would be in the written report presented to the next meeting. The written report would also refer to 2023-24 efficiency savings and the plan that would be put in place for achieving that.

The Acting Chief Finance Officer confirmed that the savings in budget for the financial year 2022-23 had been achieved.

Members were dissatisfied that written reports had been requested over some time and were not forthcoming. Members expressed their disappointment with the verbal update and the lack of detail which undermined the panel's opportunity to do its job as the panel required meaningful information in a written format that they could consider and scrutinise.

The PCC explained how his corporate governance board system worked and that reports were taken to that board so the PCC could hold the Chief Constable to account, and that the role of this panel was to scrutinise how he did that. The PCC also asserted that the budget of the OPCC had not increased but the Police budget had and where efficiencies were having to be made it was so there was more room to move things. The PCC commented it was not the case that the police budget was being cut and both the OPCC/Force budgets had been matched percentage wise to previous budgets throughout.

RESOLVED:

That the verbal update be noted.

40. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER'S INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME

Members of the Panel received the annual report of the Commissioner's Independent Custody Visiting Scheme 2021-22 covering the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) introduced the report, recognising the importance of the Independent Custody Visitor Scheme and informing that he had also attended several custody visits and observed the way in which they were undertaken.

It was also noted that the PCC had launched the Animal Welfare Scheme (AWS) on 1st April 2022 and each month volunteer visitors undertook visits to the Leicestershire Police Dog unit to check on the conditions the dogs were housed, trained and transported in.

Members welcomed the report, noting the many hours of voluntary work undertaken and congratulating the volunteer visitors on sustaining these visits.

Members were curious as to the detainees who declined or refused to be seen and possible reasons behind that such as if they were repeat offenders. The PCC responded it was often the case that people refused a visit if they were asleep although he was uncertain as to the exact details of each and indicated he would enquire if any information was recorded around that. It was noted the custody officer may also on occasion advise the visitors not to visit someone if they were intoxicated or for other reasons.

In terms of the number of visits undertaken at each custody suite it was noted that Euston Street and Keyham Lane were the primary custody suites, Beaumont Leys had been closed for most of the year and was only open when there was demand or refurbishment taking place at Keyham Lane.

As regards the use of appropriate adults for young detainees it was assured that young detainees were asked if they understood the role of an appropriate adult and felt supported.

The Chair requested any data around volunteer visits with young detainees to be provided to the panel.

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the report be noted,
2. That any data around volunteer visits with young detainees be provided to the panel.

41. S106 FUNDING REVIEW OUTCOMES UPDATE

The Acting Chief Finance Officer gave a brief verbal update on progress by the OPCC and Leicestershire Force against the outcomes of the s106 funding review.

It was noted that the force was making good progress and the PCC had been considering some proposals. The Force were looking to recruit a s106 officer and more information would be brought to the next meeting in a written report as scheduled on the work programme.

RESOLVED:

That the actions being taken be noted.

42. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair noted that East Midlands Special Operations Unit had recently received an inadequate rating and requested details of any impact of that upon Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland to be brought to the next meeting.

The Chair also asked that a written report providing a complete overview of the East Midlands Regional Collaboration Programme and collaboration arrangements be provided to a future meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the work programme be noted, and future additions discussed above be included.

43. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted that the next meeting is scheduled to start at 1pm on Thursday 22nd June 2023 at City Hall.

44. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS - PRIVATE SESSION

Under the law the panel is entitled to consider certain items in private session where in the circumstances the public interest in maintaining the matter as exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded during this item of business in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, because it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraph 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, being information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime, and taking all the circumstances into account, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Inspector Adam Streets addressed the panel to provide feedback on the Constabulary's approach to dealing locally with the more broadly reported national issues of housing asylum seekers and protests occurring outside places where asylum seekers had been accommodated.

Members noted the challenges the country faced to rehouse asylum seekers and the impact upon police forces, housing officers and other agencies in responding to government policy.

Members were given an overview of the partnership landscape in terms of

managing asylum seekers, engaging with local communities, linking to community safety leads etc., to look at the pressures and challenges.

Members noted the volume of people, the mixed demographics, and recent issues linked to hotels in the area. There was a brief discussion about the use of hotels across LLR, the housing of large groups of single males and some of the issues that had arisen from that, including concerns raised around criminality and protests.

Members discussed their concerns about the ongoing situation, the processes being used by the Home Office and the impact upon police and other resources as well as the involvement of voluntary sector organisations.

Members welcomed the update and were pleased to hear details of the co-ordinated approach being taken noting the sensitivities of the discussion.

The Chair thanked the officer for attending to provide this update.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 3.00pm.

