

Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel

Tuesday 9 April 2013

PRESENT:

Councillor Croad, in the Chair

Councillors Diviani (minute 41 onwards), Folkes, Hare-Scott, Penberthy, Saltern, Sutton and Tuffin (substitute for Councillor Williams)

Independent members: Yvonne Atkinson and Mike Firbank

Apologies for absence: Councillors Barker, Boyd, Dolphin, Maddern, Kennedy, Oliver, Williams and Wood

In attendance: Sarah Hopkins, Community Safety Partnership Manager, Judith Shore, Democratic and Member Support Manager and Lynn Clark, Police and Crime Panel Co-ordinator

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.15 pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the Panel will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

34. **CHAIR'S REMARKS**

The Chair advised members that Councillor Hicks, who represented the Isles of Scilly Council on the Police and Crime Panel and had given lengthy service as a councillor had very recently passed away. He asked members to observe a period of silence as a mark of respect.

The Chair then introduced and welcomed the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Mr Tony Hogg to the meeting. He also introduced the Commissioner's staff: the Chief Executive, Mrs Sue Howl; the Treasurer, Mr Duncan Walton and the Communications Manager, Mr Mark Tyler.

35. **APOLOGIES**

The Chair advised that there were currently insufficient members present for the meeting to be quorate. However, there were no decisions to be made immediately and it was hoped that one of the late arriving members would be present for agenda item 7.

36. **MINUTES**

There were too few members present to formally approve the minutes and it was hoped that the meeting would be quorate later on with the arrival of another member. It would then be proposed that the minutes of the meeting held on 8

February 2013 were approved, subject to the amendments recorded below, and signed as a true and accurate record.

- Ms Atkinson being marked present as an independent member, not as a councillor
- Ms Atkinson not being referred to as 'Mrs' (minute 31)

(See minute 43 below)

37. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

38. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No questions had been received from members of the public.

39. **FINAL POLICE AND CRIME PLAN**

The Chair advised that this was the third presentation that Panel members had received about the Plan. The final draft of the Plan had been agreed at the previous meeting subject to the PCC reviewing the webcast and taking account of the minutes following which the PCC was requested to submit a copy to members prior to publication. This he had done. This final version could not be further amended by the Panel. He then asked the PCC to present the final version of the Plan.

Prior to commencing the presentation, the PCC also paid tribute to Councillor Hicks.

The PCC gave his presentation. The presentation notes and the webcast of the meeting can be found on the council's website: <http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/modgov> and <http://www.plymouth.public-i.tv>

The Chair thanked the PCC for his presentation and members asked questions and received answers about the following:

- Police and crime objectives (p21): it was suggested that the wording under the 5th bullet point was amended to, 'working to better understand and respond to crimes motivated by prejudice such as hate and mate crime'. The PCC agreed, though the current version of the Plan could not be amended.
- The PCC's appointment of advisers in relation to equality of opportunity and an open recruitment process. The PCC confirmed that it was his intention to select his own advisers without following a formal process but that he would keep the Panel advised about his decisions.
- Fewer Police and Community Support Officers (PCSOs) could diminish the role of neighbourhood and community policing. The PCC confirmed that budget reductions had resulted in difficult choices being made and that this

would be an operational decision for the Chief Constable.

- Reducing crime was the objective however it was anticipated that the number of crimes in, for example, the area of domestic violence would increase. The PCC confirmed that the reporting of such crimes would be encouraged.
- In relation to the appointment of a Deputy PCC, members were advised that the PCC had not yet made a decision but this would be reassessed in the light of future workloads.
- The PCC confirmed that there were challenges in connecting with the under 25 age group and he was considering how best to do this.
- The areas of victim support and changes to the probation were matters of concern and the PCC was actively considering these areas.
- In relation to change management and issues around job evaluation there was a considerable amount of work to be undertaken and the PCC was working towards stability.
- The PCC was planning to work with partners and be innovative around enabling members of the public to make contact easily with the PCC and his office.

The meeting was still inquorate and could not take a formal decision about the Police and Crime Plan but those members present tacitly endorsed the Plan.

40. **POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S REPORT ON ACTIVITIES AND DECISIONS**

The Chair advised members that the PCC proposed to provide his report to the Panel on a regular basis with the view of being open and transparent about his activities and decisions.

Members commented that they found the report useful and would like to receive a regular update from the PCC.

(The meeting was then adjourned for ten minutes.)

41. **PROPOSAL FOR HANDLING NON-CRIMINAL COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**

(Due to the arrival of Councillor Diviani during this item of business, the meeting became quorate and could take formal decisions.)

The Chair reminded members that the Panel had previously decided (on 17 January 2013) to delegate the handling of non-criminal complaints about the PCC to the Chief Executive of the PCC's office for an initial period of three months.

The Community Safety Partnership Manager thanked the office of the PCC for agreeing to handle complaints in the interim and added that no such complaints had been received to-date about the PCC. She advised that the report sought to clarify the Panel's role and responsibility and outlined four options for undertaking the work. Officers and the Chair had carefully considered the advantages and disadvantages of each and the report summarised those options. On balance, option D was preferred. It was suggested that the Panel reviewed the process after one year.

The Chief Executive of the office of the PCC advised that, whichever option was selected, the Panel retained overall responsibility for the process. The PCC's office already had a robust complaints process and an experienced team who carefully assessed different types of criminal and non-criminal complaints. She confirmed that if the Panel selected option D she would accept that delegation.

At this stage, the Chief Executive confirmed that the number of non-criminal complaints could not be anticipated and that her office responded to all complaints and took each one seriously. She confirmed the distinction between matters of opinion: for example a complaint that there were not enough police officers available which would be referred to the PCC for a response; complaints about the behaviour of the police/specific incidents and potentially criminal issues which were referred to the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

Members considered that option D was acceptable subject to a robust checking procedure being agreed. They asked that the Vice Chair was also given delegated authority to ensure continuity in the event of the Chair being unavailable.

AGREED that:

- a) a summary document about complaints received and resolved will be presented to each Panel meeting by the OPCC.
- b) twice a year, the Panel will receive a detailed report about the themes, trends, significant issues and relevant data about complaints received and resolved
- c) a robust 'dip-sampling' process will be agreed and delegated to the Chair and/or the Vice Chair of the Panel in consultation with the host authority's Monitoring Officer.

42. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair recommended that the Panel developed a pro-active scrutiny work programme.

The Community Safety Partnership Manager reminded members that the guidance issued by the Local Government Association (LGA) stated that Panels could operate in a purely reactive way in terms of their statutory and special functions, recognising that there were limited resources and a limited number of meetings in any one year.

However, the LGA had recommended that Panels should consider the advantages of carrying out a proactive scrutiny programme.

A proactive approach could be to encourage the Panel and local authorities in the peninsula to co-ordinate existing scrutiny programmes for crime and community safety to reduce duplication of work, potentially provide opportunities for joint scrutiny arrangements or, at the very least, provide an opportunity for shared learning.

Further to consultation with Panel members, the report outlined a number of areas that the Panel may wish to investigate. In order to ensure the necessary officer support, scrutiny topics would need to be prioritised.

Members commented that scrutiny could include:

- a review of Community Safety Partnerships to examine the effectiveness of partnership working
- pre-decision scrutiny of the PCC's performance management framework before it is finalised
- support with agreeing the diversity framework
- neighbourhood policing – encourage engagement with all partners across the peninsula regarding changes
- the process for encouraging reporting and improving monitoring in the areas of domestic and sexual abuse and victim support.

Members agreed that it was important to avoid duplication of work and to agree priorities within the Panel's programme of scrutiny. It was also important not to review areas too early as new arrangements needed time to 'bed in'. The first priority would be to consider the PCC's commissioning arrangements.

The Democratic and Member Support Manager advised that officers could draft a scrutiny programme based upon members' suggestions.

AGREED that:

- a) the Democratic and Member Support Manager and the Community Safety Partnership Manager will draw up more detailed proposals for the Panel's scrutiny work programme
- b) the Panel's priority will be to consider the PCC's commissioning arrangements

43. **MINUTES**

There were previously too few members present to formally approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2013. However, the meeting was now quorate.

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2013 are approved, subject to the amendments recorded below, and signed as a true and accurate record.

- Ms Atkinson being marked present as an independent member, not as a councillor
- Ms Atkinson not being referred to as 'Mrs'

44. **FUTURE MEETING DATE**

A discussion took place around days on which week day meetings should be held. It was agreed to canvass members' availability after the May elections. The next meeting would be held on Thursday 11 July.