

STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Monday, 28th January, 2013

1. MINUTES

Minutes of the Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel Meeting held on 28 January 2013

Present: Frank Chapman (Chairman)

	Brian Edwards Colin Greator (Vice-Chairman) Jason Hails Michael Holder Tony Kearon	David Leese Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal (Co-Optee) Mr P Darby (Lay) (Co-Optee) Janine Bridges
--	--	---

Also in attendance: Matthew Ellis

Apologies: Michael Heenan

PART ONE

30. Declarations of Interest

None at this meeting.

31. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2012

The Commissioner advised the Panel that the statement at minute 20 in respect of backroom support staff misinterpreted his comments where it stated "He expected that he would only need approximately one third of this support..." The Panel accepted this and it was:

RESOLVED - That, with the removal of the sentence above, the minutes of the Police and Crime Panel of 17 December 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

32. Minutes of the Confirmatory Hearing held on 17 December 2012

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Confirmatory Hearing held on 17 December 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

33. Draft Interim Police and Crime Plan 2013/14

The Commissioner had produced an Interim Police and Crime Plan to fit in with the legal requirement on him to publish a Plan by 31 March 2013. However, the intention was to consult widely on a more detailed and ambitious plan, with this being finalised by June 2013.

The Draft Interim Plan referred to the need to invest now in technology and the Panel asked how the Commissioner intended to finance such investment. This would be

partly funded through reserves that had previously been set aside for a similar investment project.

Anecdotally it was understood by Panel Members that Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) were in favour of this innovation, but highlighted the importance of integrating the software successfully. The Commissioner acknowledged that this was a concern, however work was ongoing to ensure that any new system would integrate as far as possible to enable effective data collection and information sharing between forces. It was hoped that this investment would avoid duplication, support more visible policing and enable officers to receive information in real time.

The Draft Interim Plan included targets and measures for policing priorities 2013/14 and the Panel sought clarification on whether the information covered both Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, which the Commissioner confirmed it did. They also asked for details of previous year's figures to be included in future plans to act as a reference point in helping establish how well targets were being met.

The Panel noted that investment in technology systems would be an area of capital spend, however no capital budget had been included in the papers to the Panel. The Commissioner agreed to supply the Panel with details of the capital budget.

The Panel noted the Draft Interim Plan set out the Commissioner's intention to bring together the Police, Courts Services, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and victims groups to help identify and drive through improvements. The Commissioner informed the Panel he had already had two very useful meetings with Mr Harry Ireland, Chief Crown Prosecutor (CCP) for West Midlands CPS and he was confident that progress would be made on a new way forward. The Panel asked if this work would include Her Majesty's Court Services (HMCS), particularly consideration of timing and communication issues, and were informed that a mapping exercise of the whole sector was being undertaken.

The Panel asked how success of the Commissioner's final Plan would be measured. They also had concerns over the impact of the final plan on district and borough council's responsibility for community safety, particularly when the Plan was not expected to be finalised until June 2013. District and Borough Council's would be included in consultation on the plan, as would the general public. There was a need to ensure that community safety funding was targeted where it was most needed and that the difference made by this funding could be demonstrated to have made a difference. The Panel highlighted the difficulties in demonstrating this for crime prevention projects and sought assurances that this would not lead to a shift in emphasis from crime prevention to crime reduction. The Commissioner was clear on the importance of crime prevention and informed the Panel that crime prevention would form a key part of training for police officers and special constables.

RESOLVED - That the Draft Interim Police and Crime Plan 2013/14 be noted.

34. Police and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire - Draft Revenue Budget 2013/14 and Details of Grant Settlement

The Panel considered the Revenue Budget 2013/14 and details of the grant settlement.

The Panel noted that the Commissioner had suspended regulation A19 and embarked on a limited recruitment exercise and asked how these projects would be

financed. The Commissioner informed the Panel that a number of factors influence this including the over performance of the previous Police Authority in its budgetary savings. The limited recruitment would be in two phases with a total of 28 officers recruited. Those officers affected by the suspension of regulation A19 would now have the choice of staying within the force and it was anticipated that approximately 30 officers would choose to remain. This would give a total of 58 additional officers in 2013/14. It was also hoped that collaboration with other forces over issues such as procurement would help provide savings. The Commissioner confirmed that he was satisfied that the costs arising from this decision could be accommodated in the budget for 2013/14.

The Panel noted that funding for the PCC was recorded as £1,161 in 2012/13 and again in 2013/14. They also noted that in 2012/13, the budget for the Police Authority had comprised £0.911m allocation and a contingency fund of £0.250m, and asked if this contingency had been included in the overall budget for 2013/14. The Commissioner confirmed that the contingency had been included in the budget for the OPCC. In addition a £0.250m had previously funded Police Authority member allowances and the Panel asked why this did not appear as a saving.

The Commissioner had intended to reduce the costs of those previously spent by the Police Authority. However on reflection he had made the decision to fund additional senior posts including a programme manager and a policy and performance officer and, although the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) was costing slightly more than the Police Authority had, he was confident that the developments resulting from these additional posts would help reduce costs in the future.

The Panel asked what impact was expected on recruitment from the national reduction in starting salary recently announced. The Commissioner informed the Panel that he had made funding available to the Chief Constable for a £22,000 starting salary for some posts where this was deemed appropriate. However it was also advantageous to recruit individuals who were dedicated to a future in policing rather than driven by the salary they would receive.

The Panel again raised concerns over the difficulties for district and borough councils in the lack of clarity over community safety funding allocation. £1010m funding was available but it was not clear how this figure had been arrived at. The Commissioner again reiterated that he intended to use the funding well and would ensure that it was allocated appropriately. He also intended to add to the overall allocation for community safety funding by £0.500m.

The Panel noted that the Commissioner had previously indicated he expected the old Police Headquarters, Cannock Road, Stafford, to be sold within six months of taking up his new role and the Panel asked whether this was still the case and how the funds from this sale would be used. The Commissioner was not able to say too much at present, however the income from the sale would be used to mitigate the current costs to the public purse of retaining the site.

The Panel had no further questions on the Budget and therefore the Commissioner and his officers left the meeting.

The Panel gave consideration to their formal response to the Commissioner, accepting the budget but highlighting the following areas:

- a. The difficulty for district and borough councils to fulfil their community safety responsibilities for 2013/14 when details of funding allocations may not be

available until June 2013. The Panel welcomed the increase in funding but have concerns over delays in its allocation; and

- b. The Panel welcome the Commissioners assurances that they will receive the Capital programme.

RESOLVED – That the Panel support the budget 2013/14 and will confirm this in their formal report to the Commissioner, including the comments listed.

35. Dates of Future Meetings and Work Programme

The Panel considered the dates of future meetings and work programme 2013/14. These would include quarterly performance meetings which followed the Commissioners performance meetings with the Chief Constable. The agenda for each meeting would also include a list of the decisions made by the Commissioner and items on his forward plan.

The Panel asked that they be forwarded the definition of a “decision” being adopted by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner when determining the level at which decision should be taken.

RESOLVED – That the dates of meetings and work programme 2013/14 be received.

36. Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve a likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 indicated below.

The Panel then proceeded to consider the following items:-

37. Exempt Minutes of the Confirmatory Hearing held on 17 December 2013 (exemption paragraph 1)

RESOLVED – That the exempt minutes of the Confirmatory Hearing held on 17 December 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

Chairman

Documents referred to in these minutes as Schedules are not appended, but will be attached to the signed copy of the Minutes of the meeting. Copies, or specific information contained in them, may be available on request.