

MINUTES of a meeting of the **DERBYSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL** held on 10 September 2020 via Microsoft Teams.

PRESENT

V Newbury (in the Chair)

Councillors A Barrow (High Peak Borough Council), R Bright (Derbyshire Dales District Council), V Clare (Erewash Borough Council), D Collins (Chesterfield Borough Council), J Frudd (Erewash Borough Council) C Hart (Derbyshire County Council), R Mee (Erewash Borough Council) C Moesby (Bolsover District Council), J Patten (South Derbyshire District Council), and Dr S Handsley (Independent Member).

Derbyshire County Council officers also in attendance: Paul Stone, (Finance & ICT) I Walters (Democratic Services) and L Wild (Legal Services).

Also in attendance: H Dhindsa, Police and Crime Commissioner, K Gillott, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, D Peet, Chief Executive (OPCC), A Dale, Chief Finance Officer (OPCC)

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors F Atkinson (Amber Valley Borough Council), M Bagshaw (Chesterfield Borough Council), P Niblock (Chesterfield Borough Council), P Pegg (Derby City Council), G Potter (Derby City Council), M Potts (NE Derbyshire District Council), J Smale (Derby City Council) and B Woods (Derbyshire County Council)

22/20 **MINUTES RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Derbyshire Police and Crime Panel held on 25 June and 13 August (Confirmation Hearing) 2020 be confirmed as correct records.

23/20 **MEMBER QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION** Members were provided with a written response to the Police and Crime Panel to the pre-submitted questions raised by individual Panel members.

Dr S Handsley : Given the potential financial impact or implications of Covid 19, upon your ability to deliver on your obligations, in respect of establishing local priorities and, moreover, upon your budget - and therefore your capacity to honour those obligations - can we expect either a reduction, or possible withdrawal, of the grant scheme and, if so, which specific project types or funding requests will be prioritised?

PCC Response: Whilst the impact of Covid-19 on both the police service and wider society cannot be underestimated neither can the potential benefits of an agile, targeted grants programme that seeks to support grassroots organisations working within the diverse communities of Derbyshire.

A foundation principle of our approach has been to support the concept of prevention and upstream management of issues as this is often significantly cheaper and less resource intensive in the long-term, removing the need for investigating crimes and tackling the social damage that it causes after the event.

Our experience has shown us that often it is smaller, microgrants, that can have the most significant impact in a local area and it is for this reason that the commissioning team have been developing an approach that will see a partnership between the OPCC and local third-sector support agencies to focus funding where it will have the greatest effect. The new Vulnerability Fund will allow us to support very localised projects, delivered by partners within communities that deliver against the broad objectives of the Police and Crime Plan but more importantly are designed and delivered by those communities. It is hoped this approach will see positive results in communities and help tackle those 'quality of life' issues that are so often raised when out meeting communities (an experience no doubt shared with Elected Member colleagues on the Panel).

Unfortunately, successive years of financial challenges and austerity have seen an erosion of the support of grassroots voluntary/charity sector organisations who are often best placed to respond to local issues and prevent the need for police involvement. By developing this approach, it is hoped that we will be able to free up police time, allowing them to focus on more serious matters, whilst also having a positive effect on local communities and help build stronger and safer communities.

Supplementary Question: Could you be more specific regarding which project types or funding requests will be prioritised if funding wasn't available?

PCC Response: Everything that has been funded so far will not be effected. I am not aware of any changes to our funding sources at the moment but I cannot predict what will happen in the next government funding round. As I alluded to in my response it is hoped that the new Vulnerability Fund will allow us to support very localised projects, delivered by partners within communities that deliver against the broad objectives of the Police and Crime Plan but more importantly are designed and delivered by those communities.

Councillor John Frudd : Several years ago the Government abandoned plans to take a radical proactive look at the illegal drugs trade which blights our communities. Many things would have been up for discussion which could

have included for instance, rehabilitation programs linked to de-criminalisation where it was felt appropriate, thus depleting the ill gotten gains of criminal gangs. Over time a number of strategies could have been put in place to fit many situations, and de-criminalisation would by no means be the only answer. Alas the Government chose to abandon this initiative at the eleventh hour missing a golden opportunity to finally bring about an up to date strategy for the twenty twenties going forward?

PCC Response: The use of drugs and the illicit trade that accompanies their use is indeed a blight on communities. As the national lead for drug and alcohol-use the PCC is on record as saying that the current system is clearly not working and that a root and branch review of existing approaches is what is needed. However, policies relating to the use of drugs is an extremely divisive issue that sees the polarisation of views and previous attempts to achieve a consensus on an approach moving forward has proved impossible, even amongst the relatively small cohort of PCCs.

The previous Chief Constable is on record as saying that it seems an anathema to put the production and distribution of potentially highly dangerous substances in the hands of serious and organised criminals. (The associated criminality should also not be forgotten such as people trafficking, modern slavery, prostitution, County Lines etc etc.)

Other developed economies have managed to develop more refined and impactful ways in which to tackle the use of illicit substances and it is hoped that in time the learning from these areas will be considered and potentially adopted in the UK.

Whilst there is clearly a criminal element in this debate, the issue of drug use should be seen as a public-health issue, rather than a criminal justice issue which could free up capacity to allow the police to focus more on the serious and organised criminality that makes significant financial gains through this trade, not to mention the significant harm it causes to individuals and communities.

Any genuine root and branch review of the current dysfunctional system would, therefore, be welcomed and supported. Dame Carol Black has been leading a review into the drugs market and approaches to tackling it.

In the executive Summary to the first part of the review she makes it clear that whilst funding is an issue, there are more systemic problems that will need addressing if we are to properly tackle the multiple harms the illicit drug trade, and the use of those drugs, causes to individuals and society.

Additional Question

Councillor Julie Patten: With the new covid legislation in relation to groups of 6 being introduced shortly, what will the Force's approach be to enforcing this?

PCC Response: Full details were still awaited, but the reduction from groups of 30 to groups of 6 would not change the way in which the Police would enforce the rules. There was still a need for the public and other agencies to raise any concerns where they believed breaches were happening and these would be dealt with accordingly.

RESOLVED to note the question and answer session

24/20 **POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONERS ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20** Hardy Dhindsa, Police and Crime Commissioner for Derbyshire, presented the draft Annual Report for the period 1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020 in accordance with Section 12 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and also made a number of comments and observations on the Annual Report, to which the Police and Crime Commissioner responded.

RESOLVED (1) to recommend to the Police and Crime Commissioner that the Annual Report 2019-20 be issued; and

(2) that the report be published via the Police & Crime Commissioner's Website, www.derbyshire-pcc.gov.uk.

25/20 **VERBAL FEEDBACK FROM NATIONAL EXECUTIVE AND REGIONAL NETWORK MEETINGS** The Chair informed the Panel that she and the Vice Chair had made contact with the Chair and support officer of the National Executive and had re-emphasised that Derbyshire wished to play a full and active part in the group moving forward. They had suggested areas of best practice that could be considered as part of looking at developing work plans in Derbyshire.

The Chair and Vice Chair had also attended the recent regional network meeting where much of the focus centred on virtual meetings and the issues and challenges surrounding these. Discussions also took place regarding work plans and task and finish groups and it was agreed that these would be shared by Panels across the region. It was hoped that Panels could learn from each other and see how each worked with the PCC. The impacts of covid on how panels were operating was discussed how it impacted them in their local policing communities

The National Conference in November was now likely to be a virtual event. The possibility of a hybrid conference was discussed with part attendance and part dial in. Frontline Consulting who host the conference had said that if it was to be a virtual offer they would like to expand the offer and enable more people to dial into specific workshops.

Also arising from the meeting was the need for the Panel to produce an Annual Report to comply with grant conditions and that this was currently in the process of being drafted.

RESOLVED to note the update

26/20 **VERBAL UPDATE ON HOME OFFICE REVIEW OF POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER'S** In July 2020 the Minister for Crime and Policing had laid a Written Ministerial Statement in Parliament launching a review of the Police and Crime Commissioner model.

The Review would take place in two parts with the first stage beginning immediately and reporting to Ministers in the Autumn. The second part would commence after the May 2021 elections.

Part-one would focus on the changes required to strengthen the model and which can be delivered ahead of the 2021 PCC elections. It will also consider ways to strengthen the accountability of fire and rescue services in line with the Government's long-term ambitions on fire governance reform and will be aligned with the Government's commitment to mayoral devolution. The deadline for consultation responses for phase one was 11 September, after which the Home Secretary would consider the Review's final report before taking recommendations to the National Policing Board.

Part-two would consider further ways to strengthen and expand the role of PCCs, including the role PCCs play in tackling re-offending to help reduce crime. It will focus on longer-term reforms and the potential for wider efficiencies to be made within the system with a view to implementation ahead of the 2024 elections.

The National Executive had responded to part 1 of the consultation which would be taken on board by the Panel and it was hoped that Derbyshire PCP would be in position to respond appropriately to Part two

RESOLVED to note the update

27/20 **PROPOSED SUPPORT FOR THE PANEL AND ALLOWANCES FOR MEMBERS** The Panel was updated on the progress of proposals to maximise the use of available grant funding to support the Panel.

In establishing Police and Crime Panels, the Home Office agreed that funding would be available to ensure that there was a Police and Crime Panel for the police area able to carry out its scrutiny functions and responsibilities as set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. A limited grant was provided on application to each Local Authority acting as the Host Authority for the provision of administrative and management support to facilitate the Panel.

As the Panel was advised at the meeting in June, the grant available for the financial year 2020-21 was £67,100 to cover all aspects of administrative and management support which the Panel identified as being required.

Costs claimed under the grant included officer time in supporting and advising the Panel. In order to assist the Panel fulfil its functions, it was recognised that dedicated Scrutiny Officer support would be appropriate. Consideration was currently being given to the extent and nature of the support needed and how that can best be provided. Once it has been established what the main objectives, profile and time required for the role would be, it is proposed that an officer be recruited on a one-year fixed-term basis so that the appointment can be reviewed and adjustments can be made as necessary.

It was also recognised that the development of the information available on the website/webpage regarding the Panel could be improved. Officer time in developing the website/page would also be covered by the grant. Therefore, it is proposed that further consideration be given to development of the information published by the Panel, but balanced with the funds available under the terms of the grant.

Training and induction of new members had been identified as being fundamental to develop the knowledge and experience of the Panel and the costs of this could be met from the terms of the grant. Therefore, further consideration will be given to training requirements to ensure that Panel members can benefit from effective training.

The terms of the grant enable it to be used to cover member expenses and allowances. However, the Panel Arrangements for the Derbyshire Police and Crime Panel stipulated at paragraph 9.1 that:

“Each council has the discretion to pay its representatives(s) on the Panel special responsibility allowances and to reimburse reasonable expenses incurred. No allowance or expenses payments will be made by the Panel itself to councillor members. Any allowances or expenses which may be made to councillor members arising out of Panel membership shall be determined

and borne by the appointing council for each Panel Member individually.”

It further stipulated at 9.2 that:

“The host authority, on behalf of the Panel will reimburse reasonable expenses to independent members provided that this is agreed as part of the annual budget approved by the Panel.”

The grant envisages a maximum sum of £920 being payable to Panel members to cover expenses. The grant does not envisage that that money would be paid as a lump sum, but only on the incurring of expenses. The current Panel Arrangements were in accordance with this position.

Should Panel members wish for an additional allowance to be paid, then for councillor members, this would need to be agreed through the Members’ Allowances Scheme for the authority for each individual representatives. It would be a matter for the host Authority that was Derbyshire County Council, to consider payment of any allowance to independent (non-councillor members).

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and also made a number of comments and observations on which were duly noted or answered.

RESOLVED to note the considerations and progress relating to the proposals to maximise the grant funding available to support the Panel.

28/20 **FORTHCOMING EVENTS** It was noted that the National Police and Crime Panels Annual Conference would be held in November 2020, and it was likely that this would now be held virtually. Further details were awaited from Front Line Consultants.

29/20 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING RESOLVED** to note that the next meeting of the Derbyshire Police and Crime Panel would take place on Thursday 19 November 2020 commencing at 10.00am