



Norfolk Police and Crime Panel
Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday 13 February 2014 at 10.00 a.m
County Hall, Norwich

Main Panel Members Present:

Alec Byrne (Chairman)	Norfolk County Council
Dr A Boswell	Norfolk County Council
Mr I Graham	Broadland District Council
Mr Brian Hannah	Norfolk County Council
Mr Paul Kendrick	Norwich City Council
Dr Christopher Kemp	South Norfolk Council
Mr Brian Long	King's Lynn and West Norfolk Council
Mr Lee Sutton	Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Mr Alexander D Sommerville, CPM	

Officers Present

Miss Sonya Blythe	Committee Officer
Mr Chris Walton	Head of Democratic Services
Mrs Jo Martin	Scrutiny Support Manager

Others Present

Mr Stephen Bett	Police & Crime Commissioner for Norfolk
Mr Simon Bailey	Chief Constable for Norfolk
Ms Jenny McKibben	Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner for Norfolk
Mr Mark Stokes	Police & Crime Commissioner for Norfolk's Chief Executive
Mr Bernard Docherty	Crime Registrar, Intelligence Directorate, Norfolk Constabulary

- 1. To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending**
 - 1.1 Apologies were received from Ms S Brooks, Mr W Richmond and Mr R Shepherd.
- 2 Members to Declare any Interests**
 - 2.1 None.
- 3 To receive any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency**
 - 3.1 The Chairman advised that there were no urgent items of business to consider.

4 Minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2014

4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

- 5.10.4 – Mr Hannah clarified that he had put this question on behalf of Mr Foulger.

5. Questions to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk

5.1 The Chairman welcomed the Commissioner for Norfolk and his officers to the meeting.

5.2 The following questions were addressed to Mr Bett and his Team:

5.2.1 Question from Dr Kemp. What would you regard as your three principal successes unique to Norfolk during your first year?

Response by Mr Bett. Obtaining money to create an innovation fund for a mental health worker. Putting a permanent member of staff in place with responsibility for domestic violence crimes. Putting a member of staff in place with responsibility for rehabilitation.

5.2.2 Question from Mr Richmond (asked by the Chairman). How are you getting on with partners and have you made any decisions about their funding in future years?

Response by Mr Bett. Very well. The past year had been spent listening to partners to establish what was required. The common emerging theme was that partners did not share enough information with each other regarding their resources and where they would place them in the community. The Commissioner had funding available for projects. The Community Health Foundation would assess any bids for funding with the final decision being made by the Commissioner. The Commissioner's office would check periodically that the aims and outcomes of his pledge were being met, and as long as they were, the funding would be available for three years.

Mr Graham asked for clarification around why partners had not been willing to share information with each other?

Mr Bett confirmed that in some part this was due to the Information Commissioner and how people interpreted the information which was required. He had been successful so far in helping bodies to communicate more in order to cut out duplication of work and save time and costs. A website was being created in order to give all partners easy access to information which would save resources.

5.2.3 Question from Dr Kemp. Notwithstanding that the UK Statistics Agency has officially ruled that Police crime figures are no longer reliable given the unanswered criticisms of the alleged systemic culture of under-reporting in the Police Service, the Commissioner has expressed his confidence in the statistics reported by the Norfolk Police. In those circumstances, what representations has the Commissioner made to the UK Statistics Agency to

reinstate the *gold standard* previously afforded Police crime figures?

Response by Mr Docherty. Mr Docherty explained that he was an independent member of staff. He and his team had responsibility for monitoring crime statistics and had the authority to over rule any officer with regard to whether a crime should be recorded. All crime recording was monitored and all decisions were measured. His team were fully engaged with the HMRC and would address all recommendations which had been raised in a recent review.

- 5.2.4 Question from Mr Long. It is not uncommon for victims of low level crime to be told that the crime will not be recorded as one, despite them feeling that they have been the victim of a crime.

Response by Mr Docherty. All crime should be recorded as a crime if it was intended, even if it was low level. Officers had to judge this and occasionally in the case of low level crimes they could be wrong. Mr Docherty was happy for his email address to be passed to the Chairman who could request a review if the Panel received information on a wrongly recorded crime.

Mr Bailey added that safeguards were in place - if a member of the public reported a crime which was not recorded as such then the audit team would investigate on each occasion. The largest problem with recording accurate crime statistics was unreported crimes, particularly in rural areas. Efforts were being made to raise awareness in rural areas of the importance of reporting crime.

- 5.2.5 Question from Dr Kemp. We hear about people who are made to obtain a crime number in order to progress insurance claims. Is everything that is given a crime number recorded as a crime?

Response by Mr Docherty. Anything given a crime number would be recorded as a crime.

- 5.2.6 Question from Mr Graham. What is your view of extending collaboration with other police force areas in addition to Suffolk?

Response by Mr Bett. When the collaboration with Suffolk started, officers of the same rank were on different pay and conditions. In addition the two forces had different IT systems, different control procedures and different priorities. Time had been taken to overcome these problems. The force was always looking to collaborate and over the next 18 months to two years would look to carry out more collaborative work in the region to become more efficient. Cyber crime needed to be better understood as attacks could come from across the world rather than locally.

- 5.2.7 Question from Mr Sutton (on behalf of Mr Chenery). What progress are you making with improving the way people with mental health problems are dealt with by the criminal justice system in Norfolk?

Money had been received for a mental health worker to be placed in the control room. As 40% of people in custody had mental health problems this would lead to more joined up and efficient working, which would save officer time. In addition effort was being made to coordinate mental health charities and the Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust to work more closely with the police.

Mss McKibben added that a key factor in the rehabilitation of offenders would be to develop a strategy around offenders and mental health, which the Mental Health Working group were currently doing.

- 5.2.8 Question from Mr Long (on behalf of Ms Brooks). How are you working with Local Authorities to address community safety issues? And, are SNAP Panels still valuable?

Response by Mr Bett. Some SNAP Panels work extremely well whilst others do not. This depended on how many of the public attended the meetings. If the meetings were well attended then they would continue to be held as they brought benefit to the public and police. It had proven difficult to generate interest in the panels.

All public bodies were being closely worked with in order to look at issues which affected vulnerable residents. The Commissioner made the final decision on where money was spent in order to empower public bodies to carry out their work. This ensured that funding was used in a joined up way.

- 5.2.9 Question from Mr Kendrick. What is your strategy for disposing of redundant properties?

Response by Mr Bett. An integrated strategy was in place for managing property disposal. This had been out on hold for the time being due to the collaboration with Suffolk as discussions were being carried out around which properties to keep across the two forces. Currently all parts of the estate were being reviewed.

- 5.2.10 Question from Mr Sommerville. Are the estates modern?

Response by Mr Bailey. Norfolk Constabulary had the best headquarters and custody facilities in the country. There were low carbon emission stations in operation but there also some older stations which were in need of renovation.

- 5.2.11 Question from Mr Sommerville. Decision 2013/6 - Police led prosecutions (Court Representation) - joint self funding model. (Page 68 of PCP Papers)

Further to the above decision on 5th April 2013, this is a multi faceted question:

- (a) Can you please advise the panel how this new approach is organised and the relationship of the organisation with the CPS?
- (b) Have the six police staff posts been filled and where have the personnel been posted?
- (c) How successfully is the scheme operating and what advantages have resulted from the scheme and how is it being monitored?

Response by Mr Bailey. Teams had been established in 2003 as part of a pilot project which would be in place until 1 April 2014 to separate the role of the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service. This had given the police the power to make decisions regarding non contested, road safety crimes such as speeding or failing to wear a seatbelt. Dedicated courts had been set aside to deal with these issues which had saved time and money as a large amount of cases had been processed. Four out of six police staff posts had been filled and they spilt

their time between Norfolk and Suffolk. The scheme was working well – it was not meant to be a profit making and was in fact breaking even cost wise.

- 5.2.12 Question from Dr Kemp. The Commissioner has cited the "Saville effect" in justification of his rejection of the Panel's recommendation that he reconsiders with a view to lowering his proposed level of precept. In those circumstances:

[a] how many Norfolk Police officers have been seconded to the Yewtree enquiry?

[b] how many hours of Norfolk Police time have been spent on that enquiry?

[c] how many witnesses with substantial Norfolk connections have been interviewed by those officers?

[d] how many persons with substantial Norfolk connections have been prosecuted as a result of those enquiries, for which offences and with what result?"

Response by Mr Bailey. Every Chief Constable and Chief Executive throughout the country had discussed the Saville effect with their Commissioner. More victims of historic abuse now had the confidence to come forward because their level of awareness had been raised by these crimes. There had been a large increase in every area of abuse being reported and the additional resources which were required because of this increased demand on police time were one reason that the precept had been raised.

- 5.2.13 Question from Mr Byrne. Regarding the commissioning plan, what proportion of requests are you able to fund, compared with the amount of applications for funds that you receive? How do you evaluate the commissioning?

Response by Mr Bett. When Mr Betts had commenced in his role as Commissioner, decisions on funding had to be made quickly. The Commissioner had £1m available for organisations to bid for as long as they fit in with his election promises. Between November 2012 and 2013 all organisations were visited in order to gain an insight into their work and any funding issues which they faced. A gap analysis of mental health services was being coordinated. Once this had been looked at the Commissioner would know where funding was needed. All bids would be considered by the Norfolk Community Foundation prior to the Commissioner agreeing them on a three year basis.

There were a lot of small groups in Norfolk and providing funding would hopefully to give them the ability to pass their information onto the public and to enhance and look after their interests. There was more demand than available funding which is why time was taken to establish a clear evidence base of why funding was required. The Commissioners staff networked closely with all agencies and statutory bodies in order to determine the best ways of commissioning.

- 5.2.14 Question from Dr Kemp. Do you look at the governance arrangements of small organisations to check their continuity and accountability?

Response by Mr Bett. This would be one of the tasks that the Norfolk Community Foundation would complete.

- 5.2.15 Question from Mr Hannah. Committee papers all include a reference to Section

17. Some Members and officers still do not appreciate how this connects to the issue of crime and disorder. Often there is no explanation on reports as to how it will impact. How would you improve this situation in support of your work in prevention and the responsibility that we all have to the subject?

Response by Mr Bett. Councillors of all levels would be spoken with, to ensure that they understood this part of their role and how it related to the Commissioner's role. The Commissioner was prepared to visit all councils in order to meet Members to ensure their understanding of this.

Mr Stokes added that he was happy to enter into discussions with officers across district and county council's in order to understand what processes officers had in place to ensure adequate Section 17 information was supplied to allow Members to make decisions.

- 5.2.16 Question from Mr Hannah. Regarding restorative justice, the Police tried to implement community volunteers to set up community conferences to look at local issues and conflicts at neighbourhood level, without police intervention. Would you consider this again?

Response by Mr Bailey. This was happening, just not in the way that had originally been envisioned. For example 20 schools with high crime rates had been identified, which would be expanded on. This was being delivered in areas where a significant return on the investment could be seen. There was a restorative justice funding stream available. Officers would still work with communities, this additional would strengthen and boost that. Currently community volunteers were not in place but this was a key item to pick up. A victim hub would allow volunteers to be drawn in to support victims.

Mr Stokes added that he would support further discussions with officers.

- 5.2.17 Question from Mr Graham. Regarding the increase in certain crimes from the "Saville effect", overall the number of crimes has decreased. Where is the drop in crime coming from?

Response by Mr Bett. Traditional crimes such as burglary and car theft had decreased. This masked the impact of sexual assault crimes which had increased but on a smaller basis.

- 5.3 Finally, the Commissioner confirmed that he was happy to give Panel members a tour of Norfolk Police Headquarters to give them a further understanding of the issues being faced. He was pleased to attend question and answer sessions such as these with his colleagues in order to be able to give the Panel comprehensive answers to any questions which Members may have.

- 5.4 The Chairman thanked Mr Betts and his colleagues for attending.

6 Forward Work Programme 2014-15

- 6.1 The Scrutiny Support Manager presented the Forward Work Programme 2014-15 (Item 6). It was noted that the date to review the proposed budget had been moved to 4 February 2015 from 30 January 2015. As such, Members asked that the reserve date arranged for 12 February 2015 also be moved in order to allow

adequate time for changes to be made to the proposed precept if required. The Scrutiny Support Manager agreed to review the dates again.

6.2 **RESOLVED**

To agree the forward work programme, subject to any further amendments needed to the 2015 dates.

The meeting closed at 11.15am

CHAIRMAN



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