

North Yorkshire County Council

Police and Crime Panel

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 17 May 2018, commencing at 10:30 am in the Snow Room at City of York West Offices, York.

Present:-

Councillors: Val Arnold (Ryedale District Council), Michael Chambers MBE (Harrogate Borough Council), Peter Dew (City of York Council), Russell Lord (Richmondshire District Council), Ashley Mason ((in the Chair) City of York Council), and Peter Wilkinson (Hambleton District Council).

Community Co-opted Member: Paula Stott.

Julia Mulligan (Police and Crime Commissioner)

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority appointed observer: Councillor Tony Richardson (Vice Chair, NYFRA)

Officers from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner: Fraser Sampson (Interim Chief Executive Officer), Michael Porter (Chief Finance Officer), Will Naylor (Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner) and Tom Thorp (Policy and Scrutiny Manager)

Officers from NYCC: Diane Parsons (Panel Secretariat).

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

287. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Carl Les, Councillor Sandra Turner and Santokh Singh Sidhu.

288. Minutes

As a point of clarification, it was noted that details regarding the numbers of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in North Yorkshire are available on the North Yorkshire Police (NYP) website, not that of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2018, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the above amendment.

289. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Arnold and Richardson notified their membership of the North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

290. Public Questions or Statements

Members were advised that no questions or statements had been received from members of the public.

291. Members' Questions

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) was asked about work underway to ensure that elderly people within the community are protected from the risk of cybercrime and fraud. The PCC highlighted the partnership work ongoing around this involving NYP, Trading Standards and other partners such as Age UK and high street banks. The Panel was informed that there is a small cyber unit based in Northallerton and it was agreed that it would be beneficial to co-ordinate a visit there for Panel members - bringing in other partners as identified – to brief the Panel on what's being done around cybercrime and protecting the elderly from fraud (online and phone-based).

Further to a Member's query, the PCC advised that the neighbourhood policing survey will be launched on 23rd May 2018 and will run for an 8-week period. Panel members will be provided with further details.

The PCC was invited to update on progress via the Home Office with the local business case for a change in governance of the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS). The PCC continues to keep in contact with the Minister's office and has been advised that a decision will be made in due course.

Councillor Richardson followed up with some queries regarding plans for the joint NYP-FRS transport and logistics hub in Thirsk and whether this would be managed by one person. This related to Councillor Richardson's concern that a joint site would present access difficulties for staff accessing their area of the hub. Fraser Sampson advised that staff working at the hub will be vetted so there should be no issues with gaining access.

Paula Stott referred to the recent announcement of the departure of Chief Constable Dave Jones, the circumstances of which she felt appeared to be unusual, particularly as he had so little time left to complete his service up to 2020. The PCC advised that the Chief Constable had decided to retire earlier to spend time with his family. Further to a follow-up question, Fraser Sampson advised that the notice period for a Chief Constable is generally three months and as such Dave Jones formally retires from the force on 9th July 2018. The PCC advised the Panel that she may be able to provide further information on this matter but as this was confidential it would need to be provided privately. Through the Chair, the Panel agreed at 10:50am that they would retire into private session on the grounds that the ensuing discussion would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 within column 2 of Part 1 of Schedule A to the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation) Order 2006. The press and public were excluded from the room during this time.

The meeting re-convened in public at 10:55am.

Councillor Chambers referred to press coverage regarding the possibility that an increasing number of rural forces may be routinely armed with firearms to be able to deal with an armed incident, and sought reassurance from the PCC that this would not be done in North Yorkshire. The PCC advised that the National Police Chiefs' Council, who had issued this statement, could not instruct forces to do this and the PCC herself felt strongly that doing this could fundamentally be damaging to the relationship between the police and the public.

The Chair asked for an update on the sale of the former police HQ to the prospective purchaser and whether this was still moving forward. Fraser Sampson responded that there had been a delay in the process but the prospective buyer has re-applied for planning

permission. Small elements of NYP are as such occupying the building again in the interim to keep it maintained; this is generally to help meet demand for space for training and development.

292. 101 Service Performance Update

Considered -

The reports of the Police and Crime Commissioner updating on the recent performance of the 101 non-emergency service.

The Deputy PCC highlighted the overall improvements detailed in the reports on call waiting times and abandonment rates for the 101 service as compared with last year. However, the latter still remain relatively high, with abandonment rates of 17% and 27% in February and March 2018, respectively. The Panel asked what level of abandonment would be considered to be acceptable by the force. The Deputy PCC advised that there are no national benchmarks for 101. However, an abandonment rate of 25% is considered unacceptable and something closer to 10% might be considered "good". Nationally, demand for both the 101 and 999 services remains high and the PCC is expecting demand for both to peak over the summer months. The measures put in place by the PCC in recent months, such as Queue Buster (call back facility) and a switchboard have helped to deal with increased demand and call waiting times.

The PCC was asked about the reference on page 48 of the papers to getting the interim solution for estates and staffing in place by the end of May in order to manage the anticipated peak in summer demand. The PCC explained that there have been some delays to implementation for end of May but was confident that arrangements would be in place before the summer. It was agreed that the PCC would provide a further update on this at the next Panel meeting.

Resolved -

- (a) That the reports be noted; and
- (b) That the PCC provides an update on progress with the interim estates and staffing solution to the FCR at the next Panel meeting in July.

293. Force Control Room Investment

Considered -

The report of the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding the recently-announced investment of £3m into the Force Control Room (FCR), intended to ensure that sufficient staff are recruited and appropriately trained to deal with calls for 101 and 999 by the summer. The Panel had been provided with the business case for the FCR and Crime Occurrence Management Unit (COMU) along with the PCC's Decision Notice which also refers to resulting improvements to crime recording.

The PCC highlighted that the NYP business case for this investment had been heavily scrutinised. The PCC felt confident that the investment will bring about the necessary improvements and if anything a challenge for NYP would be around ensuring it could manage peak versus non-peak demand to the FCR with the additional staff recruited and ensuring there would be flexibility in how staff work. The regular turnover over time of staff in the FCR was also felt to be something which would help to manage this issue.

Paula Stott referred to the visit by some Panel members to the FCR in 2017 and how impressed she was with the willingness of staff to go the extra mile. However, she was conscious that staff would be dealing with some distressing calls and that there is a duty of

care to support them in dealing with that element of the role. The PCC and Deputy PCC highlighted that a lot of effort is put into ensuring the wellbeing of staff and the unions are well engaged in this process.

Further to a query, Michael Porter clarified that the investment for the FCR is coming from the Policing Priorities Fund, created from the precept uplift this year. This equated to £1.9m recurring so £3m is being funded across two years. Capital spend is around portacabins and infrastructure. The Panel were given reassurance that this investment will not impact on the PCC's plans for investment into other areas, as promised in February 2018, such as victims' services.

The PCC was asked about length of training for staff in the FCR to reach full accreditation and were advised that training takes a couple of months for a communications officer and roughly five months for a dispatcher. Members queried the salaries payable to FCR officers as there was concern that these may not be competitive, relative to other pressurised/anti-social control room-type roles. It was agreed that the salary ranges would be clarified and brought back to the next Panel meeting. The Deputy PCC did not feel that turnover in the FCR was due to the salary itself.

The Chair referred to the agency staff who have been put in place to support the recently-implemented switchboard and asked if this approach was sustainable. The Deputy PCC advised that there are plans to make the roles substantive/permanent in this area.

Resolved –

- (a) That the reports be noted; and
- (b) That the OPCC will provide clarification on the salary ranges for staff deployed in the FCR, for the next Panel meeting in July.

294. The Future of Police Complaints in North Yorkshire

Considered –

The report of the Police and Crime Commissioner setting out how the PCC intends to change the police complaints process in North Yorkshire, the reasons for doing so and what the PCC hopes to achieve as a result.

The PCC provided some context to her proposals for North Yorkshire and where she felt the current complaints system is flawed. This included the system being constructed to lay blame with an individual officer but people being unable to complain about wider service failures. New legislation will enable PCCs to take a more active role in complaints and will mandate their involvement in appeals. It has also broadened the definition of a complaint.

Under the PCC's proposals, the Professional Standards Department (PSD) would still deal with some types of complaints but a new team within the OPCC would handle the receipt, initial assessment and allocation of complaints, acting as a single point of communication for customers and resolving some complaints through service recovery. The PCC expressed that a key benefit of this approach would be the development of a better understanding of trends in relation to complaints. This will help in turn to ensure improvements to police practice are identified and embedded. The Deputy PCC explained that the intention will be to commission an independent person to undertake the appeals role.

Members queried how the new team will be financed. Michael Porter advised that £100,000 has already been allocated as part of the budget and planned efficiencies to be made within the force will also assist. Members also queried whether the public would understand who the PCC is and her role in complaints handling. The Panel were advised

that the PCC continues to receive a high volume of correspondence from people who have assumed that her role is around dealing with police complaints. It was agreed that the Panel would receive the business case for the proposals when ready. The PCC had hoped to be an early adopter by the autumn of 2018 but this may slip into next year.

Members expressed concern at clearly explaining the changes to the public as well as internally and this was acknowledged.

Councillor Val Arnold left the meeting at this point at 11:45am.

Members considered the potential for body-worn cameras to assist in the handling of police complaints. Body-worn is currently used by those officers working with firearms, tasers and those officers dealing with domestic abuse cases. Members asked the PCC whether the intention is to roll out body-worn to all officers. Tom Thorp advised that the use of body-worn is currently at a test stage whereby it is being rolled out to a certain number of officers in one wave and the benefits evaluated before moving on to another wave. NYP are bringing forward a savings plan to pay for this. The Panel were also advised that in West Yorkshire, the force has identified that use of body-worn has helped to reduce confrontation. Members requested that a report on the recommendations regarding the further rollout of body-worn cameras be brought back to the Panel in due course.

Resolved -

That the Panel:

- (a) note the report;
- (b) receive the PCC's business case on proposals to change the police complaints system, when available;
- (c) take a report regarding the recommendations on further use of body-worn cameras.

295. Balanced Appointment Objective: Panel Membership Update

Considered -

The report of the Panel Secretariat providing an update on the political proportionality of the Panel following recent district elections.

Diane Parsons advised the members of the need to keep the political proportionality of the Panel under review. Aside from some minor discrepancies in entitlement, the position following the recent local elections arguably places the Panel in a more solid position than previously. Members were recommended to agree that no changes need to be made to the membership at this time but that the position would need to be kept under review.

Resolved -

- (a) That the update provided on political proportionality of the Panel following the recent local elections be noted; and
- (b) That it be agreed that the balanced appointment objective be kept under review as necessary.

296. Update to the Panel's Complaints Handling Leaflet

Considered -

The report of the Panel Secretariat inviting the Panel to agree a revision to its leaflet on complaints handling.

Diane Parsons highlighted that since the Panel's approval of the updated complaints literature at the previous meeting, it had been highlighted that the short guidance leaflet would benefit from further clarity around the Panel's ability to disapply certain types of complaint, to ensure a more accurate reflection of what is stated in the lengthier procedural document. The Panel were asked to agree the updated content.

Resolved -

That the revised complaints handling leaflet as set out at Appendix A to the report be agreed.

297. Media Protocol for the Police and Crime Panel

Considered -

The report of the Panel Secretariat inviting the Panel to agree a media protocol.

As a point of good practice, many Panels have a media protocol and as such Diane Parsons invited the Panel to consider endorsing the draft protocol provided. It was emphasised that as the Panel is a joint committee the protocol is not intended to preclude Members from making individual statements locally on issues affecting their own council. However, where a statement is made on behalf of the Panel, this would need to initially be channelled through the Chair or Vice Chairs.

Councillor Richardson asked if photos of the NYFRA observers (and their status on the Panel) could be included with the membership list circulated with the Panel agenda.

Resolved -

- (a) That the draft media protocol as set out at Appendix A to the report be adopted.
- (b) That NYFRA observers to the Panel be included within the membership list when circulated as part of the Panel meeting agenda.

298. Work Programme

Considered -

The report of the Panel Secretariat, inviting the Panel to consider its work.

A few items have been added to the work programme following discussions at the previous Panel meeting, such as criminal justice. Diane Parsons invited the members to consider the scope and content of an item around commissioning, as interest had previously been expressed around this. Arrangements for a confirmation hearing for a Chief Constable are underway and this is likely to need to take place mid-August.

Councillor Chambers highlighted in relation to the discussions on cybercrime that a useful briefing has recently been provided to County Councillors by the National Cyber Unit.

In terms of other items suggested for future Panel meetings or informal briefings, the following were highlighted:

- (a) cold calling - to better understand the role played by various agencies in tackling this.

(b) engagement with Unison and the Police Federation.

Resolved -

That the Work Programme be noted and updated to reflect the scheduling of the items highlighted during the course of the Panel meeting.

The meeting concluded at 12:15pm.

DP

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