

Minutes of a meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel held at County Hall, Glenfield on Monday, 23 September 2024.

PRESENT

Mrs D. Taylor CC (in the Chair)

Cllr. Liz Blackshaw	Salma Manzoor
Parisha Chavda	Cllr. Les Phillimore
Cllr. Sarah Cox	Cllr. Sarah Russell
Cllr. Mohammed Dawood	Cllr. Christine Wise
Cllr. Jim Knight	Cllr. Andrew Woodman
Cllr. Kevin Loydall	

In attendance

Rupert Matthews – Police and Crime Commissioner
Rani Mahal – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
Claire Trewartha – Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

13. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2024 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

14. Public Question Time.

There were no questions submitted.

15. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

16. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

17. Police and Crime Commissioner's Annual Report 2023/24.

The Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) which presented a draft of his Annual Report 2023/24. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 5', is filed with these minutes.

In introducing the report the PCC emphasised that he believed the current police funding formula to be unfair which left Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland disadvantaged compared to other areas. The PCC said he had been lobbying the previous government for change of the formula and would continue to lobby the new government. The PCC

thanked the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Executive of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for their work over the year.

Arising from discussions the following points were noted:

- (i) The PCC said that he intended to focus on creating safe and viable communities and ensure that the local economy was flourishing and that businesses were profitable. To achieve that aim he would be working with businesses and other partners to tackle retail theft. Shoplifting offences had seen a 29.1% increase over the past year in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and also a significant increase nationally. It was also believed that assaults on shop staff had increased but the exact figures were not clear from the data as assaults on shop staff were not recorded separately to other assaults. The PCC had now asked the Chief Constable to ensure that assaults on shop staff were recorded separately. Once the extent of the problem was known the PCC could put measures in place to tackle the issue. A member raised concerns that the shoplifting of goods below £200 was a summary offence and therefore would usually be dealt with by an Out of Court Disposal. The member emphasised that thefts of under £200 could still have a large impact on shopkeepers and the member asked if this threshold could be lowered. In response the PCC acknowledged that the £200 figure needed reconsidering. The PCC explained that in the past shoplifting had involved small amounts of money and been non-violent. Now organised gangs were getting involved and the issue was becoming more of a priority nationally. Whilst the increase in the cost of living was a contributory factor there were other factors such as substance misuse and people stealing to pay for drug habits.
- (ii) A member welcomed the PCC's support with rolling out the DISC app which was an incident reporting tool for retailers.
- (iii) Members joined the PCC in welcoming the work of the Violence Reduction Network (VRN) and thanked the Network's Strategic Director Grace Strong. It was noted that the impact of the VRN would be seen over the long term though positive results were starting to be seen now. Sometimes the impact of interventions was hard to measure, especially when they were diversionary and intended to prevent individuals getting involved in future crime. What could be measured was the number of diversionary activities that were taking place.
- (iv) In response to concerns raised about cybercrime and the cyberattack on Leicester City Council in March 2024, the PCC explained that Leicestershire Police was working in partnership with public bodies to tackle the problem, and the PCC held the Chief Constable to account for this work and so far had been impressed by the work that was taking place.
- (v) The PCC had awarded a new £2.5m 5-year contract to Catch 22 to provide enhanced support to victims of crime across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (£500,000 across 5 years). A member queried whether this funding award was secure, given that other recent funding had been reduced, such as the Safer Streets funding from the Home Office. In response it was explained that the PCC was contractually obliged to provide Catch 22 that funding and could not now reduce the amount. Should the PCC be forced to make budget cuts in the future, the savings would have to come from elsewhere.

- (vi) The OPCC and the VRN were collaborating on a project developing a virtual reality headset video 'First Phone: Keeping Children Safe Online' to reduce children and young people's vulnerability to becoming involved in serious violence by teaching them safer online practice. In response to a query from a member as to how this linked in with the work of Warning Zone and whether there was any overlap it was agreed that clarification would be provided after the meeting.
- (vii) The Chief Constable chaired the Local Criminal Justice Board due to his national portfolio in Criminal Justice. The PCC was happy with the impact the Chief Constable had on the Board and the improvements that had been made. There was a question as to whether the new Government would be making changes to Local Criminal Justice Boards but as yet no information was available.
- (viii) The PCC had set up a Hate Crime Scrutiny Panel, and a Hate Crime Hub was being developed with partners to support victims of hate crime. In response to a request from the Panel for more detail on these initiatives the PCC agreed to bring a report to a future meeting of the Panel.
- (ix) A member asked if the Force Performance section of the Annual Report could include a table to make the figures easier to read and the PCC agreed to include this in the final version of the report. The data indicated that rape offences had decreased a further 11.6% over the past year and it was queried whether this was due to a lack of reporting rather than a reduction in actual offences being committed. At Corporate Governance Board meetings the PCC held the Force to account for their performance in relation to rape offences and a report specifically on this topic would be coming to a future meeting of the Panel.
- (x) The PCC had invested in a wide range of community-led projects designed to support the priorities of his Police and Crime Plan and this had resulted in 3 grant rounds and over £390,000 of funding being provided to community organisations. The Chair noted from a map in the report that most of the organisations that had been awarded funding were based in the Leicester City area and therefore asked what was the criteria for this funding to be awarded. In response the PCC explained that the bids were open to all areas of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and it was dependent on the amount and quality of bids received for each area. Leicester City and Loughborough tended to have more crime so more bids came from those areas. However, the OPCC had put measures in place to try and get successful bids from other areas such as holding bid writing workshops.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the draft Annual Report 2023/24 be noted.

18. Police and Crime Commissioner's update.

The Police and Crime Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner which provided an update on his work throughout January 2024 to the pre-election period. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 6', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussions the following points were noted:

- (i) Recruitment for new Ethics and Transparency Panel members had just concluded and 4 successful candidates were now being progressed. In response to a request for further detail about the number of Panel members and the recruitment process that was carried out, it was agreed that the additional information would be provided to the Panel after the meeting.
- (ii) The PCC had launched the Pathfinder Driving Course for 15-17 year olds. The course lasted one week and drivers were required to attend with their parent/guardian. Members raised concerns that a lot of parents/guardians would not have the time to accompany their child to the course and the PCC acknowledged these concerns but stated that he felt the course was valuable and worth trying. The success of the course would be evaluated. The £29,290 funding was for 3 years and would cover multiple courses. In response to a request for further detail regarding the number of courses it was agreed that this information would be provided after the meeting.
- (iii) A member raised concerns about a lack of public awareness of the laws around electric scooters and electric bikes, particularly the fact that they were only allowed to be used on private land. The member suggested that the modes of transport should be covered in education courses. The PCC agreed that the laws were unclear to most people and that the packaging needed to make it clearer where the products were allowed to be used. Leicestershire Police had run a campaign to inform the public but more could be done.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Police and Crime Commissioner's update be noted.

19. Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner update.

The Police and Crime Panel considered a report of the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner which provided an update on the tasks she was carrying out which had been delegated to her by the Police and Crime Commissioner. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 7', is filed with these minutes.

Members noted that the Deputy PCC had been undertaking a lot of visits to various organisations and the Panel asked for more detail on the impact of those visits. In particular it was queried how the Deputy PCC carried out due diligence on commissioned services, as stated in the report. In response the Deputy PCC stated that she assessed what the services provided for the funding and the impact on the community. She gave feedback to the commissioning team at the OPCC and ensured that funding was going to well-deserved projects. In response to further questioning about the process, and a request for a template of how commissioned services were evaluated, it was agreed that further information would be provided after the meeting.

In response to a query about the summer 2024 riots in the UK, the PCC explained that Leicestershire Police had carried out a lot of work with local communities and the unrest in LLR had not been as bad as elsewhere in the country. The Corporate Governance Board had been looking at what lessons could be learnt from the riots and what recommendations needed to be put in place. It was agreed that at a future meeting of the Panel there would be a more in-depth agenda item on riots.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the update from the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner be noted.

20. Neighbourhood Policing.

The Police and Crime Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding how he was fulfilling his duty to hold the Chief Constable to account for the policing of neighbourhoods. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes.

Concerns were raised by the Panel that neighbourhood officers did not always stay long in the role before moving on, which meant that relations with the local community were not always as developed as they could be. In response, the PCC stated that whilst ideally neighbourhood officers would remain in that role for a long period of time, it was also important for officers to gain experience in other areas of policing. It was explained that the real close liaison with communities was the role of Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) and the panel welcomed the role played by PCSOs. However, Panel members raised concerns that some PCSOs did not remain in that role for long either as they were using the role to gain experience before becoming a police officer.

Concerns were also raised that neighbourhood officers were often abstracted for other duties such as policing football matches and protests. In response to a question as to whether the PCC was confident that sufficient resource was being left in neighbourhoods, the PCC explained that he was unable to be confident because no measurements had been taken nor assessments of this issue had been made up until now. However, it had now been agreed with the Chief Constable that records would be kept of this issue to enable analysis to take place. The PCC gave some reassurance that no obvious gaps in resourcing of neighbourhoods had been noticed so far.

A member made a request for police officers to spend more time in communities talking to local people rather than just driving through. In response the PCC acknowledged that communities were reassured by the sight of Police Officers in the local area.

In response to a question as to the impact of the increased neighbourhood policing funding on crime figures the PCC agreed to raise this with the Chief Constable.

A member emphasised the positive impact that neighbourhood policing had on Ant-social Behaviour but queried whether this could be measured and evidenced. In response the PCC referred the member to a Cambridge University study report regarding the impact of outreach workers and offered to share the report with the member after the meeting.

In response to a question, the PCC provided assurance that he welcomed the role of Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), had already put a lot of work into CSPs, and in his current term of office intended to attend a meeting of each CSP.

RESOLVED:

That the update regarding the policing of neighbourhoods be noted.

21. Corporate Governance Board update.

The Police and Crime Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner which provided an update on how he was fulfilling his duty to hold the Chief Constable to account for the performance of the Force through Corporate Governance Board meetings. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 9', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussions the following points were noted:

- (i) The Force had seen an increase of 17,000 emergency calls in the 2023/24 year compared to the previous year. A member questioned whether this was because the public were unable to get through on the non-emergency phone line. In response it was explained that this was a difficult question to answer because it could not be known for sure why a person ended a call to the non-emergency number or whether they then called 999 with the same problem. However, anecdotal indications were that this was a possible cause. Efforts were being made to encourage the public to report non-emergency problems online. Members raised concerns about the online reporting service as it asked for a lot of personal data which could put people off.
- (ii) The PCC stated that he was satisfied that overall the performance of the Contact Management Department was improving.
- (iii) With regards to response times Leicestershire Police had set a local target of 15 minutes for response in an urban area, and 20 mins for rural areas due to resource and travel time. The Force closed the 2023/24 fiscal year with an average response time of 15 minutes and 35 seconds for emergency calls, an improvement on the previous year's average of 16 minutes and 11 seconds. In response to a question from a member as to how this compared to other Forces nationally it was agreed that enquiries would be made with other Forces and any information received would be passed onto the Panel.
- (iv) In July 2024 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) had carried out an inspection of Leicestershire Police and the inspection report was expected to be received soon. It would firstly be sent privately to the Force for any factual errors to be corrected before it was published.
- (v) A member requested an in-year report on the savings and transformation programme to help the Panel's understanding before the budget report came to the Panel in February 2025, and it was agreed that this would be provided to the Panel.

RESOLVED:

That the update in relation to the Corporate Governance Board be noted.

22. Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 funding review.

The Police and Crime Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner which provided an update on funding received under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 10', is filed with these minutes.

Members welcomed the progress that had been made.

RESOLVED:

That the Section 106 update be noted.

23. Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the next meeting of the Panel be held on Monday 28 October 2024 at 2.00pm.

2.00 - 3.53 pm
23 September 2024

CHAIRMAN