

Minutes of a meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel. held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday, 18 June 2024.

PRESENT

Mrs D. Taylor CC (in the Chair)

Cllr. Liz Blackshaw	Salma Manzoor
Parisha Chavda	Cllr. Les Phillimore
Cllr. Sarah Cox	Cllr. G. Whittle
Cllr. Mohammed Dawood	Cllr. Christine Wise
Cllr. Jenny Joannou	Cllr. Andrew Woodman
Cllr. Jim Knight	

In attendance

Rupert Matthews – Police and Crime Commissioner
Claire Trewartha – Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Kira Hughes – Chief Finance Officer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Grace Strong, Director, Violence Reduction Network, Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (minute 6 refers).

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2024.

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2024 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

2. Public Question Time.

There were no questions submitted.

3. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

4. 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.

5. Review of Panel Membership.

The Panel considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance, Leicestershire County Council, which enabled the Panel to consider its membership and any changes required to meet the balanced appointment objective as required by legislation. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 5', is filed with these minutes.

The Director of Law and Governance explained that the membership of Police and Crime Panels was required to represent all parts of the relevant police area, represent the political make-up of the relevant local authorities (when taken together), and have the skills, knowledge and experience necessary for the police and crime panel to discharge its functions effectively. However, the current membership of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel for 2024/25 did not reflect the requirements for precise political balance. The main reason for this was that some authorities had nominated their Cabinet Lead Member for Community Safety which, whilst fulfilling the requirement for the Panel to have the appropriate skills and knowledge, had meant that there were more Labour members than was in accordance with the political balance requirements. The Director reported that advice had been sought from the Home Office regarding the matter but a response from the Home Office was still awaited.

Some members indicated a preference for further changes to be made to the Panel's membership to make it align with the required political balance as set out in paragraph 8 of the report. The Chair expressed a strong desire to have a Green Party member on the Panel to reflect the number of Green Party members on Councils in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Other members stated that other factors should be taken into account such as the skillset of members and the fact that some of the District Councils had coalition governments. It was noted that the Cabinet portfolio holder for Community Safety at North-West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC) was not the NWLDC representative on the Police and Crime Panel so there were measures that could be taken to ensure political balance.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Schedule 1 of the Panel's Constitution be amended to reflect the Panel's current membership as 5 Conservatives, 5 Labour and 3 Liberal Democrats;
- (b) That officers be requested to undertake further discussions with the Councils that nominate members to the Panel with a view to changing the Panel's membership so it includes a Green Party member;
- (c) That a further report be brought to a future meeting of the Panel providing an update on the Panel's membership and political balance.

6. Serious Violence Duty.

The Police and Crime Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding how he was fulfilling his responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 6', is filed with these minutes.

The Panel welcomed to the meeting for this item Grace Strong, Director, Violence Reduction Network, Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Arising from discussions the following points were noted:

- (i) When it was first set up the Violence Reduction Network (VRN) initially received funding from the Home Office on a yearly basis for the first two years, before being given a 3 year settlement. The VRN was now in the third year of this settlement. It was not known whether and to what extent any future government would fund the

Violence Reduction Network. The current VRN staff were included in the OPCC budget for 2024/25. The additional funding that came with the Serious Violence Duty was also due to end in March 2025 so there was uncertainty around that as well. The PCC promised to continue to lobby government for funding to tackle serious violence.

- (ii) In Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) 62.6% of serious violence occurred in a dwelling, 4.6% in hospitality settings and 2.7% in education settings. In response to a request for the percentage of serious violence that occurred in public/open spaces it was agreed that this information would be provided after the meeting.
- (iii) The Violence Reduction Network had originally focused on violence in public places involving people under the age of 25, but its remit had now broadened to include sexual violence and violence in dwellings. Two sets of performance data were therefore being collected; one in relation to the original definition of its remit and one in relation to the new definition. Baseline data for the second definition was now available and could be tracked over the years going forward.
- (iv) The Home Office had prescribed three success measures for local areas to monitor in addition to any locally agreed performance measures. These were:
 - i. A reduction in hospital admissions for assaults with knife or sharp object;
 - ii. A reduction in knife and sharp object enabled serious violence recorded by the Police;
 - iii. A reduction in homicides recorded by the Police.
- (v) In response to concerns raised by a member about threats of violence on social media it was explained that this issue was covered in the Preventing Serious Violence Strategy for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Funding was being received from the Youth Endowment Fund to tackle the problem and consideration was being given to what interventions could be made in LLR.
- (vi) The majority of the serious violence in LLR took place in Leicester City and therefore it was felt to be right to focus the VRN's time and resources on tackling serious violence in Leicester City. Whilst the VRN had a universal offer which covered the whole of LLR, targeted work took place in the City.
- (vii) In 2022 there had been riots in the East Leicester area. Not all of the violence that took place during those riots would be included in the data collected by the Violence Reduction Network as the VRN only collected the data of incidents that fell within a specific definition. At the time the VRN had been focusing on violence involving people under the age of 25. However, a member pointed out that most of the violence during the riots had involved younger people. Reassurance was given that the VRN did not ignore any types of violence and aimed to tackle violence of all types across LLR. Reassurance was also given that regardless of the limitations and speed of the Criminal Justice System, the VRN could make interventions at any time.
- (viii) In response to a question from a Panel member as to what liaison the VRN undertook with the Magistrates at Youth Courts, it was confirmed that Youth Justice Teams (YJTs) were part of the Violence Reduction Network and engagement with Magistrates took part through the work with YJTs.

- (ix) Work took place in schools regarding serious violence and the Chair requested that details of this work be circulated to Panel members after the meeting.
- (x) In response to concerns raised by a member regarding joint criminal enterprises, reassurance was given that the work of the VRN did not just focus on individuals but took into consideration all the factors around violent events, and interventions took into account group dynamics.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

7. Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner update.

The Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) which provided an update on his work from January 2024 to the April pre-election period. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 7', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussions the following points were noted:

- (i) The Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner had led a Parish Council Engagement Programme which concluded in March 2024. In response to a comment from a member that the uptake from Parish Councils had been disappointing, it was explained that this could have been due to the time of day the meetings were held. Reassurance was given that when some Parish Councils had been unable to attend meetings in person they had submitted written representations instead. It was useful for engagement to take place with Parish Councils as they had good knowledge of the issues facing the Parish area and were able to make suggestions as to how those issues could be resolved, though unfortunately the OPCC was not always able to implement those solutions.
- (ii) In response to a query as to how the PCC held the Chief Constable to account in relation to road safety issues such as speeding and E-scooters, it was explained that the Director of Performance and Governance at the OPCC monitored the performance of the Force in this regard. However, these issues were not just a matter for the Police, and partnership working was also required to tackle them.
- (iii) Auto Speed Watch Cameras were now being used by some Police Forces which collected data on the average speed of vehicles. Parish Councils in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland were strongly advocating the use of the cameras and had offered to purchase the equipment themselves and send the data to Leicestershire Police. Leicestershire Police had originally decided not to use Auto Speed Watch Cameras but this decision was being reviewed.
- (iv) In response to questions from members it was agreed that further information would be provided in future reports about Community Payback Schemes and the impact of People Zones.
- (v) A member commented that the report gave the impression that the PCC carried out more community engagement work in the County area rather than the City. In response it was explained that over the year the PCC rotated his community

engagement around the different areas of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR), and whilst during the period of time the report covered his time may have been more County focused, over the course of the year he gave the City a fair proportion of his time in accordance with the City's population.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

8. Corporate Governance Board.

The Police and Crime Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding issues which he had escalated to the Corporate Governance Board. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussions the following points were noted:

- (i) With regards to the pay award funding shortfall the Chief Constable had requested use of reserves to support the 'glide path' required and to cover any severance and redundancy costs. Reference to the 'glide path' meant moving towards the goal of reducing the size of the Force in the smoothest and trouble-free way. The PCC was reticent to use reserves but approached requests on a case-by-case basis and the Chief Constable had made a persuasive case. Therefore, the PCC had permitted the use of reserves in relation to the pay award.
- (ii) With regards to the public reporting crime, at a previous Panel meeting a member had requested information regarding the abandonment rate of the online reporting system and specifically which online pages did people abandon on the most. In response the PCC stated that this information was difficult to obtain but the Force were looking into it, were due to provide him with a report on the matter, and the information would be passed onto the Police and Crime Panel when available.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

9. Op Soteria and Rape performance.

The Police and Crime Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding how he was holding the Chief Constable to account for the performance of the Force in relation to rape offences. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 9', is filed with these minutes.

- (i) Nationally the Force sat 29th out of 43 forces for volume of rape cases. However, the figures had to be viewed in the context that action had recently been taken in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LRR) to make reporting of rape easier and therefore a spike in volume had been expected.
- (ii) A member expressed disappointment that the positive outcome rate (offence resulting in a charge) for rape offences in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland was currently 6%, which was 1% below the national average. In response it was explained that the performance of all the forces was across a narrow spectrum and

there were no forces significantly exceeding the performance of Leicestershire Police. The Chair noted that percentages by themselves could be misleading and it was helpful for the exact numbers to be provided in reports so that the full context could be understood.

- (iii) A member requested further information on where in the system cases were being dropped i.e. was it the Police or the Crown Prosecution Service making the decision that no further action should be taken. In response it was explained that the Corporate Governance Board had spent a lot of time on this issue. The PCC received updates regarding rape performance at the Corporate Governance Board every 6 months and an update could also be brought to a future meeting of the Police and Crime Panel.
- (iv) The Police and Crime Commissioner had provided £132,981 funding to Living Without Abuse who provided an information and advice service to victims of sexual abuse. Living Without Abuse were holding a Strictly Come Dancing competition to raise money and the PCC Rupert Matthews would be taking part. Tickets were available.
- (v) The PCC provided £67,906 funding to the Juniper Lodge Sexual Assault Referral Centre in New Parks, Leicester. A member raised concerns that the Centre was not easily accessible for residents of the Melton or Rutland areas, especially as the other nearest SARCs were in Nottingham and Northamptonshire.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted;
- (b) That the Police and Crime Commissioner be requested to provide a report to a future meeting of the Police and Crime Panel regarding when and why rape prosecutions in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland are discontinued.

10. Annual Report for the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme.

The Police and Crime Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding the independent custody visiting scheme. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 10', is filed with these minutes.

Panel members welcomed the work of the custody visitors and were pleased to note that the majority of issues raised by detainees were less serious and could be solved quickly.

In response to a query from a member about whether custody visitors could interview the 'appropriate adults' based in Police stations the PCC agreed to pass this request onto the City and County Councils who appointed the appropriate adults.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

11. Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The Police and Crime Panel received a verbal update from the Chief Finance Officer at the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding work taking place to repurpose funding received under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

As part of the update the following points were made:

- (i) The Leicestershire Police Section 106 Officer was in post and the work was progressing well. The officer had arranged bi-monthly and quarterly meetings with District and Borough Councils.
- (ii) The priority was to drawdown the money from Section 106 agreements that were due to expire in the next 12 months.
- (iii) Specific projects had been identified which Leicestershire Police could use Section 106 funding for. Out of £1.3 million approximately £900,000 had been transferred over and the remaining £400,000 would be obtained in the next few months.
- (iv) It was hoped that the process for drawing down Section 106 funding could be more consistent across all the local authorities in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Letters had been sent to two local authorities regarding the different processes they had in place and the difficulties drawing down funding in those two areas.

The Chair asked for a chart to be included with the next Section 106 update to the Panel showing the status of all the Section 106 funds that had been allocated to Leicestershire Police.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the verbal update be noted.

12. Dates of future meetings.

RESOLVED:

That future meetings of the Panel take place on the following dates all at 2.00pm.

Monday 23 September 2024;
Monday 28 October 2024;
Monday 2 December 2024.