

**LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND POLICE AND
CRIME PANEL – 3 OCTOBER 2017**

VENUES FOR PANEL MEETINGS

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to consider the arrangements for venues for Panel meetings going forward and to review the trial which took place regarding holding two meetings per year at City Hall, Leicester.

Background and current arrangements

2. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland is an elected official under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. The role of the Police and Crime Panel is to review and scrutinise the decisions and actions of the PCC providing support and challenge. Transparency plays a key role in the Panel's approach to scrutiny of the PCC.
3. The Police and Crime Panel is a public meeting and it plays a key role in assisting the public in evaluating the performance of the PCC. The Panel also provides evidence of ongoing support and challenge to local policing and community safety. For these reasons it is imperative that meetings of the Panel are accessible to as many members of the public as possible either by attending in person or viewing a webcast, whilst maintaining value for money.
4. The Secretariat for the Police and Crime Panel is based at County Hall and comprises officers from Leicestershire County Council. This arrangement was agreed prior to the Panel's inception in 2012. The County Council claims grant funding from the Home Office in support of its duties as Secretariat.
5. The current Chairman of the Police and Crime Panel is partly based at County Hall by virtue of being an elected member of Leicestershire County Council. This enables effective and regular liaison between the Chair and the Secretariat.
6. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) is based at Force Headquarters in Enderby on the outskirts of the city. In addition to officers from the OPCC, officers from Leicestershire Police also regularly attend meetings of the Panel. In terms of mileage from Force Headquarters, City Hall and County Hall are fairly equidistant.
7. At a meeting of the Panel on 23 September 2016 a decision was made by the Panel to hold two of its six standard meetings per year at City Hall on a trial basis, commencing with the March 2017 meeting of the Panel. Panel meetings therefore took place at City Hall on 29 March 2017 and 26 July 2017.

Analysis of the trial

8. The room used for Panel meetings at City Hall is spacious and has a good size public gallery. However, no members of the public attended either of the Panel meetings at City Hall in 2017 therefore it has not been demonstrated that holding the meetings at the City make Panel meetings more accessible for the public. A journalist from the Leicester Mercury did attend the Panel meeting on 26 July 2017 however that particular journalist regularly attends meetings at County Hall as well.
9. The webcasting for the meeting on 29 March 2017 worked well and was available for viewing on the City Council website during and after the meeting. However, there were technical difficulties with the webcasting for the meeting on 26 July 2017 resulting in the first half of the meeting not being webcast. It is not expected that the technical difficulties would be a permanent issue if meetings continued to be held at City Hall.
10. City Hall does not have its own car park and therefore Panel attendees were recommended to park at the NCP Rutland Centre carpark on Halford Street, Leicester. Whilst this is relatively close to City Hall this car park has been very full at the time of day the Police and Crime Panel has taken place. In addition, parking at this car park for the duration of Police and Crime Panel meetings has cost each attendee £12 which has had to be claimed back from the Home Office grant funding. Other car parks are available in the City Centre though not as close to City Hall.
11. From the point of view of the Secretariat, holding the meetings at City Hall has created some difficulties as this has required the transporting of large amounts of paper documents from County Hall to the NCP car park by vehicle and then be manually transported into the City Hall building. There were also difficulties with printing off last minute documents and ensuring last minute messages were received by the secretariat officer once he had made his way to City Hall.
12. The Panel's Legal advisor and Monitoring Officer is based at County Hall and was able to attend the meeting at City Hall on 29 March 2017. However, a more desirable use of resources would be for the Legal Advisor not to be required to attend every meeting of the Panel but to be on hand to provide advice if required and this works more efficiently if the meetings are at County Hall.
13. The attendance of Panel members has been slightly lower at City Hall meetings than would normally be for meetings at County Hall. For the meetings on 29 March 2017 and 26 July 2017 only 11 of the 15 Panel Members were present. However, this may be due to other unconnected reasons and little significance can be placed upon it.
14. Though traffic is naturally a consideration for the location of meetings, it could be suggested that traffic in and approaching the city is notably busier than in most areas of the County. When combined with the parking issues in the city this may have affected members' ability to arrive at meetings on time. Conversely, City Hall is probably more convenient for the City Councillors on

the Panel.

Recommendation

15. The Panel is asked whether it wishes to continue with the current practice of holding two of its 6 yearly meetings at City Hall.

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