

MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL



MINUTES OF MEETING

**SOUTH WALES POLICE AND
CRIME PANEL MEETING**

TUESDAY, 14TH SEPTEMBER, 2021

PRESENT: Councillor R Young (Bridgend CBC) (Chair)

Councillors:

B Bowen-Thomson (Cardiff Council), R Lewis (Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC), G Thomas (Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC), P Rees (Neath Port Talbot CBC), W Evans (City and County of Swansea), B Gray (Vale of Glamorgan) and S Jago (Merthyr Tydfil CBC)

Co-optees:

M Jehu (Vice-Chair)

Outside Bodies:

Alun Michael, South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner
Lee Jones, Chief Executive of the Office for the South Wales Police & Crime Commissioner
Peter Curran, Chief Finance Officer for the Office of the South Wales Police & Crime Commissioner

Officers:

S Jones (Senior Solicitor)
Judith Roberts (Minute clerk)

ITEM NO.	AGENDA MATTER	DECISION
76	Briefing Session	A briefing session for Panel Members was held from 10.15 – 10.30 am prior to the arrival of any invited attendees or

		<p>witnesses to the meeting.</p> <p>The Panel discussed the items that were to be considered at the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair agreed that additional matters that were raised and discussed would be dealt with under 'Any Other Business</p>
77	Apologies for Absence	<p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Christine Richards City and County of Swansea, Councillor Jayne Cowan Cardiff Council, Mr Ian Fox Independent Co-optee.</p>
78	Declarations of Interest	<p>Councillor Bernie Bowen-Thompson declared a personal interest as Chief Executive for Safer Wales as they receive funding from the Commissioner's Office.</p> <p>Mel Jehu declared a personal interest as a non-executive trustee with Safer Merthyr Tydfil as funding is received from the Commissioner's Office.</p>
79	Minutes of previous meeting of South Wales Police and Crime Panel - Tuesday 1 June 2021	<p>Resolved that:</p> <p>The Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 1 June 2021 be accepted as a true record.</p>
80	Commissioner Forward Look and Update	<p>The Commissioner briefed the Panel on his report titled "South Wales Police: Looking to the future - The importance of Neighbourhood Policing, Community Safety and the role of the PCSO in post-Pandemic South Wales".</p> <p>The following questions and comments were raised:-</p> <p>In relation to the funding announcement for 100 new PSPOs – how would that be delivered strategically & operationally on the streets of South Wales.</p> <p>At this stage of the pandemic policing and its challenges were returning to normal – officers returning to the streets, patrolling, and engaging with communities.</p> <p>The panel accepted that policing at this particular time had been extremely challenging and demanding for the police, but concerns were raised about the public's ability to contact the police by 999 or 101. This causes the public to lose confidence. On-line reporting sometimes feels as though you are sending info into a "black hole".</p> <p>It was accepted that greater public engagement was needed to ensure that the Police prioritised the things that were bothering people.</p> <p>In relation to the new PSPOs, this was welcomed and that their connection with the public was vital in modern policing, but it was very important that they were not taken away from their duties. They need to be on the streets not in back</p>

		<p>offices.</p> <p>Questions were raised concerning the enquiry into the Mayhill riots and what some members considered to be a lack of progress into the investigation. The Commissioner reassured members that matters were progressing, but this was not a simple enquiry and involved many partners. Reports of anti-social behaviour in Neath were also relayed to the Commissioner and that this was having a detrimental effect on public confidence with the police.</p> <p>A question was asked how the 100 new PCSOs would be allocated throughout Wales and would areas of greater population have a greater number of the new PCSOs?</p> <p>Concerns were raised about the regular and frequent turn over of senior police officers who through career development provided communities with no continuity. It was also stated that whenever possible PCSOs should remain in the same community for a significant period of time.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Commissioner's Office for the report</p>
81	Finance Update	<p>Peter Curran who was supported by the Commissioner took the Panel through the key parts of the Finance Report in line with the Panel's requirement for the Commissioner to provide regular updates on financial matters.</p> <p>In the presentation information was given on the following –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit Wales had confirmed their satisfactory completion of their audit. • The Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21 had been approved by the Joint Audit Committee in July 2021. • The Annual Report of the Joint Audit Committee for 2020/21 which demonstrated a high level of assurance by both internal and external audit and was confirmed in the Joint Audit Committee's Annual Report. • Salient Current (2021/22 in-year) Financial Issues to include – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In-year monitoring ○ Additional PCSOs ○ Police Uplift Programme ○ Apprenticeship Levy ○ The policing response to C-19 ○ Council Tax Receipts ○ Pensions • Update concerning the Comprehensive Spending Review 2021 and South Wales Police' response to the Home Office request for information.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on a possible review of the Police Funding Formula. • Capital City Funding and the business case which is in the process of being prepared. <p>The Chair commented that the report was exemplary and covered all significant elements and it was confirmed that the Panel would be more than prepared to support the Commissioner's request for Capital City Funding.</p> <p>A question was raised about hybrid and electric vehicles for the police fleet and whether extra money for such vehicles had been factored in. The Panel were assured that any extra cost would be offset by savings made in procuring and running the vehicles.</p> <p>The panel were assured by Mr Curran that everything was on budget</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>Members of the Police & Crime Panel noted the contents of the report and the appendices.</p>
82	Annual Report	<p>The Commissioner and Lee Jones took the Panel through the Annual Report and the Panel considered and commented upon the same following the presentation and subsequent questions.</p> <p>Amongst other things the Annual Report 2020/2021, summarised the work the Commissioners team had undertaken throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. It has also dealt with significant changes to the operational leadership of South Wales Police, with Matt Jukes being replaced by Jeremy Vaughan as the new Chief Constable.</p> <p>The Panel were reminded that the financial challenges faced by South Wales Police remained significant but despite this the Commissioner and his office have continued to deliver social and economic benefit to South Wales in recent years; through focusing on (1) early intervention and prompt, positive action, and (2) working effectively with partners.</p> <p>Covid-19, had a significant impact on service provision and demand and for the first time the police in Wales faced the challenges of enforcing significant legislation set down by Welsh Government rather than at Westminster.</p> <p>Finally, the Annual Report detailed the increase in effective communication and collaborative working both locally and nationally forging stronger relationships between partners.</p> <p>Questions and comment were made by the Panel in particular to the public consultation survey detailed in the Annual Report and the fact that it was not comprehensive enough to hold weight and upon which priorities could be</p>

		<p>based. This was accepted by the Commissioner's office who sited public apathy but nevertheless detailed what steps they intended to take to make the consultation better. A follow up meeting would be arranged between a Panel member and the Commissioner's office to discuss matters further.</p> <p>The panel also commented upon the good work undertaken with regard to Priority 3 namely the work to protect the most vulnerable in our communities, understanding causes and taking prompt positive action as issues arise. The Drive Project was singled out for praise.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>To agree the content of the Annual report with the Panel recognising that the pandemic has put a significant strain on parts of the plan. It was however recommendations that (1) there continues to be investment in front line services, (2) that the priorities detailed in the report in particular the priority to protect the vulnerable is maintained and continues to a significant priority for the police and (3) although partnership working is good and is a priority for the Commissioner improvements need to be made with regard to public engagement to guide priorities and partnership working.</p>
83	Scrutiny Annual Report	<p>Lee Jones outlined the salient points of the Commissioner's Annual Scrutiny Report demonstrating that the Commissioner used a range of ways to ensure formal scrutiny of the force. He conducts weekly meetings with Chief Officers and chairs a Strategic Board on a quarterly basis where he holds the Chief Constable to account in relation to crime reduction, force performance, and the delivery of priorities in the Police & Crime Plan.</p> <p>It was explained the scrutiny process was complex and that the Commissioner was still looking to improve scrutiny by focusing on the right areas. Technology would hopefully assist in making improvements in the future. The Ethics Committee and Joint Audit Committee were referred to as significantly adding value to scrutiny.</p> <p>When asked about concerns and areas for possible improvement specific mention was made to the effect the pandemic has had on domestic violence and that despite the introduction of IRIS it was now harder to spot domestic violence as victims were no longer visiting GP surgeries. It was accepted that lessons learned in the past should not be lost.</p> <p>The Commissioner and Lee Jones stated that they will work on engagement with the public, recruitment and retention, neighbourhood policing and the introduction of the new PCSOs as and when they arrive.</p> <p>A comment was made about the police reputation being very low following on from the tragic Sarah Everard case and that it would assist the Panel to hear in a future report</p>

		<p>what steps the police have taken or intend to take to ensure that robust processes are in place to stop the police from recruiting “rouge officers”. It was agreed that a report will be presented to a future Panel meeting.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>Members of the Police & Crime Panel noted the contents of the report.</p>
84	Co-option of Independent Members	<p>Mel Jehu left the meeting before the start of this agenda item. The chairman and Panel member Cllr Ben Gray then gave an update on the appointment process for the two independent co-opted members. They stated that there were 4 applications for the two posts all of which were of a high standard. All applicants attended an in-person interview with the interview Panel comprising of the chairman, Cllr Gray and Cllr Christine Richards. All applicants were asked the same questions save for the applicants who were at that time in post where there had to be slight amendments. The Panel used a scoring system and came to a unanimous decision on both appointments who were Mel Jehu who was re-appointed for the second time and Ms Sarah James who was appointed for the first time. Although Ian Fox was not in attendance at the meeting the Panel thanked him for his hard work and contribution to the Panel.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>Members of the Police & Crime Panel appoint Ms Sarah James and Mr Melvin Jehu as co-opted independent Panel members for the period ending on the 31st October of the next ordinary election of the South Wales Police & Crime Commissioner.</p>
85	Any other business deemed urgent by the Chair	None.