

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 22 JULY 2019 AT 4:00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT:

Councillors

Woodhead, P.E. (Chairman)
Fitzgerald, Mrs. A.A. (Vice-Chairman)

Davis, Mrs. M.A.	Smith, C.D.
Dudson, A.	Sutton, Mrs. H.M.
Hewitt, P.M.	Thompson, Mrs. S.L.
Layton, Mrs. A.	Todd, Mrs. D.M.
Newbury, J.A.A.	

Also in attendance:

- Chief Superintendent J. Moore, Staffordshire Police (*for agenda item 4.*)
- Councillor C. Bennett, Crime & Partnerships Portfolio Leader (*Invitee*)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillors Miss M.A. Freeman and Mrs. A.M. Muckley.

2. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restrictions on Voting by Members and Party Whip Declarations

No declarations of interests or party whip declarations were received.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed.

4. Deletion of the Staffordshire Police Partnership Manager Posts

Chief Superintendent Moore was welcome to the meeting, and the Chairman explained the reasons for him being in attendance. The Chief Superintendent then gave Members an outline of what his role entailed, which primarily covered neighbourhood policing and partnership working.

He advised Members that the number of PCs working in neighbourhood policing had increased from 290 to 371, whereas there had been a small drop in the number of PCSOs, but the overall numbers of front line officers had increased. The number of civilian staff remained unchanged.

Members were then given a background of the current neighbourhood policing model, funding arrangements, and rationale and process involved for the deletion of the Partnerships Manager Posts. It was noted that any savings made from the posts being deleted would be invested directly back into neighbourhood policing. Views were being sought from each of the Local Policing Team (LPT) areas about how any new model of partnership working should look. It had also been acknowledged that partners should have been notified sooner about the planned deletion of the Posts, and it was regrettable that this hadn't happened.

Members then raised the following questions/comments, to which the Chief Superintendent replied in turn:

- Were the current post-holders civilian staff and were they being made redundant?

All were civilian staff, but not all being made redundant, nor were all of them currently in full-time roles. Some had chosen to leave and others were seeking redeployment into other posts.

- Why couldn't the current post-holder based within Cannock Chase be redeployed into the new 'co-ordinator' role?

The new role would not at the same reporting level as the current post and be on a lower salary grade. The existing post holder could take redundancy or be offered redeployment into another role at the same level as his current post. The new role had not yet been developed as it was important to ensure the new role profile was fit for purpose.

- The current post-holder had been prominent in co-ordinating the resolution of local issues, so there was concern that fragmentation would happen under a new model and local contact/knowledge would be lost.

The aforementioned Harm Reduction Hubs would be Sergeant led and Councillors would have a central team based within the LPT whom they could contact with any queries and concerns. In a lot of instances issues that were being dealt with by the Partnership Managers should have been addressed by PCs and PCSOs, therefore a lot of work was being duplicated. The intention of the new co-ordinator role was for it to focus on problem solving and providing support to the Hubs.

- When the new role and model had been established, Members would need to understand the new structure and who the local contacts would be.

The Council's Partnerships, Community Safety & CCTV was on the Project Board set up to design the new roles and working model, so would be able to

provide any necessary information once finalised.

- Had existing post-holders been given the chance to train for the new role?

The formal redundancy process was still underway and the proposed new posts were still being designed, so don't want to give false hope to existing post-holders. As previously advised, there was the option of redeployment if individuals wanted to take it. Whilst some good work was being undertaken across the County, not all working aspects of the current roles needed to be done going forward.

- Some of what the existing local post-holder had done was not measureable. Had any consideration been given to looking at what work had been done that had developed outside of the existing role profile?

All eight posts affected were being supported by Staffordshire Police's HR department as necessary. Work undertaken locally was part of a wider team, and not just down to the single post-holder. In some instances the post-holder had not been involved. The core team would still be in place, as would the ongoing commitment to neighbourhood policing and partnership working. It would be wrong to say that a local system worked solely because of one person as a strong team approach was in place. In respect of Cannock Chase, a lot of local contact was with the LPT's Chief Inspector.

- Would Councillors have a named contact 24/7 under the new working model?

24/7 contact was already in place through the LPT, but there would be a named contact within the team. Councillors should already have regular contact with PCs and PCSOs, on a monthly basis at least.

- What was meant by 'central location' of the Harm Reduction Hub?

The Hub would be based at Cannock Police Station, with discussions ongoing about required resourcing. Some of the work of the existing role would continue, but a lot of the 'nice to do' aspects would be filtered back to PCSOs.

- It was appreciated that the existing roles had not worked as well in other areas of the County, but it appeared that the new roles been established but the current posts were being deleted. Policing teams appeared to change quite frequently, which meant it was difficult for Councillors to forge proper working relationships. The existing post-holder locally had been a key point of contact. Monthly contact wasn't happening with PCs and PCSOs, and they didn't always attend parish council meetings. A lot of the time only written update reports were being provided.

Everything just described was part of the Force's engagement strategy. Whilst PCSOs weren't expected to be in attendance for the whole of a parish council meeting, it was intended that they drop in as necessary.

Furthermore, the submission of written reports wasn't advocated. The purpose of making the new Hubs Sergeant led was that they had the powers to direct the work of PCs and PCSOs, and it was important to ensure contact was not lost with local teams. It had been acknowledged that the Force was not always good at letting people know about changes in structure and personnel in local teams; therefore it was understandable that reassurance was needed about having a named point of contact.

- It was felt that local Sergeants were quite stretched work wise already, so would more resource be provided?

Five Sergeants were currently in place locally, one of whom would be the lead for the Hub, i.e. not be a shift Sergeant. There was a need to be aware of different local needs when designing the new working model, but all Hubs would be led in the same way.

- It was apparent that savings needed to be made, and this was being achieved through making the existing posts redundant and creating new posts on a lower salary grade.

There was no reduction in the overall budget for neighbourhood policing, therefore no savings had to be made. Roles were needed to carry out certain specific duties, and overall, the total staff headcount may go up. The structure of neighbourhood policing had change five times in the past ten years, but it was expected to evolve down this proposed path in the future. The only change had been the reduction in PCSOs from 240 to 215, some of which had been due to natural wastage, but mostly due to individuals becoming PCs instead. It was expected that a recruitment drive for more PCSOs would take place later on this year.

- Would there be a seamless transition on 1 October 2019 to the new working model, once the existing posts ceased to exist on 30 September?

Not sure at this stage as the new model was still being developed, but the core local team would still be in place. The engagement plan and contact information for the LPT would be distributed once the Chief Inspector had returned from leave.

- Why was a reduction in the number of PCSOs being progressed if neighbourhood policing was a key focus going forward? Locally another PCSOs presence would be of benefit. Also need to know how regular contact can be established and maintained.

The Force had to achieve savings overall, some of which came from the PCSOs base. More investment was being put into neighbourhood policing, but not into physical numbers of front line officers at this time.

- Had discussions taken place to review the powers of PCSOs? For instance dealing with parking related issues now took longer as PCSOs were no longer able to issue parking tickets.

PCSOs had not had this power for a number of years now as it had been transferred to local authorities, but they could still ask drivers to move their vehicles on if an unnecessary obstruction was being caused.

- Local PCSOs worked more with vulnerable people but it could often be difficult to contact officers via the 101 number, and there was a reluctance to dial 999 instead.

Work was needed locally to best understand how incidents/issues should be reported, but matters could now be reported online and via social media.

- The decision making process in respect of the proposed changes hadn't involved partners, thus creating some frustrations locally. As it was not yet known what the new partnership model would be, was it going to be fit for purpose and how were people being consulted about it? Furthermore, had local factors been accounted for?

The direction of travel for the proposed new model was being given via partnership briefings, and the Hubs had been mentioned. Although each LPT area was different, they were led by a Chief Inspector and would have one of the Hubs in place. The new role was being designed through a Project Board, which included representation from this Council, Children's Services at County level, the Fire & Rescue Service and Stoke-on-Trent City Council. This model was phase 1 of a number of intended changes.

- Were there any contingency plans in place for any gaps between the existing posts ending and the new roles starting?

The Hubs could be used as a contact point, as could local PCs, but this was not intended to be a long-term arrangement.

- Would substantial improvements be seen for communities as a result of this new working model?

Testing of the model had taken place in Tamworth borough, using local people to help devise solutions suited to their area. There was enough evidence in place to show that the new process would work, including more focus on vulnerability and prevention work at a local level.

- The consultation process for these changes had been handled wrong and it wasn't expected that the new model to be ready for 1 October, therefore could the current system continue until everything was ready to be put in place?

Neighbourhood teams were already in place, as were the Harm Reduction Hubs and points of contact. Therefore the main structure was already in place other than the new co-ordinator role.

- Problems could arise if teams did not operate consistently going forward. How would information be disseminated out under the new model?

It was not just down to an individual role as several systems were in place for receiving information, but this was due to be changed to a single system. IT solutions for information sharing were being developed through the 'Connected Staffordshire' programme.

- How would 'lower level' information be disseminated under the new model?

Whoever was in a relevant community/partnership meeting would do so as should happen at present, especially if it was intelligence related. Co-ordination of group activities would continue as at present.

- Managing Director – have seen diminishing support over the past few years for the Chief Inspectors, firstly by the removal of the Inspector posts, and now the deletion of the Partnership Manager posts and reduction in the number of PCSOs, as well as a reduction in overtime. The growing concern was for the Chief Inspector as a leadership role. Would there be an increase locally in the number of PCs and Sergeants for 2019/20 and 2020/21 as part of the Police Commissioner's commitment to enhancing neighbourhood policing from the precept levy?

The overall numbers for neighbourhood policing would increase. Locally the number of PCs would go up, but there would be a slight reduction in PCSOs. The numbers were being rebalanced but there would be more officers in total. Work was happening to try and retain the number of Sergeants across the County at 55. Money hasn't been found to provide tier 1 and 2 areas with Inspectors, but would like this to happen. The total number of Sergeants and PCs for the Cannock Chase LPT would be provided to Members. The overtime budget had been reduced, but overtime spending was still happening where it needed to, i.e. an overtime ban had not been put in place. The planned increase in PCs and Sergeants for 2019/20 and 2020/21 would be actively promoted.

At the conclusion of the questioning, Members thanked the Chief Superintendent for his attendance and taking the time to answer all of their questions.

(Chief Superintendent Moore left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

5. End of Year 2018/19 Improving Community Wellbeing (Environment, Partnerships and Community Safety) PDP Performance Update

Consideration was given to the end of year performance information (Item 5.1 – 5.9 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Managing Director advised that a good level of performance had been achieved against the actions outlined in the 2018/19 Priority Delivery Plan (PDP), with 87.5% being completed. Actions not completed in respect of introducing Safeguarding Champions across the Council and construction of a new toilet block facility in Hednesford Park had been deferred until 2019/20. With regards to the toilet block construction, Members were advised that the Council was waiting for the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to sign off the financial spend to date on the Hednesford Park project before it was known how much available underspend

there was to potentially fund the build works, subject to further negotiation with the HLF.

6. Community Scrutiny Committee 2018/19 Annual Report

Consideration was given to the Report of the Managing Director (Item 6.1 – 6.2 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Managing Director advised Members that the main piece of review work undertaken by the Committee last year was related to Child Exploitation and 'County Lines', and encouraged those Members who were new on the Committee to read the review work and accompanying background reports.

Members then reconfirmed the following resolutions made by the Committee on 19 March in respect of the review:

That:

- (A) The final report in respect of the Committee's Child Sexual Exploitation and 'County Lines' review be accepted.
- (B) A letter be sent to the Home Office, on behalf of the Committee, recommending that the law be changed to stop mobile phones being purchased and used anonymously, thereby making it easier for relevant authorities to tackle County Lines issues.
- (C) A letter be sent to the Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime (PFCC), detailing the recommendations of the Committee's review.

7. Community Wellbeing (Environment, Partnerships and Community Safety) PDP 2019/20

Consideration was given to the Priority Delivery Plan for 2019/20 (Item 7.1 – 7.4 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

For the benefit of those newly elected Members, the Managing Director explained the background to, and rationale for, production of the PDPs. The 2019/20 PDPs had been agreed by full Council in April 2019, and regular performance updates would be given at Cabinet and each Scrutiny Committee during the year. It was also confirmed that scrutiny of the 'Commercial Use of the Highway' Policy would continue to be carried out by the Promoting Prosperity Scrutiny Committee.

(The Managing Director left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

8. Community Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2019/20

Consideration was given to the Report of the Managing Director (Item 8.1 – 8.12 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

Prior to determining the Committee's work programme for 2019/20, Members

followed up on the earlier session with Chief Superintendent Moore, noting concern that the process to develop the new model and co-ordinator role had not been instigated as soon as it was known that structural changes were going to happen. Members were keen to monitor the development and implementation of the new working model, and the Crime & Partnerships Portfolio Leader advised that he could provide the Committee Chairman with any updates received via the Community Safety Hub meetings. Members were also keen to support the Partnerships, Community Safety & CCTV in her role helping to develop the new model, and wanted to know more about who Councillors would contact in the future to discuss strategic and local policing matters.

The following items were suggested by Members as review topics for 2019/20:

- Inspection checks on Private Sector Housing;
- Waste & Recycling Service and Biffa Contract – it was noted that the Government was currently consulting on a future waste strategy, and may ask all local waste collection authorities to undertake weekly collections of food waste, as the previous removal of this initiative had seen a reduction in overall recycling rates. It was further noted that Members needed a better understanding of the local process for how waste was recycled after it had been collected. It was suggested that Members undertake a visit to Biffa's Material Recycling Facility at Aldridge to support this aim.
- Carbon Neutrality – this matter had been discussed briefly by the Committee at its meeting in March 2019, and also debated at length at the 10 July 2019 full Council meeting.

The 2019/20 work programme for the Community Scrutiny Committee, and associated actions, were then agreed as follows:

(A) Deletion of Staffordshire Police Partnership Manager Posts:

- (i) The Chairman of the Committee to write to Chief Superintendent Moore expressing the concerns of the Committee regarding the perceived delay in developing a new partnership working model, seeking clarification on the timescales involved in this process and wanting a wider conversation about links between Councillors and the Police on local and strategic policing matters.
- (ii) A task & finish group be established to support the Partnerships, Community Safety & CCTV Manager in the development and shaping of the new working model. The group to be comprised of Councillors Doug Smith, Diane Todd and Paul Woodhead, with input from Councillor Bennett as the Crime & Partnerships Portfolio Leader.
- (iii) The Committee to monitor implementation of the new model over the course of the year to see if what was proposed worked in practice.

(B) Carbon Neutrality – a task & finish group be established to undertake a research and information gathering exercise on associated matters and report back to the Committee as necessary. The group to be comprised of

Councillors Andrea Layton, Josh Newbury, Sam Thompson and Paul Woodhead.

- (C) Waste & Recycling and Biffa Contract – examine related issues with the Waste & Engineering Services Manager and representatives from Biffa at the November 2019 Committee meeting, and undertake a visit to Biffa’s Material Recycling Facility at Aldridge. The visit to take place in advance of the November Committee meeting.
- (D) Community Wellbeing (Environment, Partnerships and Community Safety) PDP 2019/20 performance updates.

The meeting closed at 6:02 p.m.

CHAIRMAN