



ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

WEDNESDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2023 AT 9:30AM IN THE JORDAN SUITE, THE EXCHANGE (COUNTY HALL), PRESTON

MINUTES

PRESENT

Andrew Snowden - Police and Crime Commissioner
Chris Rowley - Chief Constable, Lancashire Constabulary

IN ATTENDANCE

Angela Harrison – Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Steve Freeman – Chief Finance Officer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Andrew Pratt – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
Rachel Whittle – Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Sacha Hatchett – Deputy Chief Constable, Lancashire Constabulary
Sam MacKenzie – Assistant Chief Constable, Lancashire Constabulary
Russ Procter – Assistant Chief Constable, Lancashire Constabulary
Dan Rogers – Chief Finance Officer, Lancashire Constabulary
Gillian Routledge – Chief Operating Officer, Lancashire Constabulary
Zoe Mainey - Detective Superintendent, Lancashire Constabulary
Kim De Curtis – Chief Inspector, Lancashire Constabulary
Amy Robertson – Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Carol Benton – Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

ITEM 2 APOLOGIES

Ian Dickinson – Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Pete Lawson – Assistant Chief Constable, Lancashire Constabulary

ITEM 4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.



ITEM 6 ACTION LOG

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) was pleased to note that all the actions identified at the last meeting had been completed.

ITEM 7 CURRENT AND SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The Chief Constable spoke about the significant media interest surrounding the sad disappearance of Nicola Bulley. The force were looking at all options with an open mind, with experienced SIOs leading the investigation. There has been input from external sources to re-assure nothing has been overlooked and the investigation team are working through their recommendations. There is a media briefing today to explain to the public what the force are doing. There is nothing to suggest any criminal acts but, as stated, the force are keeping an open mind.

The Chief Constable referred to Operations Warrior, Defender and Vanquish which are all delivering on the Police and Crime Plan, taking the fight to criminals.

The force is on target to surpass the uplift target at the end of March 2023.

The Constabulary advised that to November 22 the Insight data shows Lancashire are one of only eight forces seeing a reduction in crime, with an associated reduction in the number of victims.

The PCC referenced the media interest surrounding the disappearance of Nicola Bulley and went on to say that first and foremost, his thoughts remained with the family and friends of Nicola Bulley and he was thankful for all the efforts of the officers, staff and partners who continue to work tirelessly on the search for Nicola.

The PCC spoke of the support of the Police and Crime Panel in recently approving the increase in council tax. The planning application has been submitted for the re-development of HQ, it's live on the Planning Authority portal and represents an important step forward, leaving a legacy for the future.

It was noted that the new version of Oracle went live on 26th January 2023. The Chief Operating Officer reported that the system had been working well and wanted to formally note on record her thanks to ICT and HR for facilitating the transition.

ITEM 8 FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2022

The PCC received a report setting out the Financial Position as 31 December 2022.



The PCC noted the forecast underspend outlined in the report and the position of the capital programme. The PCC noted the pressures faced by the Constabulary in relation to overtime and agency staff budgets. However, attendees were optimistic about the forecast underspend as this will help to balance the budget next year when there may be a requirement to rely on reserves.

The Chief Finance Officer for Lancashire Constabulary noted that the figures for the end of December 2022 were similar to the figures that had been produced for the end of January 2023.

In noting the report, the PCC noted that if the underspend can be maintained, this will help with the position in respect of reserves next year.

ITEM 9 BUDGET REPORT

The PCC received a report on the Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2023/24 and Capital Investment Programme for 2023/24 to 2027/28.

It was acknowledged that the figures had changed slightly since writing the report to the Police and Crime Panel due to an increase in Council Tax. It was noted that £3.1M is forecast to be drawn down from reserves in 2023/24 to balance the budget. However, if reserves levels are as forecasted, this draw down will mean that total reserve levels will fall within the 3-5% target, in line with the reserve's strategy.

A total cost saving of £7.875M is reflected in the 2023/24 budget. Whilst the PCC acknowledged the savings being made, he noted that there continues to be a requirement to draw down reserves to balance the budget in 2023/24. He noted that savings are important in respect of easing pressures on reserves and therefore, cost savings should be reflected and tracked in quarterly reports, demonstrating the complexities of the financial position and the saving measures in place.

The Deputy Chief Constable stated that savings are tracked through quarterly reports and also through the Change Board.

The PCC also noted the importance of tracking savings to ensure uplift targets in respect of Police Officers and PCSOs are met. It was noted that the deadline set for meeting the Police Uplift Programme target for police officers had been set by Government at 31st March 2023, 30th September 2023 and 31st March 2024 . It was reinforced that PCSO levels need to be at full establishment by March 2024 and their cost managed within the existing Constabulary budget.

The Chief Operating Officer for Lancashire Constabulary noted that the Constabulary were having meetings to profile police recruitment and were tracking through the Strategic Resourcing Board . Through these measures, she was confident that uplift target would be met.



In noting Council Tax payments, the Commissioner acknowledged that less than 30% of households within Lancashire are band D or above.

The PCC's Chief Finance Officer noted that up to £115M was being collected through the precept in 2023, which is an increase of around 50% in comparison to 2013.

The PCC noted that the Police and Crime Panel were eager to see how the increase in the precept improves the delivery of service on the streets.

ITEM 10 FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

The Commissioner received a report detailing the Financial Outlook 2023/24 to 2025/26.

It was noted that the purpose of the report was to formalise the assumptions regarding the financial strategy already in place and provide context in which the budget is being set. It was noted that the Chief Finance Officers are in the process of producing a financial strategy document that will cover the medium-term period for consideration by the PCC and Chief Constable.

The Chief Constable noted that the Constabulary are already looking at savings that can be made for 2024-25.

The Chief Constable gave thanks to both the PCC's Chief Finance Officer and the Chief Finance Officer for Lancashire Constabulary for their work in producing the reports.

ITEM 11 JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE

The PCC and Chief Constable considered a report seeking approval to appoint Paul Richardson as Chair of the Joint Audit Committee, selected after a competitive recruitment process.

The meeting also noted that 18 applications have been received in respect of the remaining 4 Committee members vacancies and the next stage is to shortlist and interview them.

The Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable approved the appointment of the Chair as proposed.



ITEM 12 INSPECTIONS, AUDITS AND REVIEWS

In relation to HMICFRS Inspections the PCC was advised that preparatory work was ongoing in relation to two forthcoming Inspections, Serious and Organised Crime which will look at Lancashire and also interconnections to the Regional Organised Crime Unit, and an unannounced Custody Inspection which is expected imminently.

ITEM 13 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting was the 23 May 2023.

ITEM 14 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

That the press and public be excluded from the Meeting during the consideration of the following Items of business on the grounds that there would be a likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as indicated against the heading to the Item, and the public interest not to disclose it outweighed the public interest in disclosing it.

PART II – PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

ITEM 15 PROGRESS AGAINST POLICE AND CRIME PLAN PRIORITIES 2021 – 2025

The PCC received a report setting out the Constabulary's progress against the priorities and measures set out in the Police and Crime Plan.

As part of the discussions the Commissioner noted that the charity organisation Paladin had indicated that they would like to carry out some work with Lancashire Constabulary around stalking.

ACTION: Mr MacKenzie to look into facilitating work with Paladin.

ITEM 16 PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS UPDATE

The PCC received an update on the key headlines in respect of Professional Standards.



ITEM 17 FIREARMS

The PCC acknowledged the Firearms Licensing update report and the positive picture it presents. The PCC thanked the Firearms Licensing team for providing a robust and good service to the public.

ITEM 18 SUPER COMPLAINT

The PCC received a verbal update on the super complaint and specifically advised on the Lancashire response to the recommendations made to forces in relation to honour based abuse and the associated work that was ongoing in force. The required force response had been submitted.

ITEM 19 INSPECTIONS, AUDITS AND REVIEWS

There were no issues raised in Part II of the meeting.

ITEM 20 CURRENT AND SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

There were no issues raised in Part II of the meeting.

ITEM 21 LAND AND BUILDING UPDATE

The PCC received an update regarding the proposals for land and buildings in the East of the County, The PCC agreed to the proposals presented.

The Chief Operating Officer updated the PCC in respect of land and buildings in the South of the County and committed to provide further proposed usage details at the next meeting.

Angela Harrison
Chief Executive