

Eighth national conference for chairs, members and support officers of police and crime panels.

Scarman House Conference Centre,
Warwick University.

Monday / Tuesday 18/19 November 2019

Conference dinner. Monday 18 November 2019.

Pre-conference social dinner with amusing after dinner presentation by guest speakers: Paul Grady and Iain Murray, Grant Thornton - the conference sponsors.

Tuesday 19 November.

1. AGM of the National Association of Police & Crime Panels.
 - 1.1 Chairman's annual report.

Chair John Gili-Ross (Chair) opened the meeting. During the past year certain Police & Crime Commissioners in England have taken on fire and rescue. Not many changes are reported yet, but more are expected after next PCC elections. Over the past year the NA has tried to change mindset of home office officers, but encountered a lot of inertia. Hence, NA is moving its focus onto training. After May 2019 elections 2/3 membership of the NA Board changed. There are challenges for new panel members as entrants, as the role can be daunting so there is a need for training.

- 1.2 There was a need to ensure that the N. Association can present a national voice. Chairmans view is that it has to be in a national influencing role.

- 1.3 Elections were held for officers, with named presented on a tabled paper. Motion that the nominations as listed was carried.

- 1.4 Future funding of the National Association. Home office precludes using grant to pay subscription. Debate then motion to move to a non- subscription basis for all Panels was passed.

- 1.5 Funding of panel. It currently has cash reserves of £6000. There is a commitment to spend £700 on a website. Any income that comes in will go through Emma as the executive support and held by Essex cc as a specific cost centre. There is also a treasurer that provides extra governance.

1.6 Constitution. A paper detailing technical changes to the outdated terms of reference and remove mention of an annual subscription was passed.

1.7 Following this AGM, the support officer would write to all PCP inviting them to become members of the national association on a subscription free basis.

2. Conference plenary: exploring issues to challenge and support the commissioner.

Keynote: Dr Rick Muir, Director Police Foundation.

“The strategic review of policing in England and Wales”.

2.1 The Police Foundation mainly does research and also does reviews. Last police review was stated as 1962. (Actually, there have been others since, but no actions taken on their recommendations). The 1962 review recommended taking police boards (PAs) down to 43. It looked at governance issues and also how much police officers were paid.

2.2 Recent years there has been lobbying for a new royal commission, but this has not happened. Hence, the police foundation have started this review.

Features:

- Crime is changing dramatically. New tech led to cyber crime.
- Changing social attitudes to hidden crime etc.
- Serious crime rising as is public concern.
- Non crime demand has become more complex linked to vulnerability and require multiagency response.
- Changes combined with reductions in funding forced the police to prioritise. Police mission has changed in response to austerity but without public debate or explicit change of policy.
- Last big policy changes 2010/2011 were a response to a different set of issues - local accountability, targets, quangos.
- Concern that policing has lacked a long term strategic focus.

All these features are influencing the need for an independent strategic review.

2.3 The review will consider:

- Challenges to public safety country will face in 2020s and beyond.
- Response police service to these changes.
- How demand has changed.
- What future police workforce should look like.
- How should policing be organised locally and nationally.
- Review chaired by Sir Michael Barber, ex-Head of no 10 Delivery Unit.

2.4 The review is currently looking at phase 1, a review of public expectations. The report is expected to be published June 2021.

“Ian Roffe’s view: interesting presentation, but not convincing argument that this review will change anything - it is not a Royal Commission and does not have any political leverage”.

3. Q& A Discussion Panel on the Plenary.

Panel Members: Loraine Atkinson. Christine Goldstraw. Paul Grady.

Issues Raised.

Loraine Atkinson. Was the police talent pool available, such as in cybercrime. Second, how does it fit with wider criminal justice arrangements. Third, you get what you pay for - are the public prepared to pay for things like mental health, social media, extinction rebellion, and potential civic unrest.

Christine Goldstraw. Works for a charitable trust. Criminal justice system is creaking and see issues every day in the news stories.

Paul Grady. Grant Thornton’s Head of Police. He considered the split between national and local policing, you do need, both but the top slicing is contentious. Government is very astute currently in inferring more police numbers as it is resonating with the public. When public expectations are backed by the tabloids then you can get expectations that are not likely to be met. The Strategic review was long overdue.

Small Group Workshops

Tuesday pm comprised essentially of a selection of small group workshops.

Using the home office grant for panels. Dave Burn (Frontline Consulting) Session considered using the Home Office grant for Panels. This session looked at the grant agreement, key deliverables and the new critical success factors and enable Panels, especially their Support Officers, to compare the approach being taken to the use of the grant and reporting, including reference to the new guidance for Panels.

- Home office grant letter in summer, came as a bit of a surprise to most panels.
- New grant arrangements. Purpose to bring inline with cabinet office requirements.
- Underspend overall on panel budgets. New requirements on evidence. Response can come in different ways.
- Changes. Panels are requested to provide updates referred to as critical success factors.

- Each annual review will result in the authority making a recommendation for the current year.
- Number of public meetings held. Support officer can determine what evidence is provided.
- Purpose and agreement continue in line with existing plans.
- Csfs should be redefined.
- Panels are more effective now than they were say 3 years ago.

Effective scrutiny. Tim Young (Frontline Consulting). This session explored the scrutiny function of Panels, looked at good practice from several Panels and discussion of achievements, barriers and possible solutions to enable effective scrutiny of Commissioners by Panels.

It examined the scrutiny function of panels and to share good practice and to look achievements, barriers and possible solutions. It was apparent that some PCC refuse to cooperate or work with their panels and or there are strained relationships. Without a working relationship the panels cannot work effectively.

Forum on tackling serious violence, knife crime and county lines. Although serious violence and knife crime is not such a serious issue in Dyfed Powys we are affected by county lines gangs. A frank discussion was held on all aspect of the topic and the problems of knife crime in some parts of the UK. Again it was apparent that some delegates were frustrated by the actions of their PCC.

Cllr John Prosser, Cllr William Powell, Prof Ian Roffe