

Note of meeting between Deputy Minister & Chief Whip and the Police & Crime Panel (PCP) Chairs in Wales, 22 January, 2020, 10:15 AM, Conference Room, Second Floor, Ty Hywel, Cardiff Bay

Attendees

Jane Hutt AM, Deputy Minister & Chief Whip (DMCW)
Karin Phillips, Deputy Director Community Safety (KP)
Jayne Phillips, Crime & Justice (JP)

Councillor Colin Mann – Vice Chair Gwent Police & Crime Panel (CM)
Rachel Morgan, Wales Local Government Association (RM)
Mel Jehu – Vice Chair South Wales Police & Crime Panel (MJ)
Professor Ian Roffe – Vice Chair Dyfed Powys Police & Crime Panel (IR)
Patricia Astbury – Chair North Wales Police & Crime Panel (PA)

1. Welcome & Introductions. DMCW. The meeting was requested by the Chair of the WLGA PCP's in Wales group to discuss the work of the PCPs and discuss the problems with the way panels are constituted in Wales.
2. Each of the PCP chairs gave an overview on their respective panel membership and how they were chosen and appointed.
3. The DMCW asked the group to summarise the main issues faced by PCPs. All agreed that these are:
 - Funding – there had been no uplift to the annual grant received from the Home Office since their inception. This is taken up by expenses and the regular meetings. Panel members often cover their own costs when the budget runs out. There is insufficient to cover training or conferences, and membership turnover increases the need for training. DMCW asked if similar concerns had been raised by English PCPs and if RM was aware of the extent to which LAs in England provide additional funding to PCPs.

Action Point 1

RM to provide information on the extent to which LAs contribute to PCPs in Wales and in England and whether similar concerns had been raised about funding levels by English PCPs

- Panel constitution – In Wales, the Panel is not a committee or joint committee of any local authority and in general in Wales’s panels work very well together and positive relationships have developed over time. This means that panels in Wales are unable to utilise resources from the local authority for support if the LA wishes to. In England, Local authorities are free to use their own budgets to resource the Police and Crime Panels as they see fit.
 - Legislation - The legislation to change the status of Panels in Wales is UK Government legislation. Also given that the National Assembly rejected the LCM in 2012 that was required to establish PCPs in Wales in the same way as in England therefore if it was agreed there would be benefit in revisiting the way PCPs in Wales are constituted then the view of the Assembly would need to be sought too.
 - Appointing panel members – given the status of the Panels in Wales, nominated panel members have to be submitted to the Home Secretary for agreement. It can take up to 8 weeks for the agreement to be received. For that period the new member is observing only. Usually the process of securing nominations was not problematic. However in May this year. There are also council elections in England as well as the PCC elections in England and Wales. This could bring a big churn in membership of elected members, added to the time taken by the Home Office to approve nominations.
4. It was confirmed that WLGA provide support to PCPs. For example the WLGA meet regularly with PCP chairs twice a year. WLGA had had a good relationship with the previous Home Office Crime Director, and are aiming to establish this with the current director.
 5. DCMW asked that RM work with the four Chairs to produce a short note summarising the issues and what they suggested could be done to address them. The paper should highlight where the situation in England differs and why. KP would raise the issues with the Home Crime Director, Asim Hafeez, with whom she has regular meetings.

Action Point 2

Panel members to draft a paper on the issues and KP would raise with the Home Office Crime Director for Wales

6. There was discussion around the possibility of a representative of the panels attending the Policing & Partnership Board for Wales. DMCW explained the Board is owned by the PCCs and CCs and they have the responsibility for the Terms of Reference and membership; they had invited the FM to chair and he sometimes delegates the role to the DMCW. DMCW suggested the members

could contact Paul Morris, the Head of the Police Liaison Unit to have that discussion.

Action Point 5

JP to link the panel members with Paul Morris.

7. DMCW will inform the members of the Policing & Partnership Board for Wales about today's meeting. A paper will be drafted to take to the Policing Board for information.

Action Point 6

DCMW to inform the Policing & Partnership Board for Wales of her meeting with the PCP Chairs

8. DMCW suggested today's discussion/meeting could continue between the panel members and officials. DMCW also suggested KP attend one of the meetings convened twice a year with the WLGA and the panel chairs.

Action Point 7

RM to invite KP to one of the WLGA PCP meetings

Action Point 8

KP and RM will meet and discuss PCPs outside the meeting.