



Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire and  
Luton Borough Council

# **Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel**

## **Activity Report 2017/18**

Issued: June 2018

# **Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel Activity Report 2017/18**

## **1. Foreword from the Chair**

This report provides the three Unitary Councils in the Bedfordshire Police Force Area with a summary of the activity of the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel during the 2017/2018 municipal year.

The Force has had to contend with a number of issues throughout the past twelve months, one of which was the “inadequate” grading received by HMIC in 2016 which the PCC, CC and Panel all challenged and commented on. By May 2018 the Force was rated again and was graded “most improved” Force in the country which is a testament to the hard work that has been done by the Force during the year.

The Panel has continued to challenge the Commissioner in all areas to hold her fully to account over performance of the Force and in doing so have appointed specific Panel Members to focus on all areas of her Police and Crime Plan and to lead at each Panel meeting with detailed scrutiny of performance. This has lead inevitably to an increase in Panel Members’ work as has the increase in the number of meetings held.

In addition vital areas of performance covering Collaboration, Estates, New Police Hubs and Funding are discussed on the agenda at every meeting. In this regard considerable progress has been made in delivering the pledges made by the PCC in her Police and Crime Plan.

Much work has been done to support the Commissioner by means of being involved up front with some areas and as Chair I have been involved in both the selection process for the award of the Commissioners grant funding and as part of the interview panel for the recent Chief of Staff appointment.

The Panel has also held hearings throughout the year to consider any complaints received about the Commissioner and to confirm the appointment of the Commissioner’s voluntary deputy and her Chief of Staff.

Mr Paul Cain  
Chair, Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel

## **2. Introduction**

### **2.1 Panel Membership**

The Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel comprised the following Members in 2016/2017:

Bedford Borough Council

Councillor Alison Foster  
Councillor Sarah-Jayne Holland  
Councillor Randolph Charles

Central Bedfordshire Council

Councillor Fiona Chapman  
Councillor Ian Dalgarno  
Councillor Paul Downing (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Peter Hollick

Luton Borough Council

Councillor David Agbley  
Councillor Mohammed Farooq  
Councillor Raja Saleem

Co-opted Independent Members

Mr Paul Cain (Chair)  
Mr Damian Warburton

### **2.2 Requirements of a Panel Member**

All Panel Members are expected to attend the planned Panel meetings whenever possible. There are usually between 6 and 8 formal public meetings each year and these have been held at 6.30pm at the Council offices of the three Local Authorities in Bedford, Luton and Central Bedfordshire. There will be additional meetings arranged for Complaints, Member Development, occasional Task & Finish Groups and Confirmation of Senior Police Commissioner's Office Appointments which Panel members will be asked to support.

The Agenda and Reports are always circulated at least 5 working days before each meeting. Panel Members are expected to read in advance the Agenda and associated Reports and to participate in discussions during the Panel Meetings as appropriate and putting aside party political divisions. Panel members are often requested to attend a pre-meeting prior to the formal public meeting in order to discuss and prepare for agenda items.

## 2.3 Meetings and Activities

The following table details the Panel meetings and Panel related activities that have taken place during the 2016/2017 municipal year.

Activity	May 2017 to March 2018
1. Formal Panel meetings	6
2. Confirmation Hearings for senior staff of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner	2
3. Panel training/workshop sessions	1
4. Complaints Hearings	3

## 2.4 Arrangements, Procedures, Strategies and Plans

The Panel has a series of arrangements, procedures and strategies/plans which are in place to help the Panel operate in a smooth and efficient way. These are monitored on a regular basis to ensure they continue to meet requirements and the following were reviewed in June 2016:

### [Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel Arrangements and Procedure Rules](#)

At the 16 June 2016 meeting the Panel reviewed these Arrangements and Procedure Rules and agreed that no changes were necessary. The Panel further agreed that the Panel Arrangements and Procedure Rules be reviewed on a four yearly basis, unless there was a need to do otherwise.

### [Protocol Governing the relationship between the Police & Crime Commissioner and the Police & Crime Panel, including the Information Sharing Protocol and Media Protocol](#)

At the 16 June 2016 meeting these Protocols were reviewed and approved subject to some minor amendments. The Panel further agreed that the Protocols be reviewed again after four years of operation, unless there was a need to do otherwise.

## 3. Panel Development / Collaboration

Panel members have attended a national conference and several regional collaboration meetings. Members have also been involved in national discussions to form an Association of Police and Crime Panels. Prior to approval of the budget, the Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Officer from the Commissioner's Office provided a briefing to Panel members.

#### **4. Panel Reports and Recommendations to the Commissioner**

At every meeting the Panel receives an update report from the Commissioner on her activity, including the reporting of any strategic decisions made. Reports are also received at each meeting on Estates, Collaboration and selected priorities with the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan. This gives the Members an opportunity to scrutinise and challenge the Commissioner as she carries out her regular duties.

- 4.1** At the meeting held on [20 June 2017](#) the Commissioner presented her "One Year On" report. The report set out the Commissioner's achievements in the first 12 months of her term of office and reviewed progress against her Police and Crime Plan.
- 4.2** At the meeting held on [15 August 2017](#) the Commissioner outlined actions which were to be taken in response to recommendations made by the HMIC. The Panel also selected from within its own members, eight Panel Champions to scrutinise each of the eight pledges within the Police and Crime Plan.
- 4.3** At the meeting held on [10 October 2017](#) the Commissioner formally announced the appointment of a voluntary Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, as confirmed by the Panel at a hearing on 25 September 2017. The Commissioner also presented her draft Community Policing Survey.
- 4.4** At the meeting held on [5 December 2017](#) the Commissioner announced that the new Police Station at Lime Street in Bedford would open on 18 December 2017 and options were being explored for a joint Police and Fire and Rescue Headquarters.
- 4.4** At the meeting held on [6 February 2018](#) the Panel approved the Commissioner's budget and precept proposal for 2018/2019. The Commissioner referred to a successful Road Safety Event for Young Drivers which she had held and a further Partners' Event to promote the launch of the new Victims' Hub and website. The latter had attracted 130 partners from various agencies.
- 4.5** At the meeting held on [3 April 2018](#) the Commissioner announced that the new HMICFRS Inspector had rated the Bedfordshire Force as 'most improved' in the country. She also provided details on allocation of her grant funding and introduced her new Chief of Staff whose appointment had been confirmed by the Panel at a hearing on 12 March 2018. The Panel discussed option for the audio and video recording and broadcasting of meetings.

#### **5. Complaints**

The Panel has a responsibility to informally resolve non-criminal complaints about the conduct of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner as well as criminal complaints or conduct matters that are referred back to it by the Independent Police Complaints Commission. It has delegated responsibility for the handling of complaints to the Monitoring Officer of the host Authority (Bedford).

A Complaints Sub-Committee of the Panel has been established to consider any complaints that are referred to it by the Monitoring Officer.

During the period covered by this report, three complaints were received, all from the same complainant and all in relation to the same incident. At the hearing of the first complaint on 20 June 2017 the complaint was not upheld and certain recommendations were made to the Police and Crime Commissioner. At the hearings of the further complaints on 15 August 2017 and 17 January 2018 the complaints were also not upheld.

## **5. Communications Strategy**

### **6.1 Panel Communications Strategy**

The Panel Communications Strategy was reviewed by the Panel at the 16 June 2016 and it was agreed that no changes were needed to the Panel Communications Strategy. The Panel further agreed that the Panel Communications Strategy be reviewed again in four years' time, unless there was a need to do otherwise.

### **6.2 Panel Webpages**

As host authority Bedford Borough Council provides dedicated web pages which provide information for the public on:

- The role of the Police and Crime Panel
- Panel Membership and contact details
- Panel meetings and agendas, reports and minutes
- Panel reports to the Commissioner
- Panel Press Releases
- The role of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Complaints

The Panel's website, <http://www.bedford.gov.uk/bedspcp>, is maintained regularly to ensure it is an up to date knowledge base for the public to access. There is close co-operation and links with the PCC's office to ensure consistent channels of communication with the public.

Links to the Panel's website are also available from [Central Bedfordshire](#) and [Luton Borough](#) Councils' websites as follows:

<http://centralbeds.moderngov.co.uk/mgOutsideBodyDetails.aspx?ID=836>

[http://www.luton.gov.uk/Community\\_and\\_living/crime-and-community-safety/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.luton.gov.uk/Community_and_living/crime-and-community-safety/Pages/default.aspx)

### **6.3 Panel Reports to the Commissioner**

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 requires the Commissioner to make written reports and recommendations to the Panel on the following:

- The proposed precept for any year

- The proposed Police and Crime Plan and any proposed variations
- The Commissioner's Annual Report
- The outcome of Confirmation Hearings for the positions of Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Chief Executive and Director of Finance of her Office and the Chief Constable.

Details of the Commissioner reports to the Panel are contained in section 4 of this report.

#### **6.4 Press releases**

Press releases are a key means of making the public aware of the Panel and its work and the activity of the Panel is publicised with Press releases as appropriate.

In support of the Press Releases, the social media website "[Twitter](#)" is used for additional publicity.

There is good liaison between the PCC's office and the Panel in ensuring that communication material is consistent from both bodies and that, where appropriate, it is issued simultaneously.

### **6. Conclusion**

The Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel continues to work in close co-operation with the new Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Panel is being pro-active in carrying out the statutory roles of effectively scrutinising the budget and precept, and the Commissioner's Annual Report as well as holding the Commissioner to account over the various reports on the performance of Bedfordshire Police from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary.

This co-operation continues to add real value to the role of the Panel in working closely with the Commissioner in order to assist in providing the best possible Policing Service to the people of Bedfordshire.