



CHELTENHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Notice of a meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 26 November 2018
6.00 pm
Pittville Room - Municipal Offices

Membership	
Councillors:	Chris Mason (Chair), Klara Sudbury (Vice-Chair), Sandra Holliday, John Payne, Paul Baker, Max Wilkinson, Dilys Barrell, Iain Dobie, Jo Stafford and Dennis Parsons

The Council has a substitution process and any substitutions will be announced at the meeting

Agenda

5.	FEEDBACK FROM OTHER SCRUTINY MEETINGS ATTENDED Gloucestershire Health and Care O&S Committee on 13 November 2018 – update from Councillor Martin Horwood Gloucestershire Economic Growth O&S Committee on 31 October and 21 November 2018 - update from Councillor Paul McCloskey Police and Crime Panel meeting on 16 November 2018 - update from Councillor Brownsteen	(Pages 3 - 4)

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PCP Report for O&S – November 26th 2018

Date of meeting: Friday 16th November 2018

Summary

The Police & Crime Panel discussed two substantial issues. The first was a proposal from the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner to take over the governance of Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service, which the panel is not in favour of. The second was a deeply concerning assessment of the impact that a shortfall in police pensions, which the Treasury recently announced would have to be made up for from local budgets, will have on the Gloucestershire Constabulary.

Agenda item 4: Fire Governance

A proposal from the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner to take over governance of Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service.

For context, in June 2018 a whistleblower contacted the Chief Executive of Gloucestershire County Council with three complaints. These included high staff turnover, increasing levels of mental health problems, demonstrated by an increase in usage of occupational health by staff within the service, and the sale of a service-owned vehicle far below market value, involving the Chief Fire Officer. Upon further investigation the Chief Fire Officer has stood down from his post and a new CFO has been appointed, who is due to take up his post early in 2019. The whistleblower report prompted an Internal Audit of GFRS which raised multiple concerns about the service.

The Policing & Crime Act 2017 gives the Police & Crime Commissioner remit to form part- or take on the direct governance- of the local fire service. With concerns about the governance of this service, the OPCC is considering making a formal approach for governance. They are holding talks with the Home Office on this matter, and took their proposal to the Police & Crime Panel this month for scrutiny.

Core arguments from the OPPC are: the service needs better governance, as evidenced by the whistleblower report and Internal Audit; this proposal is within statutory obligations; governance of GFRS is more logically placed in line with scrutiny of Gloucestershire Constabulary; the two services can greatly benefit from greater collaboration; capital gains can be realised by collocation of operation bases, which would increase operational efficiency and enable the sale of land assets.

The panel raised several concerns about the proposal: the new CFO has just been appointed and has the confidence of GCC to make changes to the service; whistleblowing is part of the governance structure, and so this incident demonstrates that the current governance process works; this is the second attempt by the OPCC to take on governance of GFRS and it was rejected strongly the first time; as Brexit is dominating national government, and there is high speculation about a general election in the near future, any agreements with the Home Office are subject to change; should the current PCC wish to seek a stronger mandate for this proposal, he could make it part of his re-election campaign. Overall, the panel felt that the case for changing governance was not strong enough, and felt it a better strategy to allow the newly appointed CFO time to get on with his job.

The PCP cannot instruct the Commissioner to change strategy here. It remains within the gift of the Commissioner and his office whether or not to proceed. The PCP has agreed to an additional meeting of the panel before year end 2018 to consider this proposal further.

Standard item: Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive raised major concerns about further cuts announced by the Treasury. Police services nationwide are being told to meet a £420m shortfall in the national budget. This means that GC will have to find an additional £1.7m next year, and an additional £3.4m each year thereafter.

These cuts eliminate Gloucestershire's Constabulary's entire capacity for development. The Chief Executive and the PCC told the panel that they cannot overstate the seriousness of this problem. PCC's nationwide are united in their concern about these cuts, as is the Home Secretary.

The Chief Executive reported a successful year for Independent Custody Visitors. ICV's are volunteers who arrive unannounced at the Custody Suite to speak with the people in custody and ensure that they are being treated and kept to acceptable standards. The panel congratulated the OPCC on this good work.

Standard item: Police & Crime Plan Priorities Highlight Report

This report showed good progress and work across the six key priority areas identified by the OPCC. Particular highlights presented to the panel were: the successful pilot at Tewkesbury School of Restorative Practice, which has seen a 54% reduction in exclusions; the creation of an ACE Panel (Adverse Childhood Experience) by the Health & Wellbeing Board, and; Operation Mamushi, which identified 32 children as being at risk from a specific organised crime group and directly intervened to place them on child protection plans or children in need plans. In six months, the RAG rating of these 32 changed as such:

Rating	April 2018	October 2018	Change
Red	20	6	-14
Amber	8	4	-4
Green	4	22	+18

Cllr Jonny Brownsteen