

Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel

21st November 2014

Reimbursement for Independent Members

Recommendation

That the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel considers whether it would wish the two co-opted independent members on the Panel to be reimbursed for the contribution they make to the Police and Crime Panel at the rate of £1,000 per annum, subject to officers identifying an appropriate way of doing so.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 requires two independent co-opted members to be appointed to the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel. The independent co-opted members must not be members of local authorities covered by the Warwickshire Police area. In co-opting the two independent members, the Act requires that the Panel must secure that (as far as reasonably practicable) the appointed and co-opted members of the Panel, when taken together, have the skills, knowledge and experience necessary for the Panel to discharge its functions effectively. The term of appointment for independent members is four years. Following a recruitment process, Mr Bob Malloy and Mr Robin Verso were appointed to the Panel on 5th December 2012.
- 1.2 Since its establishment the Government has provided a level of funding for the support of Police and Crime Panels. The funding is not provided as a lump sum; the host authority, Warwickshire County Council, has to reclaim the expenditure based on the actual costs of administration and member expenses through a grant claim process operated by the Home Office. The funding is also provided on an annual (financial year) basis and the Grant Agreement makes it clear that there is no guarantee of continued year on year funding.
- 1.3 Given the financial climate, in 2012/13 when the Panel was established, the Constituent Authorities within Warwickshire decided not to provide any additional funding over and above the level allocated by the Home Office.

- 1.4 At its meeting on 12th March 2013, the Panel agreed that allowances would not be paid to the two co-opted members. Nor would allowances be paid to the local authority members (as they are already in receipt of a member allowance from their own local authority). However, all members are entitled to claim expenses and subsistence for attending Panel meetings and associated activities, which are currently reimbursed at a rate agreed by Warwickshire County Council.
- 1.5 Since the establishment of the Police and Crime Panel, its work has steadily increased with a higher number of formal meetings and the establishment of the Budget Working Group, Planning and Performance Working Group and the Victims' Services Task and Finish Group. Given the commitment of the two co-opted members on the Panel and its Groups, and the recent appointment of one of the co-opted members as the Vice-Chair, the Panel is asked to reconsider its view regarding the reimbursement of those two members. As the co-opted members are independent and not elected members, they are not in receipt of an allowance from a local authority. Acting as an independent member is a considerable time commitment and the Panel is reliant upon them undertaking their role through goodwill.

2.0 Comparative Data

- 2.1 In preparing this report, research was undertaken to identify the approach taken to the issue of reimbursement of co-opted members in the other 42 Police and Crime Panels across the England and Wales. A total of 32 Panel representatives responded, giving a 74% response rate. Of the respondents, 11 (34%) reimburse their co-opted members, with figures ranging from between £582 and £1,900 per annum. The average payment is around £1,000 per annum.
- 2.2 Generally speaking, provided co-optees are not in receipt of allowances from their nominating body, the councils in Warwickshire all pay co-optees who are members of a committee or sub-committee of the Council. The amounts paid range from £221 to £1,153. However, the Police and Crime Panel is not a committee or sub-committee of any of the councils and therefore there is no formal provision for the payment of allowances to the independent members through the Councils' own allowance schemes.

3.0 Options

- 3.1 The Police and Crime Panel is asked to consider whether in principle it would wish the two co-opted independent members on the Panel to be reimbursed for the contribution they make to the Police and Crime Panel, subject to officers identifying an appropriate way of doing so.

Background Papers

Information relating to the reimbursement of members on other Police and Crime Panels.

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