

**EXMOOR PANEL
MINUTES
Thursday 23 January 2014
Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross**

Those present:

S Pugsley (Chair)	R Webber, Cutcombe PC
C Knight, Brushford PC	M Ellicott, Exford PC
M Rawle, Dulverton TC	A Sparling, Luxborough PC
A Vigar, Exmoor PC	D Walker, Skilgate Parish
G C Sparling, Luxborough PC	W Hellewell, Timberscombe PC
B Foster, Selworthy & Minehead Without PC	F Bray, Winsford PC
J Parsons, Timberscombe PC	P Griffin, Wootton Courtenay PC
A Collins, Withypool & Hawkridge PC	F Nicholson, SCC
J Dawson, Avon and Somerset Constabulary	J Edwards
R Manicom, Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue	K Mills, WSC
D Peake and K Harwood, SCC Highways	B Lang, WSC
K Turner, WSC	
S Edwards, Clinical Commissioning Group	

1 Election of Chairman

- 1.1 Agreed that Councillor S Pugsley be elected as Chairman of the Exmoor Panel for the next twelve month period.

2 Election of Vice-Chairman

- 2.1 Agreed that Councillor M Ellicott be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the next twelve month period.

3. Apologies for Absence

- 3.1 F Gabb, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service; T Saunders, ENPA; District Councillor K Ross; and Councillors N Thwaites and R Coyne, Dulverton TC.

4 Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 November 2013 and Matters Arising

- 4.1 Agreed that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting.
- 4.2 There were no matters arising.

5 Ambulance Service

- 5.1 Simon Edwards, Commissioning Manager of the Clinical Commissioning Group attended to update the Panel on the current position in regard to the ambulance service in the area.
- 5.2 Simon explained that current services were provided in the following ways:
- i. For urgent life threatening calls the service was provided by the South West Ambulance Service.

- ii. For non-emergency cases Somerset County Council provided patient transport via a mix of voluntary drivers and taxi companies providing a 24 by 7 service for patients meeting certain criteria.
- iii. For patients that meet certain criteria in respect of their medical conditions, the NSC (a private company) provided a patient transport service from October 2013 providing a more flexible service on a 24 by 7 basis.
- iv. Persons on lower income/claiming benefit if meeting eligibility based criteria are entitled to obtain reimbursement of at least partial reasonable transport costs using normal public services.

- 5.3 For those patients who do not meet any of the criteria above signposting arrangements are available in terms of being advised of the most appropriate public and voluntary services available.
- 5.4 In response to a question of what the response times were, Simon indicated that in cases where life was threatened the national target of eight minutes still applied, and for other calls the response could take up to four hours although obviously the response would be made in a much shorter timescale if that was possible.
- 5.5 He did confirm that there is a recognition that the eight minutes target is extremely unlikely to be met in these instances in the more remote rural areas such as that covered by the Exmoor Panel; therefore much effort was being put into supplementing the service by using local co-responders.
- 5.6 Exford expressed a concern that they had been advised that the provision of a co-responder in their parish would prove too expensive but Simon reassured them that the service was keen to enhance the co-responder system wherever possible.
- 5.7 Rob Manicom representing the Porlock fire station confirmed that eight of the nine current firemen at that station were acting as co-responders and that improvements were being provided in terms of the responders being mobilised direct from the ambulance service in the next few weeks; in addition special mobile phones were to be provided so that call outs and acknowledgements could be dealt with by text message and there were plans to be more flexible to allow co-responders to take vehicles home with them so they could respond directly if called.
- 5.8 In response to a question, Simon indicated that he was not certain of the details in terms of how and when was a decision taken to send an air ambulance and he would make enquiries and arrange for the information to be circulated.
- 5.9 The Somerset County Councillor requested that more specific information be provided, at least on county council electoral division basis, to provide accurate details of response times and Simon confirmed that it was the intention to do this within the next twelve months. He confirmed that if he did find out any more relevant information he would arrange for it to be circulated to Panel members.
- 5.10 The Chairman thanked Simon for his contribution.

6 Police Issues

- 6.1 The police reported on detailed crime statistics since the last Panel meeting. Overall there were no significant trends to report and she confirmed that the speed

watch system was still in operation and being kept under review to see if it could be improved.

- 6.2 It was confirmed that a new Beat Manager – Jeff Trimmings – had recently started at the Dulverton Police Station.

7 Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service

- 7.1 Rob Manicom reported that at Porlock responses to twenty four calls had been made since the last Panel meeting, most of these related to co-responder issues and there had been no fire incidents.
- 7.2 Although one of the current team was due to leave Porlock, three new potential members were going through the training process and if successful would result in eleven serving members which was just below the maximum figure of twelve for the station.

8 SCC Highways – Winter Water Management

- 8.1 At the commencement of the item Councillor R Webber stated that he had driven around the parish during the worst of the recent flooding and could identify what he saw as trouble spots and suggested that other parishes should do the same and provide the information to the Highways Authority to give the opportunity of some proactive work being taken to address these problems before serious flooding occurred again.
- 8.2 Karin Harwood and David Peake confirmed that they would be pleased to receive any information from parishes either by emailing David Peake or telephoning 0845 345 9155.
- 8.3 It was also confirmed that Somerset Highways were trying to identify problem areas that could be proactively addressed but obviously the recent conditions had been extreme and it was not possible to cover all eventualities. Priority would be given to areas where severe ponding occurred on public roads and to protect residential properties under the threat of flooding.
- 8.4 The County Councillor explained that the County Council had provided a fund of £200,000 which could be bidden for in respect of flood alleviation schemes that could be considered for the public benefit that had been endorsed by the relevant parish/town council and would need to be championed by a County Councillor. The fund was to cover for the whole of the County of Somerset and therefore would only go so far.
- 8.5 It was also confirmed that proactive work was being done to clear gullies and ditches and that particular attention was to be given to the A396 for the end of the current financial year.
- 8.6 There was some discussion as to who was responsible for clearing blockages under and around bridges – either the Environment Agency or the Somerset County Council and the County Council was currently endeavouring to seek absolute clarity on this particular point.

- 8.7 The County Council also agreed to look specifically at blockages and concerns around bridges at Exford, Simonsbath and Winsford and to contact the Environment Agency about a silting problem near the bridge at Withypool.
- 8.8 It was also reported that the Snowdrop Valley buses were due to commence on 1 February 2014.
- 8.9 In response to points raised by the Chairman of the Panel, it was agreed that West Somerset Council would consult with Veolia who currently undertake the road sweeping contract to send out to all parish councils details of their programme of road sweeping in advance so that arrangements could be made to ask local residents to keep their cars clear of the highways to be swept.
- 8.10 In this respect it was also asked if the company could explore the possibility of sweeping the centre of the settlements first as this is where most of the cars had been moved from to avoid them being put back before sweeping had been undertaken on that part of the highway. In addition there were certain known parts of the highway that became badly cluttered by leaves outside of the normal designated sweeping zones and it was suggested that Veolia be asked to consider dealing with these particular problems as part of their current contractual arrangements.

9 Exmoor National Park Authority

- 9.1 In her absence Tessa Saunders had submitted a written report as follows: "The consultation on the draft Exmoor National Park Local Plan ended on 13 December 2013. Overall 145 responses were received by the Authority and we would like to thank those individuals and parish and town councils that submitted their comments on the Plan. Currently we are logging the responses to analyse and consider them in relation to the draft Local Plan. The majority are supportive or provide general comments on aspects of the Plan. There are some areas of concern which we will be considering in due course, and an update on this process will be provided at the next Exmoor Panel meeting."

10 Parish Lengthsman Scheme and Update

- 10.1 It was reported that the Clerk to Dulverton Town Council had not received any responses from existing parishes as to their intentions in respect of the Scheme continuing for the 2014/15 financial year and as such it was assumed that they would all wish to carry on participating based on current figures.
- 10.2 Therefore invoices would be sent to all those parishes concerned requesting the same level of funding as that provided for the 2013/14 financial year and all parishes were requested to pay promptly.
- 10.3 It was also confirmed that the District Council's £3,000 contribution to the Scheme for the next financial year was being included in the proposed budget to be approved by full Council in February 2014.

11 West Somerset Council

- 11.1 Bruce Lang reported that the joint management and shared services project between West Somerset Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council was underway with the appointment of the majority of a Joint Management Team.

11.2 Details of the names and responsibilities of those members of the Management Team were circulated for the information of parishes. The details were available on the District Council's website.

12 Dates and Venues of Future Meetings

- 6 March 2014 at 7.00pm – Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross
- 19 June 2014 at 7.00pm – Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross
- 2 September 2014 at 7.30pm (Warden's Meeting at 6.30pm) – Winsford Village Hall
- 4 November 2014 at 7.00pm – Winsford Village Hall
- 20 January 2015 at 7.00pm – Winsford Village Hall
- 5 March 2015 at 7.00pm – Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm