

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At a Meeting of **Police and Crime Panel** held in Committee Room 1A , County Hall, Durham on **Thursday 9 January 2020 at 2.00 pm**

### **Present:**

**Councillor L Hovvels (Chair)**

### **Durham County Council:**

Councillors D Boyes, P Crathorne, J Nicholson and M Simmons

### **Darlington Borough Council:**

Councillor B Jones (Vice Chair)

### **Independent Co-opted Members:**

Mr N J H Cooke and Mr D K G Dodwell

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chair referred to the recent sad death of Ron Hogg, Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner. Members of the Panel stood for a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

#### **1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Crumbie and Dulston.

#### **2 Substitute Members**

There were no substitute members in attendance.

#### **3 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **4 Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 17 October 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **5 Recent Media Activity**

The Panel noted a report of the Media and Engagement Officer, Office of the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner which provided an update of press

coverage concerning the work of the Acting Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner since the previous meeting (for copy see file of Minutes).

## **6 Countering Terrorism**

The Panel received a presentation from DI Alfie Keane, Durham Constabulary and Jon Carling, Acting Chief Executive, Office of the Acting Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner about activity relating to counter terrorism (for copy of slides see file of Minutes).

The presentation covered the UK approach to counter terrorism and focused on the work undertaken by Durham Constabulary to prevent and address it locally, in partnership with other organisations and with the community. The presentation also looked at how the PCVC held the Constabulary to account.

The Chair thanked DI Keane and Jon Carling for their informative presentation on an issue of such great importance.

## **7 Precept Consultation**

The Panel considered a report of the Acting Chief Executive, Office of the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner regarding consultation on the level of the policing precept in 2020/21 (for copy see file of Minutes).

S White, Acting PCVC informed the Panel that normally he would formally present his proposals for the precept to the Panel at its meeting on 6 February 2020, after the consultation in January which would have taken place following the notification of Government grant and also capping proposals. However, because a General Election had taken place on 12 December 2019 the announcement of the level of Government grant and any capping proposals were not yet known.

The Acting PCVC informed the Panel that for any consultation to be meaningful, facts and figures were needed and he was frustrated that as yet these were not yet known. It was hoped that this information would be known by mid-January, but this would not allow for the normal four-week consultation period to take place.

Councillor Boyes considered this to be an unsatisfactory state of affairs in that the settlement would not be known until mid-January but the precept proposals needed to be presented to the Panel early February. This would not allow for the normal period of consultation and Councillor Boyes questioned how meaningful any consultation may be and asked whether consultation could take place on a number of predicted scenarios.

The Acting PCVC replied that the Medium-Term Financial Outlook had assumed an increase of 2%, but if this was consulted on and then a greater increase was needed, this could be difficult when a lower figure had been consulted on. The Acting PCVC informed the Panel that he would not be looking to increase the precept by any more than was necessary.

The Acting PCVC informed the Panel that he had a statutory duty to consult on his precept proposals and that he would communicate what he could when the settlement figure was known.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

## **8 Quarterly Performance Report**

The Panel considered a report of the Acting PCVC which provided an update on performance against the Police, Crime and Victims' Plan 2018-21 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Boyes referred to the table at Paragraph 35 of the report which showed that Durham had dropped from quartile three to quartile four regarding public confidence in how the police and council were dealing with the crime and anti-social behaviour issues in their area. The Acting Chief Executive replied that a working group had been established to assess the reasons why this measure was so different to that for only the police and an interim report for this working group would be available for the next Panel meeting at the beginning of February. The working group was led by the County Council.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

## **9 PCVC Commissioning Activity**

The Panel considered a report of the Acting Police, Crime and Victim's Commissioner which provided an update of key considerations at the Commissioning Boards between July and December 2019.

C Oakley, Head of Governance and Commissioning, Office of the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner informed the Panel that funding decisions for 2020/21 had been put on hold until the Commissioning board meeting to be held on 29 January 2020 when central government funding should be clarified.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

## **10 PCVC Decisions**

The Panel noted a report of the Acting Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner which provided an update on the decision register for 2019 and the forward plan (for copy see file of Minutes).

## **11 HMICFRS- Inspection Report: Joint inspection of police custody**

The Panel noted a report of the Acting Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner which provided details of the findings of a recent unannounced Joint Custody Inspection of Durham Constabulary by HMI Prisons and HMI Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (for copy see file of Minutes).

## **12 National Association of Police Fire and Crime Panels**

The Panel considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Durham County Council regarding membership of the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels (for copy see file of Minutes).

J Slee, Overview and Scrutiny Officer, Durham County Council informed the Panel that the role of the National Association was to identify and promote best practice and provide a collective voice for Panels. The Association had recently removed the requirement for members to pay a membership fee.

Councillor Boyes was supportive of joining the Association as a means of sharing best practice and perhaps learning from the work of other Panels and questioned what the finance arrangements may be for reimbursement of Members attending Association events.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer replied that expenses were currently borne by Members host authorities, however, clarity would need to be obtained on expenses of the Independent Co-opted Members.

### **Resolved:**

That the Chair of the Durham Police and Crime Panel advise the Chair of the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels that Durham Panel wish to join the Association.

## **13 Conference Feedback Report**

The Panel noted a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Durham County Council which provided feedback from the National Conference for Police (Fire) and Crime Panels held on 19 November 2019 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Chair of the meeting was of the opinion that the following item of business was of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration because of the lateness of the government announcement on police funding for 2020/21.

#### **14 Funding Announcement**

The Panel agreed that a letter be sent from to all local MP's to stress the need for the announcement of government grant funding for 2020/21 to be made as soon as possible. The Acting Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner informed the Panel that he would write to the Minister along the same lines.