

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Police and Crime Panel** held in Remote Meeting - This meeting is being held remotely via Microsoft Teams on **Friday 16 October 2020 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor L Hovvels (Chair)

Durham County Council:

Councillors D Boyes, L Brown, P Crathorne, J Nicholson, S Quinn and A Savory

Darlington Borough Council:

Councillors J Dulston, B Jones (Vice-Chair), Wallis and Mr D K G Dodwell

Independent Co-opted Members:

Mr D K G Dodwell

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Simmons and Mr N Cook.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor L Brown was present as substitute for Councillor M Simmons.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 12 March and 15 June 2020 were agreed as a correct record to be signed by the Chair.

4 Declarations of interest, if any

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Media Report

S White, Acting Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner provided an update of press coverage concerning the work of the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner since the previous meeting (for copy see file of minutes).

The Acting PCVC informed the Panel the Media and Engagement Officer had left the organisation in August and a new member of staff had been recently appointed. He thanked the staff in the office who had continued to provide media support in the interim.

The Chair acknowledged the comments on the interim arrangements and confirmed that the officer had worked in the role since the former Police Authority and wished her all the best in her new position on behalf of the Panel.

Councillor Quinn asked whether there had been increased reports on fireworks and the Chair confirmed it had been raised at a recent AAP Board. The Acting PCVC confirmed that no increase in reports had been received as yet, however he commented on the increased demands on forces across the Country on Halloween and in the run up to 5 November

Resolved

That the report be noted.

6 Police, Crime & Victim's Commissioner's Annual Report

The Panel considered the Acting Police, Crime & Victims Commissioner's (PCVC) Annual Report 2019-20 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Acting PCVC confirmed that since the report had been published an independent analysis had been done by the National Farmers Union which showed that Durham was not following the trend and doing well with regards to rural crime levels.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

7 Quarterly Performance Report

The Panel considered a report of the Durham Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner's Office which provided performance against the Police, Crime and Victims' Plan 2018-2021 (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor Boyes was concerned at the number of offenders reoffending and the high percentage of the public that did not have confidence in the force. He asked whether this was repeat reoffenders that could not be rehabilitated and confirmed that he had attended an area in Easington where criminal activities were taking place openly and residents did not report crime. The reasons given were that people were afraid of reprisals, but many were of the opinion that the Police would not act on reports. Councillor Boyes asked whether the Checkpoint scheme had changed as he was under the impression that it was for low to medium levels of crime, yet it had been used in an incident where a police officer had been assaulted.

The Interim Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer confirmed that some of the comments would be referred to the force for a specific report and she would consult PACT and update the Panel with the response. She confirmed that there was a number of reoffenders with a mindset that they could offend with impunity, but there was a high level of information and a lot of concerted effort in responding to those matters. She was aware that the Easington locality received regular attention due to ongoing issues and that the force were actively working to get on top of them and it was a benefit for the community to bring those matters to attention of the office to ensure they were prioritised.

With regards to the Checkpoint scheme, the Interim Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer was unaware that assaulted police officers was an eligible offence but suspected it would be getting reviewed as there had been an increase in assaulted police officers and she would seek a formal response for the Panel.

The Acting PCVC advised that the crucial thing was that people report crime to the police, and was confident that the force was responsive in such a way that they responded appropriately when given the information. With regards to offending and reoffending, one of the drivers behind Checkpoint was to deal with issues relatively quickly and to ensure there was no repeat offending and he assured the Panel that robust governance was in place to ensure offenders were not put through rehabilitation schemes if they were having no effect. He reiterated the importance of reporting crime and asked the Panel to reiterate to any of their constituents.

The Interim Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer confirmed that last week concluded a visit from HM Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire and Rescue Service which had investigated the effectiveness and efficiency of the Covid 19 response and she would ensure that the interim report was included on the next Agenda.

In response to a question from D Dodwell, the Interim Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer confirmed that there had been an increase in cyber-crime and scams on vulnerable people especially during the lockdown period when people were isolated and in poor mental health. This was similar across all force areas and a key priority for the National Police Chiefs Council and had also been recognised by the College of Policing in the Future Operating Environment Model.

Councillor J Dulston suggested that the out of court initiatives and education had worked for a time but suggested that especially during recent times the wider community would prefer the force to take a tough approach on the minority of people who were putting businesses at risk.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

The Panel noted a report of the Acting Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner which provided an update of key decisions at the Commissioning Boards held between 1st April 2020 and 30th September 2020 (for copy see file of minutes).

9 PCVC Decision Records

The Panel considered a report of the Acting Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner which provided an update on the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner's decision register for 2020, and address the forward plan (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor Jones expressed concerns regarding the operational impact of the custody project development. The Acting PCVC confirmed that an abridged version of the Estate Strategy 2020-2025 had been produced and offered to brief any of the Panel with similar concerns.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Acting PCVC confirmed that there would be a briefing session with the Chief Constable which would take place in early November and the Panel would be briefed as well as respective Councillors, Parish Councils.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

10 HMICFRS Inspections

The Panel considered a report of the Acting Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner with regards to the findings of the recent inspections by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) that had required a PCC comment (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved

That the report be noted.

11 Police and Crime Panel Annual Report 2019/20 and Work Programme 2020/21

The Panel considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which presented the Durham Police and Crime Panel Annual report 2019/20 and sought agreement to the Panel's Work Programme for 2020/21 (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved

- (a) That the Durham Police and Crime Panel Annual Report be endorsed
- (b) That the work programme for 2020/21 be agreed.

12 Review of Complaints Procedure - Report of the Monitoring Officer and Clerk to the Police and Crime Panel

The Panel considered a report of the Monitoring Officer and Clerk to the Police and Crime Panel which provided an update to the procedure for handling complaints relating to the Police, Crime and Victims Commissioner (PCVC) or the Deputy Police, Crime and Victims Commissioner (where appointed). The report also recommended that the Panel receive an update report from the Clerk to the Panel at each regular meeting on complaints relating to the PCVC or Deputy PCVC (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved

- (a) That the draft complaint procedure to be implemented and applied to any complaint formally received after 16 October 2020
- (b) That the Panel receive a report from the Clerk to the Panel on complaints received at each regular meeting including those which have not been referred to the Panel

13 Exclusion of the public

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

14 Concerning complaints about the Acting Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner

The Panel considered a report of the Monitoring Officer and Clerk to the Police and Crime Panel with regards to a number of complaints about the Acting Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner.