

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Police and Crime Panel** held in **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham** on **Friday 23 June 2023** at **10.00 am**

Present:

Councillor L Brown (Chair)

Durham County Council:

Councillors D Boyes, L Brown, J Charlton, L Hovvels, D Nicholls, R Potts and A Savory

Darlington Borough Council:

Councillors N Johnson and G Lee

Independent Co-opted Members:

Mr N Hallam and Mr R Rodiss

Also in attendance:

Councillor K Robson

1 Election of Chair

Moved by Councillor D Boyes, **Seconded** by Councillor D Nicholls that Councillor L Hovvels be elected Chair of the Panel for the ensuing year.

Moved by Councillor J Charlton, **Seconded** by Councillor R Potts that Councillor L Brown be elected Chair of the Panel for the ensuing year.

Upon a vote being taken it was:

Resolved:

That Councillor L Brown be elected Chair of the Panel for the ensuing year.

Councillor L Brown in the Chair

2 Election of Vice-Chair

Moved by Councillor D Nicholls, **Seconded** by Councillor D Boyes that Councillor N Johnson be elected Vice-Chair of the Panel for the ensuing year.

Moved by Councillor R Potts, **Seconded** by Councillor J Charlton that Councillor G Lee be elected Vice-Chair of the Panel for the ensuing year.

Upon a vote being taken it was:

Resolved:

That Councillor G Lee be elected Vice-Chair of the Panel for the ensuing year.

3 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S Ali.

4 Substitute Members

There were no Substitute Members.

5 Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 February 2023 and Special Meeting held 6 April 2023

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2023 and special meeting held 6 April 2023 were confirmed by the Panel as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Joy Allen noted that she had not yet received a response to her letter to the Prime Minister, Shadow Leader, Treasury and Shadow Treasury Ministers as regards the future of fair funding.

6 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

7 Problem Orientated Policing

The Panel received a presentation of the Police and Crime Commissioner on Problem Orientated Policing, presented by Chief Inspector Emma Kay Inspector Laura Backhouse (for copy see file of Minutes).

Chief Inspector E Kay explained as regards tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) together, with elements including: an agile process; innovation, prevention; community issues; problem solving plans; and the OSARA Model (objective; scanning; analysis; response; and assessment). Examples of work and campaigns undertaken included: 'Kick-Off @3'; ASB 'Stamp It Out'; nitrous oxide; and 'Shocking Behaviour Part II' in respect of community defibrillators.

The Chair thanked the Officers and asked the Panel for their comments and questions.

Councillor D Nicholls thanked the Officers for their presentation and noted the positive impact of the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in his area. He noted his experience with young people, with many drinking energy drink and vaping on the service bus travelling to the local secondary school. He noted it was difficult to engage with young people and added he felt underlying issues were poverty and lack of positivity. He noted many youth clubs no longer operated and young people had little to do in many areas and asked if funding was sufficient or if there were any national funding that could be accessed.

Chief Inspector E Kay noted that there were many issues faced in terms of young people, however, Durham Constabulary did not face them alone, working in partnership with many organisations including Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council, as well as with schools and youth groups. She noted the funding available in terms of education, and while having this in all locations would be difficult, she noted community cohesion was very important. She noted that while youth provision had been cut in many places, as alluded to in terms of youth centres and clubs, it was explained that partners all worked together innovatively to do the best with the resources available.

Councillor D Boyes noted the interventions that partners could take, adding he felt they were not the whole fix. He explained that he felt there needed to be one responsible 'authority', as there was under previous Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) arrangements and a forum to discuss issues in locally. He noted that in his Electoral Division, Easington, there was high levels of ASB and under the MARAC arrangement he had been able to speak to a number of agencies do discuss issues. He noted that he had not received invites to any similar meetings for around 10 years.

Councillor D Boyes noted he agreed with early intervention and that progress shown was very good, however, there would always be a 'hardcore' element that would not engage with authorities and therefore it was important to look at how the Police and other agencies would reach those groups. He added he felt the football example was a good one. He noted, however, that there was some degree of lawlessness in some areas, in terms of ASB, theft and arson.

Chief Inspector E Kay noted an ASB Strategic Overview Group, chaired by the Local Authority, and a Crime or ASB Assessment Conferences (CASBRAC) process has been introduced as an escalation approach to enact a quick time partnership approach. She added there was engagement via Neighbourhood Inspectors and at Police and Communities Together (PACT) meetings. She noted the Neighbourhood Inspector for Councillor D Boyes' area had secured funding for a number of activities, including on allotments, however, she appreciated there were challenges. Chief Inspector E Kay noted the Safer Streets Funding, via an Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) programme and added that Durham Constabulary listened to communities and appreciated the work of Local Members.

Councillor G Lee asked as regards evidence of the innovative scheme actually working, and how and who would Local Members engage with. Inspector L Backhouse explained there was a lot of research and information available from the College of Policing in relation to activities, including ideas such as nudge theory. She added that examples of proven activity would be looked at and work undertaken to understand how to implement in our area. Chief Inspector E Kay reminded the Panel that Durham Constabulary was an outstanding Police Force in terms of tackling organised crime groups and value for money. She added that one aspect was not to bombard in terms of messaging, rather to have a bespoke media strategy that included Neighbourhood Teams working locally in each community.

Councillor G Lee asked as regards contact details to send information and as regards any evidence base, numbers before interventions, numbers after to be able to assess effectiveness. Chief Inspector E Kay explained the process in terms of cost benefit analysis, with ASB numbers measure six months before a scheme, and six months following a scheme. She added that the costs would be worked out across all areas and then shared with partners.

Councillor L Hovvels noted the previous MARAC arrangements and added she felt Councillors had felt involved at a 'grassroots level' through that process. She noted the importance of engaging with Local Members and noted examples of good work in her area, such as tackling graffiti in Wheatley Hill.

She added she felt policing was not just for the Police, it was for everyone within a community to come together to tackle issues to prevent the cycle of ASB and crime. She noted examples of where small amounts of funding on community schemes had proven to work effectively and noted the most impact was in cases where communities had been helped to care for their neighbourhoods. Councillor L Hovvels added she felt it was for the Panel and Council to champion working together in partnership. She asked how positive schemes, such as those referred to in Wheatley Hill, were showcased. Chief Inspector E Kay noted that all Councillors would be in contact with their Neighbourhood Inspectors and Teams and noted that meetings could be called around specific issues that may arise in areas.

The PCC thanked Chief Inspector E Kay, Inspector L Backhouse and the team for their work in this area and noted that when she was elected as PCC, she had wanted to push funding down to the local level. She reminded the Panel that each Neighbourhood Team had a £10,000 budget to look at local issues and while there were demand issues in some areas, there were many examples of good work. In relation to problem solving, the PCC noted the approach taken by the Force in order to turnaround issues swiftly. She added that the OSARA Model helps in this regard and noted that the upcoming POP Awards would highlight the 'best of the best' and what worked in practise. She noted details could be provided within a future update. She noted that updates on work in local communities would come from the OPCC, as well within updates from Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) in terms of local partnerships.

Councillor J Charlton noted the information provided was very useful, however, echoed the points raised by other Members in terms of how Councillors can bring forward information in their areas, and receive feedback on any ongoing work in their area. Chief Inspector E Kay noted the point raised by Members in terms of more engagement, links with Neighbourhood Teams and for feedback.

R Rodiss noted the difference between 'Proactive Teams' and Neighbourhood Teams and referred to Councillor D Boyes' point on a 'hardcore' element where the only answer could be arrest. He asked if the 'proactive teams' were tasked to deal with those in particular, would that not be a quicker approach. Chief Inspector E Kay noted that we would not be able to simply arrest our way out of the problem, however, she explained that Response and Neighbourhood Teams worked together. She added that the ASB Action Plan, from the Home Office, looked to tackle wider issues. She added that if there was information brought forward to the Police, then resources could be targeted accordingly.

R Rodiss noted that information was key and that he felt that being able to react quickly to criminals acting quickly was vital in terms of tackling issues.

Chief Inspector E Kay noted there was proactive work ongoing, not just within the Force, but also with partners with a holistic approach looking at enforcement, education and engagement.

Councillor D Nicholls noted that Councillor G Lee could take comfort from an example of work undertaken in his area with clear improvement relating to a defibrillator now being secured and no longer vandalised, the local Scout Group being able to meet with out issues. He added there was the issue of off-road bikes and noted that quick reporting through to his local Neighbourhood Team meant that, in his experience, that issues were addressed timely, and feedback was regularly provided from his Neighbourhood Inspector. He added he would always feed through information where appropriate, but also understood that there was a balance in terms of allowing Officers and other professionals within partner organisations to get on with their work and in providing feedback to Local Members.

Resolved:

That the presentation be noted.

8 Joint Independent Audit Committee Annual Report 2022-23

The Panel received the Annual Report of the Joint Independent Audit Committee, presented by the Independent Chair to the Committee, E Bell (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Independent Chair reminded the Panel that the Joint Independent Audit Committee were advisory only, and their work was independent of the Police and did not overlap. He added that the Chief Finance Officer, Gary Ridley had assisted the Committee and reiterated that the Committee challenged the work of the PCC and Durham Constabulary.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

9 Quarterly Performance Report Quarter Four 2022-23

The Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner which provided an update on performance for Quarter Four 2022-23, including headline work around holding the Chief Constable to account and wider partnership work being undertaken (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor D Nicholls noted his support for the 101 Live Chat function and was pleased as regards the performance and the increase access to now be 24 hour, 7 days a week, valuable for those such as victims of domestic abuse who may need to contact at any time. He that in terms of children missing from home, they were often vulnerable children and added he would welcome additional information to come back to the Panel so that Members could understand how they might be able to help and support the issue fully. He asked if the PCC had any further information in terms of the funding horizon nationally. The PCC noted the success of the live chat function, with many preferring that method for reporting incidents, which helps in turn by freeing up capacity for incidents via the emergency number. She noted that still, 40 percent of calls received did not relate to policing matters. Councillor D Nicholls noted that at a previous visit to the call centre, only around one third of the calls while at the centre had related to policing issues. The PCC noted there was renewed push in terms of tackling mental health issues, with other services taking on some of the burden that has been placed upon the Police in recent years. She added that the Home Secretary had stated a 'right care, right person' approach should be adopted and added she felt that residents would agree and want their Police Officers to be on the street, tackling ASB and crime demand and for other, more appropriate services to look to tackle issues related to mental health.

The Chief Finance Officer noted that there would naturally be an impact in terms of the pay award, with details to come forward next month. He added that inflationary costs were also being felt, noted that many areas of Police spend were limited to a few, or in some cases single providers. He added that PCCs were no longer to receive Home Office grants in relation to investments into fleet. He explained to the Panel that Police Officers were not employees of the Force, rather they were Agents of the Crown, and accordingly could not be made redundant. He added that it was expected that the balance of Home Office Grant against precept would tip further toward precept as grant decreased. The PCC noted she had raised the issue of fair funding with both the Government and Shadow Government Team, asking for fairness and a level playing field for all PCCs across the country. The Chief Finance Officer noted a lot of work ongoing in terms of demand upon police services, including from issues such as cybercrime, a 'borderless' crime, non-crime and welfare related calls, as well as the traditional 101 and 999 calls.

Councillor L Hovvels noted the issue of children missing from homes and that she too would welcome additional information on that topic, including the cost as she understood these were high spend areas for Local Authorities in addition to the Constabulary. The PCC noted it was an important issue to be addressed.

Councillor D Boyes noted that one individual had been responsible for 80 incidents, demonstrating the 'hardcore' element he had referred to previously. He noted the success of the drug rehabilitation service, and the move of Public Health Grant into Local Authorities. He noted the success against regional performance, however, not when compared nationally. He noted that detailed reports in relation to the Drug and Alcohol Service had been received by the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the past and asked if the Public Health grant remained in this regard, whether those links to the Police remained, and whether there was any joint work looking at the issues, as a small number of people were generating a high percentage of ASB and crime.

The Chief of Staff, OPCC, Andrea Petty noted that Humankind provided the Council's Drug and Alcohol Service and noted the grant referred to was still in place. She added that prior to leaving the Council to take up her role at the OPCC, the Drug and Alcohol Service was a standing item on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme, adding that it was an area under the responsibility of the Local Authority. Councillor D Boyes noted changes in performance reporting at Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Chief of Staff, OPCC noted the mandate of the Police in combating drug and alcohol related crime. The PCC noted a lot of ongoing work of the Government in respect of drug rehabilitation, with a review on drugs by Dame Carol Black. She added she was a member of a Ministry forum alongside other PCCs looking at drug reform.

Councillor R Potts noted figures and data were being compared to 2019/20, he felt this was misleading as it compared to the COVID-19 period, rather than comparing figures from last year to this year. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services noted that the Chief of Staff, OPCC had committed to provide that comparative information.

Councillor D Nicholls left the meeting at 11.30am

Councillor R Potts noted the reduction in 101 calls and an increase in 999 calls. He noted a specific robbery incident where after a one-hour chat, the victim was given contact details for the local PCSO and Officer, however, both had left Durham Constabulary, one six months ago, one 12 months ago. He added he agreed with the points raised by Panel Members in terms of their concern in respect of children missing from home. He noted that, given a 227 percent increase in children missing from home, there must be an associated increase in the types of offences that were linked, such as sexual offences, however, they did not appear to be included in the report, he asked why that was the case.

The PCC noted that she would encourage any Councillor to provide feedback to the Police should they note any contact details were not up-to-date or incorrect. In terms of data and comparison to the previous year, she explained that performance reporting at the next quarter would be comparing against the previous year, however, she would get the figures and comparisons requested by Councillor R Potts.

Councillor D Boyes left the meeting at 11.35am

The PCC explained she was more than happy to provide any additional data relating to key performance indicators. She noted that in terms of children missing from home that there was higher likelihood of children to be missing from unregulated children's homes, noting the proliferation within areas where housing was cheap. She noted as regards waiting lists for services, such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS) and the time spend by the Force in terms of looking for those children missing from home. Councillor R Potts asked as regards return to home interviews and follow up to ensure if any offenses have been committed against those children, they are recorded, and further potential offenses prevented. The PCC noted at a local level that Neighbourhood Teams and PCSOs go to Children's Homes and build up the levels of trust with those young people. She added that they speak to the managers and the children to understand the issues.

Councillor G Lee noted 4,716 children missing from home for 2022/23 and noted his sadness that 80 percent were those under 18 years old, around 3,800 children. He asked what the definition of missing was, one day, two days or something else and whether there was a breakdown in terms of where they went missing from, either from school, home or while travelling. The PCC noted there was a breakdown by category and noted that different children's homes had different operating practises. The Chief of Staff, OPCC noted definitions relating to missing children, including '*a child who has run away from their home or care placement, or feels they have been forced or lured to leave*'. Councillor G Lee asked for information as regards the number of children that return safely and how many children did not. The PCC noted the information would be brought together for the next meeting.

R Rodiss noted his concern in respect of the Police Call Centre and front-line roles. He understood that many new recruits, former call handlers that had applied to become Officers, had been drafted back into the call centre, albeit the Chief Constable had stated that the work had been 'overtime'. He asked that when the PCC next speaks with the Chief Constable that she would raise the issue of having those younger Officers out on the street learning skills rather than being in call centres. The Chief Finance Officer noted that such matters were operational matters for the Chief Constable.

R Rodiss noted he understood that new Officers were under a probationary period, however, he reiterated that he felt having them in the call centre was preventing them from gaining the experience on the streets that they needed, and he felt that older or injured Officers could be better placed to help with call centre demand.

Councillor D Nicholls noted that issues relating to licensing of children's homes and care homes and noted his concern that, should the Police begin to 'step back' from their role in dealing with mental health issue calls, that the NHS may not yet have the capacity to deal with the number of issues. The PCC noted that this was an issue and often one of the reasons the Police were called was because they were seen as being available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or when other services were closed. She noted issues that compounded included deprived areas and cuts to service provision. The PCC noted the response to mental health calls by Humberside Police, and how they looked at who should address such calls.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

10 Complaints Update

The Panel considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which provided an update on complaints relating to the PCC or the Deputy PCC (for copy see file of Minutes).

It was noted that the last report the Panel received in relation to complaints was at its meeting on 6 April 2023, with no further complaints received since that meeting. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services reminded Members that they had considered a complaint at the meeting on 6 April 2023, the complaint had been concluded, with the Panel resolving not to publish the outcome.

She added that the last complaints report had referred to a complaint received on 6 March 2023 which appeared to be against the Constabulary rather than the PCC. She explained that the Complainant was invited to complete a complaint form, setting out how their complaint related to the PCC. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services noted that a complaint form was submitted, with the Complainant submitting a number of follow up e-mails asking for the matters raised to be treated as a complaint. It was explained that the underlying issues related to a police operational matter about which the Complainant had previously sought to complain to the Panel in June 2022, having been informed at that time that the Panel had no jurisdiction to consider complaints about police operational matters.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services explained that the Complainant remained dissatisfied and had sought to renew their complaint. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services noted that she, as Clerk to the Panel in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Panel, made the decision to take no action in respect of the complaint on the ground that it was vexatious and following the Complainant being notified, the complaint was concluded accordingly.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

11 Police and Crime Panel Annual Report 2022-23 and Work Programme 2023-24

The Panel considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services on the Durham Police and Crime Panel Annual Report 2022-23 and sought agreement to the Panel's Work Programme for 2023-24, presented by the Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer, Stephen Gwilym (for copy see file of minutes).

The Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer noted that Appendix 2 set out the Annual Report, in line with Home Office guidelines, setting out the role of the PCC, PCP, membership of the Panel, and including the activity of the Panel across the meetings held. He added reference was also made to informal development sessions, training and engagement activity. He noted that the PCP set its own Work Programme, as noted within paragraphs 8-13 of the report, noting links to the PCC Annual Report and Police and Crime Plan, along with standard items such as performance and complaints. The Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer explained that the Council's Internal Audit Section had confirmed that the expenditure incurred by the Panel had been in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Home Office grant.

Members noted that Appendix 3 to the Annual Report gave further details in respect of future meetings of the Panel, with the Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer noting that the issue raised in relation to performance updates and children missing from home would be added.

H Hallam noted he was a relatively new member of the Panel and noted, in terms of the election of Chair and Vice-Chair, he had felt somewhat disenfranchised as he had not been in discussion with other Panel members as regards the process and equally was not familiar with the new members to the Panel in the way Council Members were in terms of them being their Council colleagues. He noted issues in respect of agenda papers and noted that Members of the Panel had not contacted him outside of meetings.

The Chair noted she was sorry he felt that way. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services noted she too was sorry and would look to address issues going forward, including contact details to be circulated to all Panel Members, should all be agreed. As regards the nominations process for Chair and Vice-Chair, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services explained that was a political process and that would be an issue for Independent Members to reach out to the politician Members.

Members noted issues relating to electronic and paper copies of agenda papers, noting different approaches depending upon Committee and Local Authority, with some Joint Committees such as the Crematorium Joint Committees.

Councillor D Nicholls thanked the Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer and noted that, if possible, a site visit to the new Custody Suite would be useful. The Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer noted that an update on the Investigative Hub was scheduled for the September meeting and arrangements could be made with the OPCC following the update at the meeting.

Resolved:

- (a) That the Durham Police and Crime Panel Annual Report be endorsed.
- (b) That the Work Programme for 2022/23 be agreed, with the inclusion of children missing from home and a visit to the Investigative Hub.