

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Police and Crime Panel** held in Committee Room 1B, County Hall, Durham on **Tuesday 29 October 2013 at 1.00 pm**

Present:

Councillor L Hovvels (Chair)

Durham County Council:

Councillors J Armstrong, D Boyes, M Dixon, S Forster, A Hopgood and A Willis

Darlington Borough Council:

Councillors I Haszeldine, L Hughes and B Jones

Independent Co-opted Members:

K Larkin-Bramley

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Armstrong, P Brookes, S Harker and D Stoker.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor M Dixon attended as named substitute for Councillor P Brookes, Councillor A Hopgood attended as named substitute for Councillor D Stoker and Councillor L Hughes attended as named substitute for Councillor S Harker.

3 Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings held on 25 June and 17 September 2013 were confirmed by the Panel as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Referring to Minute No. 9 of the meeting held on 25 June the Overview and Scrutiny Officer reported that a Restorative Approaches Training Session had been arranged to take place on 26 November at County Hall between 1.00 p.m. and 3.30 p.m. Any Member interested in attending the session should inform the Overview and Scrutiny Officer.

4 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Budget Monitoring - 2013/14

The Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) which provided details of the performance of the 2013/14 revenue and capital budgets (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Jones asked how many police officers were currently on military duty, and whether this was at any cost to the force. The Assistant Chief Officer, Durham Constabulary replied that currently there were 9 officers on secondment and that the force received full cost recovery for this.

Ms Larkin-Bramley referred to the current austerity measures and asked how the budget process for the next year would be undertaken. The Assistant Chief Officer replied that 2014/15 should have been the last year for austerity, however, austerity would now extend beyond this. The force had tried to produce 2-year budgets for a degree of reassurance and managers in force had been asked to examine officer and staff levels. Targets had been set for non-pay budgets such as estate, ICT and fleet. However, budgeting beyond the next couple of years would be more difficult because of changes outside of the control of the force, for example, changes to National Insurance payments. Ms Larkin-Bramley requested that the Panel be made aware if any budgetary concerns as they arose during the 2-year budget setting process.

The PCC informed the Panel that the budget process was made more difficult by the degrees of uncertainty, for example the projected underspend of £900,000 would be taken by the contribution to the IPCC budget. The PCC informed the Panel that it was his intention to increase the precept for the next financial year. Work was ongoing around collaborative projects and the PCC informed the Panel he was willing to give briefings on this outside of the meetings process.

Councillor Hopgood referred to the overspend in the revenue budget for legal fees and asked whether this was a one-off event or whether it had been an underestimation. The Assistant Chief Officer replied that this was a one-off event and related to legal fees which the PCC paid during investigations of officers. Such fees were difficult to plan and tended to be paid as and when they arose.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

6 Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017 - Update

The Panel noted a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner which provided details of the force performance with supporting commentary for the twelve months to the end of September 2013, compared with the twelve months to the end of September 2012. The report also provided details of work undertaken with a range of partners to take forward actions on the Commissioner's priorities (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Panel raised the following issues:

- Councillor Dixon welcomed and supported the recent comments made by the PCC and Chief Constable regarding drugs. He referred to parking problems in Newton Aycliffe and suggested dialogue with the County Council regarding joint funding arrangements to tackle the problem. The PCC replied that he was happy to enter joint funding arrangements wherever it was possible.
- Councillor Hopgood referred to local Councillors being stakeholders and referred to a recent surgery held in her Ward which she was unaware of. She also mentioned that work regarding Student v City issues was being done already and this may be useful for the PCC to be aware of.
- Councillor Haszeldine congratulated the work of the PCC and force in raising awareness of domestic violence, which he believed had led to an increase in the reporting of such incidents. He referred to the increase in reported incidents of shoplifting, which he considered to be partly due to current welfare reforms. However, he queried the figures for Anti-Social Behaviour, believing that such incidents were not being reported because the public did not believe they would get a response. The PCC replied that he would urge people to report all incidents to the police, as this would give him a stronger position when reasoning for officers. Referring to shoplifting, the PCC provided the Panel with details of a pre-charge disposal approach being taken by the Integrated Offender Management Unit.
- Councillor Boyes referred to work being undertaken around Ant-Social Behaviour and road safety and informed the PCC that both these areas had been considered by the County Council's Safer and Stronger Scrutiny Committee, which would welcome the opportunity to feed in to the process being carried out by the PCC.
- Councillor Jones referred to Community Panels, which were based on constituencies. As a result, 4 rural Wards in Darlington fell within the Sedgfield constituency, and Councillor Jones asked that these be aligned to Darlington. The PCC replied that he would consider this and provide Councillor Jones with feedback.

7 Confidence

The Panel noted a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner which provided an update on the work being undertaken by Durham Constabulary in relation to the confidence agenda (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Boyes referred to the problem of attendance at some PACT meetings, and suggested that best practice be shared between PACT areas in an attempt to increase attendance. Councillor Jones added that continuity of officers attending PACT meetings was important. The Police and Crime Commissioner replied that if his attendance was required at any PACT meetings, Members of the Panel should contact his office. If any problems were being experienced regarding the continuity of attendance of officers, if this information was fed back to him, he would raise the matter with the Chief Constable.

In response to a question from Councillor Hopgood regarding which areas fell within each Locality, the Police and Crime Commissioner undertook to provide this information following the meeting.

Referring to community engagement, Councillor Hovvels praised the police for their improvement of communication to inform communities of events taking place in their areas.

8 Exclusion of the Public

That under Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for Agenda Item B6 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

9 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2013 were confirmed by the Panel as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

10 Office of the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner Structure Review

The Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner which provided details of the review of the staffing structure for the Office of the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

That the report be noted

11 Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012

The Panel considered a report of the Monitoring Officer regarding a complaint received in relation to the Police and Crime Commissioner (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

That the recommendation contained in the report be approved.