

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Police and Crime Panel** held in Committee Room 1A, County Hall, Durham on **Tuesday 3 February 2015 at 10.00 am**

Present:

Councillor L Hovvels (Chair)

Durham County Council:

Councillors J Armstrong, D Boyes, P Brookes, S Forster and A Willis

Darlington Borough Council:

Councillors B Jones (Vice-Chair), Mr N J H Cooke and Mr D K G Dodwell

Independent Co-opted Members:

Mr N J H Cooke and Mr D K G Dodwell

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Stoker.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members.

3 Minutes

In relation to the final paragraph of minute no.9, the Police and Crime Commissioner highlighted that 64 new police officers would be recruited over the next two years, as opposed to the 16 reflected in the minutes.

In relation to minute no.8, the Chief of Staff clarified that, contrary to the minutes, the Restorative Justice Co-ordinator was not yet in post.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2014 were confirmed by the Panel as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Consultation on Council Tax Police Precept 2015/16

The Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) which presented the proposal for the policing element of the Council Tax Precept 2015/16 and provided an update in relation to the consultation on that proposal (for copy see file of Minutes).

The PCC advised that the proposal would see a modest precept increase of 1.98% and of those consulted, 67.8% were in agreement with the proposed increase. The Panel were advised that Durham Constabulary maintained one of the lowest precepts nationally.

Councillor Boyes supported the proposal, noting that the proposal represented an annual increase of only £2.11 for a Band A property. Councillor Armstrong echoed that support, though indicated that he would have supported a higher increase if it meant that police resources would be protected.

In response to a query from Councillor Armstrong, the PCC clarified that virtually all force areas proposed to apply a gradual increase on the precept and most were increasing in a similar range to Durham.

Resolved:

That the current position of the consultation and the expected outcome of a 1.98% precept increase be noted.

6 Mutual Gain

The Panel received a presentation regarding “Mutual Gain”, the Community Engagement initiative which had been piloted in Darlington and Seaham (for copy of slides see file of Minutes).

Chief Superintendent G Hall and Chief Superintendent I Wood delivered the presentation, accompanied by officers from both pilot areas. The presentation provided the Panel with an overview of the aims and objectives of the programme, details of those who participated and an overview of the outcomes, evaluation and benefits. The Panel were advised that the initiative had been a valuable learning curve not least because it had altered the views of all participants in relation to community engagement and had created a strong sense of empowerment among the pilot communities.

Councillor Boyes commended the model which had been piloted and welcomed the possibility of it being rolled out to other areas. He stressed that for the programme to be successful it required buy in from all levels and good leadership from senior levels. Chief Superintendent Hall agreed and advised the Panel that indeed the staff involved had also felt empowered.

In response to queries from Councillor Brookes, Chief Superintendent Hall advised that the programmes were not actually labour intensive as local residents were so keen to be involved that all stakeholders were required to do was to facilitate their development. It was noted that officers would have welcomed more time to devote to the programmes.

In relation to keeping up the momentum in the pilot areas, Chief Superintendent Hall clarified that all efforts would be made to build on what had already been achieved, irrespective of future funding. The Panel was also advised that it had

been identified that a wider scope of participants should be involved in future work, for example including representatives from the Health Service.

In response to a query from Councillor B Jones, Chief Superintendent Hall clarified that the model was suitable to roll out to other ward areas, though it would be inevitable that residents in alternative areas may respond to the programme differently.

Councillor Forster had been involved as a stakeholder in the Seaham pilot and took the opportunity to commend all those who had been involved, the event had been a resounding success and the most pleasing outcome was the trust that local residents now had in the police.

Chief Superintendent Hall took the opportunity to commend the work of S Pearce, Area Action Partnership Co-ordinator for East Durham, for her involvement with the Seaham pilot as she had worked very closely with the Police to facilitate and deliver the event.

7 Update on Commissioning Activity

The Panel considered a joint report of the Chief of Staff of the PCC which provided an update on the PCC's commissioning activity ahead of the 2015/16 financial year (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

8 Review of Police and Crime Commissioner and Police and Crime Panel - Memorandum of Understanding/Partnership Working Agreement

The Panel considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which sought agreement on a Memorandum of Understanding/Partnership Working Agreement between the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

That

- a) The Memorandum of Understanding/Partnership Working Agreement between the PCC and the PCP be agreed;
- b) The Memorandum of Understanding/Partnership Agreement be reviewed on an annual basis.

The Chair took the opportunity to thank the Overview and Scrutiny Officer for his work in relation to the Memorandum of Understanding/Partnership Agreement.

9 Joint working arrangements between the Police and Crime Panel and Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The Panel considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which sought agreement to continue joint working arrangements between the Durham Police and Crime Panel (PCP) and Overview and Scrutiny arrangements at Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor D Boyes advised that while he agreed with the recommendations set out in the report, he would welcome the opportunity for the Scrutiny function, in particular the Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to have more involvement with the work of the PCP. Councillor J Armstrong highlighted that all Overview and Scrutiny Committees were at liberty to set their own work programmes on an annual basis so could opt to have more involvement in issues relating to policing, though it would be important to ensure there was no duplication of work.

Resolved:

That

- a) The approach for joint working between the Police and Crime Panel , Durham County Council's Safer and Stronger Communities OSC and Darlington Borough Council's Monitoring and Co-ordinating Group, be agreed;
- b) The joint working arrangements be reviewed in 12 months.

10 Any Other Business

The Police and Crime Commissioner advised that he would circulate information to the Panel regarding police complaints. Though latest statistics indicated that complaints were up by 26%, it was important to note that what constituted a complaint had now changed and as such the statistics were somewhat misleading. Indeed, the Panel was advised that the number of complaints per officer had actually reduced.