

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

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

Present:

Councillor L Hovvels (Chair)

Durham County Council:

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

Darlington Borough Council:

Councillor B Jones (Vice-Chair)

Independent Co-opted Members:

Mr N J H Cooke and Mr D K G Dodwell

1 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor P Brookes.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor M Dixon as substitute for Councillor P Brookes.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2015 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 Reviewing the Police and Crime Plan 2015-17

The Panel considered a report of the Chief of Staff of the Police and Crime Commissioner which provided a refreshed Police and Crime Plan for 2015-17 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Commissioner presented his revised Police and Crime Plan for 2015-2017 and provided the Panel with information about the contents of the Plan.

Councillor Hovvels informed the Panel that the revised plan provided a comprehensive document which, in a succinct approach, clearly identified the PCC's vision, objectives, key areas of focus, how these would be delivered through

partnership working and measurements for outcomes and holding the Chief Constable to account.

Councillor Jones referred to the priority relating to domestic violence and a recent presentation he had attended in Darlington where he had received feedback that progress over addressing the issue of domestic violence over the last 10 years had been very slow. The PCC replied that Durham was one of eight forces nationally which had been praised by the IPCC regarding its work around domestic abuse and agreed to meet with Councillor Jones after the meeting to obtain further details from him. Councillor Hovvels added that progress had been made, with officers wearing body cams and victims dealing with the same officer wherever possible.

Councillor Boyes informed the Panel that he considered the Plan to be a good, succinct yet comprehensive document. He was pleased that the PCC had responded to previous comments made by the Panel but failed to understand some of the consultation responses, for example why 12% of respondents would think engagement should not be a priority. The PCC replied that there was sometimes confusion around what the term engagement meant and this could be the reason for the percentage figure.

Resolved:

That the comments of the Panel on the Plan be fed back to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

6 Revenue and Capital Budgets 2015/16

The Panel considered a joint report of the PCC Chief Finance Officer and Chief of Staff which provided details of the proposed revenue and capital budgets for Durham Constabulary for 2015-16 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Dixon referred to the demolition of Newton Aycliffe station and asked what the future use of the land may be. The Chief Finance Officer replied that outline planning permission had been approved for a care home to be built on the site and the sale of the land would be a source of income to the force as well as generating future business rate income.

Mr Cooke referred to the Air Support Unit which was now based further away from Durham and therefore there would be more 'dead time' to arrive at any incident it was called to in County Durham or Darlington. This could also act as a psychological barrier to request the Unit.

The Chief Finance Officer replied that currently the force paid £1,500 to £2,000 per flying hour for the Unit's helicopter with the force being contracted to a number of hours each year. However, the force was not using all of its contracted hours each year. The PCC added that usage of the Air Support Unit would be closely scrutinised in future years to ensure that those forces which used it the most paid the largest contributions.

In response to a question from Councillor Jones regarding a decrease in spending of £2m for Joint and Other Authorities the Chief Finance Officer informed the Panel that this cost had been allocated elsewhere in the budget.

Councillor Boyes referred to capital expenditure on Red Sigma/Blue Delta development and asked how this level of expenditure compared with other forces. The Chief Finance Officer replied that value for money profiles produced nationally showed the level of spend to be similar to other forces. A grant had been received towards Red Sigma, which had been developed in-house, resulting in a more rapid development time. Talks were now being held with other forces regarding their usage of the system, which could result in some income generation.

Councillor Armstrong referred to the level of reserves and asked whether these were sufficient. The Chief Finance Officer replied that he was satisfied the level of reserves were sufficient adding that the Home Office closely monitored reserve levels to ensure they were not too high and were only used to support capital expenditure.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

7 Inspection Update

The Panel noted a report of the Assistant Chief Officer which provided details of inspections expected in 2015, recently published inspection reports and pending inspection reports (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Assistant Chief Officer informed the Panel that there was to be an Efficiency Inspection commencing on 18 May 2015.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

8 Checkpoint

The Panel received a presentation from Supt Kevin Weir regarding 'Checkpoint', a programme which aimed to reduce the number of victims of crime by reducing reoffending (for copy of slides see file of Minutes)

Checkpoint offered eligible offenders a 4-month long contract to engage as an alternative to prosecution. The contract offered interventions to address the underlying reasons why the offender committed the crime to prevent them from doing it again to somebody else. Serious offences were not be eligible for Checkpoint, nor were driving offences, cases of domestic abuse or hate crime. The Checkpoint subject was supported through the process by a specialist 'navigator' who completed a detailed needs assessment with them and drew up the contract.

If the offender successfully completed the contract and did not reoffend, no further action would be taken against them. If they reoffended or failed to complete the

contract they would be prosecuted and the courts would be informed of the circumstances of their failure to complete the contract.

Councillor Dixon praised Checkpoint, which addressed issues of why offenders re-offended. However, there may be a public and media perception that Checkpoint was 'going soft' on offenders, and this may be an issue which needed addressing.

Councillor Boyes welcomed the Checkpoint programme which was aimed at keeping offenders out of the criminal justice system. Offenders often had complex drugs, drink or mental health issues and Councillor Boyes asked at what stage offenders were passed to other agencies. Supt Weir replied that the 'navigator' would assess what the issues of the offender might be, with experts in each discipline having signed up to the programme. The navigator would ensure the offender received appropriate support. The Chief Finance Officer added that the force's Blue Delta system could access to various appointments systems which allowed for checks to be made that offenders kept appointments with appropriate professionals.

Councillor Foster sought reassurance around the security of IT systems used in this programme, particularly Blue Delta. The chief Finance Officer replied that every system was graded to a government standard security level.

Resolved:

That the presentation be noted and feedback be made to the Panel after 6 months to monitor progress of the Checkpoint programme.

9 Mental Health

The Panel received a presentation from Supt Weir on work being undertaken within the force around issues of mental health and learning disabilities (for copy of slides see file of Minutes).

Councillor Foster asked whether the force had contacted Mencap or other voluntary groups as part of the ongoing work. Supt Weir replied that when people were detained under s136 Mental Health Act their mental health needs must be assessed by an appropriately trained adult, and that this was a specific assessment.

Councillor Boyes informed the Panel that information sharing between agencies was often an issue when dealing with areas such as mental health and learning disabilities. Many organisations were reluctant to share information and often information sharing protocols allowed the passing of timely information between agencies. Supt Weir replied that a key issue was health, and that health teams were now being put into custody areas. Work was ongoing to establish an information sharing protocol.

Resolved:

That the presentation be noted and an update report be brought to a future Panel meeting.

10 Police and Crime Commissioner's Public Performance Report

The Panel received a demonstration from the Chief of Staff of the interactive performance report which was available on the PCC's website.

The performance report contained data on each of the PCC's priorities in both statistical and narrative form and contained context, information and opinion to prevent the raw data being misconstrued. The performance report was published on a quarterly basis when the data had been refreshed and was presented to the Chief Constable. The report would also be brought to the Panel and published publically. There was also a comments box which allowed for comment and feedback.

Councillor Boyes congratulated the staff of the PCC's office on producing such a useful interactive tool and asked whether it would be possible to link performance to that of neighbouring forces. The Chief of Staff replied that national data sets were available and discussions could take place with neighbouring forces to obtain links to their performance data and comparison tables be added.

Councillor Dixon commented that it was important to publicise the availability of this information and asked whether this would be fed through to PACT meetings. The Chief of Staff replied that it would be fed through both PACT and AAP meetings.

Resolved:

That the interactive performance report be noted.