

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Police and Crime Panel** held in Committee Room 1B, County Hall, Durham on **Monday 22 June 2015 at 11.00 am**

Present:

Durham County Council:

Councillors J Allen, J Armstrong, D Boyes, P Brookes, S Forster, P May and D Stoker

Darlington Borough Council:

Councillors S Harker and H Scott

Independent Co-opted Members:

Mr N J H Cooke and Mr D K G Dodwell

1 Election of Chairman

Moved by Councillor Boyes, **Seconded** by Councillor Armstrong and

Resolved:

That Councillor J Allen be elected Chairman of the Panel for the ensuing year.

2 Election of Vice-Chairman

Moved by Councillor Scott, **Seconded** by Mr Dodwell that Councillor B Jones be elected Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the ensuing year.

Moved by Councillor Armstrong, **Seconded** by Councillor Boyes that Councillor S Harker be elected Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the ensuing year.

Upon a vote being taken it was

Resolved:

That Councillor S Harker be elected Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the ensuing year.

3 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hopgood and Jones.

4 Substitute Members

Councillor D Stoker as substitute for Councillor Hopgood and Councillor H Scott as substitute for Councillor Jones.

5 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2015 were confirmed by the Panel as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

7 Annual Report 2014-15

The Panel considered a report of the Chief of Staff which contained the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner's Annual Report 2014-15 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Mr R Hogg, Police and Crime Commissioner, in presenting his Annual Report highlighted the following areas of the Report to the Panel:

- Performance overview and key performance headlines
- Delivering the Police and Crime Plan 2014-15, which focussed on the seven key priority areas of:
 - To reduce the impact of domestic abuse, particularly violence against women and girls
 - To reduce the impact of hate crime
 - To improve engagement with the local communities across the constabulary area
 - To tackle anti-social behaviour
 - To tackle the harm caused to individuals and communities by alcohol and drugs
 - To improve road safety
 - To make policing services visible at all times.
- Finance and resources
- Looking ahead to 2015-16

Councillor Armstrong informed the Panel that the Annual Report was a comprehensive and impressive document. Durham was the only Force to be rated as 'Outstanding' for detecting crime on 2014/15 and had also been rated as Outstanding for tackling anti-social behaviour, which was a good reflection of partnership working. The Commissioner's use of social media was to be commended and this was becoming an increasingly popular resource.

Councillor Boyes also praised the Force in being rated as Outstanding in crime detection and tackling anti-social behaviour, as well as increasing the number of PCSO's. However, Councillor Boyes expressed disappointment in the performance overview figures in the report which he expected would be better with the resources that had been put in to Neighbourhood Policing.

The PCC replied that satisfaction rates and confidence rates were high where people had experienced a first-hand contact with the police. He added that confidence was a key area of focus because other Forces did better in this regard.

Councillor Scott informed the Panel that she considered this to be a good Annual Report. She referred to the priority of tackling the harm caused to individuals and communities by alcohol and reported that Local Authorities and Public Health England were pushing for changes to licensing laws which she hoped the PCC would support. Councillor Scott also asked where the new PCSOs in Darlington were located. The PCC replied that he would report back to Councillor Scott after the meeting on the location of the PCSOs in Darlington. Referring to drugs and alcohol, the PCC informed the Panel that he would like to see changes to both licensing legislation and also legislation to reduce the harm caused by both legal and illegal drugs. One such change could be to give Local Authorities greater licensing powers when an area had reached a 'saturation point' in terms of alcohol licences. He added that he would be happy to work with Local Authorities to bring about changes to licensing legislation.

Councillor Brookes congratulated the Force on its crime detection and agreed that this was an excellent Annual Report. He expressed concern around the issue of alcohol in terms of both licensing and how alcohol targets and objectives could be strengthened. There was a need to find new ways of measuring alcohol-related crime.

G Ridley, PCC Chief Finance Officer replied that if alcohol did not exist, the work of the police would be reduced by at least 50%, especially in the night-time economy. Markers were attached to incident that the police attended and details of these could be reported back to the Panel. The police worked closely with licensing staff.

Mr Dodwell reported that PACT meetings were a good means of both reporting incidents to the police and also for the police to provide positive feedback to communities.

Councillor Forster agreed that this was an excellent Annual Report but expressed concern at the availability of alcohol being delivered by taxis and also the availability of legal 'highs'.

The PCC replied that he had spoken against legal 'highs', which had already been banned in Ireland. The Government had now introduced legislation into Parliament to outlaw such substances.

Councillor Forster reminded the PCC that some people did not use social media as a means of communication and there was therefore still a need to produce leaflets and handouts as well as attend meetings in person.

Councillor Harker referred to the launch of Clare's Law under which 83 disclosures had been given during 2014/15 and asked whether or not this had worked well. The PCC replied that he supported disclosure where this served a purpose but added that sometimes disclosure was sought to create stories where these did not exist.

Councillor May agreed that this was an excellent Annual Report. He expressed concern that the police received no support from the alcohol industry which

prompted cheap alcohol and special offers which had resulted in alcohol becoming cheaper. Although the government had mooted the idea of minimum pricing for alcohol, this had never been introduced.

The PCC replied that the alcohol industry was large and had many defences in current Licensing Act. He had worked with Balance North East in their quest for Minimum Unit Pricing and also had suggested reducing alcohol strength. Mr Cooke referred to the Freshers Weekend in Durham during which students consumed vast amounts of alcohol and the problems this brought. The PCC replied that he had been in discussion with the University about this issue and added that he considered that offending students should be subject to serious sanctions by the University. In Durham on a Wednesday night there was a culture of drinking 'shots and this needed to be addressed.

Councillor Stoker informed the Panel that the University neither encouraged nor condoned excessive drinking by students. He referred to the culture of drinking shots and the availability of quads where four shots were served as one drink and this showed a lack of support from partners to address the problem.

Councillor Allen referred to the increased reporting of incidents of domestic violence, which she considered to be positive because it showed that victims had confidence in the police to deal with such crimes. Councillor Allen asked whether re-offending in this category had reduced. The PCC replied that re-offending had reduced and Councillor Allen suggested that this should be mentioned in the Annual Report.

Councillor May referred to the consumption of wine in pubs which was rarely offered in the quantity of 125 ml but tended to be offered in larger measures. The PCC replied that he would raise this with the Alcohol Harm Reduction Unit.

Resolved:

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

8 Update on Commissioning Activity

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

Councillor Allen was pleased that the administration of the community safety grant funding process for 2015/16 had been contracted to the County Durham Community Foundation (CDCF) as this may enable applicants to be directed to other sources of funding.

Councillor Boyes referred to the grant funding of Victim Support jointly with Cleveland PCC and asked whether this funding was subject to scrutiny and oversight. The Chief of Staff replied that there was a joint performance board with Victim Support which monitored performance on a quarterly basis, on which both he

and another officer from the PCC;s office sat. He added that half-yearly reports could be provided to the Panel to provide details on the performance of the service.

Mr Dodwell asked how the community safety grant fund would be publicised. The Chief of Staff replied that this would be undertaken by the CDCF although he was unsure of their marketing channels. A report on funding under the fund would be brought to a future Panel meeting.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report be noted
- (ii) That half-yearly reports on the performance of the Victim Support service be submitted to the Panel
- (iii) That details of funding under the community safety grant fund be submitted to the Panel.

9 Delivering an Efficient Policing Service: Consideration of Medium Term Financial Plan

The Panel received a presentation from the Chief of Staff and Chief Finance Officer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, which provided details of the Medium Term Financial Plan (for copy of slides see file of Minutes).#

Councillor Allen thanked the Chief of Staff and Chief Finance Officer for their presentation. She informed the Panel that the force would face significant challenges in the years ahead adding that she had attended a recent Problem Orientated Partnerships event which highlighted the excellent work being done by the sharing of resources with partners.

Councillor Armstrong informed the Panel that the projected loss of officers over the period of the MTFP was disheartening and asked whether age profiling of serving officers had taken place. The Chief Finance Officer replied that the average police officer age in Durham was 43 years and that this was an ageing workforce. He informed the Panel there was a need for younger officers in the force, which currently had 15 officers under the age of 25.

Councillor Brookes referred to holiday pay and overtime pay and asked whether extra people could be employed which would reduce the need for this, or whether overtime hours could be incorporated into contracted hours. He also asked the proportion of senior staff to frontline staff in the proposed reduction in staff numbers. The Chief Finance Officer replied that due the nature of the service, including responding to major incidents and the reactive nature of the service, it was not possible to reduce the number of overtime hours, although expenditure on overtime had bene reduced. He was to meet with the PCC that afternoon to discuss alterations to the numbers of senior officers and senior staff.

In response to a question from Councillor Scott regarding IT costs, the Chief Finance Officer informed the Panel that the force did work with private sector providers to ensure best value for money was achieved.

Councillor Forster asked whether, with the proposal to reduce staff numbers, the use of volunteers would be encouraged, and also asked whether a cadet force still existed.

The Chief Finance Officer replied that the force had recently recruited an additional 55 Special Constables and Neighbourhood Watch volunteers and that volunteers were used in back office functions. However, Special Constables had a cost attached to them in terms of training, uniform and equipment. The Police Cadets scheme still operated and was run by the Durham Agency Against Crime.

Councillor May asked about officer deployment and the public desire to see officers on the street. He also asked what the force did to maintain officer fitness levels. The Chief Finance Officer replied that the deployment of officers was a decision for Sergeants, adding that this should depend upon priorities. Officers had to undertake annual fitness tests and there was a 2% failure rate in Durham. However, with the ageing profile of officers, this could increase in the coming years.

Resolved:

That the presentation be noted.

10 Year End Performance for 2014-15

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

Councillor Boyes asked whether comparisons with other forces and how Durham's performance compared nationally could be shown. The Chief of Staff replied that comparison figures for other forces were shown via a link on the performance web page, and this information could be circulated to Panel Members.

Resolved:

That the report be noted and comparison figures be circulated to Panel Members.

11 PCC Decision Records

The Panel considered a report of the Chief of Staff which provided an update on the Police and Crime Commissioner's decision register and forward plan (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

- (i) That the report be noted
- (ii) That the item become a standard agenda item at future Panel meetings.

12 HMIC Feedback

The Panel noted a report of the Chief Finance Officer which provided feedback received from the latest HMIC Inspection regarding efficiency (for copy see file of Minutes).

13 Police and Crime Panel Work Programme 2015/16

The Panel considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which sought agreement to the Panel's Work Programme for 2015/16 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer informed the Panel that a development session was to be arranged late summer 2015, and in response to a question from Councillor Scott, the Panel agreed that substitute Members be invited to the development session.

Resolved:

That the Work Programme for 2015/16 be approved and substitute Members be invited to the proposed development session.

14 Joint Audit Committee Minutes

The Panel noted a report of the Chief of Staff which presented notes from meetings of the Joint Audit Committee held between March and May 2015 (for copy see file of Minutes).

15 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under paragraphs 3 and 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

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

The Panel considered a report of the Monitoring Officer which advised of the outcome of a referral under the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

That the report be approved and the outcome of the IPCC referral be recorded.