

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At a Meeting of **Police and Crime Panel** held in Committee Room 1A, County Hall, Durham on **Friday 8 January 2016 at 1.00 pm**

### **Present:**

**Councillor J Allen (Chairman)**

### **Durham County Council:**

Councillors J Armstrong, P Brookes, A Hopgood and P May

### **Darlington Borough Council:**

Councillor S Harker (Vice-Chairman)

### **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 Boyes, Forster, Haszeldine and Jones.

#### **2 Substitute Members**

There were no substitute Members in attendance.

#### **3 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **4 Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 October 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman referred to the Police and Crime Panel Development Session which was held on 3 December 2015 and thanked all members who had attended and all staff from the Police and Crime Commissioners' (PCCs) office who had contributed to the success of the Session.

Councillor Armstrong informed the Panel that, while he had been unable to attend the Session, he had been fully briefed on its content by the Overview and Scrutiny Officer. The Overview and Scrutiny Office added that an evaluation pack from the Session would be circulated in due course.

The Chairman reported that the Session had been well received but that in hindsight a wider audience could have been invited to attend.

Mr Dodwell referred to page 2 of the Minutes and informed the Panel that 'his Parish Council' should read 'the Association of Parish Council's'.

The Panel reported that it was good to receive feedback on all points raised at the previous meeting by email so soon after the meeting and thanked the PCC and his office for producing this information.

Councillor Hopgood referred to page 2 of the Minutes and asked for an update on PCSO powers to issue fines. The PCC replied that he had responded to a Government consultation on PCSO powers and had included this as part of the response.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer informed the Panel that the following feedback had been circulated:

- A further breakdown of the figures for domestic abuse, as requested by Councillor Hopgood;
- Details of schools which had not attended the Wisedrive event as requested by Councillor Hopgood;
- The Crime Pic questionnaire referred to at Minute Number 7;
- Information on Neuro Linguistic Programming and Mindfulness training referred to at Minute Number 8.

## **5 Consultation on Council Tax Police Precept 2016/17**

The Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) which provided information about his proposals to consult on an increase in the policing element of the Council Tax precept for 2016-17 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Mr Dodwell referred to the proposed precept increase of 1.98% and asked why this was the maximum increase, when Darlington Borough Council was proposing an increase of 3.99%. The Assistant Chief Executive, Durham County Council replied that changes to local government finance for this year gave councils the opportunity to raise an extra 2% precept to support adult social care.

Councillor Harker informed the Panel that there was an expectation from government that PCCs would raise their precept by 2% and this should be stressed during consultation on the precept. The Assistant Chief Officer confirmed that this expectation had been mentioned in the Comprehensive Pending Review announcement.

In reply to a request from Councillor Armstrong, the PCC agreed to provide Members with details of the 'Community Days' he would be undertaking during his consultation.

Councillor Brookes informed the Panel that he was supportive of the proposed increase, adding that it was unfortunate the increase could not be larger without the need for a referendum. He understood that the PCC needed to operate within Government rules and also understood the risks associated with a referendum.

The PCC informed the Panel that he had sent a letter to the Home Office highlighting that the yield from the precept in County Durham and Darlington was one of the worst in the Country. The Assistant Chief Officer informed the Panel that the 10 lowest precepting PCCs could increase their precept by £5, but Durham was the 15<sup>th</sup> lowest. However, some of the lowest precepting PCCs were in areas of high property values, and therefore had disproportionately high yields. The PCC's letter to the Home Office was to highlight this anomaly and to take into account the low Council Tax base. The PCC agreed to circulate a copy of his letter to the Home Office to Panel Members.

Councillor Armstrong informed the PCC that he was pleased that the proposed precept increase was being taken to AAPs and added that he would be recommending the 1.98% to his AAP. He referred to paragraph 7 of the report which stated that each additional increase of 1% raised approximately £260,000, yet in paragraph 2.4 of the consultation document this figure was £250,000 and stressed the importance of consistency in the presentation of data.

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the intention to consult be noted;
- (ii) That a full report on the outcome of the consultation would be presented to the next Panel meeting on 1 February 2016 be noted.

**6 Enhancing Collaboration between Durham Constabulary and Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service**

The Panel considered a report of the Chief of Staff which provided an update on work undertaken to enhance collaboration between the Police and Fire and Rescue Services (for copy see file of Minutes).

The PCC informed the Panel that there was no intention for the PCC to take on the role for the Fire and Rescue Service. He had held discussions with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority around enhancing collaboration with the intention to drive out efficiencies without changing structures.

Councillor Brookes referred to the prospect of elected mayors and asked whether this could lead to a change in arrangements in the future for both the Police and Fire and Rescue Services. The PCC replied that the Police and Fire and Rescue Services were not part of the currently proposed roles for the elected mayor, and if this was to change, would need to be backed by a business plan and discussions with the PCC. Feedback from both Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council was that neither wanted these services to be part of the role of an elected mayor.

Mr Dodwell asked whether liaison took place with other PCCs about collaboration. The PCC replied that he met regularly with other PCCs to discuss such issues.

Councillor May informed the Panel that both the Police and Fire and Rescue Services had specific expertise in the service they provided and expressed concern that if services were combined too much then this expertise could be diluted. The

PCC replied that while there were clear parameters for combining services, some could be done jointly, for example, fire prevention and crime prevention.

Councillor Hopgood referred to paragraph 5 of the report and suggested that he chair of the Panel should sit on the Joint Strategy Board (JSB). The PCC replied that the JSB was made up of representatives of the governance structures of both services and the Panel had a scrutiny function rather than a governance function. Councillor Allen added there was a need to keep a clear separation between the two structures, because the more the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) and the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) were amalgamated, the more danger they would be seen as uniting. Meetings of both the PCP and the CFA were open to the public and any member of either group could attend meetings of the other.

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the progress made on enhancing collaboration be noted
- (ii) That the proposal for representatives of the Fire and Rescue Service to attend meetings of the Police and Crime Panel, to broaden understanding and share knowledge, be endorsed.

## **7 Q2 Performance Report 2015-16**

The Panel considered a report of the Chief of Staff which provided the Quarter 2 Public Performance Report (for copy see file of Minutes).

The PCC presented the performance figures to the Panel. Referring particularly to speeding, the PCC informed the Panel that he had previously opposed fixed speed cameras. However, at a recent Association of PCCs meeting a presentation had been made regarding technology which provided the ability to measure the average speed of vehicles through communities, with an ANPR ability. Any development around this would be brought back to the Panel.

Councillor Hopgood referred to the police taking action when anti-social behaviour was reported by communities, however, when residents reported issues of speeding vehicles the police seemed to be unable to take such action because they had not witnessed the speeding. The PCC replied that where community groups felt that action was not being taken on reports made then this should be fed back to him and he would raise the matter with the police.

Councillor Allen informed the Panel that, over all, this was a pleasing report which highlighted positive achievements. She referred to Councillor Forster requesting that copies of the performance figures be placed in libraries for those who did not use computers and the PCC responded that this had been actioned.

Councillor Allen referred to the third bullet point on page 37 of the papers and suggested it might be useful to have a direct link to the Value for Money section in the report.

Councillor Hopgood, referring to anti-social behaviour, highlighted that the only increase was in Darlington and asked whether there was any specific reason for this. The PCC replied that if anti-social behaviour was reported, it must be

recorded, but sometimes this was just a lack of tolerance rather than anti-social behaviour. However, he had discussed this matter with the Chief Inspector at Darlington.

Councillor Brookes referred to the role being undertaken by Dr Joe Sullivan around Child Sexual Abuse mentioned on page 41 of the papers and asked, as Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel, what was being done to protect children. The PCC replied that Dr Sullivan was providing training sessions to police officers and staff to raise awareness of abuse and to identify warning signs and respond appropriately. Details of this work would be provided to Panel members.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

## **8 Update on Victims Commissioning and Funding**

The Panel considered a report of the Head of Governance and Commissioning which provided an update on the application of victims commissioning and restorative justice funds in 2015/16 and the conclusion of the procurement exercise to select the provider of a victim needs assessment and referral service which would commence on 1 April 2016 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Allen informed the Panel that the victim needs assessment and referral service would provide better value for money through collaboration. The service was more targeted around the victim and this was welcomed.

The PCC thanked the Head of Governance and Commissioning and his team for the work done to get to this position.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

## **9 PCC Decision Records**

The Panel considered a report of the Chief of Staff which provided an update on the PCCs decision register from June to September 2015 and forward plan (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Hopgood referred to the lease of part of the Framwellgate Moor section office and informed the Panel that this could lead to parking problems in the area. The Assistant Chief Officer undertook to investigate this and provide feedback.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

## **10 HMIC inspections**

The Assistant Chief Office provided the Panel with an update on the vulnerability inspection carried out by HMIC.

No forces were graded as outstanding, 12 forces, including Durham, were graded as good, 27 forces were graded as requiring improvement and 4 forces were graded as inadequate.

The key findings for Durham were as follows:

The Constabulary had:

- clear and consistently applied processes in place to identify repeat and vulnerable victims.
- robust supervisory processes in place.
- significantly invested in training staff, with over 1000 officers and staff trained in dealing with vulnerability.
- good risk assessments carried out and good understanding of the Victims' Code.
- well trained call handling staff.
- a clear commitment to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation via a strategy and action plan.
- close working arrangements with partners.
- made progress in areas such as conducting satisfaction surveys and preparing a domestic abuse problem profile.

In reply to a question from Councillor Allen about how call handlers defined vulnerability, the Assistant Chief Officer replied that call handlers were trained to identify vulnerability.

**Resolved:**

That the update be noted.

**11 Spending Review outcome and update**

The PCC provided the Panel with an update on the Spending Review outcome.

The PCC informed the Panel that Durham had been faced with a potential funding loss of £7m due to the government using incorrect data when using a new funding formula make grant allocations. He had immediately briefed local MP's and the matter was raised in the House of Commons where the Home Office admitted its mistake and had shelved the proposed new funding formula. The PCC informed the Panel that he had written to the Home Office suggesting that any review of the police funding formula be carried out by an independent body.

Councillor Allen informed the Panel that a lot of work had been done by the PCC, MPs and officers when the error came to light and that it could have been a different scenario for Durham had this not been picked up. Mr Dodwell added that it was important the work which had been undertaken on this was well recorded.

**Resolved:**

That the update be noted.

Signed .....  
Chairman of the Meeting held on 1 February 2016

