

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At a Meeting of **Police and Crime Panel** held in Committee Room 1A - County Hall, Durham on **Thursday 10 January 2019 at 2.00 pm**

### **Present:**

**Councillor L Hovvels (Chair)**

### **Durham County Council:**

Councillors D Boyes, P Crathorne, J Nicholson and M Simmons

### **Darlington Borough Council:**

Councillors H Crumbie, B Jones and M Knowles

### **Independent Co-opted Members:**

Mr N J H Cooke and Mr D K G Dodwell

The Chairman informed the Panel that she had agreed to change the Agenda order so that Item No 8 would be considered after Item No 4 to allow the Chief Finance Officer to attend another meeting.

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brookes and Savory.

### **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 meetings held on 22 October at 9.30 a.m. and 10.05 a.m. were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment:

Mr N Cooke and Mr D Dodwell being removed from the attendance under the Darlington Borough Council heading in the minutes of the meeting held at 9.30 a.m.

### **5 Provisional Government Grant Settlement and its Implications for the Force - Verbal Update**

G Ridley, Chief Finance Officer provided the Panel with a verbal update on the provisional Government Grant settlement and its implications for the force.

The Chief Finance Officer provided the Panel with details of extra grant funding which had been allocated to Durham for 2019-20 and explained the budgetary pressures facing the force, including pension costs, salary increases, and IT costs.

Councillor Boyes referred to the extra £2.9m which had been allocated towards pension costs and asked whether this was a one-off payment. The Chief Finance Officer replied it was assumed that this would be allocated in future financial years because pensions were an ongoing cost.

The Chief Finance Officer informed the Panel that the Budget would be brought to the Panel in more detail.

## **6 Recent Media Activity**

The Panel considered a report of the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner (PCVC) which provided an update on media activity during the period since the last Panel meeting (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Boyes referred to the media coverage of problems in the Stanley area and requested an update. The PCVC informed the Panel that a lot of effort had been put in to the Stanley area to address these problems. Councillor Nicholson, a local Member for the area praised the actions of the police in the area who could not be faulted and added that a channel was needed to address young people's issues in the area.

The PCVC informed the Panel that he would feed the positive comments of Councillor Nicholson back to local officers. The PCVC referred the Panel to The Loop, a project which took place in Durham before Christmas. The Loop tested the quality of drugs which people took along to the testing centre and not one sample tested reflected what people thought the drug was. It was intended to carry out the project again. Councillor Hovvels informed the PCVC that the results from this testing could have implications for health professionals and asked whether this information had been shared. The PCVC replied that the information would be shared with partners and would also be brought to the Panel for information.

## **7 Focused Report on Police, Crime and Victims' Plan Outcomes - Outcome 2: 'Victims and the Vulnerable Feel Supported'**

The Panel considered a report of the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner which supplemented the public performance report with regard to giving an overview on the Police, Crime and Victims' Plan Outcome 2 – 'Victims and the Vulnerable Feel Supported' (for copy see file of Minutes). The Panel also received a presentation from Jacob Cain, Policy and Accountability Officer, Office of the Police, Crime and Victims Commissioner.

Councillor Boyes referred to the budgets of partners being cut, for example Public Health, and asked how this was putting a strain on the PCVCs budget. The PCVC

replied that he was striving to work closer with partners to save money and improve return on investment, however his budget could not take all of the strain. He was very concerned that the most vulnerable people may not get the support they needed or deserved.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

## **8 Precept Consultation**

The Panel considered a report of the PCVC which presented the consultation document about the precept for 2019/20 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Crathorne expressed some concern that earnings were higher down south and therefore the impact of a rise in the precept would be less than in the north where earnings were lower. She considered that the needs of the public should be considered as well as the needs of the police. The PCVC replied that last year he had approached the Chancellor about increasing the tax burden for higher banded properties but was told this could not be done.

Mr Dodwell informed the Panel that he sympathised with the PCVC who he considered had no option other than propose his increase in precept. If he did not do this then there would be a knock-on effect in future years.

The PCVC informed the Panel there was an assumption that precept increases could be pegged at a maximum of 1.98% next year and if this was so then Durham force would have a budget shortfall of £2.9m. He would continue to argue for a fair funding formula for Durham Constabulary.

Councillor Boyes considered it would be unwise not to introduce the proposed precept increase.

**Resolved:**

That the intention to consult on the proposed precept be noted

## **9 Quarterly Performance Report**

The Panel received a presentation from the PCVC on the Quarter 1 public performance report which contained key performance data (for copy see file of Minutes).

The PCVC informed the Panel that he had previously presented the quarterly public performance report at the meeting of the Police and Crime Panel. The report had now changed to reflect the structure of the latest Police, Crime and Victims' Plan which detailed four outcomes under which sat eight Key Performance Questions (KPQs) and cutting across all of these were twelve priority areas.

This quarter's report focused on Outcomes 3 and 4 of the Plan and therefore on KPQs 5-8. The next quarter's report would focus on Outcomes 5 and 6, KPQs 9-12, and subsequent reports would repeat this pattern.

Councillor Boyes informed the Panel that he set great store by Restorative Justice which worked and for every £1 spent resulted in savings of £8. However, there was a stubborn, hard-core group of individuals who seemed to never get sanctions against them and this made the Restorative Justice approach difficult to justify at times. The PCVC replied that a lot of acquisitive crime was carried out by people with drug dependency and work around this had been ongoing with both Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council for the last 12 to 18 months. The problem of this hard-core group of individuals required a partnership approach.

Councillor Knowles referred to a case reported in the Northern Echo whereby a prolific shoplifter had been released from a short custodial sentence and had received £46 upon release. The offender had shoplifted again and the Judge had not committed him to custody yet the sentence was too short for the Probation Service to take up. The PCVC replied that short prison sentences did not work, there was a need to get the offender stabilised and break the causes of activity.

Councillor Jones agreed there was a hard core of individuals whose behaviour was difficult to address. He asked whether there was any liaison with the Magistrates Association to ensure magistrates understood the thoughts of the public regarding this.

The PCVC replied that it would be wrong for him to interfere with the independence of the judiciary, however the public could make such representations. He understood that magistrates were keen to see changes to sentencing guidelines. In reply to a question from Councillor Boyes the PCVC confirmed that magistrates operated to uniform sentencing guidelines across the Country.

**Resolved:**

That the Performance Report be noted.

## **10 Commissioning Update**

The Panel considered a report of the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner which informed the Panel that the decision-making process for financial allocations in 2019/20 had been completed (for copy see file of Minutes).

Mr Dodwell informed the Panel that organisations in receipt of a financial allocation faced uncertainty towards the end of the financial year about future funding and longer-term awards would minimise this level of uncertainty. C Oakley, Head of Governance and Commissioning replied that it was intended to work through the partnership gaps to identify area of need which would drive funding and have a better impact. The PCVC added that his office could only make reasonable assumptions because the government did not provide multi-year settlements.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

## **11 Work Programme 2018/19 - Update**

The Panel noted a report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships, Durham County Council which provided an update on the Panel's work programme for 2018/19 (for copy see file of Minutes).

## **12 PCVC Decision Records**

The Panel noted a report of the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner which provided an update on the decision register since the last meeting, and forward plan (for copy see file of Minutes).

## **13 Exclusion of the Public**

### **Resolved:**

That under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 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 as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

## **14 Concerning a complaint about the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner**

The Panel considered a report of the Monitoring Officer, Durham County Council regarding a complaint made about the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner (for copy see file of Minutes).

### **Resolved:**

- (i) That the matters complained of were not of sufficient seriousness to warrant referral to the IOPC;
- (ii) That no further action be taken on the complaint;
- (iii) That the Panel's decision should not be published.

## **15 Brexit Update**

Mr Dodwell sought information on planning which was taking place around Brexit.

The Monitoring Officer informed the Panel that consideration would be given to Mr Dodwell's request and a report would be brought to the next Panel meeting.