

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Police and Crime Panel** held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Monday 19 July 2021 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Durham County Council:

Councillors D Boyes, L Hovvels, D Nicholls, J Nicholson, R Potts, A Savory and M Simmons

Darlington Borough Council:

Councillors J Dulston, Mills and Wallis

Independent Co-opted Members:

Mr D K G Dodwell

1 Election of Chair

Moved by Councillor Boyes, **Seconded** by Councillor Wallis that Councillor L Hovvels be elected Chair of the Panel for the ensuing year.

Moved by D Dodwell, **Seconded** by Councillor R Mills that Councillor B Jones be elected Chair of the Panel for the ensuing year.

Upon a vote being taken it was

Resolved:

That Councillor B Jones be elected Chair of the Panel for the ensuing year.

2 Election of Vice-Chair

Moved by Councillor Boyes, **Seconded** by Councillor Hovvels that Councillor N Wallis be elected Vice-Chair of the Panel for the ensuing year.

Moved by Councillor A Savory, **Seconded** by Councillor J Dulston that Councillor J Nicholson be elected Vice-Chair of the Panel for the ensuing year.

Upon a vote being taken it was

Resolved:

That Councillor J Nicholson be elected Vice-Chair of the Panel for the ensuing year.

In the absence of Councillor B Jones, Councillor J Nicholson assumed the Chair.

Councillor J Nicholson in the Chair

3 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor B Jones and N Cooke.

4 Substitute Members

Councillor R Mills as substitute Member for Councillor B Jones.

5 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Councillor Nicholson thanked the previous Chair of the Panel, Councillor L Hovvels, for her service to the Panel.

6 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2021 were confirmed by the Panel as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

7 Acting Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner's Annual Report

The Panel considered a report which presented the Police, Crime and Victims' Annual Report for 2020-21 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Mr S White, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner presented the report to the Panel as the former Interim Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner.

In presenting the report the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer referred to the challenges faced over the last year as a consequence of the pandemic and paid tribute to the officers and staff of the Constabulary and of officers of the Office of the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner in their response to it.

Councillor Boyes thanked the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer for his work as Interim Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner. It was well documented that there had been an increase in alcohol consumption and in domestic violence incidents over the period of the pandemic and Councillor

Boyes was reassured that the first four bullet points in the Outcomes Progress section of the Annual Report focussed on these areas.

D Dodwell complimented both the Acting Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner and the Chief Constable for their sensible response to the Barnard Castle incident during the pandemic.

Resolved:

That the Annual Report be noted.

8 Draft Police and Crime Plan

The Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner which presented the draft Police and Crime Plan 2021-22 in advance of its launch for consultation (for copy see file of Minutes).

In presenting the report the Police and Crime Commissioner informed the Panel that she had carried out a survey between October and December 2020 to ascertain public priorities. Over 1,200 responses were received and this provided an idea of what local residents wanted addressing in the Police and Crime Plan. The Police and Crime Commissioner informed the Panel that the proposed priorities for 2021/22 were as follows:

- Safer Communities – Investment in neighbourhood policing to reassure public, tackle crime and ASB, provide prevention advice, solve problems, and build confidence;
- Safer Business – To gain a better understanding of the crime faced by businesses and shop workers to address business crime, threats and abuse;
- Safer Online – To tackle the emerging threats of cyber enabled crime by developing new tactics and capabilities to safeguard those using online platforms;
- Safer People - To protect, support and respond to victims, witnesses and vulnerable people and tackle abuse and exploitation in all their forms;
- Safer Roads - To prioritise and tackle the areas of highest harm and risk known as the fatal 4: speeding, mobile phones, drunk and drug driving, and seat belts;
- Safer Countryside – To understand and respond to the needs of rural communities and tailor services accordingly.

Councillor Boyes thanked the PCC for her presentation. The Draft Plan was a good start and consideration now needed to be given to how the priorities were prioritised and how much resource would be devoted to each priority. Councillor Boyes expressed disappointment at the ability to contact the police using the 101 number which rang for a period of time and then rang off. Councillor Boyes considered this could deter people from reporting

incidents. Councillor Boyes also referred to the use of off-road bikes and lack of police presence over the last 15 months or so which had led some to think they could 'get away' with anti-social behaviour. He expressed hope that as the country emerged from the pandemic there would be more of a police presence, including PCSOs, which had been the bedrock of community policing and intelligence gathering in County Durham.

The PCC replied that the 101 number was a top priority. There was an on-line facility to report incidents, although it was acknowledged this was not available 24/7. Referring to off-road bikes, the PCC was looking to support Operation Endurance.

Councillor L Hovvels referred to the Neighbourhood Wardens service and asked whether more powers could be devolved to the Wardens. Councillor Hovvels referred to off-road bikes and the cost of target hardening schemes which were very expensive for small communities.

The PCC replied that partnership working was part of problem solving and undertook to work with the Neighbourhood Wardens service to address problems. Target hardening schemes did not address the problems of off-road bikes but merely displaced them to another area and therefore the root cause of the problem needed to be addressed.

Councillor Potts raised the problem of PC and PCSO coverage in the Evenwood area. The PCC replied that she would investigate this issue outside of the meeting and provide feedback to Councillor Potts.

Councillor Potts referred to plans for a new custody suite and expressed concern that this would result in increased police officer time taking detainees to custody which in turn would lead to the removal of police officer resource from the front line.

The PCC replied that when she was elected she had undertaken a review of work on the new custody suite which had taken place, including the risk, the legal issues, the HMICFRS reports and she had visited every police station with a custody facility within County Durham and Darlington. She had also visited centralised custody suites in other force areas. Any decision made on the future of custody would be based on what was best for County Durham and Darlington.

Councillor Dulston considered that the areas of focus in the draft Police and Crime Plan were the correct ones and reflected concerns which were raised by communities. Councillor Dulston endorsed the comments made by Councillor Boyes regarding the 101 number.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

9 Media Report

The Panel considered a report of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner which provided an update on press and social media coverage concerning the work of the Police and Crime commissioner since the previous meeting (for copy of report see file of Minutes).

Mr Dodwell complimented the Senior Media Officer on the level of social media activity.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

10 Quarterly Performance Report

The Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner which updated on performance against the Police, Crime and Victims' Plan 2018-21 (for copy see file of Minutes). Moving forward the report would continue to focus upon key performance measures that would overlay the new Police and Crime Plan 2021-2024.

J Trotter, Head of Policy, Commissioning and Accountability presented the report. The report was based on the old Police and Crime Plan and future reports would be based on the Police and Crime Commissioner's new Plan and the performance measures set within that.

Councillor Boyes was unsure how much weight could be attached to the report because people were finding it difficult to make contact through the 101 number and because the pandemic had presented unique circumstances.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

11 PCC Decision Records

The Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner which provided an update on the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner's decision register for 2020-21 and addressed the forward plan (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

12 PCC Commissioning Update

The Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner which provided an update of funding committed to PCC strategic commissioning activities in the financial year 2021/22 and also provided a summary of PCC strategic commissioning funding by theme and strategic budget in 2020/21 (for copy see file of Minutes).

D Dodwell referred to the £525,491 COVID Emergency Grant which had been received and asked whether this had covered the additional demand caused by the pandemic. The Head of Governance and Finance replied that the grant covered the demand which could be identified.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

13 HMICFRS inspections

The Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner which outlined the findings of the recent inspections conducted by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) that have required a PCC comment as follows:

- An inspection of how effectively the police deal with protests
- The police response to the coronavirus pandemic during 2020/ Custody services in a COVID-19 environment
- Review of policing domestic abuse during the pandemic- 2021
- Report on Hestia's super-complaint on the police response to victims of modern slavery

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

14 Complaints Update

The Panel considered a report of the Monitoring Officer and Clerk to the Police and Crime Panel which provided an update on the implementation on the procedure for handling complaints relating to the Police and Crime and Victims Commissioner (PCVC) or the Deputy Police, Crime and Victims Commissioner (where appointed) and to provide an update on the number of formal complaints received since the last meeting. (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

That the content of the report be noted

15 Police and Crime Panel Annual Report 2020/21 and Work Programme 2021/22

The Panel considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which presented the Durham Police and Crime Panel Annual report 2020/21 and sought agreement to the Panel's Work Programme for 2021/22 (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor Hovvels, as previous Chair of the Panel, thanked officers for their work over the previous year.

Mr Dodwell referred to the recent Call for Evidence in respect of remote meetings and asked whether any progress had been made in this area. The Monitoring Officer and Clerk to the Panel replied that this was a government consultation which had now closed. Feedback had been provided but no notification of any proposed changes had been received at this time.

Resolved

- (a) That the Durham Police and Crime Panel Annual Report be endorsed
- (b) That a report on the Panel's work programme for 2021/22 be presented to the Panel's next meeting.

The Chair informed the Panel that there was one item of urgent business to be considered relating to correspondence from the Home Office on the future resilience and succession plan.

16 Future Resilience and Succession Plan

The Chief Executive Officer reported a letter had been received from the Police Minister relating to PCC's considering and consulting with Police and Crime Panels in relation to the appointment of Deputy PCCs. It was likely that the government would legislate around the issue of succession planning. The PCC intended to consult with the Panel towards the end of the month.