

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Police and Crime Panel** held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Friday 17 September 2021 at 2.00 pm**

Present:

Councillor B Jones (Chair)

Durham County Council:

Councillors D Boyes, L Brown (Substitute), D Nicholls, J Nicholson, R Potts, A Savory and S Quinn (Substitute)

Darlington Borough Council:

Councillors J Dulston and Mr D K G Dodwell

Independent Co-opted Members:

Mr D K G Dodwell

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lucy Hovvels and Mamie Simmons, and co-opted Member Nicholas Cooke.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor Liz Brown substituted for Councillor Mamie Simmons, and Councillor Shirley Quinn substituted for Councillor Lucy Hovvels.

3 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2021 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

4 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Draft Police and Crime Plan

The Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner which presented the draft Police and Crime Plan 2021-2022, reflecting the results of the consultation process (for copy see file of Minutes).

In presenting the report the PCC advised that the revised Plan was for review and comment by the Panel before the final version was issued. The PCC thanked the Panel and the respondents to the consultation for their contributions, and the Team for their work to complete the Plan.

Over 700 responses had been received to the consultation, and the PCC suggested bringing the key issues and comments to the Panel for information.

Councillor Boyes was encouraged by the response to the consultation, and asked what weight would be given to the comments received and how the issues raised would be prioritised. The PCC in highlighting some of the key issues which were reflected in the Plan following the consultation, informed the Panel that anti-social behaviour continued to be the top priority for the public. Drug use/dealing and fly-tipping were other key areas of concern, together with speeding, off-road bikes and vandalism, and these were also reflected in the Plan. Whilst these were the areas of concern identified by the majority of respondents, she was mindful of other areas of high harm such as domestic violence, hate crime and burglaries. She would continue to review the priorities throughout her term of office to ensure they remained relevant.

Following a question from Councillor Potts, the PCC stated that new strategic measures were being developed for future performance management reporting. Anti-social behaviour was widely under-reported and one of the key priorities to address this was to improve the 101 system, or as an alternative to encourage reporting to Crimestoppers.

Mr Dodwell asked if the Government's recent announcement to tackle crimes against women would impact upon the Plan. The PCC confirmed that crimes against women and girls was identified as a key deliverable within the Plan, and the Force was already engaging with partners who were all committed to addressing this as a priority. The County was also part of a pilot which supported victims at all stages from reporting a crime to receiving justice.

Councillor Nicholls welcomed the Plan, and reinforced the importance of tackling crimes against women and girls. He also welcomed the proposal to develop a strategy to change attitudes and improve knowledge of and response to crimes against women. Councillor Nicholls referred to the 101 chat function and was pleased that this provided an immediate response to those reporting a crime.

The PCC confirmed that every aspect of the 101 system was being examined, and the chat function was part of this review. In reply to a question from Councillor Liz Brown, the PCC confirmed that the chat function was not yet available 24/7, but this was under review.

A recruitment process was underway to appoint a Victims Champion, Anti-Social Behaviour Champion, Domestic Violence Champion and Survivor Champion. The Champions could be asked to attend the next meeting of the Panel to give an overview of their roles.

Resolved:

That the content of the Plan be noted and agreed.

6 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).

Following a question from Mr Dodwell, it was confirmed that the figures presented regarding social media activity were proportionate to the population in the PCC areas.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

7 Performance Progress Report

The Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner which provided an update on the current work strands associated with developing performance management of the Police and Crime Plan 2021 – 2024 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

That the report be noted and the new iteration of the Quarterly Progress Report be awaited.

8 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 Service (HMICFRS) which had required a PCC comment as follows:

- A duty to protect: Police use of effective measures in cases involving violence against women and girls
- Interim Report: Inspection into how effectively the police engage with women and girls
- A review of Fraud: Time to choose
- A joint thematic inspection of the police and CPS's response to rape – Phase One: From report to police or CPS decision to take no further action.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

9 PCC Decision Records

The Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner which provided an update on the PCC's decision register for 2021-2022 and addressed the forward plan (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

10 PCC Commissioning Update

The Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner which provided an update of funding decisions taken at the Commissioning Boards in July and August 2021 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Following a question from Councillor Dulston, the Head of Governance and Finance explained that the commissioning process was fundamental to the fair distribution of public money and funding.

The PCC added that as a new PCC she was looking at how funding could be distributed fairly to deliver the priorities identified in the Plan. In Durham this was being explored through the Area Action Partnerships, similarly in Darlington, through the Darlington Partnership.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

11 Complaints Update

The Panel considered a report of the Monitoring Officer and Clerk to the Police and Crime Panel which provided an update on complaints (for copy see file of Minutes).

Members were informed that between the 9 July 2021 and 9 September 2021 no formal complaints had been received against the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

12 Police and Crime Panel Work Programme update 2021/22

The Panel considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which provided an update on the Work Programme for 2021/2022 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Members noted that the Work Programme of the Panel was required to remain flexible to accommodate any additional items that may be identified throughout the year, including future performance reporting against the delivery of the priorities in the Police and Crime Plan.

Resolved:

The updated Work Programme for 2021/2022 be noted.

13 Any Other Business - Custody Suite

Councillor Boyes asked for an update in respect of the custody suite which was discussed at the last Panel meeting. The PCC responded that following that meeting the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner had considered how to engage the public for their views, and had invited public questions on the custody suite. An on-line meeting was then held to respond in detail to the queries raised.

Having completed the review, the PCC had approved the proposals for a central custody suite, with the additional requirement for the social value toolkit to be included in the procurement process. A key deciding factor for the PCC during her review of the proposals was the risks and responsibilities she had witnessed staff face in the custody suites. The new central custody suite would mitigate these risks and provide a better facility for both custody staff and detainees.