

# Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

25 February 2014

## Police and Crime Panel



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### Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

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#### Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with progress of the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) for the Durham Constabulary Force area.

#### Background

2. This report builds upon information previously presented to the Committee and the aim of this report is to provide an update to Members in relation to the Panel's meetings on 5 December 2013 and 3 February 2014.

#### Detail

3. **PCP Meeting 5 December 2013**

The purpose of this meeting was in accordance with the Police, Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 to hold a confirmation hearing for the Commissioner's proposed candidate, Mr Gary Ridley for the role of his Chief Finance Officer. In advance of the meeting the Panel received concerns by the Joint Audit Committee regarding maintaining independence as the proposed candidate is also the Section 151 Officer to the Chief Constable.
4. During the hearing, the Panel questioned both the Commissioner and Mr Ridley and was reassured by the following points:
  - The additional information provided by the PCC through an addendum report within the Panel's papers that identifies a Dispute Resolution Process;
  - That the Joint Audit Committee will oversee governance of the two roles;
  - That this arrangement will be reviewed after a 6 months, and
  - Mr Ridley's clear and confident assurance to the Panel of his understanding of his powers and duties as a Section 151 Officer.
5. On the basis of this assurance, the Panel recommend the appointment of Mr Gary Ridley as the Chief Finance Officer for the Police and Crime Commissioner for Durham in accordance with Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

6. **PCP Meeting 3 February 2014**

The focus of the Panel's meeting was to consider the Commissioner's report on precept determination for 2014/15. It is to note that at the time of the report being presented it was not known to what level the Government's Council Tax capping criteria would be for 2014/15.

7. Following consideration and questioning from Members, the Panel agreed the Commissioner's proposal to set the Council Tax requirement at a level that results in a 2% increase in Band D Council Tax for the year ending 31 March 2015, subject to this complying with the Government's Council Tax capping criteria and that in the event of a cap lower than 2% being imposed it is set at a level that results in the maximum permissible increase.

8. The Panel then received a report from the Commissioner to update the Panel with information in relation to the current performance, research and activity to improve public confidence. The report highlighted partnership working with Durham University Business School to more fully understand what drives public confidence and that following upward trend in crime locality confidence plans had been revisited to provide a clearer focus for operational staff on what needs to be delivered. Members were informed that clear actions have been set for the current aims to reduce crime, improve community engagement, police effectiveness and serve behaviour.

9. At this meeting, the Panel also agreed reports to continue existing joint working arrangements with Overview and Scrutiny functions at both constituent authorities and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Police and Crime Commissioner and the PCP and these be reviewed on annual basis.

**Recommendation**

9. Members of the Committee are asked to note information contained within the report and comment accordingly.

**Background Papers**

None.

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance** – the report contains information following the Panel’s consideration of the PCC precept for 2014/15.

**Staffing – None**

**Risk - None**

**Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – None**

**Accommodation - None**

**Crime and Disorder** – information contained within this report is linked to Altogether Safer element of the Council Plan and establishment of a Police and Crime Panel to scrutinise the elected Police and Crime Commissioner.

**Human Rights – None**

**Consultation – None**

**Procurement – None**

**Disability Issues – None**

**Legal Implications** –the Panel’s responsibilities within the Police, Reform and Social Responsibility Act is referenced within the report