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Mr Ron Hogg
Durham Police and Crime Commissioner
County Hall
Durham
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6th March 2013

Dear Mr Hogg,

Police and Crime Panel Response to the Draft Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017

As Chair of the Durham Police and Crime Panel, I would like to thank you and your Chief Executive, Lesley Davies for attending the Panel's meeting on 5th March 2013 to present your first draft Police and Crime Plan as Durham Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).

The Panel acknowledge the work that has been undertaken within a relatively short time frame since taking office to produce a draft plan and in accordance with the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the following are comments for your consideration.

Priorities

The Panel supports both community and personal priorities that have been identified following consultation including the Force's Strategic Assessment. In particular the Panel welcomes reducing the impact of Domestic Violence and Hate Crime as your key priorities as these are areas that can often go unreported and the hidden harm can have a devastating effect on individuals, families and communities.

In so doing, the Panel acknowledges the strategic links that have been made between the Plan with that of the Local Authority Council Plans and Community Safety Partnership strategic plans across County Durham and Darlington.

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Whilst identified as a national threat within the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR), Members of the Panel noted positive work undertaken to tackle Organised Crime but feel that this is an important area that should be referenced more explicitly within the Plan. We acknowledge that the SPR priorities are included within in the Durham Constabulary's force plan (plan on a page) and that linkage across plans is very important. Increased clarity of the linkage across plans is vital for the Police and Crime Panel to monitor the Police and Crime Commissioner's achievement of his plan.

Performance

The approach you described at the meeting whereby you meet on a regular basis to hold to account the Chief Constable and his Heads of Service on performance and value for money is also welcomed. The Panel look forward to receiving monthly monitoring reports of key measures and indicators including performance in relation to improving public confidence and public satisfaction levels. We note that you will also produce a quarterly performance report that will be available to communities.

Whilst it is acknowledged within the draft plan that performance monitoring information is to developed, the Panel request that a performance framework that includes measurable targets and indicators (hard measures) including an Action Plan with milestones is developed to enable the Panel to effectively monitor your performance areas on a 6 monthly basis. The Panel suggest that the first round of such information is shared at the PCP at its meeting in October 2013.

Engagement

The Panel note consultation conducted and planned with a wide range of audiences to seek comment on community priorities and your approach to actively embrace equality and diversity matters. The Panel also note your approach to working with and engaging hard to reach groups and communities. In addition, utilising modern methods of social media and digital democracy will also capture a wider audience to communicate and seek views.

The Panel welcome your intention and encourage you to utilise 'easy to reach groups' and work with existing partnership forums including Area Action Partnerships within County Durham and would also encourage engagement with similar local forums within Darlington.

The Panel feel that engagement with these networks will also contribute to delivery of your priority 'to improve engagement with local communities across the Constabulary area.' In addition, information sharing on the work of both the PCC and the Constabulary could also be done through existing publications that are produced and circulated to residents by Durham County Council's 'Durham County News' and Darlington Borough Council's 'Darlington Together'.

General Comments

The Panel request that the Plan adopts plain English so that it is accessible and easy to read. Furthermore, that a reference is made to how your role will comply with the Nolan principles. The Panel note existing financial pressures on public sector organisations and welcome your approach to work with partners on joint approaches to deliver greater efficiencies and savings. The Panel look forward to your invitation to engage in the discussion on the forthcoming 'Policing the Future' debate.

To conclude, in accordance with the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, I trust you find the Panel's views are constructive and contribute to delivery of your final Police and Crime Plan and I look forward to your response.

Yours Sincerely



Councillor Lucy Howels
Chair of the Durham Police and Crime Panel

Cc: Lesley Davies, Chief Executive, Office of Durham Police and Crime
Commissioner
Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive
Colette Longbottom, Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Feisal Jassat, Overview and Scrutiny Manager
Ian Croft, Senior Committee Services Officer