

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Police and Crime Panel** held in Committee Room 1B, County Hall, Durham on **Monday 3 March 2014 at 11.45 am**

Present:

Councillor L Hovvels (Chair)

Durham County Council:

Councillors J Armstrong, D Boyes, P Brookes, S Forster, A Hopgood and A Willis

Darlington Borough Council:

Councillors S Harker, B Jones and N Vaulks

Independent Co-opted Members:

N Vaulks

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors I Haszeldine and D Stoker and Ms K Larkin-Bramley.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor A Hopgood attended as named substitute for Councillor D Stoker.

3 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2014 were confirmed by the Panel as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Police and Crime Plan

The Panel considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which presented the Police and Crime Commissioner's revised Police and Crime Plan 2013-17 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Commissioner presented his revised Police and Crime Plan for 2013-2017 and provided the Panel with information about the contents of the Plan.

Councillor B Jones referred to the priority of reducing hate crime and asked about the levels of hate crime and how it was identified as such. The Commissioner replied that although levels of hate crime were very low, there was concern that the level of reporting such crimes was low. Levels of hate crime were monitored and a coherent hate crime strategy now existed. Feedback received from the Hate Crime Action Group showed that more positive support was now being provided and confidence was growing.

Councillor B Jones then referred to the priority of tackling the harm caused to individuals and communities by alcohol and drugs and asked how this aligned to the views of the Chief Constable on the legalisation of drugs. The Commissioner replied that the Chief Constable did not advocate the decriminalisation of drugs but proposed the decriminalisation of being a drug addict, a view which the Commissioner supported. A lot acquisitive crime currently carried out was to feed the drug habit of addicts, and money from drugs purchases went into organised crime groups. If addicts were provided with drugs in drug consumption rooms, this would remove the need for acquisitive crime, reduce the risk of blood borne disease, reduce the chances of overdose and reduce the supply of money to organised crime groups. Additionally, the use of drug consumption rooms could lead to the rehabilitation of addicts.

Councillor Brookes, referring to hate crime, informed the Panel that this was most predicated upon ignorance and prejudice, the solution to which was partnership working for the education of communities. The Commissioner replied that Durham Agency Against Crime delivered such awareness packages into communities.

Councillor Boyes, while agreeing with the views of the Chief Constable and the Commissioner relating to drugs and organised crime, suggested that he Plan should include greater detail of actions taken regarding drugs and organised crime.

Councillor Hovvells informed the Commissioner that she was pleased that the impact that mental health issues had on services was included in the Plan and that the Commissioner was part of a national working group looking into mental health issues as part of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, to help to shape local and national policing development.

Resolved:

That the comments of the Panel on the Plan be fed back to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

6 Draft Protocol on Exercise of the PCC's Power under Section 38 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011

The Panel considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive regarding a draft protocol between the Police and Crime Commissioner, Police and Crime Panel and

the Chief Constable on Exercise of the Commissioner's Power under Section 38 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

That the draft protocol be approved and that it be signed off by the Chair of the Panel, the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable.

The Chairman of the meeting was of the opinion that the following item of business was of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration because of the need to update Members on a funding application.

7 Medomsley Inquiry

The Police and Crime Commissioner provided the Panel with details of an application for funding in relation to the Medomsley Inquiry.