

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Police and Crime Panel** held in Endeavour Room, Police Headquarters - Aykley Heads, Durham on **Tuesday 28 October 2014 at 1.00 pm**

Present:

Councillor L Hovvels (Chair)

Durham County Council:

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

Darlington Borough Council:

Councillors S Harker and H Scott

Independent Co-opted Members:

K Larkin-Bramley

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) informed the Panel that this was the last working week for Pauline Curry, Office Manager in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner before she retired. The PCC praised the work of Pauline during her time in post, particularly her help during the transformation from Police Authority to Police and Crime Commissioner. Councillor Hovvels also praised the work of Pauline and both personally, and on behalf of the Panel, wished her all the best in her retirement.

1 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2014 were confirmed by the Panel as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to K Larkin-Bramley's apologies being recorded.

2 Apologies for Absence

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

3 Substitute Members

Councillor H Scott as substitute member for Councillor B Jones.

4 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 WOW Awards

Gary Ridley, Assistant Chief Officer, Durham Constabulary informed the Panel that Durham Constabulary had been nominated in three categories of the 2014 WOW Awards.

The categories the Constabulary had been nominated under were Serving the Community: Best Organisation, WOW! You Changed My Life and WOW! What a Team. The Panel received video presentations which provided details of two of the three nomination categories.

Referring to the 'You Changed My Life' nomination, Councillor Forster asked whether counselling services were available for officers involved in this type of work. The Assistant Chief Officer replied that the force and Police and Crime Commissioner had been approached by the Police Federation with a request that officers in specialist roles be given psychological evaluation and the force was looking to commission an external service to provide this, as well as providing training to Inspectors and Sergeants to identify issues. He added that the force operated a confidential helpline, chaplaincy service and an IT package called 'Beating the Blues'

The Assistant Chief Officer informed the Panel that the video presentations they had received were examples of work the force undertook on a daily basis and they emphasised that the Police Service was not merely a service to reduce crime.

6 Violence Against Women and Girls - 'One Year On'

The Panel received a presentation from Sweetie Sahani, Staff Officer to the Police and Crime Commissioner, which provided an update on the Regional Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy which was launched in November 2013 (for copy of Strategy and Slides see file of Minutes).

Councillor Boyes asked whether there was a consistency of response from partners involved in the Strategy. The Staff Officer replied that there was consistency in their responses, adding that the HMIC had highlighted strong partnership working.

Councillor Scott referred to the Alcohol Harm Reduction Unit and asked whether a presentation on the Unit and its work could be made to Darlington Borough Council's Health Scrutiny Committee. The Staff Officer replied that this would be possible and she would discuss this further outside of the meeting.

Councillor Harker referred to the wearing of body cameras by police officers when attending domestic abuse incidents and sought clarification around this. The Staff Officer replied that the Chief Constable had issued a directive that such footage should be taken when attending domestic abuse incidents, although officers needed to be mindful of what the incident was, and added that the use of such video evidence had been accepted by the Crown Prosecution Service. The Assistant Chief Officer informed the Panel that Durham was the first constabulary to equip every constable and PCSO with body cameras, which while capturing evidence, also had the effect of diffusing offenders and the force receiving fewer complaints. The force had evaluated the use of body cameras and provided the Home Office with this evaluation.

Councillor Brookes referred to tackling the issue of violence against women and girls being labour-intensive in terms of outcomes, with any successful campaign resulting in increased reporting, and asked how this would be dealt with in terms of resources. The PCC replied that there was a need to build strategies with partners so that victims of such crimes could also be signposted to partner agencies as well as being dealt with by the police.

Councillor Forster praised the work of the Strategy and of the force in being forward-looking but asked about the issue of abuse towards males. The PCC replied that although the thrust of the Strategy was towards violence against women and girls, in the future this would be expanded to include same-sex relationships and also abuse towards males.

Councillor Boyes requested that a further update on the Strategy be brought to the Panel in 12 months time.

Resolved:

That the presentation be noted and a further presentation be brought to the Panel in 12 months time.

7 Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017

The Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) which provided details of progress in the achievement of policing priorities in the Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Scott referred to the press and publicity the PCC had received around his drugs policy, some of which had been negative, and stressed the importance of effectively communicating the policy and its reasoning. Councillor Stoker also asked whether the Chief Constable's position on drugs policy was the same as that of the Commissioner. The PCC replied that the position on drugs policy of the Chief Constable was the same as his and, referring to publicity, informed the Panel that he would give the press a full briefing on his drugs policy prior to the drug symposium he would be hosting on 27 November 2014, which was referred to in his report. Councillor Armstrong reminded the Panel that there would always be an issue of being mis-reported in the press.

Councillor Boyes expressed concern at the rise in the number of incidents relating to violence against the person, which had been explained by a change in the method of recording, and asked whether this rise would be a 'one-off' as a result of this change. The PCC replied that this figure should plateau, although it would be monitored.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

8 Budget Monitoring: Actual to 30 September 2014 and Outturn to 31 March 2015

The Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner Chief Finance Officer which outlined the performance of the 2014/15 revenue and capital budgets as at 30 September 2014 and provided a forecast outturn to 31 March 2015 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Police and Crime Commissioner informed the Panel that he would provide a presentation to a future meeting around the restructure of his office.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

9 Task and Finish Group Activity - Work Programme Development

The Panel considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which presented findings and considered proposals to develop the Panel's work programme following work through 'task and finish' group activity (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Brookes considered that the recommendations from the task and finish group would be helpful in taking the work of the Panel forward and welcomed the proposed two half day Panel training and development sessions.

In reply to a question from Councillor Scott, it was confirmed that Panel substitute Members would be invited to attend the training and development sessions.

Resolved:

That:

- (a) Standard items on the Panel's agenda include reports on:
 - (i) decisions by the PCC;
 - (ii) commissioning activity of the PCC in relation to priority areas of the Police and Crime Plan;
 - (iii) a presentation focused on an area on delivery of a priority area within the Police and Crime Plan; and
 - (iv) feedback reports from HMIC inspections and topical issues
- (b) the Panel's meeting in December includes a report on the PCC's Budget and precept consultation.
- (c) the Office of the PCC include Members of the Police and Crime Panel within its circulation of all press releases from the Commissioner
- (d) two half day Panel training and development sessions are arranged throughout the municipal year

10 HMIC Inspection Feedback

The Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner Chief Finance Officer which provided feedback from the latest Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies (HMIC) Inspections of the Force (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Chief Finance Officer informed the Panel that the two HMIC reports outlined in the report were generally positive in content and portrayed a force which was well managed and led and where there were aspects of service delivery to be improved, these would be addressed.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

11 Exclusion of Public

Resolved:

That under Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1,3 and 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

12 Appointment of Independent Co-opted Members

The Panel considered a report of the Monitoring Officer regarding the appointment of two people as independent co-opted Members (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

That:

- (i) Nicholas James Hawksley Cooke and Derek Kenneth Graham Dodwell be appointed to the positions of independent co-opted member on the Police and Crime Panel from 1 November 2014 to 30 April 2017
- (ii) That a reserve candidate be appointed for a period of one year from 1 November 2014 should any vacancy arise, subject to the receipt of satisfactory references
- (iii) That the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Panel, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, be authorised to consider the references for the reserve candidate, should a vacancy arise.

13 Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012

The Panel considered a report of the Monitoring Officer regarding a referral under the 'Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012' (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

That the matter be recorded as a conduct matter and be referred to the IPCC.

Before closing the meeting the Chairman informed the Panel that this was the last meeting before the current Independent Co-opted Members term of office expired on 30 October 2014. The Chairman thanked the current Co-opted Members for their valuable contribution to the work of the Panel and wished them, both personally and on behalf of the Panel, best wishes for the future.