

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Police and Crime Panel** held in Committee Room 1A, County Hall, Durham on **Thursday 1 February 2018 at 10.00 am**

Present:

Councillor L Hovvels (Chair)

Durham County Council:

Councillors A Bainbridge, D Boyes, P Brookes, L Brown and A Shield

Darlington Borough Council:

Councillors S Harker, B Jones (Vice-Chair) and M Knowles

Independent Co-opted Members:

Mr N Cooke and Mr D Dodwell

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Robinson and Simmons.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor A Shield as substitute member for Councillor Robinson and Councillor L Brown as substitute Member for Councillor Simmons.

3 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 January 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor Brookes referred to the provision of information to Parish Council's which was discussed at the meeting on 4 January 2018 and asked whether there was any update on this. The PCVC replied that he had discussed community engagement with the force. A police officer would attend meetings of a Parish Council if there was a specific reason to do so although it would be expected that this would be the first agenda item for discussion and it was not anticipated that an officer would attend more than two meetings in a year. Councillor Brookes replied that while Parish Council's did not expect an officer in attendance at meetings, crime data for the Parish area would be useful. Mr Dodwell requested that the PCVC circulate this information to Parish Clerks.

The PCVC referred to the incident at the Happy Wanderer which had been raised at the previous meeting and Councillor Hopgood being unaware that the PCVC had visited the victim. The PCVC informed the Panel that across Durham and Darlington he had 176 elected Councillors to liaise with and would endeavour to

keep local members informed wherever possible. However, he apologised if sometimes there was an oversight with this liaison.

Councillor Hovvells informed the Panel that congratulations had been sent on behalf of the Panel to Gary Ridley on the award of his OBE.

4 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Consultation on Council Tax Police Precept 2018-19

The Panel considered a report of the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner which provided an update on the process for setting the Policing Precept for 2018-19 and which sought the Panel's support in doing so (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner informed the Panel that engagement on the proposed precept had taken place at Area Action Partnership meetings, drop-in sessions in Darlington and Durham City, online and in local media.

The PCVC informed the Panel that at most AAP meetings attended, support for the proposed increase was strong. The online response showed a balance of opinion for and against the proposed increase, although only 52 responses were received.

In response to a question from Councillor Boyes regarding the proportion of funding provided by Government grant and that provided by local taxation the PCVC agreed to provide the exact figures after the meeting.

Councillor Boyes asked about the level of reserves and how these compared to other forces. The PCVC replied that the level of general reserves was between 4% and 5%, with earmarked reserves also being held. Some reserves had been used to offset liabilities to make savings.

Mr Dodwell referred to the student population within Durham who did not pay Council Tax and therefore did not contribute towards policing and asked what revenue the force received from the University. Councillor Brown replied that the University contributed £11,000 a year towards policing, which equated to half a PCSO. Councillor Brown asked how this level of funding compared to other University towns. The PCVC was not aware of how it compared but agreed to look into this.

Councillor Shield asked what proportion of the precept covered the provision of police pensions. He expressed concern that a number police officers retired from the force with their pension and were then re-employed within the force as staff members.

The Chief of Staff replied that police pensions were paid from the Police Pension Fund and as such none of the precept was used to pay police pensions. Any officer who retired and was then re-employed as a staff member would be subject to a competitive interview process and, if appointed, would be done so on merit.

Councillor Shield clarified that he wanted to know what percentage of the precept was used to pay the Police employer contributions into the pension fund. The PCVC and Chief of Staff were unaware of this percentage but agreed to provide Councillor Shield with this information once it was known.

Councillor Shield appreciated that while the skills such officers may have acquired during their careers were an attractive proposition for an employer, there was also a level of social responsibility to ensure young people were presented with the opportunity to obtain such skills. The PCVC replied that the force appointed apprentices as well as having programmes such as the police cadets, with apprentices obtaining accredited skills. However, it was important that the best candidate was appointed for any job.

Resolved:

- (i) That the consultation returns be noted
- (ii) That the proposed 7.09% precept increase be agreed
- (iii) That the Chairman respond to the PCVC
- (iv) That the response of the Chairman be published online.

6 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

That under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

7 Concerning a complaint about the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner

The Panel considered a report of the Monitoring Officer, Durham County Council regarding a complaint made about the Police Crime And Victims' Commissioner (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Monitoring Officer provided the Panel with background details of the complaint, the role of the Panel, relevant legislation and protocols and the PCVCs response to the complaint.

The Monitoring Officer informed the Panel that the information supplied by the complainant and the PCVCs response had been evaluated and it was recommended that the complaint be not upheld.

Members of the Panel discussed the complaint and the PCVCs response and it was:

Resolved:

- (i) That the matters complained of are not of sufficient seriousness to warrant referral to the IPCC (Regulation 13).
- (ii) That the first two complaints be treated as having been resolved under Regulation 28(8)

(iii) That no further action be taken in relation to the third complaint.