

Cleveland Police and Crime Panel

A meeting of Cleveland Police and Crime Panel was held on Tuesday, 5th February, 2013.

Present: Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E(Chairman), Cllr Charles Rooney(Vice-Chairman), Cllr Chris Abbott, Geoff Baines, Cllr Ken Dixon, Gwen Duncan, Cllr George Dunning, Cllr Ray Goddard, Cllr Terry Laing, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Carl Richardson, Cllr Bernie Taylor

Officers: Mike Batty, David Bond, Michael Henderson (Stockton On Tees Borough Council).

Also in attendance: Jacqui Cheer (Temporary Chief Constable); Barry Coppinger (Police and Crime Commissioner), Michael Porter (Chief Finance Officer – Commissioner’s Office)) and Joanne Hodgkinson (Governance and Policy Development Officer – Commissioner’s Office), Denise Ogden (Hartlepool Borough Council)

Apologies: Mayor Stuart Drummond; Cllr Peter Cox

PCP 32/12 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Ken Dixon declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest due to his son being a serving Cleveland Police Force Officer.

PCP 33/12 Minutes of the meeting and the confirmation hearing held on 7 December 2012

The minutes of the meetings held on 7th December were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

PCP 34/12 Police and Crime Plan 2013 - 2016

The Panel received a report from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland ('the Commissioner') that presented the draft Police and Crime Plan 2013 - 2016.

The draft Plan set the context and background to the Commissioner's objectives and commitments, along with the performance framework outcomes expected.

Members noted that, before issuing the Plan, the Commissioner must, amongst other things, send a draft plan or variation to this Panel and he must have regard to any report/recommendations the Panel made.

The Commissioner explained that the Plan had been developed from the information and pre-election manifesto commitments prepared during the Police and Crime Commissioner election process and consultation activities. In preparing the draft the Commissioner had completed rigorous assessment of the issues related to the prevention and management of crime and antisocial behaviour. This included an assessment of information available in relation to Force capacity and capability to deal with issues arising.

The Plan identified 5 key objectives:-

- Retain and Develop Neighbourhood Policing.
- Ensure a better deal for victims and witnesses.
- Divert people from offending, with focus on rehabilitation and the

- prevention of reoffending.
- Develop better coordination, communication and partnership between agencies to make the best use of resources.
- Working for better industrial and company relations.

The Panel asked a number of questions and discussion covered a number of different aspects of the plan, including:

- when the performance information would be available and how would it be compared, for instance, ranked against other police force's performance.

Members noted that performance measuring, outcome and targets were being developed and would be included in the Plan at the earliest possible time. It was explained that, for the purposes of comparing performance, Cleveland would be grouped with forces that had broadly similar socio-demographic characteristics. These groupings were known as 'Most Similar Forces' (MSFs). Cleveland Police MSF comprised Gwent, Merseyside, Northumbria, South Wales, South Yorkshire and West Midlands.

- it was noted that the Plan identified a commitment to respond to all reports of antisocial behaviour within 24 hours. Members queried what such a response may involve.

It was explained that, for minor incidents, the response would likely be a phone call but, for more serious incidents, a home visit might be appropriate. It was suggested that this be made explicit in the Plan.

Members noted the considerable amount of consultation that had taken place with regard to the Plan. The Panel was informed that many organisations had objectives in common with the Plan and were keen to work closely with the Commissioner.

The Panel was happy with the approach adopted by the Commissioner and supported the draft Plan.

RESOLVED that:

1. the Police and Crime Plan 2013-16 be supported.
2. the Commissioner be requested to consider, in terms of his commitment that there should be a response to reports of anti social behaviour within 24 hours, making the nature of the response someone can expect, specific.

**PCP
35/12**

The 2013/14 Precept Proposal

- a) Commissioner's Report**
- b) Scrutiny of precepts - guidance**

Members considered a report that presented the Commissioner's proposed precept of 1.99%, for 2013/14. Members were also provided with a document that provided guidance relating to scrutiny of precepts.

The Commissioner explained that in making his proposal he had taken account

of the following:

- The financial impact on the people of Cleveland.
- The financial needs of the organisation, as currently projected, both for 2013/14 and in the future.
- The offer of a grant from the Government if he chose to freeze the precept.
- The limits imposed by the Government on precept increase before a referendum would be triggered in Cleveland.
- advice of his Chief Finance Officer in terms of the realistic options that he had.
- discussions with the temporary Chief Constable and engaged and consulted with a wider partner base.

Members noted the impact of choosing to freeze the precept in 2013, instead of the 1.99% increase that the Commissioner was proposing. It was clear that there would be little impact in 2013/14 and 2014/15, however when the grant ceased in 2015/16 there was likely to be around £550k per annum permanently less to spend on Policing and Crime within Cleveland. This would be the equivalent of 11 FTE Police Officers or 18 PCSOs.

The Commissioner explained that, based on the current forecasts of funding, that would be available to him in 2015/16 and the cost of the current expenditure plans for 2015/16 there would be a £5.2m budget gap rising to £8.7m in 2016/17. Choosing to freeze the precept in 2013/14 would add to this gap.

The Commissioner reminded the Panel that any precept increase, in excess of 2% would be subject to a referendum. Costs associated with the referendum across the Force Area would be £600k. This cost would need to be met by his Office.

The Panel noted that the impact of the Commissioner's proposed precept increase would result in a weekly increase of 5p for Band A properties to 15p for Band H properties. As over 80% of properties in the area were property Bands A - C, the majority of households would be paying 5p - 7p extra per week.

In conclusion the Commissioner formally proposed a precept increase of 1.99% for 2013/14 and asked that the Panel support it.

The Panel raised a number of queries and made comments relating to the proposal and the associated information it had been provided with. Discussion took place with regard to a number of areas and included:-

- the use of General Fund Reserves. Going forward this would be reviewed/evaluated to identify any further reserves that could be released.

- cost associated with the Sacristy investigation. It was noted that these costs had been met by government.

- 22% projected savings in costs associated with the Commissioner's Office (when compared to the previous Police Authority office)

- the consequences of accepting the Government 1% grant on budgets, and in particular, post 2014/15.

- the use of Regulation 19 within the force and the strategic planning opportunities this allowed.

Following a query relating to the number of officers, under the age of 26, currently serving on Cleveland Police Force it was agreed that the Panel be forwarded information relating to the Force's age, gender and ethnicity profile.

Members noted the consultation the Commissioner had undertaken and the issues he had considered. The majority of Panel members supported the proposal he had made and felt that residents would also support what would be a fairly small weekly increase in each households contribution to the precept.

RESOLVED that

1. the Commissioner' proposed precept of 1.99%, for 2013/4, be supported.
2. the Panel be provided with information relating to the age, gender and ethnicity of Cleveland Police Force.

**PCP
36/12** **Decisions/Meetings of the Commissioner**

The Panel was provided with information relating to decisions made by the Police and Crime Commissioner since the last meeting in December 2012. The Panel was also provided with a brief update in relation to meetings attended by the Commissioner and details of future, planned meetings.

During consideration of the information provided, Members asked for details of the Audit Committee's membership.

RESOLVED that:

1. the information provided to the Panel be noted.
2. details of the Audit Committee's membership be forwarded to the Committee.

**PCP
37/12** **Forward Plan - to follow**

Members considered a Forward Plan for the Panel.

It was noted that the meeting scheduled for 20th February 2013 would no longer be needed as the Panel had agreed to support the Commissioner's precept proposals.

The Chairman raised the issue of start times of the Panel. After a brief discussion the Panel agreed that, as far as practicable, all future meetings would begin at 5.00pm.

RESOLVED that:

1. the proposed Forward Plan be agreed.

2. as far as practicable, all future meetings of the Panel will start at 5.00pm

**PCP
38/12**

Mayor Stuart Drummond

The Chairman referred to Mayor Stuart Drummond who was one of Hartlepool Borough Council's representatives on this Panel. She reminded Members that from 5 May he would cease to be Mayor of Hartlepool and would therefore no longer serve on this Panel.

It was agreed that the Panel's thanks be recorded and forwarded to Mayor Drummond, not only for the work he had done on this Panel, and its Appointment Sub Panel, but also during his time on the Cleveland Police Authority.

RESOLVED that the Panel's thanks be recorded and relayed to Mayor Drummond.