

# Cleveland Police and Crime Panel

A meeting of Cleveland Police and Crime Panel was held on Monday, 10th June, 2013.

**Present:** Cllr Chris Abbott, Geoff Baines, Cllr Ken Dixon, Gwen Duncan, Cllr George Dunning, Cllr Ian Jeffrey, Cllr Hazel Pearson O.B.E, Cllr Charles Rooney, Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Carl Richardson, Cllr Bernie Taylor

**Officers:** David Bond, Mike Batty, Michael Henderson (Stockton on Tees Borough Council)

**Also in attendance:** Barry Copping (Commissioner), Michael Porter, Joanne Hodgkinson (Commissioner's Office), Chief Superintendent Ciaron Irvine (Cleveland Police)

**Apologies:** Cllr Christopher Akers-Belcher and Cllr Terry Laing

## **1 Welcome and Introduction**

Those present were welcomed to the meeting and Members and Officers introduced themselves.

## **2 Appointment of Chairman 2013/14**

Members considered the appointment of a Chairman for 2013/14.

RESOLVED that Councillor Norma Stephenson OBE be appointed Chairman for 2013/14.

## **3 Evacuation Procedure /Mobile Phones**

The Chairman presented the Evacuation Procedures and reminded those present to turn off, or turn to silent, any mobile phone, or similar device, they might have with them.

## **4 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations.

## **5 Appointment of Vice Chairman 2013/14**

Members considered the appointment of a Vice Chairman for 2013/14.

RESOLVED that Councillor Charles Rooney be appointed Vice Chairman for 2013/14.

## **6 Minutes of the meeting and confirmation hearing held on 5 February 2013**

The minutes of the meetings held on 5 February 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

## 7 Police and Crime Commissioner - Annual Report 2012/13

The Panel was reminded that the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 required the Police and Crime Commissioner to prepare an Annual Report.

The Commissioner provided the Panel with a copy of his Annual Report 2012/13. It was explained that whilst financial and performance information covered a full 12 month period (1 April 2012 - 31 March 2013) activities reported on focussed on the period from the date the Commissioner took up office to the end of the 12/13 financial year (22 November 2012 - 31 March 2013).

In presenting his report the Commissioner highlighted some of the significant events that had occurred during the period the report related to:

- Establishment of arrangements with the three north east Police and Crime Commissioners paving the way for even greater operational and 'back office' collaboration, and policy work.
- Establishment of an independent joint Audit Committee.
- Cleveland Community Safety Awards - The Commissioner made an invitation to Members of the Panel to attend on 15 July 2013.
- Commitment to supporting the Living Wage Campaign and ensuring that contractors did too.
- reviewing options with regard to a new Police Headquarters that would save money and stimulate the economy.

Members of the Panel asked a number of questions and received responses from the Commissioner. During this process the Commissioner indicated that

- with regard to the possible new Headquarters, he expected that money would be saved in terms of reduced debt and revenue costs.
- he was looking to work with North Yorkshire and, in particular, within the rural fringes of Cleveland in terms of Farming Issues and Rural Neighbourhoods.
- he recognised Domestic Violence as a considerable on-going problem and was looking at supporting prevention and creating an environment where victims were confident about coming forward. He had established a Victims Strategic Planning Group to bring together key agencies. It was early days but a positive start had been made.

RESOLVED that the Police and Crime Commissioner's Annual Report 2012/13 be supported.

## **8 Police and Crime Commissioner - Governance**

The Panel considered a report that provided an update in relation to the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee report on PCC Register of Interests.

The Commissioner provided a copy of the Home Affairs Committee's published report and pointed out that it had suggested that Cleveland had not been particularly forthcoming in the provision of information. The Commissioner indicated that he was disappointed in this suggestion given his commitment to openness, honesty and integrity. He signposted Panel Members to his web site which demonstrated this commitment. The web site had been launched in November 2012 and this had continued to be developed. It provided a very wide range of financial and other information, and more than was required by law.

The Commissioner gave examples of errors within the Home Affairs Committee's report that he felt indicated its shortcomings.

The Commissioner restated his commitment to transparency and scrutiny and explained that he had appointed a wholly independent audit panel charged with scrutinising the Commission and the Force. External auditors had looked at the Commissioner's first few months in office and reported on 'Good Governance and Financial Management'. He suggested that the Police and Crime Panel could take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relied to manage this area were suitably designed, consistently applied and effective. A copy of the report was provided to members.

In conclusion the Commissioner indicated that, whilst welcoming the interest of the Home Affairs Committee he wished to counter any suggestion that he had not been willing to provide information to it. His web site contained all this and more, and was available for anyone to see. It had taken some time to populate but financial information had been on the site since 28 February.

The Panel noted the information provided to it and, in particular, the favourable audit report and considered that the Home Affairs Committee report had been hastily put together and more time should have been taken to ensure its accuracy.

RESOLVED that the information provided be noted.

## **9 Police and Crime Commissioner - Performance Update**

The Panel was presented with a report that outlined:

- Cleveland Police crime performance data for the year 2012/13.
- A breakdown of crime performance in each of the Cleveland Districts.
- Most Similar Force and National Positions for all crime categories.
- Outcomes of the Force's Operational Policing Priorities 2012/13.

During consideration of the data, reference was made to the Chief Constable's recent decision to disband the Force's mounted section.

The Commissioner explained that he had received a report on this matter from

the Chief Constable. He was aware of the many concerns on this issue, which were being brought to the attention of the Chief Constable. He would report back to the Panel when he had had chance to fully review the Chief Constable's report and the concerns expressed and issues raised by the public and this Panel. Ultimately, however, this was an operational decision made by the Chief Constable.

Other discussion related to the following:

- The effect that Welfare Reform may have on crime and would figures begin to increase. Noted that crime had been reducing for a number of years and it was considered that it would be difficult to predict what effect the reforms may have. It was agreed that it would be important that all agencies associated with crime reduction continued to work together and considered all opportunities.
- Special Constables and Volunteers - A recruitment Fair had been organised and other initiatives. Numbers of volunteers currently stood at 120 and 300 was considered to be the desired number.
- Unreported Crime (and so, not reflected in statistics).
- the 1 million youngsters unemployed and the potential implications of this. It was noted that the Commissioner was working with young people and he indicated that he would bring a report back to the Panel on this matter.
- significant increase in Robbery of Businesses, and particularly in Hartlepool. Noted that the number of occurrences of this was low and, therefore, any increase had a great impact in percentage terms. Local teams worked on these matters and the arrest rate for these crimes was good.
- there was lots of good partnership work being done with regard to retail crime, bringing retailers together and sharing information. The Retailers' role in reducing crime in this area was crucial.
- Categories of violent crime and injury caused by violent crime. There was concern about mental injury being recognised and recorded. It was explained that psychological anguish could be recorded and if caused over an extended period of time could be classified as Grievous Bodily Harm.
- Noted that problems associated with the night time economy was reducing and was considered to be as a result of actions by the Police and partners.

RESOLVED that:

1. the data presented be noted.
2. the Commissioner brings reports to the Panel relating to:
  - his scrutiny of the Chief Constable's decision to disband the mounted section.
  - the work he was undertaking with young people.

## **10 Programme of engagement for the Police and Crime Commissioner**

Members considered a report that provided a brief update in relation to meetings attended by the Police and Crime Commissioner from January 2013 - April 2013.

It was explained that since his election in November 2012 the Commissioner had attended well over 350 meetings with various partner organisations and residents across the Cleveland area.

Members were reminded that the Commissioner had pledged to visit all 82 wards across the Cleveland area and, so far, he had visited approximately 50. The Commissioner indicated that he would look to do this on an annual basis.

The Commissioner was congratulated for the commitment he had demonstrated in engaging with the public.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

## **11 Decisions of the Police and Crime Commissioner (including forward plan of decisions)**

Members considered a report that provided an update in relation to the decisions made by the Police and Crime Commissioner between January 2013 and 20 May 2013.

Members raised queries with regard to the following decisions:

- Agree the Provision of forensic services for seven police forces.

It was explained that, as part of a Government Spending Review, the central forensic laboratory network had ceased to operate. All forces had been instructed to make their own arrangements with regard to forensic services and Cleveland had joined with 6 other police forces in the north east to procure these. A considerable saving had been achieved via this procurement.

- Purchase of a passive drugs dog.

These dogs were used where the situation called for the dog to indicate the presence of drugs, to its handler, in a discreet manner.

- Agree that aid be provided for G8 Summit in Northern Ireland in line with appropriate legislation.

It was explained that Cleveland Police Force had provided 30 officers for this event. The Panel noted that the costs of this were paid by the Government. The Force considered that these occasions provided an opportunity for officers to be exposed to different situations and this was beneficial to

those officers and the Force, as a whole, in terms of learning new skills.

Members noted that legislation sometimes compelled the Force to provide assistance at events. It was agreed that it would be useful if it could be indicated on decisions where the Commissioner's actions were dictated by legislation.

There was a limit on the number of officers the Force had to commit to such events (5% of total officers). Reimbursement of costs was usually received within a month.

- Response to Minimum Unit Alcohol Pricing

Noted that the Commissioner had supported the introduction of a minimum price. It was agreed that it was disappointing that this opportunity to introduce a minimum price appeared to have been missed.

RESOLVED that:

1. the report be noted.
2. the Commissioner be requested to indicate where legislation required him to make a particular decision e.g. provision of officers for certain events.

**12 Confederation of Police and Crime Commissioners - Monthly Overview**

Members considered a report that sought views on the value of the monthly reports prepared by the Confederation of Police and Crime Commissioners.

Members were also asked if, and how, they would like to receive the reports.

RESOLVED that the reports be forwarded to members electronically, or hard copy if preferred.

**13 Scrutiny Work Programme**

The Panel considered a report that proposed an approach to setting a scrutiny work programme.

When developing the work programme it was proposed that the Panel consult with:

- Panel Members
- The Police and Crime Commissioner
- other partners, including community safety partners
- Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSCs) in the Cleveland area

It was proposed that, as a guide, the Panel should select no more than three topics for each year although the nature and extent of the work undertaken and its completion would depend on the complexity of the issues, the approach to

the investigation and the resources available.

The Panel was invited to forward items in relation to priorities contained in the Police and Crime Panel, for inclusion in the Scrutiny Work Programme, to the Chairman by 30 June 2013, so that the Panel could set the 2013/14 work programme at its meeting on 18 July 2013.

RESOLVED that the suggested approach to the Panel's scrutiny role, as detailed in the report, be approved.

#### **14 Police and Crime Panel - Member Development**

The Panel considered a report that provided members with an opportunity to consider their own personal development requirements.

A model personal development plan was provided to members, together with a role guide which described the core role and responsibilities for Police and Crime Panel members.

Members were asked to return the personal development plan to the Head of Democratic Services, Stockton on Tees Borough Council by 24 June 2013 detailing their requirements.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and members consider their personal Learning and Development requirements and forward them to the Head of Democratic Services, Stockton on Tees Borough Council, by 24 June 2013.

#### **15 Cleveland Police and Crime Panel - Expenditure Expenses**

Members were provided with a report that detailed grant expenditure associated with the operation of the Cleveland Police and Crime Panel.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

#### **16 Local Government Association Conference - Feedback**

Members considered a report that provided feedback from the Local Government Association Conference on Police and Crime Panels.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

#### **17 Forward Plan (including approval of a schedule of meetings)**

The Panel received a draft Forward Plan and Schedule of meetings.

RESOLVED that the Plan and Schedule be approved.

#### **18 Public Participation - Public Questions**

Members considered a report that highlighted the Panel's agreed process for dealing with questions received, on notice, from members of the public.

It was proposed that this would be a standing item on the Panel's agenda.

Members noted that no public questions, on notice, had been submitted for this meeting.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that Public Questions becomes a standing item on the Panel agenda.