

Cleveland Police and Crime Panel

A meeting of Cleveland Police and Crime Panel was held on Tuesday, 22nd October, 2013.

Present: Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E (Chairman), Cllr Charles Rooney (vice-Chairman), Cllr Christopher Akers-Belcher, Cllr Chris Abbott, Geoff Baines, Cllr Ken Dixon, Gwen Duncan, Cllr George Dunning, Ian Jeffrey, Cllr Terry Laing, Cllr Carl Richardson, Cllr Bernie Taylor

Officers: David Bond, Margaret Waggott, Michael Henderson, Graham Birtle (LD); Mike Batty, Steve Hume (DNS)

Also in attendance: Barry Coppinger (Commissioner), Ed Chicken, Joanne Hodgkinson (Commissioner's Office); Deputy Chief Constable Iain Spittal (Cleveland Police)

Apologies: Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Hazel Pearson OBE

1 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.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of the Meetings held on 18th July 2013 and 29th August 2013

The minutes of the meetings held on 18 July 2013 and 29 August 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

4 Police and Crime Commissioner - First Year in Office

Members considered a report that provided an update on the achievements of the Police and Crime Commissioner for the period November 2012 to October 2013. The report also considered the challenges ahead.

The report included details of some of the work being undertaken and initiatives introduced by the Commissioner. These included:-

- Holding summits/seminars which brought a number of different people and organisations together, which helped with the understanding of issues, including retail crime and disability hate.
- Allocation of Property Act funding to 19 local community projects.
- Establishment of FarmWatch across Cleveland and supported joint operations with neighbouring police forces to tackle rural based crime.
- Consultation - the Commissioner had personally attended over 100 meetings across all 82 Cleveland Wards to hear directly the views of the local community. A Youth Forum had been established to ensure the views of young people were taken into consideration.

- Collaboration arrangements with other forces had been put in place to reduce costs, improve resilience and efficiency.

The Panel considered the report and discussed a number of points/queries with the Commissioner and officers:

- It was noted that crime was rising and it was suggested that unemployment and the prevailing economic climate may be a factor in this. It was explained that national performance data showed that most force areas were experiencing increases in crime rates. Cleveland had seen a 2% rise since last year. However, last year's crime figures were at an all time low. Theft had increased by 6% and most of this had been retail theft. The Police were working with retailers to address this.

- Members discussed the challenges ahead including the budget deficit and what this might mean for Community Safety Officers. The Commissioner explained that one of the options to tackle the deficit was a reduction in the police property estate and he considered that spend on buildings must come second to spend on officers at the front line. It was explained that Community Support Officers would be an important part of future policing in Cleveland and they were a key element of Neighbourhood Teams.

- The Commissioner explained that moving to a new HQ would be cost neutral. New HQ would produce revenue savings in terms of maintenance, energy costs etc. In addition it was envisaged that the facility would have an area for partners to develop the wider community protection agenda.

- Drugs were a factor in many crimes and the Police were targeting at both ends of the spectrum in terms of large organised drugs gangs and dealers at street level. The Commissioner indicated that he supported community projects that diverted people away from drugs.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

5 Police and Crime Commissioner - Quarter 2 Monitoring Report

Members considered a report that provided an update of performance scrutiny undertaken by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland during the period July – September 2013.

Members considered the information provided and noted that:

- Despite the challenges the force had dealt with it remained in the top 10 for levels of public satisfaction.
- Information obtained from public surveys and 'ring backs' to the public was fed in to the Force's service improvement team and assisted with training and briefings.
- The Commissioner would monitor the effectiveness of the Restorative Justice initiative and the reoffending rates. The Commissioner considered that the

initiative was good at diverting people from reoffending. It was not soft on criminals and would benefit perpetrators, victims and the wider community. It was early days and a learning process.

- The Chairman explained that she represented the Panel on the out of court disposals partnership group.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

6 Programme of Engagement for the Police and Crime Commissioner

Members considered a report that provided an update in relation to meetings the Commissioner had attended from July 2013 – September 2013. Details of future meetings were also summarised,

The Panel noted that feedback from all engagement exercises continued to be positive with residents being supportive and appreciative of Neighbourhood Policing in their local area.

Key meetings attended by the Commissioner included:

- Community Safety Awards
- Strategic Planning Day to assist with the Police and Crime Plan refresh
- A meeting with UNITE union – part of the Commissioner's commitment to work for better industrial relations
- Retail Crime Partnership to improve links with retailers and share best practice.
- Sensory tunnel exercise which provided the Commissioner, front line officers and staff with a greater understanding of how people with sight loss use all their senses in everyday life.

The Panel congratulated the Commissioner for the extent and depth of his consultation.

The Panel referred to the planned webchat with Rural Community. The Commissioner explained that the use of social media was very helpful to engagement with the rural community. The Commissioner continued and indicated that the neighbourhood watch was being revised and would consider how the rural community could be supported. A regional rural Crime Conference was planned and there were collaborative arrangements, in terms of rural crime, with North Yorkshire and Durham forces.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

7 Decisions of the Police and Crime Commissioner (including forward plan of decisions)

The Panel received a report that provided an update in relation to decisions made by the Police and Crime Commissioner between 2 July 2013 and 7 October 2013.

During consideration of the report the Panel noted that:

- The Commissioner was the first Police and Crime Commissioner in the Country to implement the national living wage, as an employer and in respect of contractors.(working at police site for more than 2 hours a day). The Commissioner would receive an accreditation and details would be provided to the Panel.

- Corporate governance checks and safeguards were in place including an Independent Audit Committee, external audit and an inspection regime. In 2014 the University would give the Commission an Independent Health check.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

8 Scrutiny Update - Officer Reporting In.

Members were reminded that the Panel had previously identified a number of issues within its Scrutiny Work Programme that it wished the Commissioner to provide an update on:

- Independent Advisory Groups
- Management of police officer hours
- Arrest Referral Contract
- Energy and Efficiency of Estates and Fleet
- Collaboration Agreements

A report providing updates was presented to the Panel.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

9 Probation Services - Scrutiny approach

Members were reminded that the Panel had agreed to undertake a range of scrutiny work, including a piece of work examining the probation service.

The Panel received a report suggesting that it appoint a Task and Finish Group to undertake this work, starting in February 2014.

RESOLVED that:

1. a Task and Finish Group be established to undertake a review, starting in February 2014, of the probation service.

2. the membership of the Group be as follows:

Gwen Duncan

Cllr Chris Akers Belcher

Cllr Steve Nelson (if Cllr Nelson was unable to serve on the Group, then Cllr Laing would take the position)

Cllr Charles Rooney

Cllr Ian Jeffrey

10 Youth Engagement

Members received a report informing them of the youth engagement activities undertaken by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner in fulfilling the statutory duty to consult with local communities. Details of future plans were also provided.

The Commissioner explained that he would be taking part in the national Children's Commissioner Takeover Day event on 22 November 2013.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

11 Audit Completion Report

The Panel received a report that presented a copy of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Audit Completion Report for 2012/13.

Members noted that the Police and Crime Commission had received an unqualified opinion on the statement of accounts.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

12 Local Authority Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee Work Programmes

The Panel received a report that provided an overview of relevant work being undertaken by Local Authority scrutiny panels.

RESOLVED that the range of Local Authority Crime and Disorder scrutiny work underway in the Cleveland Police area be noted.

13 Member Development

Members received a report relating to Learning and Development activities for members serving on the Panel.

The Panel was reminded that Members had been requested to identify any specific training needs by completing a Personal Development Plan. It was noted that those Plans had been received and considered and no further training needs had been identified.

In terms of induction training it was suggested that the initial induction pack be circulated to new Panel Members on appointment. If Members had any queries regarding the information in the pack then they could contact Democratic Services for assistance.

The Panel was informed that the Police and Crime Commissioner was organising a programme of events to fulfil his commitments in the Police and Crime Plan. A programme of planned and future events was provided and it was suggested that Members may wish to attend these PCC organised events.

In addition, it was further suggested that a Panel Development item be added to each agenda allowing members an opportunity to receive updates from officers on any relevant issues. This item could then be stood down if there were no updates.

If Members required any further support, they would be able to request this by contacting Stockton on Tees Borough Council's Democratic Services Unit.

Following the Local Elections in 2015, the Induction Programme would be refreshed, prior to delivery, and consideration would be given to any individual needs arising from Panel Members.

RESOLVED that:

1. the report be noted.
2. the induction pack be circulated to new Panel Members.
3. a Panel Development item be added to each agenda. The item to be stood down if there were no updates.
4. the induction programme be refreshed following the Local Elections in 2015.
5. Members contact the Democratic Services Unit if they required any specific development support.

14 Forward Plan

Members considered the Panel's draft Forward Plan.

RESOLVED that the draft Forward Plan be approved.

15 Public Questions

The Panel received a report relating to Public Questions.

Members were reminded of the agreed procedure for considering questions, on notice, and noted that no such questions had been received for this meeting.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

16 Complaints

Members received a report that provided details of a complaint about alleged conduct of the Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner.

Members were reminded that the Panel had considered the complaint, at its meeting held on 29 August 2013. Following consideration the Panel had made a number of decisions, including:

'...the Panel attempt to secure informal resolution of the complaint, and the Commissioner and Complainant be invited to a future meeting, in order to provide relevant information, or documents and/or answer relevant questions or give evidence.'

The Panel noted that the Complainant had been invited to this meeting but had indicated that he would not be attending.

Given this the Panel discussed its options.

RESOLVED that

1. the Complainant be informed of the Panel's disappointment regarding his decision not to attend the meeting.
2. the Complainant be asked to confirm within one month if he is willing to engage with the Panel's attempt to secure an informal resolution of the complaint, and in particular to attend a future meeting in order to provide relevant information or documents and/or answer relevant questions or give evidence.
3. no further action be taken regarding the complaint at this stage.

.....Chairman