

Cleveland Police and Crime Panel

A meeting of Cleveland Police and Crime Panel was held on Thursday, 26th June, 2014.

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 Terry Laing, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Bernie Taylor

Officers: David Bond, Margaret Waggott, Michael Henderson, Steve Hume (Stockton BC)

Also in attendance: Barry Coppinger (Commissioner), Joanne Hodgkinson (Commissioner's Office)

Apologies: Cllr Christopher Akers Belcher, Cllr Paul Thompson and Cllr Brenda Thompson

1 Appointment of Chairman 2014/15

RESOLVED that Councillor Norma Stephenson be appointed Chairman for the Municipal Year 2014/15.

2 Evacuation Procedure/Mobile Phones

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

3 Declarations of Interest

Cllr George Dunning declared an interest in the item entitled Annual Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland as he was a serving member of Cleveland Fire Authority.

4 Appointment of Vice Chairman 2014/15

RESOLVED that Councillor Charles Rooney be appointed Vice Chairman for the Municipal Year 2014/15.

5 Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2014 and the Confirmation Hearing held on 7 April 2014

The minutes of the meetings held on 5 February 2014 and 7th April 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

6 Police and Crime Commissioner's - Performance Outturn

Members received a report that provided an update of performance scrutiny undertaken by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland to support the delivery of the priorities of the Police and Crime Plan for the fourth quarter and full year of 2013 - 14.

During consideration of this item a number of matters were discussed, including:

- the new definition of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and it was expected that this would lead to more recorded incidents of ASB. The Commissioner explained

that he would be organising a seminar on ASB legislation and Members of the Panel would be invited. The Commissioner explained that daily assessments were made, based on an analysis of information and incidents to identify where police officers should be deployed.

- Organisational Stability and Time off in Lieu. Members noted that lots of work had taken place in this area and senior officers took a very robust approach. Figures in this area had improved and the Commissioner indicated that he would provide members with further information on this.

RESOLVED that the report and discussion be noted and the additional information referred to, be forwarded to the Panel.

7 Annual Report of Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner

The Panel considered the Commissioner's Annual Report. It was explained that the financial outturn figures associated with the report had not been published at that time and would be presented to the Panel's July meeting.

The Panel discussed the Annual Report and reference was made to the following areas

- support for a Myth Buster that the Commissioner had produced aimed at dispelling commonly reported myths about asylum seeking.

- a planned demonstration that the English Defence League was holding in Middlesbrough that weekend. The Commissioner explained that he had been briefed on policing arrangements associated with the demonstration and counter demonstration and he would continue to receive briefings, from senior police officers throughout the event. He explained that police officers from Durham and Northumbria would be involved in the policing and he was satisfied that arrangements would be adequate and any necessary response, to any issues that arose, would be proportionate. In response to a specific question the Commissioner indicated that he would provide the Panel with details of the costs of the police operation, including the cost of the assistance from the Durham and Northumbrian Forces.

- Domestic Violence - The Commissioner provided a brief overview of his action plan tackling violence against women and girls. The Commissioner explained that initiatives were looking to ensure victims of domestic violence were not the entire centre of the evidence in any prosecutions. He explained that 75-80% of incidents in Cleveland had men as the perpetrator and women as the victim. The figures quoted, in terms of gender split of domestic violence victims, were queried and it was agreed that this would be clarified.

RESOLVED that:

1. the Annual Report be noted.
2. the report be further considered at the Panel's next meeting, when financial outturn information would also be included.
3. the discussion be noted and the additional information and clarification be

provided.

8 Police and Crime Plan

Members were provided with the final edition of the revised Police and Crime Plan 2014-17.

Members asked a number of questions about the Plan, including:-

- the National ranking of forces and influences on a force's position, such as its size and financial position.
- Strategic Policing requirements.
- was there any policy that allowed police officers, who were the subject of an investigation and possible discipline, to resign? The Commissioner explained that the Commission had an Ethics Committee that was undertaking work in this area and he would bring a report on this work back to the Panel

The Panel determined that it did not wish to make any recommendations to the Commissioner.

RESOLVED that:

1. the Police and Crime Plan 2014 -2017 be supported.
2. the report relating to the work of the Ethic Committee and described above be provided to the Panel.

9 Restorative Justice

The Panel received a report that provided an overview relating to the use of Restorative Justice (RJ) within Cleveland Police.

The report outlined plans for the future Commissioning of RJ across the Cleveland Police area, including how funding, allocated by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) would be utilised.

Members were reminded that RJ was the process which brought victims and offenders together to discuss their account of the same incident, with the aim of putting victims back in control and presenting offenders with the consequences of their actions.

RJ held offenders to account for what they had done and helped them understand the real impact, take responsibility and make amends for their actions.

The RJ agenda aimed to:

- Improve victim satisfaction
- Sustainably reduce re-offending
- Restore confidence in the police and CJS
- Promote effective community engagement

- Tackle low level crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour effectively; and
- Promote 'Respect' Agenda

MoJ research had shown that RJ could benefit both the victim and the offender. Evaluation of pilots found that RJ was associated with an estimated 14% reduction in the frequency of re-offending. The evaluation also found that 85% of victims, that participated in the conferencing method of RJ, were satisfied with the experience.

RJ was launched within Cleveland Police in April 2013 to enable most offences committed by under 18s to be dealt with by means of a RJ Intervention. The main focus of introducing RJ was to enable low level crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour to be dealt with instantly or by an 'on-street' disposal. Examples of some of the methods used when undertaking an RJ intervention include; face to face apology, letter of apology and a written assignment. A number of case studies were presented to the Panel as was some feedback received from both victims and offenders who had taken part in the RJ process.

Cleveland Police had commissioned Unite to undertake a piece of work to evaluate the effectiveness of RJ in year one. This report was due imminently and would form an action plan for further RJ development, within Cleveland Police, for the future.

It was noted that the Commissioner had appointed a dedicated RJ co-ordinator for a two year period, to support the development of a longer term, sustainable Cleveland wide RJ service, alongside the good schemes that already existed across Cleveland.

With the co-operation and assistance of partners the PCC proposed to introduce a virtual 'restorative justice hub'. The hub would act as the Cleveland Restorative Justice development and co-ordination service across the whole of the Cleveland Police area.

Members commented that the case studies had been extremely helpful in illustrating the benefits of RJ.

It was suggested that it would be helpful to understand what percentage of total crimes, in each Borough, went down the RJ route.

RESOLVED that the overview be noted.

10 Police Estate

The Panel was provided with a copy of the strategy that would inform and direct the decisions made by the Commissioner in relation to the estate provided to, and used by, Cleveland Police.

The strategy document set out the ways that would accelerate savings and drive better performance from the police estate and looked at opportunities for closer co-operation with partners, in line with the Commissioner's and Chief Constable's priorities.

The strategy, and the plan that went with it, provided the basis upon which the PCC and Force could make the best decisions about the way the property portfolio could help in meeting corporate objectives.

Members noted that achieving value for money from the estate would depend, not only on the cost and use of space, but also on whether it provided a suitable working environment and met the needs of the people who used it and the public.

There were a number of 'Drivers for Change' that were discussed in the Strategy document such as:

- Value for Money and Excess Capacity.
- Changing Requirements of the Police as a result of significant change programmes and investments in ICT

These 'Drivers for Change', allied with the Vision and Strategy around the physical estate, used for Policing in Cleveland, would inform the decisions made by the PCC over the coming years and give a clear direction on the changes that were likely.

The Panel noted that, to date, 6 leased premises were either in the process of being ended or had ended, with the staff relocated to existing buildings in line with the priorities and strategic intention of the PCC and Force. Savings for these 6 buildings would total over £200k per annum once this process was complete. These buildings were predominantly not buildings that were accessible to the general public.

Members discussed the strategy with the Commissioner and

- noted that decisions on police buildings were made by the Commissioner after receiving proposals from the Force. The Commissioner indicated that he would notify the Panel of any proposed police station closures. He would also highlight, with ward Councillors, any plans to remove police officers based at buildings in their ward.

- a member highlighted problems with satellite stations and officers' time being used to travel to and from such stations. The Commissioner would look into this.

- the Commissioner would encourage more informal police bases in the area.

RESOLVED that the report and discussion be noted.

11 Scrutiny Programme

Members were provided with a report that briefly detailed the Scrutiny work undertaken by the Panel during 2013/14 and requested topics for scrutiny during 2014/15.

Members were reminded that the Panel had established a Task and Finish Group to look at Probation Services. During consideration of this there was a general discussion about the scrutiny of the Community Rehabilitation Company

(CRC). The Commissioner indicated that he would bring a report to the Panel when the position around this became clearer.

RESOLVED that Members provide the Panel's Chairman or the Head of Stockton Council's Democratic Services with potential scrutiny topics for 2014/15, by 10 July 2014.

12 Decisions of Cleveland Police and Crime Panel

The Panel considered a report that provided an update in relation to the decisions made by the Police and Crime Commissioner between 15 January 2014 and 6 June 2014.

The Panel discussed issues surrounding the decision on whether to build a new Community Safety Hub. The Commissioner indicated that he would provide the Panel with further information on this matter in due course.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and the Panel receives further information, from the Commissioner, relating to a possible new Community Safety Hub, in due course.

13 Programme of Engagement for Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner

Members were provided with a report that updated the Panel with regard to meetings attended by the Commissioner from February 2014 and May 2014.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

14 Cleveland Police and Crime Panel - Grant Expenditure

Members received a report that detailed grant expenditure associated with the operation of the Panel.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

15 Review of Complaints Handling Procedures

Members considered a report that reviewed the current arrangements for dealing with complaints about Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner and sought the Panel's views regarding future arrangements.

Members considered the information provided to it and, in particular considered issues relating to:

- the accessibility of the complaints handling procedures.
- information and documentation regarding complaints.
- the timeliness of the Panel's consideration of complaints.
- engagement of complainants with the complaints procedure.
- the powers the Panel had, the action it could take and how it had approached

this to date.

- in depth research that the Local Government Association may be undertaking on Police and Crime Panels' experience to date on complaint handling, and potential recommendations to the Home Office in this regard.

The Panel felt that the operation of the complaints process would benefit if responsibility for handling complaints was delegated to a sub committee. It was suggested that there could be a caveat to this, that a complaint could be submitted to the full Panel where this was considered appropriate e.g. because it would lead to a more satisfactory resolution of the matter in the particular circumstances of the case.

RESOLVED that:

1. the current arrangements for handling complaints about the Commissioner be posted on dedicated pages of Stockton Council's website and that links to those pages be included on the websites of the other Councils in the Cleveland Force area.

2. information and documentation regarding complaints e.g. a complaint form and timescales for dealing with Complaints, be brought to a future meeting for consideration, and subject to approval be then made available and included on Stockton's website.

3. the responsibility for handling complaints be delegated to a sub committee of the Panel comprising 3 of its members.

4. further reviews of the Panel's complaint handling arrangements take place regularly, with the next review being undertaken during 2015/16.

5. a policy regarding the unreasonable behaviour of complainants be drafted for consideration at a future Panel meeting.

6. the Panel be kept informed of progress regarding any research undertaken by the Local Government Association in relation to police and crime panels' experience of complaint handling.

16 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.

17 Forward Plan

The Panel considered its current Forward Plan and noted one change. Consideration of the Task and Finish Scrutiny Review of work in schools would

slip to the Panel's October 2014 meeting.

RESOLVED that the revised Forward Plan be approved.

18 Complaint

RESOLVED that this issue be considered by a sub committee of the Panel, in line with the delegation approved earlier in the meeting.