

Cleveland Police and Crime Panel

A meeting of Cleveland Police and Crime Panel was held on Tuesday, 21st October, 2014.

Present: Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E (Chairman),

Cllr Christopher Akers-Belcher, Cllr Charles Rooney (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Chris Abbott, Cllr Ken Dixon, Gwen Duncan, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Bernie Taylor, Cllr Paul Thompson

Officers: Graham Birtle, Margaret Waggott, Michael Henderson, Steve Hume (SBC)

Also in attendance: Barry Coppinger (Commissioner), Simon Dennis, Michael Porter, Joanne Hodgkinson (Commissioner's Office), Iain Spittal (Cleveland Police)

Members from the Police and Crime Commission's Audit Committee

Apologies: Geoff Baines, Cllr Ian Jeffrey, Cllr Brenda Thompson, Cllr George Dunning, Cllr Terry Laing,

1 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.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Panel Member questions to the Commissioner

The Chairman referred to a letter she had received from Hartlepool Borough Council's Leader, Cllr Christopher Akers Belcher, regarding the visibility of police officers 'on the beat' in Hartlepool and Anti-Social Behaviour in the Borough.

The Panel heard that the issue had been raised at a meeting of Hartlepool Borough Council and it had been suggested that it be raised with the Commissioner, and at a meeting of this Panel.

The Commissioner explained that he was aware of the concerns and that he had been involved in discussion on the issues at a recent 'Face the People' meeting in Hartlepool. The Commissioner would prepare a written response for Cllr Akers-Belcher to report to his Council and the Panel Chairman would be provided with a copy of that response.

The Chairman explained that following a number of requests she would be looking to arrange for an item to be included on the agenda of future meetings of the Panel that would allow Members to raise issues with the Police and Crime Commissioner that were not detailed in any other part of the agenda. The Chairman asked that any questions members had for future meetings be advised to the Commissioner before the meeting. This could be facilitated by Democratic Services - Stockton. In terms of question requests she had received ahead of this meeting she indicated that she would allow them to be raised at this point:

- Withdrawal of funding for in custody drug testing raised by Cllr Nelson (Stockton). The Commissioner would hold a meeting with the Chair of Safer Stockton Partnership, Cllr Nelson and appropriate officer to discuss the matter. Cllr Nelson to report back to the Panel.

- 101 calls and their cost. It was queried what the costs associated with this service were, as there were concerns that calls were charged at a national rate and not a local rate. It was explained that it was a national scheme with a fixed charge of circa 15 pence.

RESOLVED that the discussion be noted/actioned as appropriate.

4 Minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th July 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

5 Q2 Monitoring Report against the Police and Crime Plan

Members considered 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 second quarter of 2014/15.

The Commissioner explained that in addition to the weekly general accountability meetings he held with the Chief Constable he also monitored the serious incidents log on a daily basis. The Commissioner also explained that the Cleveland Connected service had been launched on 2 October, which was a new communication system to allow the public to input information by phone, or e mail, and also receive information.

During consideration of the report there was discussion which has been summarised below:-

- The excellent work that had been undertaken, in the region, on the challenge regarding the justice system on domestic violence.

- There was a query with regard to the Local Public Confidence Survey and figures relating to perceived drug dealing or usage. It was not possible; using the survey, to drill down to responses from particular communities and the police relied on intelligence and engagement with communities to identify hotspots. The restructure of the Force, undertaken in the summer, included the creation of one community drugs team, which would target any such areas. It was noted that there was a North East Regional Specialist Operations Unit dealing with organised crime's links to drugs dealing.

- Cleveland Connected was highlighted to members and they were recommended to register to find out what was happening in their area.

- Members noted differences between reported crime and the crime survey (the crime survey included some crimes not reported to the police). The crime survey was normally 4 months retrospective. It was explained that the difference

between reported crime and the crime survey had remained the same for some time. There was a request that the crime survey figures be shown with the recorded crime figures table.

- Members noted that recently published local public confidence statistics showed that the Force's position in the Country, for overall public confidence, was 32nd out of 43 forces. This was set against Cleveland being top in the country for this category, as recently as March 2012. It was noted that all information associated with the survey was available on-line and the league tables showed that there was little difference between top, middle and bottom. The number of people surveyed across the Tees Valley was less than 1000 people and it was believed that details of the questions were provided on the website. Deputy Chief Constable Spittal explained that the Force was working hard to improve confidence and front line staff were being focused on delivering the best quality service they could, making every interaction a positive one.

- It was noted that Cleveland Connected was an element of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme and would help develop the next generation of Neighbourhood Watch. The traditional locality based scheme still existed.

- The Commissioner noted queries as to whether the Stalking and Harassment Event in February 2015 would be gender neutral and he explained that he would bear those comments in mind when organising the event. He explained that he would, shortly, be attending a meeting about male victim domestic abuse services and he would provide an update on this at the next Panel meeting.

- Members noted that there was a maximum level of time off in lieu, of 30 hours, that staff could build up. Work was ongoing to reduce the amount of time being built up.

- Though it was possible to identify incidents of domestic violence that took place during the World Cup it was not possible to directly attribute them to the competition.

- With regard to reported crime for Q2 this year, compared to Q2 last year, it was noted that Stockton had seen a large decrease where Hartlepool had seen an increase. It was queried if any analysis of this was planned in terms of how neighbourhood policing was mobilised. It was explained that there was a piece of work underway which would take account of all the information held to understand crime and anti-social behaviour to assist making the best decisions about the location and distribution of resources over the coming years especially with reducing resources.

- Members noted that the Police had occupational health support, available to staff, for both physical and mental wellbeing.

- The Victim Satisfaction Survey had been very positive. The Commissioner explained that from April 2015 he would be responsible for commissioning Victims' Services, so scoping and needs assessments were being developed. The Commissioner would be speaking to partners and agencies through that process.

- The Commissioner indicated that he intended visiting the 4 local authorities to give a presentation on the current budget position and plans.

RESOLVED that the report and discussion be noted/actioned where appropriate.

6 Decisions made by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland

Members considered a report that provided an update in relation to the decisions made by the Commissioner between 8 July 2014 and 30 September 2014

During consideration of the report a number of issues were referred to:

- The new Community Safety Hub was likely to be occupied late 2016/ early 2017. The Commissioner would bring a report to a future meeting detailing progress and any potential collaboration.
- Work with regard to the whole police estate was ongoing to identify a long term plan to develop the estate and reduce revenue costs.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

7 Programme of Engagement for Police and Crime Commissioner

The Panel received a report detailing meetings attended by the Commissioner between July and September 2014.

Details of the Cleveland Community Safety Awards would be circulated to the Panel.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

8 Mid-Year Financial Update

The Panel considered a report that provided an update on the progress against the 2014/15 budget and an update on the progress of the development of the Long Term Financial Plan.

The Panel noted that delivery of the savings factored into the 2014/15 budget had been delivered and in many cases had been exceeded. Members were provided with forecasts for years 2015/16 - 2018/19.

It was explained that there was significant uncertainty as to what the level of future funding available would be. Savings made during the current financial year should help to support a consistent level of resources to the Chief Constable over the next 2 years to support the Orbis operating model that was currently being implemented. Significant levels of savings would still need to be delivered both for 2015/16 and beyond to ensure this could happen.

It was noted that should the actual levels of funding available be lower than currently modelled and planned, whether as a result of higher cuts to Government Grant levels, or lower than expected levels of precept income, then all plans would need to be re-visited.

The Panel considered the financial information presented and there was particular reference made to, and some concerns expressed at, the reductions in police and police community support officers and the effect this had had on the visibility of officers in communities. The Commissioner explained that the significant reductions in funding had had an impact on policing numbers and the loss of some funding streams had affected PCSO numbers in certain areas.

Members noted that additional houses built in Cleveland would result in additional funding via the precept.

RESOLVED that the report and discussion be noted.

9 Community Rehabilitation Company - Update

The Commissioner provided a brief verbal update relating to the Community Rehabilitation Company bidding process.

It was noted that the announcement of a successful bidder was expected in November.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

10 Task and Finish Group Scrutiny Review - Work in Schools

The Panel considered a report, prepared by a Task and Finish Group of the Panel that had looked at Cleveland Police's work in schools.

The Task and Finish Group had undertaken work that had identified a range of work by Police Officers and PCSOs in schools, any difference of approach across the 4 local authorities and the impact this work was having in Cleveland. The Group had taken evidence from Neighbourhood Police Officers, PCSOs, Community Safety Managers, Head Teachers, Governors and young people to gain better understanding of the issues as they perceived them.

The Group had subsequently formulated a number of recommendations:-

1. that each of the councils in the Cleveland Police area investigates the possibility to have appointed a Governor Liaison (Community Liaison Governor) for every school.
2. the PCC and police utilise consultation and engagement officers to coordinate and disseminate information to Community Liaison Governors.
3. that the PCC Office registers an agenda item on Head Teacher and Governor forum meetings in each of the local authority areas.
4. investigating whether a volunteer programme could be established using young people volunteers in schools to engage with their peers about community safety issues.
5. that the PCC and Cleveland Police determine the feasibility of the report (Police Officers in Schools: A scoping study) recommendations.

The Commissioner felt the report was a good piece of work, well researched and balanced. It was indicated that further consideration would be given to the report, its findings and the feasibility of the recommendations.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that the Commissioner/Cleveland Police consider the recommendations.

11 Complaints Procedure Review - Update

The Panel considered a report relating to a review of the complaints procedure.

It was explained that the arrangements for dealing with complaints about the Commissioner had been reviewed and reported to the Panel, at its meeting on the 26 June 2014.

It had been agreed that information and documentation regarding complaints would be brought to a future meeting for consideration. This was to include a policy regarding the unreasonable behaviour of complainants.

Members were provided with the following documents:

- A leaflet about how to complain
- A complaint form
- A complaints flow chart
- A guidance note on unreasonable behaviour by complainants.

Members approved the documentation and agreed that it be posted on the websites of all the local authorities making up the Cleveland Force area.

In addition, enquiries would be made with the Commissioner's Office about placing a link on his website that would take the public to Stockton's website and the complaints information/documentation.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the documentation be agreed and placed on the web sites of each Council making up the Cleveland Force area
2. that the Commissioner's Office be requested to provide a link on the Commission's web site that would take the public to Stockton's website and the complaints information/documentation.

12 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.

13 Forward Plan

The Panel considered its current Forward Plan.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be approved.