

**POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
19th November, 2014**

Present:-

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council:-

Councillor M. Dyson, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor R. Sixsmith, M.B.E.

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council:-

Mayor R. Jones, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor J. Sheppard, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council:-

Councillor M. Parker
Councillor T. R. Sharman (in the Chair)

Sheffield City Council:-

Councillor R. Davison
Councillor T. Hussain
Councillor R. Munn

Co-opted Member:-

Mr. A. J. Carter

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Councillor H. Harpham, Sheffield City Council
Mr. K. Walayat, Co-opted Member

J22. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Questions from members of the public would be incorporated into Minute No. 25 (Lessons Learnt) and will be formulated as part of that item.

J23. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 29TH OCTOBER, 2014

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 29th October, 2014.

With regards to the Minute No. J20 (Previous Minutes) Councillor Parker referred to the response by the Director of Legal and Democratic Services

about the recording of the confidential decision making session where the Panel adjourned and believed it to be factually incorrect. He had consulted the Legal Department and had been informed that personal notes were taken at the decision making session and were unavailable. He expressed his discontent with the response whilst pointing out that full minutes should have been taken.

With regards to the query as to whether the Chairman of the Police and Crime Panel had made contact with the Chief Constable, the Chairman was now in receipt of a full response and the Chief Constable was present today to answer any other queries.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 29th October, 2014, be agreed as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

J24. INTRODUCTION TO ALAN BILLINGS, POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER AND WELCOME TO THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

The Chairman welcomed the new Police and Crime Commissioner, Alan Billings, to the meeting and extended an invitation for him to attend all future meetings of the Police and Crime Panel, along with the Chief Constable.

The Police and Crime Commissioner welcomed the opportunity to start afresh from the events that led to him becoming elected and to becoming more acquainted with the expectations of the Panel. He looked forward to establishing a good working relationship where frank and open discussion could take place. His aim was to re-establish the trust between the public and the Police Force and for this to be addressed, together with the Chief Constable.

He was very clear in his vision for putting the victims of child sexual exploitation first, whilst understanding what had gone wrong in the past and how this was going to be addressed in the future.

The role of the Police and Crime Commissioner was to hold South Yorkshire Police to account, particularly over child sexual exploitation, Hillsborough and Orgreave to make sure they were learning lessons and at the same time supporting them in carrying out their important role in protecting people and communities across South Yorkshire.

From talking to the public prior to the election it became apparent that the public valued neighbourhood policing and it was intended that wherever possible a close relationship would be maintained between ordinary Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers as this was where intelligence was gathered and remained essential.

The Police and Crime Commissioner was committed to ensuring that voluntary sector organisations in South Yorkshire, who helped to reduce crime or help the victims of crime, were properly funded. On this basis he intended to donate half of his salary to South Yorkshire victims' charities.

The Commissioner was committed to working with all communities to bring people together to face the challenges ahead and welcomed the opportunity to make a difference, to forget the past, and to use the past as a springboard for the future.

The Panel welcomed the salary donation news and asked whether this could also be gift aided and were advised by the Commissioner that in order to donate his salary he had to receive it first. He would be paying tax and would look into options for this to be gift aided.

In response to a question about whether or not he would be appointing a Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, the Commissioner confirmed he would be considering a number of options and whether there was a need for a full time position.

The Chairman welcomed David Crompton, Chief Constable, to the meeting who was keen to endorse what the Police and Crime Commissioner had said. He was keen to attend future meetings of the Police and Crime Panel and requested that he be given an early indication as to when they may take place. Discussions would be open and transparent and where possible he would be flexible and make himself available.

South Yorkshire Police were also committed to dealing with child sexual exploitation and the work taking place should not be minimised. The Independent Police Complaints Commission were investigating a number of officers. The National Crime Agency were also setting up investigations to look through other criminal matters around child sexual exploitation as identified in the Jay Report.

It was right and necessary for independent organisations to look at what had happened to restore public confidence and faith and to ensure this did not happen again.

South Yorkshire Police did a fantastic job, but there were some serious issues that needed resolving.

Councillor Parker made reference to the information sharing session hosted by South Yorkshire Police at their training centre at Manvers, where it became apparent that information shared by the Police should at least have been shared not only with the Leader of the Council, but also the Leader of the Opposition. The withholding of certain information prevented opposition Councillors from scrutinising properly and holding those required to account. The Chief Constable, following consultation

with the Leader of the Council, agreed to look at the information sharing network in more detail to ensure it was effective.

Mayor Jones described the true role of scrutiny as she saw it and the role of the Police and Crime Panel in holding the Police Crime Commissioner to account. It was for the Police and Crime Commissioner to engage with the public and deliver improvement and for the Panel to measure how those improvements were delivered with support from the Chief Constable. This view was supported by the Police and Crime Commissioner and his Officers. Work had already commenced on the delivery of priorities and outcomes and the achievements against the Police Plan. The delivery against the priorities process would remain open and transparent.

In response to a comment about the work of South Yorkshire Police, the Chief Constable acknowledged that in the main staff did an excellent job, but that there were a number of officers that were being investigated by the Independent Police Complaints Commission. In order to move forward the Police Force were aiming to provide the best service for the citizens in South Yorkshire.

The Police and Crime Commissioner responded to the Panel by confirming his reflection to the scrutiny process was for all information to be provided. He asked that he be informed of any incidence where any information was denied or was not forthcoming.

Resolved:- That the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable be thanked for their attendance at the meeting and their attendance at future meetings welcomed.

J25. LEARNING LESSONS AND THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Further to Minute No. 19 of the meeting of the Police and Crime Panel held on 29th October 2014, consideration was given to a report presented by Deborah Fellowes, Scrutiny Manager, which highlighted where a number of public questions fell broadly under the heading of "learning the lessons from recent events" and it was, therefore, agreed to consider them as part of this item today.

On the positive side, it was clear that the Panel played its full part in ensuring that the voice of the public and, more importantly, the voices of the victims and their families were heard. Indeed, this was clearly instrumental in the final decision of the previous Police and Crime Commissioner to resign.

Public interest in the work of the Panel had been generated as a result of these recent events and it was of critical importance that this was now harnessed to further improve the work of the Panel and its working relationship with the newly elected Police and Crime Commissioner.

It was clear that the role of the Panel was to scrutinise the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner at a strategic level and not to become involved in the operational detail of the Police Force. Some of the concerns that have emerged have highlighted this as an issue.

The Panel also recently agreed to working protocols with the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committees for each of the four local authorities in South Yorkshire, to share information and practices with them.

The Panel adopted a pilot Task and Finish Group approach this year, and this would have been tested with its first main subject being that of Domestic Abuse. This had not been completed as a result of events of recent months and the effective suspension of the work programme for the Panel.

Other issues to consider included:-

- Resources required to effectively scrutinise the Police and Crime agenda.
- The role of the Police and Crime Panel in supporting the Police and Crime Commissioner to effectively deliver on his strategic priorities.
- Joint priorities for scrutiny and how these should be determined.

There was no doubt that the role of the public were key over the previous months, and the Panel took the decision to maximise the involvement of the public in its proceedings.

The new website was also now live and it could be used to generate a debate with the public about these issues, using the community forum facility which existed on it.

In terms of the powers the Police and Crime Panels have in these circumstances, the Home Affairs Select Committee had forwarded a specific recommendation to the Government regarding this. It recommended that legislation allowed for the recall of Police and Crime Commissioners if either the Police and Crime Panel made a vote of no confidence, or at least one of the local authorities take a vote of no confidence, where they represent at least half of the population of the police area. Clearly, both of these factors would have been triggered in the recent case of South Yorkshire.

The Home Office, in reply to the Chairman's recent letter, confirmed that "the Government will reflect carefully on these suggestions and recommendations, and those of Parliament, and the public more generally."

The Chairman invited those members of the public who were present today to ask the questions they had previously submitted.

(1) Wendy Zealand, South Yorkshire Neighbourhood Watch, asked having had the experience of being in place over the months of the past Police and Crime Commissioner post, and a lull to perhaps review their past work, would the Panel be making any changes as to its way of working when the position was filled again?

(2) Alan Kewley referred to a few members of the public attending Panel meetings over the past eighteen months to try to understand the main issues by asking questions from the public bench, but this had not been easy and on this basis asked, following the Police and Crime Commissioner by-election, would the Panel be willing to consider regular three-way discussions with the new Police and Crime Commissioner and representatives from community groups like Neighbourhood Watch, and how would they like to see these developing?

(3) Nigel Slack, Sheffield for Democracy, referred to the sixth report from the Home Affairs Select Committee, dealing with Child sexual exploitation and the response to localised grooming, included as an annex a draft Bill for the recall of Police and Crime Commissioners and asked what was the Panel's view on this draft and, with reference to the fact that it proposes recall petitions can only be triggered by this panel or the Local Councils, whether the powers for the public go far enough?

In terms of the P.A.C.T. meetings, whether holding a drop in session was the most appropriate in a supermarket, was the Chief Constable considering reinstating them and would this be widely advertised?

The Chairman suggested that, in terms of the public input to the meetings and whether three way discussions would be the best way forward, this be considered at the next meeting.

The Chief Constable confirmed there were no plans to change the format of the P.A.C.T. meetings at this stage and sometimes the way forward was for officers to be widely available to the public to answer queries in locations such as supermarkets. Dates were advertised via the Safer Neighbourhood Teams and it would be ensured that this would happen.

(4) Nigel Slack, Sheffield for Democracy, asked a further question about the appointment of a Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner and whether consideration could be given to the role on a part time basis.

Serious consideration would also be given by the Police and Crime Commissioner as to the most appropriate methods of public engagement and whether this included the appointment of a Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Chief Constable responded to a query from the Panel regarding feedback from the Police on the frontline and gave his reassurance that direct feedback on proposals was received.

The Panel noted the access to information concerns and the need to divorce the strategic and operational elements. This meant that some of the information was difficult to interpret in order for the Panel to scrutinise more effectively. Separating the individual layers of information often demanded additional resources and was not as a result of a reluctance to share information from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

As part of the discussion Councillor Parker also expressed his discontent with the lack of powers on the right of recall for a Police and Crime Commissioner and particularly on meetings where it was suggested that minutes were not kept. This was not effective scrutiny and there should be careful management to ensure the Panel were provided with all the information they required.

The Chief Constable confirmed that information would be made available to the Panel in order to scrutinise the Police Force and the Police and Crime Commissioner effectively, whilst bearing in mind that this would be appropriate to the level of strategic operations taking place.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner would find it particularly useful if they were made to understand the type of operational information that Panel Members would wish to have access to and arrangements for that information would be provided where appropriate.

The Scrutiny Manager acknowledged the difficulties for the Panel in determining what information they required in order to obtain the right balance between strategic and operational matters. This could be improved on further and the barriers to information sharing via Community Safety Partnerships needed to be addressed. This would be considered further following discussions with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner with key priorities for scrutiny being identified. How best to take matters further would be developed with clear understanding of expectations.

As part of the discussion Councillor Parker expressed his concern with how Officers would know what information was relevant to the Panel and when this should be shared.

As a former Elected Member Councillor Parker believed he should have been provided with certain information, especially around the child sexual exploitation scandal, and had not. He asked how were officers going to decide what information should be circulated for consideration by the Panel and was informed that it was not for officers to decide on information coming forward, but was for the Panel to decide what information it would like to consider in order to carry out effective scrutiny.

The Panel were concerned that they were at risk of drifting away from their role, but believed that it needed to have a robust forward plan in place which would look at all the strategic priorities of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Police Plan. The forward plan would then take into

consideration the priorities, their progress, what engagement was taking place with the public and what the drivers were.

In the interests of transparency the public needed to be able to look at the democratic structures to show clearly the role of the Panel on the website alongside that of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Panel acknowledged that its own role and that the Police and Crime Commissioner had been clouded somewhat but wished for this to be rectified.

The Panel needed to be afforded the opportunity to share their views and for these to be taken on board and, as raised previously by Councillor Parker, for all discussions to be minuted.

Resolved:- That the matters set out in the report for discussion be taken on board as part of the forward planning work for the Panel.

J26. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the meeting of the Police and Crime Panel scheduled to take place on Monday, 8th December, 2014 be cancelled and a further meeting be arranged in January 2015.