

**POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
19th March, 2015**

Present:-

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council:-

Councillor R. Sixsmith M.B.E.

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council:-

Councillor J. Sheppard

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council:-

Councillor A. Sangster

Councillor C. Vines

Sheffield City Council:-

Councillor M. Iqbal

Councillor R. Davison

Councillor T. Hussain

Councillor R. Munn

Co-opted Member:-

Mr. A. Carter

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Councillor M. Dyson, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Mayor R. Jones, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council

J34. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Resolved:- That Councillor Mazher Iqbal be appointed Chairman for the remainder of the 2014/15 Municipal Year.

(Councillor Mazher Iqbal in the Chair)

J35. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public submitted.

Councillor Sixsmith, M.B.E. referred to an incident at the Dearne ALC last week where seven youths bought legal highs locally. Five of the youths were hospitalised due to smoking the substances and wished to ask the Panel if there were any guidelines around the sale of these substances.

The Police and Crime Commissioner suggested the best course of action would be to contact the District Commander who could provide an update on this matter.

Councillor Sheppard indicated that he was willing to share further information as similar incidents had occurred in Doncaster.

Councillor Hussain referred to the loss of £12 million funding and asked how many Police Officer posts would be lost in each Local Authority area?

The Police and Crime Commissioner confirmed this information had been shared at the last meeting which set out in detail the loss of posts across South Yorkshire.

The Chairman suggested that this information be recirculated for all Panel Members.

J36. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 30TH JANUARY, 2015

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting of the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel held on 30th January, 2015.

Reference was made to Minute No. J28 (Resignation of Independent Co-optee) and an update provided on the current position to seek a replacement for the vacancy. Following consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman it was proposed to filling of the vacancy until after the May election to enable a clearer picture of the skill set for such a candidate to be identified. It was also suggested that Alan Carter, Independent Co-optee to the Panel, be included on the recruitment panel.

The Police and Crime Commissioner also referred to a slight misinterpretation of some text as part of Minute No. J31 (Precept Proposal for 2015/16) on Page 5 of the agenda pack and asked that the proposals lists be amended to now read:-

- ensure that uniformed officers continue to respond to emergency '999' calls;
- have neighbourhood teams and the teams of uniformed officers combined under the same management and, for example, receive the same briefings;
- introduce uniform/common shift patterns;
- increase the overall skills of police officers in the new single teams;
- introduce the use of new ICT technology, so that reports may be prepared by Officers, using laptops in Police vehicles, which would ensure that Officers spend more time in the neighbourhoods instead of returning to Police stations in order to file their reports;
- ensure that the training of all Police personnel be 'neighbourhood focused'.

Reference was also made Minute No. J31 (Precept Proposal for 2015/16) on Page 7 of the agenda pack and particularly Question No. 4 where Councillor Sheppard apologised for the content, but asked if this could be simplified to his direct question of "Had these changes to working practices been trialled elsewhere or implemented across the force without being trialled?"

Deborah Fellowes, Scrutiny Manager, also advised the Panel that, in relation to Minute No. J31 (Precept Proposal for 2015/16), the final report on the budget, to be published on the PCC's website, included some additional information. This information had been shared with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Panel to ensure they were aware.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 30th January, 2015 be approved as a correct record, for signature by the Chairman, with the inclusion of the clerical corrections referred to above.

J37. PUTTING SAFETY FIRST - SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PLAN 2013/17

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Police and Crime Commissioner which detailed the Police and Crime Commissioner's current Police and Crime Plan following the publication of the first five year plan in 2013.

In addition, the Police and Crime Commissioner thought it also important to report on his decision and rationale not to appoint a Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner.

Having listened to the views of community groups, leaders in business, the universities and local authorities, those working in the voluntary sector and many individuals, the Police and Commissioner identified that all shared a similar view around wishing to be safe and feeling safe.

In consultation with the Chief Constable, taking cognisance of the recently amended Strategic Policing Requirement, and after consideration of the evidence gathered as part of the strategic planning process, the Police and Crime Commissioner identified that 'Putting Safety First', ensuring services were responsive to the public and needs of victims, would determine the priorities of the police service for the period to 2017.

The aim of the Police and Crime Plan was for South Yorkshire to be and feel a safe place to live, learn and work and split into the strategic priorities of:-

- Protecting Vulnerable People.
- Tackling Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour.
- Enabling Fair Treatment.

The Police and Crime Commissioner made reference to each priority in detail and the reasons for the reduced number of targets.

This was based on the Police being asked to demonstrate their methods of measuring priorities and how targets were being met. The Police Force needed to be more thoughtful in its approach with a model of work around geographical areas, requiring a cultural change with time to embed and become established.

It was important for the Police to prevent people becoming victims of crime and anti-social behaviour and to do this they needed to focus on becoming more local policing teams and taking responsibility for a case rather than handing over to another officer. It also needed to be recognised that the responsibility for dealing with anti-social behaviour did not wholly lay with the Police, but some of the solutions may involve partner agencies.

The Police and Crime Commissioner explained about his establishment of an Independent Ethics Panel, chaired by an experienced Solicitor which would follow up on some ethical concerns and provide the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Police with independent and effective challenge to ensure they were acting with integrity and high professional standards.

It was noted that the budget for this financial year had balanced, but this was a different situation moving forward. For South Yorkshire, the finance settlement represented a reduction in funding of £9.6m (or 4.83%) compared to 2014/15. This was on top of a reduction of £9.5m in the previous financial year.

Further information was provided on how the Police and Crime Plan was to be delivered at a time of continuing austerity. The report set out details how this was broken down and how this would be taken forward. More could be done, including improvements in technology, greater collaboration and by design.

The Police and Crime Panel raised a number of issues, some of which would be considered further by the Police and Crime Commissioner around the elimination of some targets in the Plan.

In terms of complaints it was noted that a filtering mechanism was in operation within the Commissioner's Office to ensure they were directed to the most appropriate person. Complaints and the Whistleblowing Policy were areas that were to be scrutinised by the new Independent Ethics Panel especially in light of concerns about the most vulnerable not wishing to make complaints to the Police and the failures highlighted around the child sexual exploitation scandal.

The Police and Crime Commissioner indicated information about the systematic failures was concerning and did not necessarily stand out in the Plan, but assured the Panel that matters relating to concerns were subject to further investigation by the Independent Police Complaints Commission and the National Crime Agency.

Councillor Sheppard strongly pointed out that the public needed to be assured that the standards of South Yorkshire Police were going to be raised and that the Force did not become complacent. The Police and Crime Commissioner agreed that elements of the Plan needed to be bolder and further strengthened.

The Panel's concerns about the recorded decrease of activity such as anti-social behaviour published South Yorkshire wide were not broken down into districts. Individual areas such as Rotherham, who were seeing an increase in anti-social behaviour, were monitored by the District Commander.

The Commissioner admitted there would always be spikes and troughs in reporting, but the new Policing teams should help to manage the concern and hotspot areas which would trigger the appropriate action required by the Police.

The Chairman suggested that for the Panel to fully understand the detail of the Plan that specific information be broken down into the four South Yorkshire areas.

The Scrutiny Manager pointed out that the Rotherham Overview and Scrutiny Management Board had the Crime and Disorder function and was the vehicle for any Rotherham representations of concern.

Examples from other Local Authorities where partnerships with the Police were working, specifically around anti-social behaviour, were highlighted.

The Police and Crime Panel, however, shared a view about the local "101" number for reporting crimes and whether this was "fit for purpose" as some calls were abandoned due to a lack of response. This had been an ongoing issue for many years and reasons for the problems remained unresolved.

The Police and Crime Commissioner referred to the very high volume of calls to Atlas Court, the home of the "101" number and confirmed this was subject to review. However, he extended an invitation to Members of the Police and Crime Panel to visit Atlas Court and see for themselves the level of activity taking place and the triage system that was in operation.

Reference was made to the progress of a "culture change" within the Police Force and how difficult this was to change given the increasing demands. The big shift required was not underestimated, but it would take time to be integrated. The Force was taking every opportunity to be

visible within communities in areas such as supermarkets and schools rather than being isolated within an inaccessible Police Station. The new neighbourhood way of working would take time to embed.

The Panel welcomed the simpler and leaner version of the Police and Crime Plan as submitted, but suggested some of the strategic priorities should be re-established and broken down into the South Yorkshire districts for clarity. It was a little unclear how performance would be monitored and measured.

The report as submitted and its contents were noted, but it was suggested that feedback from the Independent Ethics Panel be referred to this Panel for information, along with the full membership and any examples of partnership working. The Police and Crime Commissioner advised he would speak to the Chairman to ascertain the best way of sharing this information.

The Panel also sought clarity on breakdown figures for missing persons as it was uncertain if some of the figures related to individuals or occasions of reported instances by third parties. This vulnerable group of people needed to be taken seriously and links with other agencies established to identify reasons for disappearance.

The Panel also referred to the make-up of South Yorkshire Police and its reference in the report with percentages within a pie chart.

The Police and Crime Commissioner agreed to set this out as real figures and forward onto Panel Members for information.

The Police and Crime Commissioner agreed with Councillor Davison that it was a balancing act of holding the Police to account. Legacy issues were an important factor and had to be borne in mind, especially for those Police Officers who had joined the force more recently and the successes and good work of the Police needed to be recognised more.

The Chairman summarised the points raised by the Panel as part of further work with the Police and Crime Commissioner and his Office. This included:-

- Concerns and abandonment figures for the public contacting "101" at Atlas Court.
- Details around membership and terms of reference for the Independent Ethics Panel appointed by the Commissioner.
- Further understanding on how performance would be monitored and measured.
- Vulnerable people, especially those missing from home, the reasons for their disappearance, hate crime and third party reporting.

Some of the work identified would be included as part of the work programme for the Police and Crime Panel and this would be shared in due course.

It was also noted that despite the austerity measures being enforced on Local Authorities and the Police that a great deal of good work was still taking place which the Police and Crime Panel were happy to support.

Resolved:- (1) That the Police and Crime Commissioner be thanked for his attendance and update on the Plan.

(2) That the renewed Police and Crime Plan 2013/17: Putting Safety First be received and approved, the contents noted and any comments provided to the Police and Crime Commissioner before 25th March, 2015.

(3) That information be broken down into four Local Authority areas for future consideration.

(4) That the areas referred to above be incorporated into the work programme moving forward.

J38. POLICE AND CRIME PANEL WEBSITE

Consideration was given to a report which set out in detail the progress on the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel website to date, which could be found at www.southyorkspcp.org.uk

A demonstration of the website was provided at the meeting for Panel to comment on and suggest any changes to be made to the site.

The purpose of the website was to make it more user friendly, with links to key tasks and reports and complaints. Full details on how to make a complaint would also be featured with clear parameters on how complaints were to be filtered. This would all be in line with the Complaints Procedure which had previously been approved by the Panel and which should be revisited and added to the work programme.

The Panel were happy for the website to be made live with some further road testing via involvement with the community in testing the prototype.

The URL site, which cost £20.00, would be effective within 72 hours and all other legal technicalities confirmed.

Resolved:- (1) That the current design of the website, as demonstrated at the meeting on 19th March, 2015, and any changes required be noted.

(2) That further consideration be given as to how best to involve members of the community in testing the website.

(3) That further consideration be given to methods of engaging/interacting with the community appropriate for the working and statutory role of the Police and Crime Panel.

(4) That the issue of complaints be added to the work programme for further consideration.

J39. WORK PROGRAMME

Deborah Fellowes, Scrutiny Manager, advised the Police and Crime Panel on the status of the current work programme.

It was, therefore, suggested that the work programme be submitted to the next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel and it was proposed that the new emerging performance framework for the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office be included, along with the review of the Annual report.

Resolved:- That the position be noted and the proposals put forward for consideration at the June meeting be approved.

J40. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel take place on Monday, 29th June, 2015 at 2.30 p.m. at Rotherham Town Hall.