

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
Wednesday, 27th January, 2016

Present:-**Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council**

Councillor R. Frost

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council

Councillor A. Jones

Councillor G. Jones

Sheffield City Council

Councillor J. Armstrong

Councillor J. Campbell

Councillor S. Mair-Richards (**in the Chair**)

Councillor J. Otten

Co-opted Member

Mr. A. Carter

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C. McGuinness (Doncaster), C. Vines (Rotherham) and E. Wallis (Rotherham) and Mr. S. Chufungleung (Co-opted Member).

F37. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

37.1 It was noted that a question had been submitted from a member of the public that had been asked on a number of occasions. The member of the public concerned was not present at the meeting, however, the Chair ruled it as being out of order due to it being repetitious and the questioner having been previously told that it was a procedural matter which had been submitted to the Chief Constable.

37.2 A member of the public asked the following question:-

“Despite recently being the victim of an armed robbery, I am not someone who wants the sight of armed police on the streets of Sheffield to become familiar or normal.

Is the PCP or PCC able to comment on any conversation they had with the Chief Constable or the PCP with the PCC in respect to the armed police on patrol in Sheffield city centre over the Christmas period?

Were they or the PCC consulted on the matter or was it handed down from the Home Office as a fait accompli?

If so, where does this leave the so called democratic control of the Police that the PCC is supposed to represent?”

37.3 The Police and Crime Commissioner replied that, as far as the Police were concerned over the Christmas period, it was a reaction to the attacks in Paris. The judgement was taken, which was not dictated by the Home Office or the Home Secretary but were local judgements taken, not just in Sheffield, but other local centres and Chief Constables put some armed police in centres like Meadowhall and city centres in order reassure people. The Police and Crime Commissioner had not been consulted. There had been a reaction from the public mainly favourable but not everybody. It was thought that the Chief Constable would reflect upon the reactions and think about that if he feels needs to do anything like that again. The Commissioner did not see it as being routine and depends upon the level of threat that is perceived by an individual Chief Constable. The Commissioner and Chief Constable do discuss things but it was his decision at the end of the day.

37.4 As far as armed officers are concerned yes there were armed officers but they were not visible to the public; they were in cars going about South Yorkshire 24 hours a day but you did not see them because the Force needed them to respond immediately if there was an incident.

37.5 Councillor G. Jones reported that Doncaster Council had been made aware that armed police were going to patrol particularly in the Frenchgate Centre in Doncaster and told that was happening following the issues in Paris. One complaint had been received about the armed police being on the streets, however, Councillor Jones had spoken to people subsequently who were reassured equally in that measure. It was a one-off particularly following those fateful attacks and hopefully would never see it again but it had certainly given reassurance to most people.

37.6 A member of the public asked the following questions:-

(a) "How does the Police and Crime Commissioner feel about moving the Fire Service and Police Force together. As the Police Force seem to suffer changes about every two years could they not be left to settle down to the local Police team working before more changes take place. These changes always have a grave impact on partnership working which then impacts on the public.

(b) How valuable does the Police and Crime Commissioner see the Confirmer system set up by South Yorkshire Police and used in partnership with Neighbourhood Watch and if he approves of it could he ensure that the Force use it for crime information. Instead of ignoring it because they have not time. Is this not a waste of money?"

37.7 With regard to question (a), the Police and Crime Commissioner agreed that there had been turbulence happening within the Police Force and it did need to settle down and embed and the local Police teams needed a period of stability to settle. As far as collaboration and partnership possibly with the Fire Service concerned, there was an agenda now which was not being driven by the Force locally, South

Yorkshire had its own ideas about collaboration with the Fire Service, but it was very much from the Home Office and Home Secretary. This appeared to be the direction of travel from the Government and it seemed to be fairly clear at some point there would have to be discussion with the Fire and Rescue Services. That is not to say South Yorkshire did not value a partnership with the Fire Services as there were a number of things that could and were done together such as shared buildings for example the building at Maltby. That was the level at which the Force was taking things in that partnering/sharing way but recognises there were pressures coming from the Home Secretary.

37.8 With regard to question (b), the Police and Crime Commissioner felt it was a valuable service. It was maintained by South Yorkshire Police and performed a valuable service. It was the Commissioner's understanding that the Police were now so stretched in terms of officers and officer time that the ideal of them operating the system and sending down messages on a pretty regular basis will probably not happen because the personnel were not available. His advice would be for Neighbourhood Watch ought to meet with the District Commanders or with local Inspector to see what it could do to make it a better system.

F38. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PANEL

38.1 Councillor Frost asked the following questions:-

(a) "I would like you to look at sharing buildings with the fire and ambulance services on 'out of town' sites to enable valuable sites to be sold and reduce running costs.

(b) Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour is a key priority and remaining committed to Neighbourhood policing. Already warranted officers have been moved to LPTs and now PSCOs are being centralised so we will miss their local knowledge built up over time. Is this the end of neighbourhood policing?

Penistone members are concerned that at certain times they will be left with no cover as travelling to Penistone can be delayed by traffic or weather problems. How can this be overcome?

(c) We are already seeing difficulties getting officers to PACT meetings and Crime and Safety Sub-Groups. How can Elected Members report problems/concerns to the Police? How do we set PACT priorities?

There were good links between Neighbourhood teams and Berneslai Homes HMOs responsible for anti-social behaviour where information was shared and appear to be lost. How can these links be restored?

(d) Crime is rising and the teams getting intelligence and with links to the community are being lost."

38.2 With regard to question (a), the Police and Crime Commissioner replied that the South Yorkshire Police and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Services were already looking at ways to share buildings and reduce costs for both services. Maltby was a good example of a shared facility and it was envisaged this would happen more over the next few years. They would also be looking at working with the Ambulance Service though this was more complicated because they operated on a Yorkshire-wide basis.

38.3 With regard to question (b), the Police and Crime Commissioner replied that he was committed to the concept of neighbourhood policing though the size of the Force had had to be reduced in recent years due to funding cuts.

The new Local Policing Teams had a neighbourhood focus and officers were being equipped with hand held computers that allowed them to stay in communities to write up their reports. They did not have to keep going back and forth to police stations.

Police Community Support Officers were being retained as part of the new Local Policing Teams as a pledge had been given that the percentage of PCSOs would remain at about 6% (225 PCSOs) for the next four years to 2020.

They were a vital resource for enabling communities to feel safe and as a source of local intelligence for the Police.

The Commissioner had given reassurances to Penistone residents that, despite the cuts, their concerns would be addressed and the local Inspector understood very well that some of the smaller or more remote communities must also be kept safe and feel safe.

38.4 With regard to question (c), the Police and Crime Commissioner reported that since there were fewer officers their attendance at community meetings was being reviewed. He would ask all local groups – TARAs, PACTs, Community Forums etc. – to talk to their local Inspector about how the Force could engage with them in the future. Local arrangements would vary. Some meetings may arrange for officers or PCSOs to attend on a less frequent basis. All groups could arrange for information to be passed electronically.

38.5 With regard to question (d), the Police and Crime Commissioner reported that not all crime was rising. In fact some crimes which concerned community groups a great deal – such as burglaries – were falling. It was vital that community groups worked with South Yorkshire Police to understand the new Local Policing Teams and to agree ways of continuing to share information.

This was one reason why the Commissioner was determined that the number of PSCOs would remain at the present number for the next four

years.

38.6 Mr. Carter asked the following question:-

“It relates to the decision taken by the Police and Crime Commissioner to move his office location from Regent Street in Barnsley to the Police Headquarters in Carbrook in Sheffield. I did have a little concern about what message that might give to the general public in terms of the independence of the PCC from the Police Force to be located continuously with him. I suggested, although I appreciate it is a matter entirely for the Commissioner’s for his consideration and determination, that it might be helpful if the address given at least indicated a certain separation from the Chief Constable and his Command Team.”

38.7 The Police and Crime Commissioner stated that the OPCC had very much taken the latter point Mr. Carter was making. He explained that clearly there was an environment where the PCC was having to save every penny possible and a principal motive for moving was financial and the move was going to save something like £100,000 a year. Consideration was then given as to where the OPCC would move to and, because the Police estate was shrinking, there were a number of options in terms of police stations, either whole or partly, and all had been considered and finished up with Carbrook which had space in it. The OPCC had moved into part of the ground floor and had a separate entrance and was separately badged. Mr. Carter was right in terms of what the OPCC put on their e-mail address, address and notepaper and must make the distinction absolutely clear. Perception was important and the PCC and OPCC had thought long and hard about that and in the end became an inhabiting factor before made the final decision. All things being equal Carbrook was the obvious place to go. Staff had moved in and been there for over a week.

38.8 The other key thing was in terms of the savings in petrol and people going backwards and forwards by Meadowhall to Barnsley. The Senior Command Team were highly paid people spending a good proportion of their life every month on the motorway stuck in traffic. .

38.9 Mr. Carter asked if the Commissioner was now required to pay relocation expenses to members of your staff by virtue of change of their office?

38.10 The Police and Crime Commissioner stated that there had been some cost in altering the building and the other costs of the kind you mentioned because changing terms of conditions. There would be some initial costs but it was then envisaged saving a lot of money.

F39. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 27TH NOVEMBER, 2015

39.1 Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting of

the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel held on 27th November, 2015.

39.2 It was confirmed that a letter had been sent to the IPCC expressing the Panel's disappointment with regard to the lack of progress (Minute No. 30 CSE Update).

39.3 The Chair stated that the revised procedure for the initial handling of complaints would be kept under review (Minute No. 31 refers).

39.4 Arising from Minute No. 28.5(a) (the report by Professor John Drew), the Police and Crime Commissioner reported that the report had taken longer than initially hoped but was now in the process of being written up. There was some sensitivity around its release date due to the trials taking place at Sheffield Crown Court, however, all local authorities would have sight of the report before an announcement was made.

39.5 Mr. Carter asked if Panel members in future could receive the draft minutes of meeting in advance of the next meeting's agenda to allow submission of any possible questions to the Commissioner.

Action:- (1) That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27th November, 2015, be approved for signature by the Chair.

(2) That Panel members receive the draft minutes as soon as possible after the meeting – Immediate.

F40. PRECEPT PROPOSAL FOR 2016-17

40.1 Consideration was given to a report, submitted by the Chief Finance Officer to the Office of the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner, containing information about the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner's proposed Council Tax precept for the 2016/17 financial year.

40.2 Attached to the report was a draft of the Police and Crime Plan setting out the strategic direction for policing in South Yorkshire and providing the information necessary for the determination of the revenue budget and Council Tax precept.

40.3 The Chancellor had announced the outcome of the Spending Review on 25th November, 2015, stating that the Government would protect overall Police spending in real terms over the spending review period, an increase of £900M in cash terms by 2019/20 which would provide funding to maintain overall Police force budgets at current cash levels.

40.4 The Spending Review also provided some Police and Crime Commissioners greater flexibility in their local funding decisions by allowing those areas that had historically kept Council Tax levels low to

increase the Band D Council Tax by £5. The 2015/16 Council Tax for policing in South Yorkshire was the eighth lowest policing Council Tax in England and therefore the “greater flexibility” was available to the Commissioner.

40.5 The Police Minister announced details of the Police Grant for 2016/17 on 17th December which stated that for 2016/17 direct resource funding for each Police and Crime Commissioner, including precept, would be protected at flat cash levels assuming that precept income was increased to the maximum amount available. This meant that no PCC would face a reduction in cash funding next year compared to this year and the majority would see marginal increases in their spending power.

40.6 An analysis of the grant funding position for Policing in South Yorkshire showed that funding from the Government, in respect of Police Grant and Formula Grant, would fall by approximately £1M in 2016/17. However, the Police Minister was able to suggest that funding for South Yorkshire would actually increase by £0.9M by assuming that Council Tax income would increase by £5 on a Band D property and that additional income would be generated by a small rise in the tax base.

40.7 The Police Funding Settlement was only for one year which made it difficult to undertake medium term financial planning. It also meant that assumptions had to be made as to the potential levels of funding for years beyond 2017 linked to the overall Home Office totals shown in the Spending Review document.

40.8 The net revenue budget for 2015/16 was £240.128M. On the basis of the funding settlement and assuming a Council Tax increase of £5 for a Band D property, the overall net revenue budget for 2016/17 would be, based on the current tax base and with no inclusion of the Collection Fund position, no more than £239.724M an overall reduction in resources of approximately £0.4M.

40.9 The overall forecast budget gap amounting to £10.5M. There was the potential for this to reduce following the determination of the tax base and collection fund position by the district councils. The gap would, therefore, need to be met from savings in revenue expenditure in 2016/17.

40.10 With employee costs representing approximately 90% of the revenue budget, it was likely that the majority of the savings would be found from reductions in employee numbers. Where such reductions involved severance/redundancy payments, the costs would be a feature of the Reserves Strategy. The approach to reducing such numbers would in part be determined by the review of operating structures which was being carried out and guided by the working assumptions set out in the Police and Crime Plan 2016-20.

40.11 The PCC would need financial reserves in order to ensure funding

was available to meet future commitments and avoid unplanned reductions in activity as a result of unforeseen or unbudgeted expenditure. The costs associated with legacy issues was not included in the revenue budget previously. There was no nationally recognised measure of the level of reserves but the Audit Commission suggested that most Chief Finance Officers regard an amount of between 3% and 5% of net revenue spending as a prudent level for general reserves.

40.12 The PCCs Reserves Strategy would be finalised as part of the budget process, however, during the current financial year the PCC had changed the planned strategy of using general reserves to contribute to funding the capital progress to preserving reserve levels for potential future legacy costs. This had resulted in planned review contributions to capital for 2015/16 being released back into reserves and the financing of capital spending replaced with borrowing.

40.13 In renewing the Police and Crime Plan 2016-20 Putting Safety First, there would be more emphasis of emerging themes of:-

- Victims of domestic abuse, human trafficking and hate crime
- Seeking to understand the causes of fatal road traffic collisions to enable greater prevention
- Developing an effective counter terrorism capability
- Ensuring an effective response to armed criminality within South Yorkshire
- Building confidence with the public and contributing to community cohesion

40.14 The following working assumptions would underpin all decision making:-

- Remaining committed to neighbourhood policing
- Deploying resources to areas of highest demand based on threat, harm and risk
- Finding ways to understand and address appropriately feelings of safety
- Distinguishing more carefully between demand that requires an appropriate police response and demand that is the primary concern of other partners
- Consulting public and partners about what they expect of South Yorkshire Police
- Encouraging the workforce at all levels to contribute towards improving service delivery
- Maximising partnerships with other forces, local authorities, emergency services and others in the criminal justice system at local, regional and national levels, where it makes for greater effectiveness and efficiency
- Embedding the Code of Ethics for policing in our culture

After the Police and Crime Commissioner had completed his presentation of the budget report, the Members of the Police and Crime Panel asked the following questions:-

- The OPCC had organised two events with partners to look and map who was doing/providing what in particular areas and was there any duplication/overlap, could the resources be pooled and work together better. The message was coming back that everyone was squeezed and struggling with the financial situation but unless all agencies worked together the small resources available may be wasted so it was important all worked together
- The back office functions of HR, Finance, IT, Legal and Finance – were shared with Humberside and had resulted in a number of savings but there was more to be done. Priority based budgeting, a close look at activities to ascertain if any more savings could be made, was being undertaken. This not reflected in the budget as that work had only just commenced but it was hoped that more savings would be found during the financial year. There was already co-operation with other Forces with regard to specialist activities.
- The possible 50-60 jobs would go through natural wastage so the likely gaps were known. However, it was now becoming more difficult to redeploy given the vastly reduced workforce
- The £4.8M funding for Legacy issues was divided into two. Firstly, £2.4M for the potential costs of the National Crime Agency inquiry into CSE and the remaining £2.4M for the Hillsborough costs which were ongoing. What this figure represented was if there were additional costs, and there would be in both areas, the minimum that would certainly have to be found would be £2.4M. If South Yorkshire applied to the Home Secretary for a specialist grant and for it to be favourably looked upon, she had made it clear we would have to stand the first £2.4M of expenses which was roughly 1% of the total budget so as a precaution we need to have £4.8M in there
- The settlement going forward, unlike local authorities who were given some reassurance over the next 4 years the Police did not; the fund was for 1 year only. There was the flexibility relating to the ability of the Commissioner to raise the Council Tax £5 but it was not known if that would be available for the next year. The Commissioner had not been formally asked to sign off the budget for 2016/17 as work was still taking place to find ways of balancing the budget. As part of the budget process work was still underway in terms of the medium term forecast from April 2017 onwards. At the present time it was felt that the forecast would involve a flat line police finance settlement position probably assuming there would continue to be a reduction in Government grant but that those reductions would be offset by Council Tax increases as that appeared to be the assumption underlying the spending review. That would mean that the reductions

in spending would have to be found in future years to offset Government increases and costs increases

- It was not felt that a full collaboration of South Yorkshire and Humberside Police Forces was being moved to. The two Forces were working very closely together as it made sense being neighbours. The collaboration still had a long way to go and more savings to be achieved. However, the footprint for the new Sheffield City Region, was different and had to be considered. The Police operated at national, regional and local levels.
- The Ministry of Justice Grant was funding that was issued annually. The figure for South Yorkshire for next year was £1.6M, a slight increase on 2015/16. There was no indication of the level of funding in future years. It funded Youth Offending Teams
- The number of Specials were rising. They were trained officers and could do everything a Police Officer could do but they were not available when they were at work. The use of volunteers generally was something that the Home Secretary was very keen all Forces look at South Yorkshire was being cautious and clear that they were not using volunteers to do things that should be paid jobs within the police force
- It was not a comprehensive list of emerging themes in the Putting Safety First Plan. Domestic abuse, human trafficking and hate crime had been in the Plan previously but suddenly seemed to have come to the fore. There was a HMI report on domestic abuse which said that South Yorkshire had to improve with regard to domestic abuse. Having a police force able to deal with these issues meant having to have the right calibre of officer and training
- It was becoming a real anxiety for the increased use of the Police Force as the "last resort" particularly with regard to cases involving mental health. There were growing concerns and issues on the Police having to respond when someone was in trouble. Discussions were taking place with the NHS and local authorities with regard to mental health cases as police officers were not trained. It was a growing area of concern across the country
- The staff at Atlas Court were doing a very difficult job with outdated equipment. They had great responsibility when receiving a call, making a judgement and making the right response to that call; it was a skilled operation. They were as much front line as neighbourhood police officers. There was a Capital Programme of approximately £12M. Tenders had been received with the chosen bidder being selected by 1st April; there would then be a period of a year for the design of the actual technology which would be state of the art. It was acknowledged that in hindsight more should have been done earlier but last year when there had been real difficulties with 101 it had not

just been the equipment but also some mistakes made about the number of people in Atlas Court which had now been rectified

Action:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the contents of the documents detailing the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposals for "Securing the Future of Neighbourhood Policing" be noted.

(3) That the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel supports the proposal, now submitted by the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner, to increase the Council Tax by 1.95% for 2016/17, by £5 for a Band D property (a 3.3% increase) to £153.16, equivalent to an increase of 10p per week.

F41. INTRODUCTION OF THE OPPORTUNITY FOR GENERAL QUESTIONS FROM PANEL MEMBERS TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

41.1 Stuart Fletcher, Legal Adviser to the Panel, presented a report proposing changes to the Rules of Procedure to introduce the opportunity for members of the Panel to ask general questions of the Commissioner.

41.2 It was proposed that, in relation to Point 9 of the Procedure, in the absence of the Member who had given notice of a question, that the Member be supplied with a written answer.

41.3 Discussion ensued on point 7(2)(b) of Appendix 1 "most not repeat or substantially repeat any question that has been asked and answered at a meeting of the Panel in the six months preceding the date of the meeting". It was established that it would be for the Chair to make a judgement call as to whether the question had been answered previously.
Agreed:- That the Panel's Rules of Procedure for meetings be amended to include the procedure in relation to questions from members of the Panel to the Commissioner on general matters, as set out in Appendix 1 including the further revision to Point 9.

F42. UPDATE ON THE OPERATION THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

42.1 Stuart Fletcher, Legal Adviser to the Panel, presented a report on the handling of complaints received against the Police and Crime Commissioner.

42.2 The following complaints had been resolved:-

1. A complaint about the timeliness of South Yorkshire Police's response to a robbery.

As this complaint was an operational matter it had been referred to South Yorkshire Police. The complainant had been informed that this had happened.

2. An anonymous complaint had been received that on two occasions the complainants had been unable to speak to someone when using the 101 number to try to contact the Police.

As this was an operational matter it had been referred to South Yorkshire Police. However, as the complaint had been made anonymously it had not been possible to inform the complainant of the action taken.

3. A complaint had been received in respect of the former South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner.

This had been referred to the Independent Police Complaints Commission who would decide as to whether the issue would be investigated further and at that stage a further report would be provided to the Panel.

42.3 Mr. Carter expressed concern that neither himself or Steve Chufunglung had been consulted in the above complaints as per the revised complaints procedure.

42.4 The Legal Adviser advised that the proposed changes had not been implemented as yet. They required specific changes to the complaints procedure which would hopefully be submitted to the next meeting, therefore, the complaints had been dealt with under the existing procedure of the host authority dealing with the initial handling.

42.5 Michelle Buttery, OPCC, reiterated the assurance given at the previous meeting that, when the process did change, the Office would seek to involve the two independent members in the vetting process so they could witness and quality assure the process.

42.6 Disappointment was expressed that the complaints procedure was still under review and not implemented as yet.

Action: That the report be received and the contents noted.

F43. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Action:- That meetings be held on 4th March, 15th April and 27th May, 2016, all commencing at 11.00 a.m. in the Rotherham Town Hall.