

Appendix A:

Member Briefing: Police and Crime Panel

Police & Crime Commissioners Register of Interests House of Commons Home Affairs Committee. (Printed 16th May 2013) First Report of Session 2013-14.

This report considers the following areas;

- The Scrutiny of PCCs,
- Who are the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC)?
- Salaries and Offices
- PCC's profile

2 Annexes are included: Information PCC's are required to publish and Chief Constables' pay . The first of these annexes may be of particular interest to members of the Police and Crime Panel.

The full report can be found at

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmhaff/69/69.pdf>

Overview:

The report recognises that the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner is to ensure an effective and efficient police force in their area and to hold the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of the PCC's 'police and crime plan' . The PCC is responsible for the appointment /suspension of the Chief Constable and for the police budget in their area. Including setting the local council tax precept for policing.

The Scrutiny of PCCs:

The report acknowledges the "power" assigned to one individual in the role of PCC and recognises that ultimately the PCCs are held to account by the electorate. It identified that at the local level Police and Crime panels (PCPs) scrutinises the work of PCCs. The report considers the actions of the Chief Constable by the Lincolnshire PCP and that in that case the PCP failed to met for over two months.

The report identified that on 19th April 2013 only 10 PCCs had met their statutory obligations and published the full financial data required. (South Yorkshire was not included in this list).

The report identified that prior to 18th April, 2013 12 PCCs have yet to publish their data online and South Yorkshire was one of the 12 named as not having published. However the report goes on to acknowledge that this was rectified before 3rd May 2013.

Who are the Police and Crime Commissioners?:

The report looks the eligibility criteria and at the breakdown of PCCs across the country.

Salaries & Offices:

The report identifies the staff in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) along with the salaries of their deputies and Senior staff members.

A financial breakdown is provided and it states that the Police precept 2012/13 South Yorkshire has increased by 3.5% for a band D property, which is one of the largest percentage increases compared to the other force areas.

It identified that the overall force budget for South Yorkshire is (£m) 252.728,773 with the budget for 2013/14 for the South Yorkshire OPCC being (£m) 3.144,717

The percentage of the budget utilised by the OPCC in South Yorkshire is 1.24%, which is the largest percentage of any other budget where information was available.*see response from PCC below.

The House of Commons Committee also identifies the force areas where the OPCC budget is more than the Police Authority budget 2012/13 and South Yorkshire is included in this list having advised of the following increase;

The cost for the Police Authority in 2012/13 was (£m) 2.307

The cost of the OPCC budget for 2013/14 being (£m) 3.44717

This is a change of (£m) 0.84 (a 36.4% increase). However it should be noted that this includes the commissioning of services, specific grants and capital financing which having considered the information provided by other OPCCs suggests that the information used was not comparable across the country.

PCC's Profile

The report looks at an analysis of the professional experience, the gender and ethnicity of PCCs and whether they reflect the diverse public whom they represent.

Conclusions and recommendations from the report:

There are 17 recommendations from the report. It was acknowledged that local scrutiny is key to ensuring the highest standards of integrity and competence.

The report also highlights that regular national comparisons are important to ensure public confidence.

With regard to costs and to ensure that transparency is maintained, and to enable OPCC budgets to be compared the Home Affairs Committee recommends that Central Government publishes a list of the costs of each OPCC compared with previous years.

Response from the Police and Crime Commissioner

The South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner has written to the Home Office identifying a number of anomalies with the responses given to the questions posed by the Select Committee. The PCC has published the following statement on his website along with the communications to the Home Office. <http://www.southyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk/News-and-Events/News-Archive/2013/Response-from-the-Commissioner-to-the-report-on-Police-and-Crime-Commissioners-Register-of-Interests-.aspx>

"The section of the report suggesting the cost of my office for 2013/14 is more than the Police Authority budget 2012/13 is not correct.

My office was not given the opportunity to validate the figures prior to the report being published and in my mind this suggests a lack of precision and robustness in their gathering of information.

The correct budgeted costs for the office of the police and crime commissioner (OPCC) are £2.035m, which is in fact £200k less than the Police Authority budget.

The £3.144717m published in the report includes other budgeted costs, which are not valid for comparison purposes.

A budget of £2.035m, also changes the percentage of the OPCC budget from the overall policing budget for South Yorkshire to 0.91%, rather than 1.24% stated in the report. “

The Home Affairs Select Committee Clerk has agreed to provide further clarification about the figures on their website in early June.