



NORTHUMBRIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

10 September 2019

PRESENT:

Gateshead Council	Councillors A Douglas and S Hawkins
Newcastle City Council	Councillors C Penny-Evans and K Webster
North Tyneside Council	Councillors J Mole and T Mulvenna
Northumberland County Council	Councillor R Moore
South Tyneside Council	Councillor J Welsh
Sunderland City Council	Councillors D MacKnight and M Mordey
Independent Co-opted Member	Mr S Isaacson

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria

K McGuinness	- Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria (PCC)
R Durham	- Chief of Staff
M Tait	- Chief Finance Officer
C Wheatley	- Chief Inspector, Northumbria Police
H Murphy	- Business Intelligence Manager, Northumbria Police

Gateshead Council

S Ramsey	- Clerk to the Panel
B Wilson	- Democratic Services

APOLOGIES:	Councillors J Riddle (Northumberland County Council), A Strike (South Tyneside Council) and Mrs J Guy
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20. S ISAACSON – INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF THE PANEL

The Chair reported that Mr Isaacson had submitted his resignation and this was his last Panel meeting.

RESOLVED - That the Members' appreciation and thanks for the commitment and support Mr Isaacson has given to the Panel and their best wishes for the future be recorded.

21. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the last meeting held on 30 July 2019 be approved as a correct record.

22. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Further to Minute 13(ii), all of the six constituent Councils have agreed formally or verbally to contribute towards the Panel's annual subscription for the National Association of Police Fire and Crime Panels and the necessary arrangements were being made.

23. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

The terms of office of the Panel's current Independent Members ends on 7 May 2020. As reported above, Mr Isaacson is resigning as an Independent Member of the Panel after this meeting.

The process for selecting Independent Members is determined by each individual Panel. It is, therefore, proposed that an advert be placed in the local press seeking applicants for these positions. The constituent Councils are to be requested to place the advert on their websites and to circulate it to relevant partners, organisations and individuals who might be interested in applying for the positions.

It is further proposed that the Clerk to the Panel be authorised, following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair, to finalise the appointment process timetable. It is also suggested that the Chair, Vice Chair and another Member of the Panel shortlist the applicants and undertake the subsequent interviews. The preferred candidates for appointment will then be recommended to the Panel to make the final decision.

The Panel will be updated on the progress of the appointment process.

RESOLVED - That the appointment process for the appointment of the Independent Members of the Panel as outlined be approved and a progress report be submitted to the next meeting.

24. THEMED REPORT – RAPE AND SERIOUS SEXUAL OFFENCES

Chief Inspector Wheatley presented an overview of the performance of Northumbria Police in relation to Rape and Serious Sexual Offence (RaSSO) investigations.

The Police and Crime Plan and Violence against Women and Girls Strategy both highlight that preventing violence and abuse, the provision of services, effective partnership working, the pursuit of offenders and protecting the vulnerable are main priorities. Vulnerability with a focus on prevention sits at the heart of the Force's 2025 strategy.

RaSSO volumes have increased and are above the national average. The force has improved rape charge rates overall since September 2018 from 5.8% to 6.5% and was above the national charge rates of 4.5%. The force's report to conviction rate was 3.4% compared to 2.9% nationally. Although the conviction rate had increased, this had reduced to 53% and was below the national rate of 63.8%). The average

time between charge and trial is at least one year, so the cases where improved investigative standards work had been undertaken may not yet have reached trial. Onward monitoring of the conviction rate will be required to ensure that this improved.

Since 2015, sexual offences have increased by 95%. There was a 23% increase in the current year compared to the 12 months to July 2017. However, in the last 12 months to July 2019 there had been a decrease of 1% mainly due to fewer rape offences. This currently equated to 1.2 rape crimes per 1,000 population, the 4th highest nationally, based on 12 months to June 2019. The Force Management Statement predicts a further 7% increase in demand per annum.

Despite the unprecedented increase in demand in relation to RaSSO, Northumbria Police have improved performance with a number of measures introduced as outlined. The force was working in partnership with other agencies to prevent sexual abuse, ensure the earliest identification and best possible support for victims to enable them to cope and recover and to ensure perpetrators were held to account for their actions, which will result in improved criminal justice outcomes.

The six key areas for focus in 2019/20 outlined have been identified through the analysis of rape and serious sexual offences reported to the Police, victim feedback, performance reviews, rape scrutiny panel findings, internal reviews and review of national strategies and reports.

The Panel raised the following issues:

There was concern that some of the rates had increased and it was asked if the force was confident that the new measures introduced to increase conviction rates would work. It was replied that the issues had been identified and partnership arrangements developed. Charge rates and reporting rates had increased so victims had confidence in the police to report offences.

The force had improved investigative standards through training and better file evidence to the Crown Prosecution Service for the last 18 months but some of the cases involved have not reached trial yet. Conviction rates will be monitored to ensure that this improved.

The police work with partners in schools and have a good education preventative programme. This includes various initiatives to work with children where there may be specific issues. The force also works with the universities with dedicated officers and proactive operations.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

25. FEEDBACK FROM NATIONAL AND REGIONAL EVENTS

Councillor Welsh reported that she had been appointed as Vice Chair of the National Association of Police Fire and Crime Panels. The Eighth National Conference for Police Fire and Crime Panels was to be held in Warwick on 19 November 2019 and this was to include the National Association's Annual General Meeting. She was to be briefed on how the PCC was to handle the reform of police complaints as this was to be discussed by the National Association.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

26. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER – PROGRESS REPORT/KEY ISSUES IN THE NEXT QUARTER

The PCC presented her progress report/key issues in the next quarter to the Panel which covered the following:-

Police funding: Home Secretary
Tackling Hate Crime
Delivering for Northumbria
Violence Reduction Unit
Northumbria Police – seeing the work they do first hand
Commissioner's Community Fund
Scrutiny Performance
Out and about – groups she has met and visits made

The Panel raised the following issues:

The new format for the PCC's report was welcomed, and it was clearer and easier to read.

It was asked when the PCC expected the Home Office to give her details about the increase in police officers and funding arrangements. It was replied that there was no information yet or about the formula to be used to allocate the new officers to the different areas. There was also to be an increase in Police Community Support Officers but this was a separate arrangement.

The Violence Reduction Unit was welcomed and it was hoped that it would have a large impact and the Government will provide long term funding for this initiative.

- RESOLVED –
- (i) That the information be noted.
 - (ii) That the Panel support the PCC's request for additional police officers.
 - (iii) That an update on the increase in police officers be submitted at the next meeting.

27. DELIVERY OF THE POLICE AND CRIME PLAN – APRIL – JUNE 2019: THRESHOLDS AND PERFORMANCE

The Panel considered thresholds and performance information relating to the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan for April to June 2019.

The Panel raised the following issues:-

There was concern that there had been more reports of hate crime and it was asked if this was due to an increase in the number of offences or in confidence to report this to the police. It was replied that this had previously been an under reported crime but it was combination of increased confidence and awareness of

hate crime, community reporting and Brexit and other concerns. The PCC added that in Gateshead and Newcastle there had been high recording of hate crime because there have been specialist teams and champions. This was to be rolled out to the other areas so that all the force was covered by the same model.

It was asked how the force monitored trends and identified emerging issues. It was replied that the force use a range of intelligence and performance analysis, seasonal factors, tactical assessment, trends, discussions with operational officers, etc. When emerging issues are identified, impact operations can be undertaken quickly and then evaluated.

Recorded domestic abuse incidents in June 2019 were high and had increased and it was asked if this was linked to universal credit and welfare issues. It was replied that the force looked at the incidents and the number of repeat victims which was 42%. The PCC considered that basic deprivation and crime were linked.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

28. COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER – JULY TO AUGUST 2019

In accordance with the agreed procedure, an update report about the complaints and purported complaints against the PCC and every conduct matter recorded by the Monitoring Officer between July - August 2019 was submitted.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

29. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 10 December 2019 at 2.00pm