



NORTHUMBRIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

1 August 2017

PRESENT:

Gateshead Council	Councillors J McElroy (Chair) and J McClurey
Newcastle City Council	Councillor A Ainsley
North Tyneside Council	Councillors C Burdis and T Mulvenna
Northumberland County Council	Councillors S Davey and J Riddle
South Tyneside Council	Councillor G Kilgour and J Welsh
Sunderland City Council	Councillor H Trueman
Independent Co-opted Members	Mrs J Guy

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria

Dame V Baird QC	- Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria (PCC)
E Snaith	- Chief Executive
M Tait	- Chief Finance Officer
P Godden	- Head of Corporate Development, Northumbria Police

Gateshead Council

M Harrison	- Legal, Democratic and Property Services
M Aynsley	- Democratic Services

APOLOGIES: Councillors N Kemp (Newcastle City Council), Councillor P Watson (Sunderland City Council) and Shlomi Isaacson

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED - That Councillor John McElroy and Councillor Harry Trueman be appointed as the Chair and Vice Chair of the Panel for 2017/18 respectively.

2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE PANEL

The Panel noted the membership of the Panel for 2017/18, subject to Councillor John Riddle replacing Councillor Barry Flux as a Northumberland County Council representative.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the last meeting held on 25 April 2017 be approved as a correct record.

4. FEEDBACK FROM NATIONAL AND REGIONAL EVENTS

There were no national and regional events reported.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted

5. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

The Panel's draft work programme for 2017/18 was submitted.

RESOLVED - That the work programme for 2017/18 be approved.

6. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER – PROGRESS AND UPDATE REPORT 2016/17

The Police and Crime Commissioner presented her update report to the Panel which covered the following:-

- Front desk reduction in hours in police stations
- Commissioner's Community Fund 2017/18
- Alcohol – minimum unit pricing
- Home Office VAWG Transformation Fund
- Appropriate Adults Scheme
- Association of PCCs
- Monitoring the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan – Scrutiny Meeting
- Living in Fear – The Police and CPS Response to Harassment and Stalking
- Advisory Groups
- 'YourNorthumbria'
- Community Engagement
- Funding for Northumbria
- Acid Attacks
- Fire Safety Tests – Northumbria Police Estate

The PCC was asked about the delays nationally in progressing a minimum pricing unit for alcohol. She advised that there had been an ongoing legal case in Scotland on this issue and interested parties had been waiting for the resolution of this case. In addition, the alcohol industry had also put up a robust stance against the proposal.

With regard to the reduced front desk hours in police stations, the members generally understood the PCC's rationale for these closures but were concerned about the communication of these proposals to the public and local authorities.

The PCC stressed that it had been an operational decision taken by the Chief Constable and she had reluctantly agreed with it. In particular, she pointed out the

low footfall at the stations during the later hours and the cost savings to the Police. She pointed out there were telephones outside of the stations which the public could use and these would take them through to the police switchboard where they would be given priority.

Members stressed that it would have been better to have direct communications with local councillors who could then have dealt with concerns from their constituents. Members asked whether the closures would be monitored and the PCC replied that they would be and that she would bring a report back to the Panel in six months on the outcome of this.

Reference was made to the report 'Living in Fear' and, in particular, why the Force recorded almost all instances of contact as harassment rather than stalking. The PCC said that greater clarity was required on the way these cases had been recorded. She pointed out that the same risk assessments are undertaken for both stalking and harassment. However, Restraining Orders could be used for harassment cases whereas Stalking Orders could be used for the other cases. Operation Verify had been established and this would review these cases and the way they were recorded to see whether some of them needed to be re-categorised.

A member referred to the high dropout rate of LGBT recruits in Northumbria and asked whether this was a national or local problem. The PCC said she would look into this matter.

The PCC advised the Panel that the Chief Constable had announced that he was to retire in October.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the Police and Crime Commissioner's update report be noted.
 - (ii) That a monitoring report be submitted to the Panel on the impact of the revised front desk hours in police stations.

7. DELIVERY OF THE POLICE AND CRIME PLAN – APRIL TO JUNE 2017

The Panel considered performance and target information relating to the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan for April to June 2017.

It was pointed out that there had been an increase in 999 call demand and that 7% of these had been unanswered by Northumbria. However, these had been answered by another force. The performance in relation to 101 calls had also deteriorated.

A member suggested that the increase in 999 calls could be a result of the 101 call answering performance. In response to a related question, members were advised that a new shift pattern had been introduced in the Communications Department and this was still bedding in. The Head of Communications was responsible for managing an improvement plan for both 101 and 999 calls.

The compliance rate in relation to the victims' code of practice was still below last year's level. An action plan had been put in place to address this matter.

The charge rate had continued to fall but Northumbria was still third nationally. An action plan had been put in place to address this matter. An update report would be provided at the Panel's next meeting.

It had been reported at the Panel's last meeting that the increase in total crime for the 12 months up to March 2018 had been estimated in the region of 0-4%. This had now been revised to 9-18%.

There had been an increase in the number of live complaints. This was due to the effective way they are managed.

A member referred to the 19% increase in recorded crime of which 2% could be considered to represent an increase in offending, whilst 17% could be attributable to further improvements in crime recording. He pointed out that the figure for Sunderland was the joint highest in the Force area at 26% and asked for more information on the percentage due to an increase in offending for that area. He was advised that further information would be provided to him.

In response to a question on the 26% increase in recorded sexual offences, members were informed that the proportion of historic cases remained the same so most of these were new offences. This increase could be attributed to greater awareness and confidence in reporting such offences.

The PCC was asked whether she was disappointed that 36% of IPCC investigated appeals were upheld. She replied that she was disappointed and would find out how the Force compared to others on this performance. The PCC added that there were changes in legislation on how complaints against the Police were dealt with and this would result in the PCC having more responsibilities in this area from 2018.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

8. COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER – QUARTERLY REPORT TO JUNE 2017

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 for the quarter ended June 2017.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

9. COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

The Panel received information about the complaints and purported complaints received about the Police and Crime Commissioner and how they are dealt with together with examples to illustrate the process.

The Panel discussed its current approach for dealing with these complaints and agreed that it was very similar to the procedures adopted by other Panels and local authorities and it was considered to be operating satisfactorily.

A member asked how the number of complaints received against the PCC compared to other Panels. She was advised such information was not collated nationally.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the information be noted.
 - (ii) That the current arrangements for dealing with complaints against the Police and Crime Commissioner by the PCC's Monitoring Officer through delegated powers under the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012 be continued.

10. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2016/17 SUBJECT TO AUDIT

The Statement of Accounts, subject to audit, was published on 30 June 2017. It was prepared in line with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2016/17) issued by CIPFA and in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards.

The 2016/17 revenue budget was approved at £266.840m based upon:

- increases in pay and prices of £5.200m; budget pressures of £3.800m and the impact on employer National Insurance of £4.300m;
- a reduction in revenue costs of £0.200m to support capital investment;
- budget savings of £15.300m in 2016/17;
- the use of £5.692m from the Commissioner's reserves to support the revenue budget and provide headroom to manage savings going forward; and
- an increase of £5 on the Council Tax precept in 2016/17 to raise an additional £1.872m income.

The revenue outturn for 2016/17 is shown in the table below:

2016/17	Approved Budget 2016/17	Outturn 2016/17	Variance 2016/17
Group Position	£m	£m	£m
Chief Constable	256.080	255.553	(0.527)
PCC	2.262	1.493	(0.769)
Capital Financing	8.498	7.380	(1.118)
	<u>266.840</u>	<u>264.426</u>	<u>(2.414)</u>
Central Government Grant	(225.666)	(225.666)	0
Council Tax Precept	<u>(35.482)</u>	<u>(35.482)</u>	<u>0</u>
Central Grant and Precept Total	<u>(261.148)</u>	<u>(261.148)</u>	<u>0</u>
Appropriations (to)/from Reserves	5.982	3.278	(2.414)

Chief Constable

The PCC delegated a budget of £256.080m to the Chief Constable for 2016/17 to enable the discharge of the activities under his control. The in-year budget strategy and regular monitoring resulted in an outturn of £255.553m, reflecting an in-year under spend of £0.527m.

The under spend can be primarily attributed to additional income claimed to offset expenditure incurred across Innovation and transformation projects; underspend on

the workforce and investment budget; and following the conclusion of a number of potentially costly legal cases, Zurich has advised that the Force insurance provision should be lowered.

Police and Crime Commissioner

The 2016/17 approved budget for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner is £2.262m. The outturn for 2016/17 is £1.493m which is an under spend of £0.769m.

The under spend largely relates to an underspend on the Commissioner's Community Fund; one off savings on Treasury Management costs and external legal advice; and a strategy to maximise the use of the Ministry of Justice Grant for the commissioning of services in year. This has been partially utilised to create a specific earmarked reserve of £0.300m to support the cost of Health Advocates in future years.

Capital financing is also under the direction of the PCC. The Capital Financing budget for 2016/17 was £8.498m, comprising interest on borrowing and investments and the minimum revenue provision for repayment of borrowing. The outturn position is £7.380m reflecting an under spend of £1.118m. These savings have been as a direct result of tactical decisions made as part of the Treasury Management Strategy, to defer long term borrowing at higher interest rates, with shorter term borrowing at lower rates and using cash balances to fund expenditure.

2016/17 Capital Programme

In addition to the day-to-day revenue activities, the PCC incurs expenditure on capital related items. This includes acquisition of fixed assets; building alterations; ICT; vehicles; and other major items of plant and equipment. The total capital investment for 2016/17 was £9.887m.

Regulations require public bodies to produce an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) that provides an assessment of the adequacy of the governance arrangements and their effectiveness. This separate statement accompanies the Statement of Account for each body.

The PCC and Chief Constable's Joint Governance Monitoring Group have undertaken a review of the governance and internal control arrangements and have prepared an AGS for each body. These were reported to and scrutinised by the Joint Independent Audit Committee on 19 June 2017 and subsequently authorised by the PCC and Chief Constable. The process did not identify any weaknesses in the governance arrangements.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the publication of the draft Statements of Account and Annual Governance Statements for 2016/17, subject to audit, be noted.
 - (ii) That the financial outturn position for 2016/17, subject to audit, be noted.
 - (iii) That the process for the scrutiny and certification arrangements, leading to the publication of the final Statements of Account by 30 September 2017 be noted.

11. KEY ISSUES IN THE NEXT QUARTER

The PCC advised the Panel of the following key issues she would be addressing in the next quarter:-

- Legislative changes for dealing with complaints against the Police
- New national protocols on how the Government consult PCCs including reshaping the Local Criminal Justice Boards function.
- Seeing is Believing – reviewing the role of the Soroptimists as observers at domestic violence courts in Bedlington and Gateshead.
- VAWG funding
- Police Transformation Fund – outcome of bid
- Increase the number of out of court disposals
- Chief Constable appointment process
- Partnership working with the Fire and Rescue Authorities

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

12. THEMED REPORT – POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER AND COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIPS WORKING CLOSER TOGETHER

The Panel has previously agreed that one of its themed topic discussions should be based on Partnership working between the PCC and the Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs). The CSP Managers were asked to put forward suggestions or discussion points on this topic.

The Managers have put forward the following:

- CSP Leads would like to extend an invitation to representatives from the OPCC to the six-weekly Community Safety Leads meetings. Through establishing a more regular dialogue with the OPCC, there is a potential for each party to provide updates on any significant or emerging developments relating to respective work areas as well as providing opportunities to share/exploit best practice, identify areas which potentially warrant closer working as well as helping to deliver greater uniformity across the Northumbria area.
- Formally strengthening the existing relationship with the OPCC allow officers to more effectively and routinely share ideas, thoughts and practices (e.g. learning from scrutiny committees reviews, domestic homicide reviews, serious case reviews, problem solving arrangements etc), which in turn may help to inform and shape future commissioning in Northumbria. It might be beneficial to consider jointly with the PCC that officers set out what CSPs will share and how they will co-operate through a Memorandum of Understanding.
- CSPs co-ordinate a range of activity to support the objectives identified in the Police and Crime Plan and would welcome continued discussions with the PCC on how CSPs can support and address key priority areas. They fully recognise and value the commitment from the PCC in relation to Violence against Women and Girls and would like to continue to be an integral part of the solution to tackling this issue for local residents.

The PCC felt it would be helpful to discuss joint commissioning and she felt that shared priorities and commissioning would be positive.

A member felt that as the local authorities had different structures it would be helpful if appropriate joint projects could be discussed at the CSP leads meeting with the representative of the OPCC and added that these meetings could be chaired on a rolling basis.

It was suggested that CSP Leads could meet and discuss how projects and issues were taken forward together and that they could undertake specific work/tasks on behalf of the Panel.

The PCC indicated that she was willing to send a representative to the CSP Leads meetings but also proposed that it would be helpful for her to have a strategic meeting with the CSP Chairs on a regular basis eg six monthly.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the CSP Leads take forward the issues outlined above with the OPCC.
 - (ii) That a progress report be presented to a future meeting of the Panel.

13. THEMED TOPICS

The following issues have been suggested as possible themed topics for discussion at future Panel meetings:

Panel suggestions:

- Volume Crime /Increase in Crime
- Rural Crime

Previous Panel suggestions:

- Combatting cyber crime
- Report on Operation Sanctuary

PCC's suggestions:

- Early intervention and partnerships
- Legislative changes for dealing with complaints against the Police
- Number of out of court disposals

14. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 31 October 2017 at 2.00pm