

NORTHUMBRIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

26 March 2018

PRESENT:

Gateshead Council	Councillors A Douglas and J McClurey
Newcastle City Council	Councillor A Ainsley
North Tyneside	Councillor C Burdis
Northumberland County Council	Councillor S Davey
South Tyneside Council	Councillors G Kilgour and J Welsh
Sunderland City Council	Councillors M Mordey and H Trueman
Independent Co-opted Member	Mr S Isaacson

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria

Dame V Baird QC	- Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria (PCC)
R Durham	- Interim Chief of Staff
M Tait	- Chief Finance Officer
G Noble	- Northumbria Police

Gateshead Council

D Hill	- Legal and Democratic Services
B Wilson	- Democratic Services

APOLOGIES: Councillors N Kemp (Newcastle City Council), T Mulvenna (North Tyneside Council), J Riddle (Northumberland County Council) and Mrs J Guy

54. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the last meeting held on 5 February 2018 be approved as a correct record.

55. FEEDBACK FROM NATIONAL AND REGIONAL EVENTS

- (i) Further to Minute 33 – 2017/18, the first meeting to discuss the arrangements for the establishment of the Special Interest Group for Police

and Crime Panels within the Local Government Association (LGA) is to be held on 19 April 2018 in the LGA offices, London.

- (ii) The Local Government Association modern day slavery regional event had recently been held in Newcastle and it had been well attended by staff from local authorities, police and other agencies.

- RESOLVED –
- (i) That the information be noted.
 - (ii) That Councillor J Welsh represent the Panel on the Special Interest Group and further reports be submitted as appropriate.

56. THEMED REPORT – OVERVIEW OF POLICE RECORDED CRIME

Further to minute 43 – 2017/18, Temporary Assistant Chief Constable G Noble provided an overview of the methodology used to measure levels of crime, the current levels of police recorded crime within the force area and how the force was responding strategically and operationally to changes in crime against the background of significant financial challenges.

The Crime Survey for England, for the 12 months to September 2017, reported that crime, excluding fraud and computer misuse offences, had reduced by 6% compared to the previous year. In contrast, police recorded crime increased by 14% in the same period.

Following an assessment, the statistics based on police recorded crime data were found not to meet the required standard for designation as national statistics by the UK Statistics Authority in 2014. Since then, there has been a major inspection programme by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services of police practices for the recording of crime.

Total recorded crime within Northumbria has increased by 109% since 2014 with increases across all local authority areas and in all major crime types. The increases are largely attributable to improvements in crime recording practices and increased confidence of victims to report crimes because, whilst the number of recorded crimes had increased, the total number of incidents reported to the force had remained at similar levels over the last few years.

The force had undertaken significant work to improve standards of crime recording under the four broad themes of leadership, process change, training and improved quality assurance and rectification as outlined.

Some offence types have been influenced to a lesser extent by the improvements in crime recording standards, therefore, a proportion of the recent increases in crime were likely to be actual increases and/or an increase in reporting due to improved confidence to report. There had also been changes in crime. There have been significant increases in harassment offences, including stalking. The impact of social media and emergence of cyber related crime had been significant on both recorded crime and police demand. Recorded rape and other sexual offences were at their highest level since the national crime recording standards were introduced in 2002. Child sexual exploitation was an increasingly high profile issue and modern

day slavery and human trafficking had also been identified by the force as a key area of business.

Northumbria Police continued to be recognised in the public satisfaction surveys as a service which upheld high standards and delivered outstanding service. However, the last eight years have seen unprecedented cuts to funding by the Government with the force being required to make £135.6m of cuts and efficiencies. Police officer levels have reduced by 21% (898 officers) and police staff by 36% (926 officers). The force received over 800,000 calls for service per year leading to the creation of 450,000 incidents.

Over the past five years, the force had made significant improvements in terms of efficiency with the introduction of a force improvement team and programme of change. Examples of the strategic and operational response were outlined. The recorded crime by local authority area for 2014 to 2017 was also provided.

The Panel raised the following issues:-

It was asked if the data could show the actual increase in crime and not the increases relating to the crime recording standards. It was replied that although it would be difficult to quantify this it was estimated that there had been a 2-3% actual increase in crime as a whole in discrete crime types.

It was asked how the police record the complex nature of crime and whether crimes recorded under Operation Sanctuary, etc were recorded as individual crimes or multiple crimes. It was replied that there were a number of categories and types of crime but each crime was recorded individually and then pulled together to show how complex the operation was.

It was commented that it may depend on how a crime was reported as to how the police record it. Also, a spate of crime reports on one issue can greatly affect the crime figures. It was replied that the police when recording a crime have to capture the perception of the victim. This was more challenging for the police but they try to get a positive outcome.

It was suggested that the crime statistics should include the numbers of crime per 1,000 population for each local authority to help people understand them. It was replied that the crime figures as suggested were available and used both locally and nationally.

The PCC reported that she had sent the report that there had been actual increases in crime in certain categories to the Home Secretary as the Home Office considered that crime was reducing. Any reply received will be reported to the Panel.

It was asked if there was a measure that showed what was reported, the crimes recorded and the conviction rates. It was replied that these figures could be provided together with the different crime types.

If several witnesses of a crime all report it, was it recorded as a single crime or multiple crimes. If the police were confident that all reports were the same incident then one crime would be recorded. If not, more than one crime would be recorded. This would then be verified by the crime recording audit. Each reported crime was considered on its merits.

It was reported that Councillors receive a lot of local crime information from their neighbourhood team and they were very grateful for this. Given that the force had received the largest percentage reduction in funding in the country and it had the lowest precept, the force was doing well within these constraints to maintain its high levels of public satisfaction.

It was asked if the crime survey figures could be split into the categories of crime used in the police recorded crime. This would need to be investigated.

As there had been a reduction in the number of police officers, it was asked whether there had been an increase in overtime. It was replied that overtime levels had also been reduced and it was only used in specific situations and it was closely monitored.

It was asked if there were any theories as to why crime had increased and if it was because people could not afford to live. It was replied that it was difficult to make direct correlations between crime and the times of austerity.

It was commented that the local authorities and the police needed to work closely together to give support in the current financial constraints. The police were looking to work with its partner organisation to continue to make the Northumbria area one of the safest areas to live and work.

RESOLVED - That the presentation be noted.

57. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 24 April 2018 at 2.00pm