



NORTHUMBRIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Virtual Meeting held on 9 June 2020

PRESENT:

Gateshead Council	Councillors A Douglas (Chair) 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	Councillors J Riddle and M Swinburn
South Tyneside Council	Councillor J Welsh
Sunderland City Council	Councillors D MacKnight and M Mordey
Independent Co-opted Member	Mrs J Guy

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
P Godden	- Head of Corporate Development, Northumbria Police

Gateshead Council

G Morton	- Representing the Clerk to the Panel
B Wilson	- Democratic Services

APOLOGY: Councillor A Strike (South Tyneside Council)

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the last meeting held on 4 February 2020 be approved as a correct record.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Further to Minute 42, five applications for the Panel's Independent Member' positions have been received. However, due to Government advice and restrictions regarding the coronavirus, the appointment process has been put on hold. Mrs Guy is to continue as an Independent Member of the Panel until further notice.

Further to Minute 43 – the PCC’s briefing note on the reduction in precept income 2013/14 has been provided to Members.

3. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

The Panel’s draft work programme for 2020/21 was submitted.

RESOLVED - That the work programme for 2020/21 be approved.

4. COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER – ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2019 TO MARCH 2020

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 April 2019 and March 2020 was submitted.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

5. DELIVERY OF THE POLICE AND CRIME PLAN – QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT JANUARY – MARCH 2020

The Panel considered the key performance areas and crime tables at force and local authority level relating to the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan for January to March 2020.

The Panel raised the following issues:-

The Members and the PCC congratulated the force on the reduction in recorded crime. There will be a sharp drop in crime during lockdown but the PCC is working with the force to be ready for the social and economic recovery when it is lifted.

Although the force overall crime had reduced, some categories of crime force wide and in some Council areas had increased eg modern day slavery, vehicle crime and drug crime. Hate crime may also increase during the current pandemic. The PCC replied that further information on the issues would be provided. The police had targeted drug crime and she was pleased with the outcome.

Whilst 65% of urban priority 1 incidents were attended within 10 minutes, there was no information provided on how long it took to attend the remaining 35% to assess the service given. The PCC agreed to look at how this information was presented.

47% of victims of longer term anti-social behaviour experienced no further incidents since their report. However, this meant that 53% of victims had further incidents and continued to have problems. The PCC reported that she was working with the force on this issue.

It was reported that 11% of 101 calls were not answered. Also, 28% of 101 calls were not answered within national call handling standards. Details of the volume of calls, the maximum wait for a call to be answered and how many were repeat calls having hung up when not answered and called again were requested. The PCC agreed to look at these issues. Complaints received about the 101 service should be referred to her.

The action taken and follow up by the force had reduced by 3%. The PCC was not satisfied with this and it was included in her scrutiny of the force.

In regard to the code of practice, 48% of victims received notification that their crime had been recorded which means that 52%, received no notification.

It was asked if work had been done into the reasons why victims were not satisfied with the service they had received so that this could be addressed and improvements made. The PCC reported that the police were working on improving victim satisfaction with the service they received and it was suggested that this could be a future thematic topic for the Panel.

It was explained that the thresholds in the report were minimum levels of performance set for the force. The PCC confirmed that everything necessary was being done to address all the issues, meet the set thresholds and to improve the service provided by the force.

The 7% reduction in recorded crime was excellent but the force was only 35th nationally for total recorded crime per 1,000 population out of 43 forces. The PCC was pleased that the figures were going in the right direction but it may be difficult to have an accurate picture this year because of the coronavirus.

Whilst there were 2,671 first time entrants to the Criminal Justice System, no details or context in relation to this was given. This was acknowledged by the PCC and it would be looked at but there had been a significant decrease.

The 20.4% increase in recorded complaints was very disappointing because of all the previous work done to reduce these figures. The PCC replied that the complaints system had been significantly changed and there may be issues of multiple reporting and she would provide further details. Identified areas of good practice may be replicated throughout the force.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the information be noted.
 - (ii) That the work on improving victim satisfaction with the service they receive be considered as a future thematic topic for the Panel.

6. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER – PROGRESS REPORT AND 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:-

- Coronavirus response plan
- Coronavirus finance monitoring
- Coronavirus intervention
- Recovery planning
- Violence Reduction Unit
- Northumbria Local Criminal Justice Board
- Key issues in the next quarter

The Panel raised the following issues:

The work of the police as key workers had been phenomenal and greatly appreciated in this unprecedented time

Concern was raised about the increased numbers and issues regarding looked after children. The police have been working with these children as an agency of last resort but this had resource implications. The PCC was aware of the increased pressures on families, etc but the police had not raised this as an issue. She was impressed with the way the force had handled the additional pressures.

The Hendon neighbourhood policing team was praised and thanked for its excellent work with the Hendon youth centre which has resulted in a 45% reduction in youth crime in the area. The PCC agreed that this had been an exemplary project.

Concern was raised about the additional financial costs to the force of the Coronavirus. This will have a big impact on the force's reserves if no financial support is given by the Government. The PCC reported that the force was monitoring the budget implications and the Government's response closely.

There had been 4,000 expressions of interest and 1,500 applications during the recent police recruitment. The PCC was committed to recruiting and training the new recruits as quickly as possible. Additional police staff had also been recruited.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

7. THEMED REPORT – RESPONSE TO KNIFE CRIME

Further to Minute 37 – 2019/20, the PCC submitted an overview of the actions taken to address serious violence across Northumbria, the successes to date and the future steps to embed this work and maintain the reduction in serious violence achieved so far.

At the end of 2019, Northumbria was the third best performing Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and fourth best nationally in terms of % reduction for violence against the person offences.

The PCC pledged to use the additional resource received from the Home Office Serious Violence Fund to tackle the root causes of crime and the impact of deprivation on crime trends, to reverse the impact of austerity across the region and improve the support network available to the most vulnerable to intervene before an individual turns to a lifestyle of crime. The PCC received £1.6 m to create the VRU, and the force £2.32m for additional 'Surge' operational activity to enable a joint approach to tackle serious violence,

The PCC prioritised 4 key areas; early intervention, youth diversion, mental health and drugs, alcohol and homelessness. To the end of 2019, the force recorded a reduction in total overall crime, drug offences and possession of weapon offences, indicating the early impact of the serious violence strategy.

The VRU comprises professionals from varying backgrounds and a Chief Inspector and Business Analyst have been seconded from Northumbria Police. The VRU Strategic Board, chaired by the PCC, comprising senior partners from the relevant organisations, defined the VRU's priorities, etc.

Phase 1, to be delivered, concluded and evaluated by 31 March 2020, prioritised community-based interventions, strengthening relationships at a community level, engaging and working with young people and establishing a wide support network for the most vulnerable. A Single Point of Contact was designated in each Council to work with the VRU. The reported findings from phase 1 will form the phase 2 work of the VRU. The VRU phase 1 achievements were outlined.

In February 2020, the PCC co-ordinated and hosted the Knife Angel in Gateshead. This involved educational workshops for students of all ages, a sold-out theatrical performance and several engagement workshops. It featured prominently in the media and attracted praise for its approach to tackling the issue of knife crime.

The Northumbria Police 'Surge' activity focussing on the prevention and enforcement in hotspot areas was aimed at young people in schools and youth settings with increased use of digital technology to increase public engagement, patrols, intelligence led stop and search activities, days of action and additional test purchasing activities. The dedicated knife crime analytical team increased intelligence and targeting of individuals and groups to assist operational activity and identify violent offender cohorts for targeted intervention. There was investment in enhanced investigative equipment and technological capability including tasers and knife wands, mobile CCTV, an engagement vehicle, increased ANPR capability, additional police staff investigators and forensic examination equipment and increased education and engagement with young people with an intervention programme with schools and a training package for children and young people.

Between April 2019 - March 2020, knife-enabled serious violence reduced by 18% (794 offences), the number of young victims under the age of 25 by 23% (195 offences) and 6,498 knives were removed from the streets. The force was below the national average for knife enabled serious violent crime per head of population. There was a 56% increase in stop and searches for offensive weapons and a 9% increase in possessions of knife offences. The NHS projected a 36% reduction in hospital emergency admissions for assault with a sharp object with a projected 63% reduction in emergency admissions of young people under 25.

The PCC was committed to the VRU's long-term future and the method for tackling serious violence through the 5-year Serious Violence Response Strategy's four key themes of youth diversion, reduce offending, working with families and connecting communities. This will include continuing the engagement and partnerships with the six Councils, a focus on community engagement and a strong partnership with the force.

The Panel raised the following issues:

The Panel praised the PCC and the force for the good positive work being done to address serious violence.

It was asked if the assessment undertaken was in relation to causation, work done and the reduction rather than the correlation between them. The PCC replied that the direct correlation would be difficult to prove. The focus was on improving the lives of young people and reducing crime and she felt that this had worked.

The knife angel sculpture at the Sage was incredible and was seen by a lot of people. The PCC reported that it was to show and education young people about the consequences of carrying knives and it had a big impact.

It was asked how the number of knives removed from the streets compared with last year and the correlation with the increase in the number of stop and searches. The PCC agreed to look into this.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

8. THEMED TOPICS

RESOLVED - That hate crime be agreed as the themed topic for the Panel's meeting on 11 August 2020.

9. DATES AND TIMES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Tuesday, 11 August 2020 at 2.00pm
Tuesday, 20 October 2020 at 2.00pm
Tuesday, 8 December 2020 at 2.00pm
Tuesday, 2 February 2021 at 2.00pm
Tuesday, 16 March 2021 at 2.00pm