

NORTHUMBRIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

10 January 2017

PRESENT:

Gateshead Council	Councillors J McElroy (Chair) and J McClurey
Newcastle City Council	Councillor J Robinson
North Tyneside Council	Councillor C Burdis
Northumberland County Council	Councillor L Simpson
South Tyneside Council	Councillor G Kilgour
Sunderland City Council	Councillor H Trueman
Independent Co-opted Members	J Guy and 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)
E Snaith - Chief Executive
M Tait - Chief Finance Officer

Gateshead Council

M Harrison - Legal, Democratic and Property Services
B Wilson - Democratic Services

APOLOGIES: Councillors N Kemp (Newcastle City Council), T Mulvenna (North Tyneside Council), I Hutchinson (Northumberland County Council), J Welsh (South Tyneside Council) and P Watson (Sunderland City Council)

28. QUEEN'S NEW YEAR'S HONOURS 2017 – DAME VERA BAIRD DBE QC

Vera Baird QC was appointed Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire for services to women and equality in the 2017 New Year's Honours.

RESOLVED - That Dame Vera Baird QC be congratulated on the award of this honour.

29. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the last meeting held on 25 October 2016 be approved as a correct record.

30. FEEDBACK FROM NATIONAL AND REGIONAL EVENTS

There were no national and regional events reported.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

31. THEMED REPORT – POLICE RECORDED CRIME AND CRIME SURVEY FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Further to minute 21 – 2016/17, an overview of the differences between police recorded crime levels and the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) conducted on behalf of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) was submitted. The CSEW, with a sample size of 35,000 households (minimum of 650 per police force area), asks people aged 16 and over about their experiences of crime in the last twelve months. Whilst it provides trends for personal and household crime it does not include all categories of crime.

The CSEW has also included children aged 10 to 15 since January 2009 and from October 2015, it introduced questions on fraud and computer misuse.

Police recorded crime is governed by the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) and the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS). The UK Statistics Authority, in 2014, found that the statistics based on police recorded crime data did not meet the required standard for designation as National Statistics.

The Public Administration Select Committee has recommended that the annual audits of police force crime reporting be reinstated. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's (HMIC) national inspection of the integrity of police recorded crime concluded that 1 in 5 offences (19%) that should have been recorded as crimes were not. This has been followed up with a rolling programme of crime data integrity inspections at individual force level.

Police recorded crime statistics may, therefore, reflect improvements in recording practices, increases in reporting by victims or genuine increases in crime.

The two data sources are not directly comparable. The CSEW currently excludes fraud and crimes against society eg possession of drugs, those living in group residences or other institutions and crime against commercial or public sector bodies. While police recorded crime covers a broader range of offence types and victims, it is limited to only those offences reported to the police and is subject to NCRS compliance.

It is possible to compare some offence types covered by both measures (vehicle theft, burglary, bicycle theft, theft from the person, vandalism, assault without injury, assault with minor injury and wounding, and robbery).

The number of crimes identified by CSEW has reduced by 47% since the introduction of NCRS in April 2002. Over the same period, national police recorded crime reduced by 33% and in Northumbria by 43%.

Following renewed focus, the Force's compliance with NCRS has increased from 84 % to 92% during April - November 2016 compared to the same period 2015.

Over the past five years, all offence categories covered by CSEW have reduced between 16% and 43%.

Police recorded crime in Northumbria increased by 29% in 2015/16. This year, to 29 December 2016, recorded crime has increased by 30%. There have been increases in the majority of crime types.

The force completes an annual strategic assessment of the current and emerging threats and sets a control strategy and delivery plan to mitigate them. The following six priority areas have been identified:-

- Vulnerable ASB
- Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation
- Signal Crime (Burglary)
- Domestic Abuse and Serious Sexual Offences
- Counter Terrorism and Domestic Extremism
- Organised Crime

The strategic assessment is currently being refreshed and cyber enabled crime, fraud and modern day slavery linked to organised crime were highlighted as key emerging issues.

The Panel raised the following issues:-

It was suggested that as the report was about two sets of data which were not comparable it would be better if they were, to get more consistency. This was acknowledged but the Government use both sets of statistics.

It was commented that it was confusing as to whether crime was actually increasing or whether it was down to the non-compliance with the recording standards and the improvements that were being made. It was assumed that as the force becomes more compliant with the Home Office counting rules then this will give a baseline for more accurate comparisons to be made with previous years.

It was raised that police officers have said anecdotally that there was too much focus on the stated six priority areas in the control strategy and they have been told not to bother with the other crimes. The PCC replied that there were high levels of public satisfaction in how the police have dealt with all categories of crime so no crimes were neglected.

It was asked if an incident that was not initially recorded as a crime would subsequently be changed to recorded if it was followed by a second incident that was recorded. It was replied that incidents that were not recorded as a crime were regularly audited and if necessary then recorded and feedback would be given to the relevant Area Command, etc.

It was asked how the force had dropped from third to seventh in its most similar family group if the other forces were recording crime and auditing it in the same way. It was replied that they may have the same processes but could be applying them differently.

It was asked how the two sets of crime statistics were considered when preparing the police and crime plan. The PCC replied that the plan was developed following public consultation on what they thought the policing priorities should be. The increases in crime areas may be considered if the priorities are similar. The Police will continue to tackle all areas of crime.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

32. COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER – QUARTERLY REPORT - DECEMBER 2016

In accordance with the agreed procedure, a report about the complaints and purported complaints against the PCC and every conduct matter recorded by the Monitoring Officer for the quarter ended December 2016 was submitted.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

33. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER – PROGRESS AND UPDATE REPORT

The PCC presented her update report to the Panel which covered the following:-

Commissioning intentions 2017-18
Refreshing the Regional Violence against Women and Girls Strategy
Working with partners, nationally, regionally and locally
HMIC Peel Assessments 2016
Scrutiny of HMIC Inspections
PCC Advisory Groups 2017
Complaints Triage Evaluation
Anti-social behaviour volunteer networks
'Words leave scars too'

The Panel raised the following issues:-

It was commented that the increase in male victims of domestic abuse and trends were very rarely reported. The PCC replied that there had been no provable increase but more male victims were willing to report it. Victims First Northumbria and some local organisations were offering services to male victims and she had included this issue in her campaigns against domestic abuse.

Reference was made to the HMIC Peel Assessment and it was asked if sufficient resources were available for the force to address the two areas identified for improvement. The PCC replied that there continued to be Government funding cuts but there has had to be a lot of ingenuity to save resources by providing services differently.

RESOLVED - That the PCC's update report be noted.

34. DELIVERY OF THE POLICE AND CRIME PLAN – APRIL – DECEMBER 2016: TARGETS AND PERFORMANCE

Inspector Metcalfe gave a presentation on the performance and target information relating to the delivery of the police and crime plan for April - December 2016 which included:-

Victim's journey – initial contact, response, investigation, outcome

Safeguarding the vulnerable – prepare, prevent, protect, pursue

Community confidence – engagement and understanding, prevent, treatment, overall service

Crime statistics force wide and for the six constituent Councils

The Panel raised the following issues:-

It was asked if there had been many cases in Court that had been affected because details had been put on social media. It was replied that there had been some but it had been more about putting pressure on victims, etc.

It was good to see that improvements had been made in the 101 call handling. However, there remained an issue with following up incidents when officers were off, etc. It was replied that IT equipment was being improved to try and tell victims when officers would not be available to contact.

It was stated that the number of repeat victims of crime had increased again. It was replied that the victim harm reduction plans were audited to check that appropriate action had been taken.

It was commented that the conviction rate for rape offences had continued to fall. Whilst the PCC can look to improve the levels of evidence provided etc, it was the jury who made the decisions which were beyond her control. The PCC replied that the report on the findings of the Court Observers Panel, which has observed the rape and some sexual abuse trials at Newcastle Crown Court, was to be published in the near future. This will then be discussed with the agencies involved to see what can be done increase the conviction rates.

In answer to a question, it was explained that the cctv repository would allow all agencies to view the evidence provided with savings made with not having to have it copied and distributed.

It was queried why the crime levels in North Tyneside had increased by 52% and how this and the public concern was to be addressed. It was replied that this increase was again linked to the non-compliance with the recording standards and the improvements being made. This will be raised with the Area Command and also how the public was to be reassured about this.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

35. POLICE GRANT SETTLEMENT 2017/18

The Chief Finance Officer gave a presentation on the police grant settlement 2017/18 which included: headlines, provisional settlement written ministerial statement and Government cut police grant by 1.4%, central funds, policing settlement, local policing settlement and precept considerations, threats and capital grant and next steps.

The Panel raised the following issues:-

It was pleasing to see that the local media had emphasised that the £5 increase in precept was per annum for band D properties.

It was asked if the transformation fund could be of benefit to the PCC. It was replied that this was a central fund. Bids had to be submitted which met the criteria and then be had to be successful.

It was asked if the local authorities could assist the PCC more with campaigns, etc to engage more with the community and help the PCC get messages across. The PCC replied that she had enquired about this but there may be costs involved.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

36. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

The draft Annual Report 2015/16 of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria was presented. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 specifies that a PCC must produce an annual report on the exercise of their functions in each financial year, including the progress made in meeting the priorities in the Police and Crime Plan.

It is the role of the Panel under section 28(4) of the Act to review the Annual Report and make a report or recommendations to the PCC.

The Annual Report includes an overview of the PCC's activities and achievements since 1 April 2015 and a summary of the Northumbria Police 2015/16 performance data.

The PCC's 2013-18 Police and Crime Plan, published in March 2013, provides the focus for the annual report. This was currently being refreshed to ensure that the work of Northumbria Police and the PCC was responsive to local needs and priorities.

The annual report will be available on the PCC's website and hard copies will be shared with Panel Members and key stakeholders. A summary of the information will be shared with the public across Northumbria.

RESOLVED - That the PCC be advised that in accordance with section 28(4) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Panel agreed with the format and content of the draft annual report 2015/16.

37. KEY ISSUES IN THE NEXT QUARTER

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

- Analysis of the results of the consultation on the Police and Crime Plan
- The medium term financial strategy and setting the precept for 2017/18
- Continuing the work on the successful transformation fund bid for the collaborative delivery on a 'Whole System Approach to Domestic Abuse' with partners from five other police forces, local authorities in Northumbria, the community and voluntary sector and the criminal justice system.
- Preparing a bid to the transformation fund for the violence against women and girls strategy
- Association of Police and Crime Commissioners' Seminar on the new Policing and Crime Bill and the implications for PCCs

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

38. THEMED TOPICS

Members of the Panel suggested the following themed topics for further consideration:-

- How new technology can be used to tackle the increases in cybercrime as part of the changes in demand on the police services
- The report on the findings of the Court Observers Panel
- Ways in which the PCC and the Community Safety Partnerships can work closer together
- Report on Operation Sanctuary, however, the PCC would need to check the current legal position regarding this operation

39. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 7 February 2017 at 2.00pm