

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
2nd December, 2013

Present:-

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council:-

Councillor R. Sixsmith

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council:-

Councillor J. Akhtar

Councillor T. Sharman

Sheffield City Council:-

Councillor R. Davison

Councillor H. Harpham

Councillor T. Hussain

Co-opted Member:-

Mr. A. Carter

Apologies for Absence were received from:-

Councillor M. Dyson (Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council)

Mayor R. Jones (Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council).

Councillor P. Bartlett (Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council).

Mr. K. Walayat, Co-opted Member.

J16. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Resolved:- That Councillor Harry Harpham be elected Chairman of the Police and Crime Panel for the remaining part of the 2013/14 Municipal Year.

(Councillor Harpham in the Chair)

Councillor Harpham wished to thank Councillor Mirfin-Boukouris for her work and the breadth of experience she brought to the Panel.

J17. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A member of the public referred to the lack of road safety measures in the Police and Crime Plan and asked now A.C.P.O. had recently issued revised guidelines to all Police Forces, how would this influence the Police

and Crime Plan for South Yorkshire?

The Chairman confirmed that this was not a question for the Police and Crime Panel to answer, but on this occasion this had been forwarded to the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner who would issue the response.

J18. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 2nd September, 2013.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 2nd September, 2013 be agreed as a true record.

J19. CENTRE FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY SUPPORT SESSION - 18TH NOVEMBER, 2013

Further to Minute No. J13 (Introduction of the CFPS Expert Adviser) consideration was given to a report presented by Deborah Fellowes, Scrutiny Manager, which provided the Panel with a summary of key issues arising from the support session, facilitated by the Centre for Public Scrutiny, held on 18th November, 2013.

The session addressed a number of issues, which included:-

- Scrutiny of budgets was important and needed to be more detailed by the Panel. This would require earlier and regular sight of information from the Police and Crime Commissioner and access to financial/accountancy advice by the Panel.
- Performance management still needed to improve. The Panel would like to develop a performance management framework with the Police and Crime Commissioner. This would include clear, measurable targets, including targets from the District Community Safety Partnerships.
- To request a breakdown of information by Local Authority from the Police and Crime Commissioner, for example, the number of Police Officers in each and movement between them.
- Support for the Panel was important, in addition to the finance issue. Other areas identified included understanding of the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner, partnerships to work with (Community Safety Partnerships, Local Authority Scrutiny panels and the Criminal Justice Board).
- Task and Finish Groups should be established to facilitate this inter-agency working and sharing of information. It was suggested that this could be piloted with Domestic Abuse.
- A clear understanding of roles and responsibilities between the partners was required and agreed through protocols.
- Local Authority Scrutiny Panels should share work programmes with the Police and Crime Panel to help with the development of South

Yorkshire wide priorities

- The Panel needed a work plan based on the priorities within the Police and Crime Plan.
- Pre-meetings, briefings and triangulation of information should be used to make meetings more effective.

Moving forward from the development session a number of next steps were proposed. These included:-

- A request to the Police and Crime Commissioner for timely and regular financial information, including early discussions around the proposed precept
- Setting up of a task and finish group to look at a performance management framework for the Police and Crime Commissioner. Officer support from both the Panel's and the Commissioner's perspective to be incorporated.
- Information sheets on key partner agencies to be provided (Jo Sykes already actioning)
- Establishment of a Task and Finish Group to look at Domestic Abuse.
- Development of protocols in conjunction with the Commissioner, Community Safety Partnerships, Local Authority Scrutiny Panels and Criminal Justice Board
- Development and approval of a work plan. First draft to be available for the meeting.

Those that attended from the Panel found the event a source of valuable information and believed that it enriched their knowledge going forward.

It was suggested that Task and Finish Groups be set up and nominations be sought accordingly.

Resolved:- (1) That the key issues as summarised in this report be noted.

(2) That the next steps for the Panel as set out in the report be approved.

(3) That volunteers be sought for a Task and Finish Group to look at Domestic Abuse.

J20. UPDATE ON THE OPERATION OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Consideration was given to a report presented by Stuart Fletcher, Deputy Monitoring Officer, which provided an update for the Panel with regard to the nature and level of complaints received and to consider the operation of the complaints procedure.

There have been a total of ten complaints received. Those complaints have been processed with:-

- One being considered by the Panel.
- Four not proceeded with (decision of the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman).
- Two not accepted as falling within the Complaints Procedure.
- One considered by a Sub-Committee of the Panel
- One referred to the Independent Complaints Commission.
- One still under consideration.

The details of all of the complaints, other than the one currently being considered, have been reported to the Panel.

At its meeting of the 28th January, 2013, the Panel agreed to review its Complaints Procedure after its initial period of operation, which had been drafted in accordance with the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012. To ensure the appropriate balance of the proper overview of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the consideration of only those matters which were of sufficient significance to be resolved by the Panel, the following minor amendments (in bold) were suggested to the Complaints Procedure, which would assist with the proper administration:-

“Circumstances when the Panel does not need to deal with a complaint

22. The Monitoring Officer can decide, having consulted the Chair and Vice Chair, not to refer the complaint for resolution, or to take no action at all, in the following circumstances:-
 - A complaint by a member of the Commissioner’s staff, arising from their work
 - A complaint that is more than 12 months old where there is no good reason for the delay or the delay would be likely to cause injustice
 - A complaint about conduct that is already the subject of another complaint
 - An anonymous complaint
 - A complaint which is vexatious, oppressive, trivial or otherwise an abuse of process for dealing with complaints
 - A repetitious complaint
 - A premature complaint
23. The complainant will be notified if the decision is taken not to deal with a complaint.”

Resolved:- (1) That the update regarding the operation of the Complaints Procedure be noted.

(2) That the amendments to the Complaints Procedure, as proposed, be approved.

J21. POLICING IN AUSTERITY: RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

Further to Minute No. J11 of the meeting of the Panel held on 2nd September, 2013, consideration was given to a report presented by Shaun Wright, the Police and Crime Commissioner, which provided the Panel with information in relation to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) report "Policing in Austerity: Rising to the Challenge" and the response by the Police and Crime Commissioner to the South Yorkshire Police's response to the funding challenge report.

In October 2010, the Government announced that central funding to the Police Service in England and Wales would reduce by 20% in the four years between March, 2011 and March, 2015.

HMIC's Valuing the Police Programme had tracked how forces were planning to make savings to meet this budget demand each year since the Summer of 2011. The South Yorkshire Police's response to the funding challenge report, published in July, 2013, identified what HMIC found in the third year.

The inspection focused on three questions:-

1. How is the force responding to the budget reduction?
2. What is the impact for the workforce and the public?
3. How is the force managing current and future risks?

To answer these questions, HMIC collected data and plans from forces, surveyed the public to see if they had noticed any changes in the service they received from the Police as a results of the cuts and conducted in-force inspections. HMIC also interviewed the Chief Constable, Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Officer Leads for finance, change, human resources and performance in each force as well as holding focus groups with staff and other officers.

The Police and Crime Commissioner reported that South Yorkshire Police faced a more difficult challenge than some other forces. Although spending on policing was lower than in most forces and staff costs higher, South Yorkshire had not embraced the level of change or achieved the savings seen elsewhere.

The Force still had £9.6m to find by March, 2015, but the HMIC had expressed concern that this outstanding financial gap meant that South Yorkshire Police would find it very hard to make any further savings

required in the future.

South Yorkshire Police had identified that it needed to save £49.3m over the four years of the spending) and had planned how it would save £39.6m.

To reduce its expenditure South Yorkshire Police planned to reduce Police Officer numbers by limiting recruitment and holding vacancies as it was planned there would be 256 fewer Police Officers in the South Yorkshire Police. This meant the number of Police Officers was planned to reduce by 9% between March, 2013 and March, 2015.

The force had also made some Police staff redundant and not replaced others as they have left (e.g. through retirements and resignations); as a result, by the end of the spending review period, it was planned there would be 555 fewer Police staff in the South Yorkshire Police.

It was noted that HMIC expected forces to make savings without damaging the service provided to the public. This was being monitored by the examination of crime rates and the results of the victim satisfaction surveys which all forces conduct.

A number of options were being explored, such as shared I.T., fleet and facilities management, raising the precept and looking to volunteers for assistance.

Unfortunately, the force also faced the additional financial challenges and special circumstances posed by Hillsborough over the next few years. Unless these significant costs were supported by the Home Office, it was likely the impact on the public of South Yorkshire would be even more severe than that already highlighted.

Detailed discussions with the Chief Constable and his Command Team colleagues were ongoing with a view to addressing cost reduction requirements for 2014/15 and establishing a 'strategic vision' to guide budget and resourcing considerations in the medium term.

These matters would be the subject of further reports to the Panel in due course.

Discussion ensued and the Panel asked a number of questions relating to:-

- The use of organisations such as Neighbourhood Watch and other partners and the plans to increase the number of volunteers.
- Collaborations with other forces, such as Humberside.
- The use of legal aid for ex-Police Officers.
- Indemnity Insurance.
- Numbers of Police Community Support Officers and the plans for these to increase.

The Police and Crime Commissioner referred to the importance of such organisations and the framework of volunteers accessed by the Police. He also made reference to the plans to release officers under voluntary early retirement options and the reductions in the road safety figures.

It was also noted that discussions with other Police Forces had been undertaken, but there was no intention to make the Police Service nationally run.

In terms of Hillsborough and the legal aid for ex-Police Officers it was thought any advice should be paid for. The insurance previously held by the Police for any indemnity had since expired and there were no plans for this to be renewed.

In terms of the Police Community Support Officers it was noted that there were roughly around 1,000 Police Officers to be lost over the next three years, so how this differentiated into positions was yet to be determined.

Resolved:- That the report be received and the contents noted.

J22. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS: REGISTER OF INTERESTS UPDATE

Further to Minute No. J12 of the meeting of the Panel held on 2nd September, 2013, consideration was given to a report presented by Shaun Wright, the Police and Crime Commissioner, which provided the Panel with a progress update in relation to the report of the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee on Police and Crime Commissioners' Register of Interests.

The aim of the report was to show that regular, national comparisons were important for public confidence and draw together the first register of Police and Crime Commissioners' interests.

The report considered the following areas:-

- The Scrutiny of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs).
- Who are the Police and Crime Commissioners .
- Salaries and Offices.
- Police and Crime Commissioners Profile.

The Panel were informed that Police and Crime Commissioners were required to publish the information that they considered necessary to enable the local public to assess their performance and that of the Chief Constable. In addition, they were required to publish particular information specified by the Home Secretary in regulations issued under Section 11 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act, 2011. The current regulations were the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Specific Information) Order 2011.

The report identified that on 19th April, 2013 only ten Police and Crime Commissioners had met their statutory obligations and published the full financial data required (South Yorkshire was not included in this list). However, it was acknowledged that this was rectified before 3rd May, 2013.

The full financial data was published on the Police and Crime Commissioner's website on 26th April, 2013. The Commissioner was also compliant with the requirements of the Specified Information Order.

The report identified the staff in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) along with the salaries of their deputies and senior staff members.

It identified that the overall force budget for South Yorkshire was (£m) 252,728,773 with the budget for 2013/14 for the South Yorkshire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner being (£m) 3,144,717. The percentage of the budget utilised by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner in South Yorkshire was 1.24%.

The House of Commons Committee also identified the force areas where the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner budget was more than the Police Authority budget 2012/13 and South Yorkshire was included in this list.

On 22nd May, 2013 the Commissioner wrote to the Home Affairs Committee clarifying the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner budget for 2013/14 as being £2.035m, which was marginally below the equivalent budget for the former Police Authority.

On the day the report was published the Commissioner also issued a press release which stated that the report was incorrect and that his office was not given the opportunity to validate the figures prior to the report being published.

A detailed analysis of the errors in the Report was sent to appropriate officials by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and subsequently published on the Select Committee's website.

Resolved:- That the report be received and the contents noted.

J23. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- that the next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel take place on Monday, 20th January, 2014 at the slightly earlier time of 12.00 Noon.