

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
Thursday, 11th September, 2014

Present:-

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council:-

Councillor M. Dyson
Councillor R. Sixsmith

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council:-

Mayor R. Jones
Councillor J. Sheppard

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council:-

Councillor T. R. Sharman
Councillor C. Vines

Sheffield City Council:-

Councillor R. Davison
Councillor H. Harpham (in the Chair)
Councillor R. Munn

Co-opted Member:-

Mr. A. J. Carter
Mr. K. Walayat

One member of the public was in attendance

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Councillor T. Hussain (Sheffield City Council)

J13. INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIR

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, stressed the importance for matters to be dealt with smoothly and moved a variation to the Panel's Rules of Procedure to extend the time for public questions from fifteen minutes to sixty minutes.

J14. LEGAL ADVICE

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL - 11/09/14

Jacqueline Collins, Monitoring Officer and Legal Adviser to the Panel, referred to the preliminary enquires made by the Police and Crime Commissioner about the appropriateness of some Panel Members giving media statements or involved in votes of no confidence in their respective authorities taking part in the meeting and to determine any complaints given the need for procedural fairness and natural justice.

The Panel were advised that, although they may have been asked to deal with issues in their home authorities or respond to press enquires, this was done before the publication of information by the Police and Crime Commissioner today. They Panel were advised that as long as they remained open minded about the matters were entitled to remain in the meeting.

J15. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECENT REPORT BY PROF ALEXIS JAY OBE INTO CSE IN ROTHERHAM, FOR THE SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Consideration was given to the report presented by Deborah Fellowes, Scrutiny Manager and Support Officer to the Police and Crime Panel, which provided Panel Members with access to the report recently published by Professor Alexis Jay, O.B.E. on Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham.

The focus would be on the Police and Crime Commissioner's response to this report and his reassurance that he was still in a position to carry out his duties effectively as a result of its publication.

In considering the report the Panel had limited powers in respect of the Police and Crime Commissioner and was unable to impose any sanctions or penalties upon the Commissioner. Only if the Commissioner was charged with a criminal offence which carried a maximum penalty in excess of two years imprisonment did the Panel have the power to suspend him.

The Chairman invited the Police and Crime Commissioner to address the Panel as part of his reassurance and pursuance of his duties.

The Police and Crime Commissioner reinforced the message that child sexual exploitation was one of the most sickening aspects of behaviour with victims often being singled out due to their vulnerability. He described how the scale of child sexual exploitation had risen over the last decade, which was evident in other towns and cities across the U.K. and still happening in Rotherham and across South Yorkshire. Whilst awareness of child sexual exploitation had increased substantially there were still a need to do more for those who had been the victims. Child sexual exploitation was a real and present danger and families and parents were becoming more aware of the need to keep children safe.

The Police and Crime Commissioner described the positions in had held

over the past twenty five years and how in 2009 he established a charity specifically to help looked after children and as a parent and an uncle he would never ignore something as heinous as child sexual exploitation.

Describing his position as lead member for Children and Young People's Services for the Council and his work with outstanding individuals the Police and Crime Commissioner expressed his regret that he was not made aware of the sheer scale of the child exploitation problem as evidenced by the Jay Report and he reiterated his sincere apologies to the victims and their families in the part he played in the systemic failure of the system in letting them down.

The Police and Crime Commissioner hoped that the improvements already made would be built on further. The Jay Report highlighted the sheer scale of the abuse and said that the Council and other agencies should have done more and identified financial pressures of safeguarding during that time. The report made no direct criticism of the Cabinet Member or the Police and Crime Commissioner, but acknowledged that child sexual exploitation was a priority for South Yorkshire Police and would be endorsed and, indeed, was being taken forward, which was also endorsed by the Police and Crime Panel for the past two years.

The Police and Crime Commissioner referred to the Chief Executive reporting that the failings, as outlined in the Jay Report, were clearly identified and attributed to senior managers in child protection services and senior officers in South Yorkshire Police.

When interviewed by Professor Jay the Police and Crime Commissioner was told that she had seen every document presented to him as Cabinet Member and the minutes of respective meetings and was surprised to learn that there was never any mention of child sexual exploitation.

As Cabinet Member the Police and Crime Commissioner could not recall any member of the public attending his surgeries to raise any concern, nor any other Councillor raising concerns or asking a question, nor a Rotherham M.P. asking about child sexual exploitation. He could not recall any officer giving information about child sexual exploitation until two years into his term of office.

The Police and Crime Commissioner described his role as Cabinet Member and the meetings he chaired during this period, which also involved senior partner agencies. He could not recall any discussion or concern raised during this period to say that child sexual exploitation was a significant problem in Rotherham.

It was also pointed out that no inspection reports raised child sexual exploitation as a concern during the period of office as Cabinet Member and the Jay report at Section 13.26 stated that this served false reassurance to those running the service. Those inspections also commissioned internally, as indicated at Sections 3.27 to 3.31 of the

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL - 11/09/14

report never raised child sexual exploitation as a concern. There were no serious case reviews commissioned until the one referred to at Section 7.59 in 2010.

The Police and Crime Commissioner confirmed that child sexual exploitation had never been registered as a concern by the U.K. or European Parliament during this period nor the media until 2012 other than the coverage locally about specific cases in 2007, 2009 and 2010.

The Police and Crime Commissioner provided further information on reports he had received whilst as Cabinet Member and the actions he took, which were clearly minuted, as per the chronology section as depicted at Pages 10 and 11 of the Jay report. The Jay report did state that at Section 13.21 more committed leadership on child sexual exploitation was apparent.

The Police and Crime Commissioner also confirmed how it was apparent that Rotherham had taken the lead into tackling child sexual exploitation as reported by the Safeguarding Manager at the Local Safeguarding Children's Board during 2009 and the Director of Targeted Services indicated that Rotherham had the responsibility to share good practice.

The Police and Crime Commissioner also stated that he had stayed on in his role as Cabinet Member to ensure appropriate action to improve Children and Young People's Services when it was reported as "inadequate" as had its border neighbours Doncaster and Barnsley. There was no mention as to child sexual exploitation as part of those inspections at that time.

The Chairman thanked the Police and Crime Commissioner for his response and invited members of the public to ask questions of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

(1) A member of the public asked why from the Prime Minister downwards to the Leader of the Opposition and everyone else in Parliament were stating that the Police and Crime Commissioner should resign so why would he not go now?

(2) Were the public to be reassured that all vulnerable children at risk and currently being kept safe under the guardianship of this Local Authority of which you had party and privilege can you confirm that they were being reclassified as "human beings" to be kept safe and no longer classed as bodies for abuse and torture for the greater good. If so what date was this order implemented?

The Chairman advised the member of the public that Question 2 should really have been directed at Rotherham Council.

The Police and Crime Commissioner in his response accepted that many people were calling for him to resign, but he believed everyone shared

some responsibility for keeping people safe by those delivering services locally and nationally and should answer to their own actions.

The Jay report clearly identified that there were substantial financial pressures on the budget for Children and Young People's Services and the Government should reconsider the resource allocations as this was the only way that the problem could be tackled.

The Police and Crime Commissioner also considered this as a priority and since taking up office in November, 2012 had allocated £5 million to be spent on protecting vulnerable children and young people.

In terms of the labelling of victims as "human beings", the Police and Crime Commissioner believed everyone had a right to be treated with dignity and respect, irrespective of their background.

(3) A member of the public referred to the requests for the Police and Crime Commissioner to resign and asked why he did not do the right thing and let the people of this town move on or did it all come down to money?

(4) A member of the public asked if anyone in the Council Chamber still had confidence in Mr. Shaun Wright?

The Police and Crime Commissioner reported that victims' lives were worth more than money and that services were provided by the public purse, but that the budgets allocated to public services had been and still were under pressure.

In terms of why he had not stood down from his position there had been a great deal of media coverage together with messages of condemnation and also support for his continuation. It was the people of South Yorkshire who had led the Police and Crime Commissioner to dedicate the last twenty five years to public life and he remained committed to the public to deliver their policing priorities. The core reason for not stepping down was his belief that he had always acted in the best interests of young people, addressed the inadequacies in South Yorkshire Police since being in the role of Police and Crime Commissioner and had seen significant improvements and wished to see this coming through in the coming months.

(5) A member of the public asked in light of the Police and Crime Commissioner's comments in the Council Chamber yesterday a vote was taken that had no confidence in his ability to do the job. The same vote had also been taken in Sheffield and it was hoped that Barnsley and Doncaster would follow suit. The Commissioner claimed he had the backing of the people of South Yorkshire perhaps he once did, but this was waning fast and he now needed to reassess his position as time went on.

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL - 11/09/14

(6) A member of the public asked why his granddaughter was charged as being drunk and disorderly at twelve years old and four men were allowed to walk free. He considered the Police and Crime Commissioner to be a disgrace.

The Chairman advised that the Police and Crime Commissioner had given an account of why he felt he was still the right person to do the job.

The Police and Crime Commissioner considered the actions described as a disgrace. From the Jay report it was evident that some children were abused under the noses of their parents and some were not believed, which was unforgiveable. The Chief Constable had made it very clear that he would be conducting further investigations to see if there had been any wrong doing or malpractice by officers.

The Chairman having heard of the incident at (6) above asked what resources had been put provided to find out who the police officers were who arrested the girl and let the perpetrators go. He asked the Police and Crime Commissioner if he knew how many officers were involved, if they were still serving police and how close it was to identifying them?

The Police and Crime Commissioner was not in a position to answer this question today, but would request that the Chief Constable provide a written response to this Panel to address that particular question.

The Chairman asked if the Chief Constable had been asked specifically to find out the number of police officers involved in this particular incident and when was the last time he reported back on this investigation?

The Police and Crime Commissioner referred to some notes on various actions that had been taken, but on the day the Jay report was published asked the Chief Constable to review the content, to see what lessons could be learnt and to take any action that was required. He was unable to comment further on specific details of any enquiries or investigations, but would ask that the Chief Constable provide a written response, via himself, on actions being taken.

(7) A member of the public was present to highlight the mistakes and failures of Rotherham Borough Council, Social Services, South Yorkshire Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner. He referred to Section 8.5 of the Jay report which indicated that actions had not been taken due to ethnicity of the perpetrators. A victim claimed she had spoken to the Police and Crime Commissioner face to face two years ago about being abused and was now being called a liar.

(8) A member of the public referred to the 2009 Ofsted report in Rotherham when services were rated "good" when the Commissioner took up office as Cabinet Member with responsibility which later deteriorated. Prior to the Commissioner taking up his current position he was a member of the South Yorkshire Police Authority and asked which

Members of the Panel were also members of the Police Authority prior to 2010 and would they be considering their consciences regarding the oversight of the Police during the period of the Jay report?

The Police and Crime Commissioner claimed to have met many people who expressed a variety of victimisation and vulnerabilities. He had never specifically requested to meet anyone, particularly a young person who had been the subject of child sexual exploitation as this would have been inappropriate. He had, however, met some adult victims who had shared their experiences with him. He could not recall a meeting of the nature described above taking place.

In terms of the ethnicity issues that were contained in the Jay report, he could recall from his period in office three investigations to which he provided details, one in 2007, another in 2008 and the other in 2010. This evidenced the fact that ethnicity was never an issue and recognised what the Jay report claimed.

The Chairman confirmed for those present that those Panel Members that were members of the Police Authority were in fact Councillors C. Vines and Sharman and independent member, Mr. K. Walayat.

(9) A member of the public had two points to raise (1) Mr. Wright's fitness to be in office as one of the requirements for being a Police and Crime Commissioner was to sign an oath of impartiality. For all the service Mr. Wright had been in office he had been a member of the Labour Party, actively campaigned for Labour politics within South Yorkshire and specifically in Rotherham. The member of the public believed he had breached from day one his legal obligation to be straight and impartial and to practice politics while in the office was to commit his eyes perjury of the highest order as he had taken an oath of office. (2) Why had the Police and Crime Commissioner not gone on record and requested that the I.P.C.C. investigate South Yorkshire Police and his own conduct as a result of the recommendations by the Home Affairs Select Committee Chairman, Mr. Keith Vaz, who stated that it was unacceptable and impossible for South Yorkshire Police to investigate themselves.

(10) A member of the public asked now with the withdrawal from Sheffield City Council how was Mr. Wright intending to carry out his duties properly as the member of the public could not see how he could do?

The Chairman pointed out that in terms of the duties of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the votes of no confidence that had been taken, it was highly unlikely that a different response to one already made would be provided.

The Police and Crime Commissioner explained that the oath of impartiality that all Police and Crime Commissioners signed was nothing to do with party politics. The Government legislation allowed for candidates of political parties to be put forward so there was no conflict of interest. The

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL - 11/09/14

oath was more to do with ensuring that all people were treated with dignity and respect and that approach had always been taken seriously.

In terms of the I.P.C.C. this was a matter for the Chief Constable. Discussions had already taken place and steps were being taken as to further enquiries and investigations, which had already been discussed.

As far as the votes of no confidence were concerned the Police and Crime Commissioner did not believe that anyone would not take their statutory responsibilities and duties seriously to dealing with the safeguarding of young people. All Elected Members had a statutory responsibility and these would continue to be fulfilled in delivering and working together for the public.

(11) A member of the public asked if the Panel would instruct the Police and Crime Commissioner to stop using the acronym C.S.E. and to refer to this in full. Part of his oath was to treat people with dignity and respect, but by using the acronym this anonymised the respect of the victims.

(12) A member of the public pointed out that Mr. Wright's position commanded the respect of the public in order to carry out his duties properly. Unfortunately, he had demonstrated on numerous occasions and this morning that the confidence of the people was no longer there. The member of the public referred to an earlier question by a grandfather, which the Chairman had also raised questions over, and believed it was blatantly obvious that the Police and Crime Commissioner had never asked the question or approached the Chief Constable to follow this up. If he had the Chief Constable would have this on record and demanded that the Chairman of this Panel contact him to ask check the validity of the information reported today as this would demonstrate the Commissioner's incompetence from when he had been a Councillor to the present time.

In coming to his question the member of the public referred to a question asked of the Commissioner at the Home Affairs Select Committee where he was asked if he knew anything about child sexual exploitation in Rotherham. At that meeting the Police and Crime Commissioner denied that he knew anything. Other Committee members then went on to ask Joyce Thacker, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services, whether she knew anything and at that point she indicated that the then Cabinet Member had been given information. The people of South Yorkshire needed to place their confidence in the Police and Crime Commissioner so either Mrs. Thacker or Mr. Wright committed perjury at that meeting and asked had the Chief Constable been asked to investigate whether perjury had taken place?

The Commissioner had referred to the letters of support he had received. The BBC had contacted fourteen Members of Parliament from South Yorkshire of which twelve indicated they were not in support and two failed to respond. The people of South Yorkshire and Rotherham would like to know any Members of Parliament that had offered their support and

whether the two who had not responded were from Rotherham?

The Police and Crime Commissioner denied he had never claimed to know anything about child sexual exploitation, but it was the scale of the abuse that took place that Professor Jay identified over that sixteen year period. He had outlined previously the reports he had received and the actions taken, which were all in the public domain and identified in the chronology on pages 10 and 11 of the Jay report. He took on board the comments made about the use of the acronym.

No question had ever been asked of him by an Elected Member during his period as Cabinet Member or during the term of office that the questioner (an Elected Member) referred to about child sexual exploitation. This demonstrated quite clearly more should have been known and done and all Members had responsibility for this.

The messages received by the Commissioner, of both condemnation and support, in various forms were made in a private capacity and were unwilling to share them publically.

The Chairman advised members of the public that he would personally write to the Chief Constable asking the very questions raised at today's meeting.

(13) A member of the public asked if the Commissioner agreed with Sarah Champion, M.P., that the most tragic and disappointing part of the abuse for the vulnerable victims was to endure their baby being taken away and forced into the legacy of forced adoption as a consequence of being dehumanised on paper by this and your Local Authority in order to cover up grooming?

(14) A member of the public asked the Chairman and the Panel why the Police have not arrested Mr. Wright or Mrs. Thacker for conspiracy to aid offenders in perverting the course of justice? If the Police could not take action, could a private prosecution be brought?

The Chairman advised the member of the public that this Panel had limited powers and could not request that a criminal investigation be undertaken to any individual.

The Legal Adviser confirmed that if the Panel was aware of any information that supported a legal challenge for activity, then it could, as could a member of the public, refer this to the Police for investigation.

The Police and Crime Commissioner referred to the comments made by Sarah Champion and was unable to convey his feelings about the trauma around removing a child from its mother. He would ensure that any victims received appropriate victim support whether this be raised directly through the Commissioner or through his office.

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL - 11/09/14

(15) A member of the public, mindful of the time available for questions and the number of questions he wanted to ask, was not impressed with the Police and Crime Commissioner's responses, both from public questions and the Home Affairs Select Committee. He referred to a bound report which was published on the 6th June, 2011 in Portcullis House, amongst of which was the first reference to the lady know known as "Emma" and asked why no action was taken at that point as what was seen today might not have happened.

(16) A member of the public referred to a Home Office Reporter in 2002 who was threatened by the Police. She was informed that if she continued with her research her personal details would be passed onto the grooming gangs. It was quite obvious at that time that the Police knew the grooming gangs were active and asked if Mr. Wright was aware of this information back in 2002 when he was an Elected Member for Rotherham?

The Police and Crime Commissioner referred to the publication of the report at Portcullis House in 2011, which he had never had sight of or read.

In relation to the 2002 incident with the Home Office Reporter and the reports in 2003/04 the Commissioner was not aware of them and only found out following his reading of the Jay report.

(17) A member of the public referred to the Chairman questioning the Commissioner about his referrals to the Chief Constable over the incident involving the twelve year old girl. The Chairman of the Home Affairs Select Committee asked the very same questions last week and asked that a response be provided for this week. It was hoped that a proper independent investigation into the Police would result in Mr. Wright being charged with derelicts of duty of public office, as there was little compassion evident by Mr. Wright or Mrs. Thacker.

(18) A member of the public reported that alarm bells were ringing since she herself was eleven years old. Not at any point was she ever offered any support from either Social Services or Police and could not believe that the Commissioner could sit there and deny everything he had ever done. The young girls and their families involved in this abuse over many years had to live with this and had to source their own support to help deal with the effects over the last twelve years. The Commissioner was asked to stand down.

(19) A member of the public described events while she was cared for by the local authority and the grooming that took place by a convicted sex offender. She described how she was found by the Police on numerous occasions and the offender allowed to walk free. The Police were fully aware of the inappropriate behaviour taking place and underage sex. The local authority had now removed her child from her care and used her past against her, which the Police created. Her child was now in the care

of the local authority so he could be abused and groomed by paedophiles.

The Chairman asked that various individuals be removed from the public gallery due to the disruption they were causing and the lack of respect and empathy for those who were asking questions.

The Police and Crime Commissioner indicated that the last two questioners, as both victims of abuse, had been badly let down and they deserved every course of support and justice. Every endeavour was being made to prevent these crimes taking place and as Commissioner he was receiving text messages from the Police when it was suspected that a young person had gone missing as a result of child sexual exploitation and just over the last few weeks he described several incidents of inappropriate activity with young people that were being investigated.

The member of the public asked for a response from the Commissioner as to why an alleged perpetrator was allowed to walk free and why the same officers had reported to a family that there was nothing they could do about a sex offender holding a young person against her will whilst being cared for by the local authority. Why was this case?

The Police and Crime Commissioner was unable to address specific cases, but assured the public that if anyone wrote to him he would ensure that specific circumstances were properly and appropriately looked into.

The Chairman asked if the Police and Crime Commissioner was unable to answer the questions because he did not know the answers or because it was felt inappropriate to do so in such an arena.

As Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services the Police and Crime Commissioner was not informed of any individual circumstances. So not being in receipt of that information was unable to comment on specific cases. However, he reiterated that if anyone had not had the support they required or justice then please come forward and it would be properly investigated.

(20) A member of the public asked why all the evidence that had been brought forward with full DNA from children's items of clothing had been lost by the Police and how several bags of clothing could go missing?

(21) A member of the public referred to Operation Czar and asked for an explanation how people with children in their houses and cars were served with abduction notices yet taxi drivers who were moving them around just had their badges suspended?

The Police and Crime Commissioner pointed out that evidence was collected as part of an investigation. However, if that evidence was then lost then there had been a breach of good practice and misconduct. The Chief Constable was looking into all these matters of the past with a view

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL - 11/09/14

to making sure that any mistakes were addressed. In fact the Commissioner himself in August, 2013 commissioned the Chief Constable to look back at all historical cases of child sexual exploitation. No specific details could be reported.

(22) A member of the public asked expressed her outrage as to why the Police and Crime Commissioner was able to remain in his current role, along with Joyce Thacker, when she herself was let down and abused and her sister murdered. Those in charge allowed vulnerable young children to be groomed and placed in taxis and taken back to care homes.

(23) A member of the public asked the Panel if, after having listened to the comments and concerns of the public today, they were going to take a vote of no confidence in the Commissioner?

The Chairman advised all those present that once the questioning session had ended the Panel would adjourn to receive legal advice and look at what steps were open to them in light of information shared today.

(24) A member of the public asked the Panel why has the I.P.C.C. not been asked by the Panel already to investigate the Police and Crime Commissioner and the alleged misconduct in public office. You have a civil and moral duty and a legal responsibility to invite that investigation.

The Chairman advised that two complaints already received relating to the Commissioner's behaviour and public role had been referred onto the I.P.C.C. for them to investigate.

(25) A member of the public referred to the first address by the Police and Crime Commissioner when he claimed not to have heard about child sexual exploitation until 2007/08. In the Mail last week they referred to a twenty page dossier that went through his office in 2005 and would like to know if he did not read it, why not?

(26) A member of the public wished to ask the Police and Crime Commissioner if he was to resign from his position after this meeting as he considered him a disgrace and only remained in office for the sake of his pension.

The Police and Crime Commissioner had nothing further to add to information he had already put forward.

The Chairman now invited the Members of the Panel to ask questions of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

(1) Councillor C. Vines had four questions to put to the Commissioner, the first being how in November, 2012 he took over the role of Police and Crime Commissioner and wrote a letter to the Chief Constable which included your plans and focus for the future and not once did you refer to child sexual exploitation. There was a mention later in the letter along

with Hillsborough and the Miners' Strike, but only in relation to reductions in the public sector purse. In January, 2013 you changed this and included a raft of measures for child sexual exploitation and was only done after the Andrew Norfolk report.

The Police and Crime Commissioner did, in fact, write to the Chief Constable on his first day setting out the areas he intended to focus upon in his term of office and one of them clearly stated about protecting vulnerable people. More detail was provided in the Police and Crime Plan as to what this would cover and a focus was given in the first year to young people, the second year to vulnerabilities around women and the third year around vulnerabilities in older people. As you rightly refer in 2013 more focus was given to protecting young people in relation to child sexual exploitation.

(2) Councillor Sixsmith asked what were your views about the apparent low prosecution rate relating to this crime and was there anything that could have and should have been done to address this?

The Police and Crime Commissioner confirmed this was of concern as it was about preventing the crime, protecting the victims and prosecuting the offenders which needed to be right so the focus in addressing child sexual exploitation was around those measures. Further information on the measures would be provided as part of the summing up process. There had been a raft of cross cutting plans been put in place to try and address the issue and drive up the number of prosecutions.

(3) Councillor Davison asked if the Commissioner could try and obtain copies of the missing reports as a Laura Wilson, identified in those reports, as being in danger in 2005 and the relevant authorities knowing she was having underage sex and with whom.

The Police and Crime Commissioner asked if the reports referred to were the three reports as the ones identified by Professor Jay as being in 2002, 2003 and 2006 and on confirmation explained that as part of the Chief Constable's investigation he would be seeking out the reports, take on board their contents and identify what they outlined.

In terms of Laura Wilson, this was a specific case which the Commissioner was unaware of and this came to his attention via the media following the tragic circumstances following her death.

(4) Mr. Walayat was aware that since being appointed the Commissioner had put lots of measures in place and investments and asked what were the measureable targets for child sexual exploitation in percentage terms and over what duration and where this was located in the Police and Crime Plan?

The Police and Crime Commissioner responded by alluding to previous comments about child sexual exploitation and how no one could give a

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL - 11/09/14

guarantee that this would not happen again going forward. There were some horrendous people in society who wished to commit these crimes and it was a responsibility of everyone to prevent this. He had indicated to the Chief Constable that he wished to see more of this crime prevented, more victims safeguarded and supported and more prosecutions. The data provided showed that the direction of travel was positive, but there were increased numbers in terms of referrals arising from the increased awareness campaigns locally and nationally. Indications were that the numbers of referrals were increasing.

(5) Mayor Jones asked the Commissioner if he had the ability to identify the 1400 young victims in order to ensure all had received or were receiving the vital support they required?

The Police and Crime Commissioner was unable to confirm this was the case. The Jay report based the 1400 victims on a range of reports and indicators and was an estimation of the numbers. It could be more as well as being less. There were case files on record and the Chief Constable had been asked to review all young missing persons' files to ascertain the potential victims of this so further enquires could be made. There was no way of knowing who the 1400 young people were.

(6) Councillor Dyson explained that the Jay report worryingly highlighted the failings of the Police and asked if there were any plans to bring in an independent Police Force or judiciary to highlight the short comings of the Police or past officers.

The Police and Crime Commissioner explained the Chief Constable was in discussions with the I.P.C.C. and H.M.I.C. as well as the Home Office and the enquiries put in place under the Chief Constable's remit. He was assured that all the matters would be properly and unduly looked into.

(7) Councillor Munn asked what had changed since the publication of the Jay report and what measures strategically and operationally had been put in place?

The Police and Crime Commissioner asked the Chief Constable to review the Jay report and learn any lessons from it. The cases referred to within the report were being investigated and followed up. Ways in which cases were reported had now been changed as had the resources into dealing with child sexual exploitation which would be identified as part of the summing up process.

(8) Mr. Carter asked the Commissioner, having read the statement issued by the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, was he intending to continue in his role as Police and Crime Commissioner now he did not have a Deputy, but felt it very inappropriate for him to soldier on alone without any support.

The Police and Crime Commissioner had given this matter much

consideration. No firm action had been put in place as yet, but discussions had taken place, specifically around child sexual exploitation, as to whether some additional support of expertise could be recruited to address any specific areas of weakness for the Police or any other agency. No action as yet had been given to a replacement Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner.

(9) Councillor C. Vines referred to three points he wished to raise and asked (a) why only after the publication of the Jay report did the Commissioner ask for the reports that had been presented to the Safeguarding Children's Board which was established in 2004. This was one of the reasons why South Yorkshire Police Authority in 2005 did not endorse a specific Police Officer as it was felt that the Safeguarding Boards were adequate. Also could the Commissioner confirm if he had requested additional reports since September, 2014.

(b) At the Home Affairs Select Committee under oath the Commissioner had indicated that he had not met with any victims of child sexual exploitation did he still stick by that statement given that three young women claimed they had spoken to him.

(c) The Commissioner had not shown any remorse and asked how could this Panel do its job when the Commissioner was clearly holding it in contempt with his actions and how could everyone move on when he was clearly part of the problem.

The Police and Crime Commissioner responded by saying after the publication of the Jay report he wrote to the four Chairs of the Local Children Safeguarding Boards, the Chief Prosecutor and copied in the local authority Chief Executives to assess the approach of tackling child sexual exploitation and the Police's response and to advise whether there were further areas for improvement in their view.

When he came into office the Police and Crime Commissioner established a county wide Child Sexual Exploitation Forum made up of senior officers from the Police, Local Authorities, N.H.S. and the Chief Prosecutor with a view to sharing good practice and information and learning from each other's actions in relation to their areas. A joint risk assessment tool was also established, which was to be reviewed by Rotherham Council shortly, along with an information sharing protocol which was a significant step forward, particularly for the N.H.S. A county wide child sexual exploitation awareness campaign was also approved to ensure a consistent message "See Something, Say Something".

In terms of holding the Panel in contempt, the Police and Crime Commissioner believed this could not be further from the truth. He had attended the meetings of this Panel on more than one occasion, had always treated the Panel with respect and been thanked for taking the approach taken.

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL - 11/09/14

(10) Councillor Sixsmith referred to his previous question relating to the low prosecution rate in relation to these crimes and asked if figures would be given post 2005 or post 2010 given the improvement.

He also asked why the Commissioner did not feel it appropriate for him to resign?

The Police and Crime Commissioner did not have the figures from 2005, but had some referral figures from the last eighteen months. The problem went back further than 2005 as evidenced in the Jay report and was as prevalent today as it had always been, not just in Rotherham but also in Barnsley whose Children's Services had been criticised.

He had made the point several times that tackling child sexual exploitation was a very complex issue and no excuses could be given in the attempts to prevent it taking place. It was prevalent today as was in 2005 and he offered his ultimate commitment to the work already in place and the progress to date since he was appointed as Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Chairman referred to the levels of child sexual exploitation that was reported as on an "industrial" scale and asked the Commissioner if in his response be believed the level of abuse taking place now was still at the same level as it was reported to be in the past?

The Police and Crime Commissioner confirmed the numbers as reported in the Jay report (1400) were indeed abuse on an "industrial" scale and if one was to take into account the referrals and investigations now taking place then, yes, it would appear that child sexual exploitation was still at that level in Rotherham and across South Yorkshire. Whether this was as a result of more awareness and more people having the confidence to come forward or whether it was the extent of the crime taking place, then the jury was still out. Only the figures could be considered and at that level. A number of actions by the local authority and the Police were endeavouring to meet the demand of the referrals coming into the system.

The Chairman clarified that in the two years since the Police and Crime Commissioner came into position was he saying that under his stewardship the Police had not made a dent in the amount of child sexual exploitation that was taking place?

The Police and Crime Commissioner felt it important at this stage to outline what action he had taken. He confirmed that when he took up office in 2012 there were three dedicated officers to child sexual exploitation. This had now increased to sixty-two and there were plans in place as of February, 2014 to increase this further to one hundred and two by the next financial year and dedicated to public protection, including child sexual exploitation. This was a significant commitment by South Yorkshire Police and take them from the bottom quarter to the top quarter of forces tackling this issue. As a result of this commitment there had

been more convictions and in the past year there had been thirty-seven in South Yorkshire, one hundred and seventy nine live child sexual exploitation investigations, sixty of which were in Rotherham, seven of which were significant investigations involving multiple perpetrators and victims, two of which were in Rotherham. Sixty-eight people had been charged or had been summoned for child sexual exploitation offences, of which twenty-six of these were in Rotherham.

Between 2010 and 2012 three hundred and ninety eight referrals had been received by South Yorkshire Police and between 2012 and 2014 there had been eight hundred and seventy four referrals. At any one time there was approximately forty-three referrals into the Police that was being actively investigated. This was a significant leap for South Yorkshire Police who in 2012 did not have this as a priority as the ex-Police Authority Members could confirm. It had been nothing but a priority for the Police since the Police and Crime Commissioner had taken up office in 2012. The commitment put into tackling this issue had delivered on these outcomes. It was not enough, but the Commissioner was looking for further actions to improve this situation further.

(11) Mr. Walayat had two questions for the Police and Crime Commissioner. (a) It had already been established that there were no targets set in the Police and Crime Plan to measure child sexual exploitation. However, public confidence and satisfaction was a priority and despite the large expense to improve this, since the Commissioner had been in office public confidence and satisfaction had gone down. Did the Commissioner feel that by resigning public confidence could be restored, money could be saved and for this to be put towards supporting the victims of this crime?

(b) The Police and Crime Commissioner spoke about the improvements he had made since coming into office, but asked what the improvements were in relation to sexual offences as the Commissioner had advised that this was widespread nationally, but a recent report that the Commissioner's office produced – the Force's Performance Exceptions Report – highlighted that South Yorkshire was worse off than others nationally and other similar forces.

The Police and Crime Commissioner advised Mr. Walayat that he would know from his many years as a member of the South Yorkshire Police Authority that this was never set as a priority for South Yorkshire Police by the Police Authority. Public satisfaction in South Yorkshire Police had remained fairly constant for a long period of time. It was currently at around 85% and had been at this level of many years. Over the last four years around £50 million had been taken from the South Yorkshire Police budget resulting in a loss of over six hundred officers, six hundred support officers and crime had continued to reduce. A significant amount of resources had been placed into tackling this particular issue and against a backdrop of overall resources reducing and was quite an achievement.

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL - 11/09/14

The Chairman referred to child sexual exploitation not being a priority for South Yorkshire Police and asked if the Commissioner was Vice-Chairman of the South Yorkshire Police Authority during that period?

(12) Mayor Jones asked of the numbers quoted where cases were referred to the Police what percentage were turned back by the Crown Prosecution Service? Were the Crown Prosecution Service going to revisit these cases as there were lots of perpetrators who had been identified by the public and the Police and were these people who committed these heinous crimes going to be brought to task?

The Police and Crime Commissioner reiterated again that in August, 2013 he had written to the Chief Constable and the Crown Prosecutor to establish a historic investigation team to look back at historical cases where miscarriages of justice or where lines of enquiry had not been properly investigated to be relooked at to secure justices for more victims. This had now been scoped out and actions were being taken forward. An imminent report was due back from the Chief Constable on this work and highlight his plans to take this further forward.

There was evidence that the Crown Prosecution Service needed to look further at some information captured and this was being taken forward as a priority in relation to child sexual exploitation cases.

The Police and Crime Commissioner confirmed that he did receive regular updates and the most recent from the Chief Prosecutor, identified as child abuse, for 2013/14 confirmed that 78.7% of the court cases presented secured a positive outcome. That placed South Yorkshire, twentieth, out of the forty-two Crown Prosecution Services, showing improvements. This could be improved on and the Crown Prosecutor was committed to improving this figure further. This would be ongoing area of concern that would be monitored by the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Crown Prosecutor going forward.

If victims were coming forward and reporting then it was a priority for the Police to investigate and secure any evidence they could to take forward to the Crown Prosecution Service to secure a conviction. The Police and Crime Commissioner wished to see more offenders and perpetrators being brought to justice and receive punishment for the crimes they had committed and for their sentences to reflect their crimes.

For this reason the Police and Crime Commissioner supported South Yorkshire Police to introduce polygraph or lie detector tests to more adequately manage sex offenders in the community and South Yorkshire was only the second force to introduce this. Resources had been committed to training officers to undertake these tests. This would certainly lead to more sex offenders being properly managed in their communities.

(13) Councillor Davison pointed out that there was a perception that there

were not enough prosecutions and requested that more detail be provided on them. Many of the young women who had raised questions today claimed they could still see their perpetrators walking free and it was important for all public safety to ensure that these people were prosecuted.

As a Panel Member Councillor Davison believed that more evidence was needed and the only way that this could be provided was by being more actively aware of the activity in police stations. Publication of the Jay report had made a large difference on the kinds of questions that the Police and Crime Panel should be asking if it was to continue fulfilling its scrutiny function. It was, therefore, suggested that there be more training for Panel Members and for this to include visits to police stations.

The Chairman pointed out that training Panel Members was a matter for the host authority to take forward.

(14) Councillor Sheppard noted that the Police and Crime Commissioner's role required the complete trust of the people of South Yorkshire, more so than Councillors and Members of Parliament. He pointed out, whether he was culpable or not, the Commissioner was up to his neck in this controversy in Rotherham and asked if there could be a perception that he had a conflict of interest as the body he had oversight of now was investigating the body that he had oversight of previously?

The Police and Crime Commissioner did recognise that particular issue and would be taking every action by further engagement with both the Police and Crime Panel and the public in reassuring them that both he and the Police were doing their jobs effectively. He did recognise that there could be further challenges since the publication of the Jay report.

The Chairman referred to the role of the community in protecting children and how everyone had a responsibility, but those in public office put themselves forward to ensure that the relevant authorities were doing their jobs properly. He, therefore, asked where the thought the accountability lay?

The Police and Crime Commissioner confirmed that the accountability lay with him attending the Police and Crime Panel and in a variety of meetings and surgeries that he attended. The book of accountability, therefore, stopped with the elected representatives. The Police and Crime Commissioner confirmed he had always taken his senior roles very seriously and had taken appropriate action as and when reports had been presented to address public concerns as did other elected representatives. He had taken action to tackle the concerns surrounding child sexual exploitation probably more seriously than anyone else in South Yorkshire. He looked forward to everyone's commitment from this Panel to take this work further forward.

The Chairman asked for an explanation how, in the face of such

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL - 11/09/14

significant public opposition, the Police and Crime Commissioner proposed to consult and represent the people of South Yorkshire now he had lost confidence in them?

The Police and Crime Commissioner confirmed that one of the most significant challenges facing any Commissioner was to maintain public engagement and identifying public issues of concern. From a personal perspective stepping aside would have been the easiest way to deal with this and would have avoided the criticism. He was prepared to take this criticism and be held to account and the only way to tackle the issues that had been put forward in the Jay report. His own record as Police and Crime Commissioner in tackling child sexual exploitation spoke for itself and he genuinely believed that he should continue in the role for the past, present and future victims of this dreadful crime. Perpetrators needed to be brought to justice and if focus on this issue did not continue then the offenders and abusers had won. He did recognise that there would be additional challenges as a result of this, but did not think any challenge was insurmountable in his role and continuing the good work that had been put in place since he became Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Chairman asked specifically how the Police and Crime Commissioner could engage with the public which was a critical part of his role?

The Police and Crime Commissioner confirmed he was going to continue to undertake public surgeries, public engagement activities as had been undertaken in the past, including with stakeholders and partners, with a further plan for online questions and answers. Engagement and public access was very important to the role and the Police and Crime Commissioner would continue to do what he had previously done to make himself as accessible as possible.

The Chairman asked if the Commissioner was confident he would hold public engagements and continue to serve the public in the future?

The Police and Crime Commissioner was confident that any concern brought by the public would be dealt with as had happened previously and would continue to be the case.

The Chairman invited the Police and Crime Commissioner to sum up his responses to Professor Jay's report.

The Police and Crime Commissioner wished to point out that in his role since 2012 he had identified child sexual exploitation as a priority. This was recognised by Professor Jay in her report who indicated that it was adequately resourced. This was not the Commissioner's view and he had a plan in place to get to the point where it was adequately resourced. Still more could be done.

The Police and Crime Commissioner referred to his early comments about:-

- Setting up the county wide Child Sexual Exploitation Forum.
- The extra resources supplementing a further ten officers.
- Extra training for seventeen hundred officers and P.C.S.O.'s.
- Dedicated research analyst for areas to be targeted in Rotherham and South Yorkshire.
- Commissioning of the young witness service to support victims through the court process.
- Development of a voluntary sector grants scheme.
- Commissioned H.M.I.C. to look at the effectiveness of tackling this crime and the progress made.
- Commissioned the Chief Constable to work with the Crown Prosecution Service to look at historic cases of child sexual exploitation, which was delivering further results.
- Investments with Barnardo's for the training of four special Social Workers.
- Joined the Home Office Task Force in dealing with child sexual exploitation.
- Supported the introduction of polygraph tests.
- Made the commitment of £5 million of investment as part of the Platinum Model, which was already delivering results.
- Launched the county wide – know the signs campaign.
- Received the support of this Police and Crime Panel for the plans going forward.
- Commissioned women's aid to help inform services to those victims of domestic and sexual violence. A report back on this was due imminently.

As a result of the above interventions South Yorkshire Police had secured more prosecutions than ever reported in its history. Child sexual exploitation had been set as a priority and would remain so.

The Police and Crime Commissioner remained committed to the people of South Yorkshire and had dedicated the last twenty five years to public office. He hoped the Panel and the local authorities would continue to work with him to continue that good work that had been put in place.

The Chairman confirmed that the Panel would now adjourn to seek legal advice in response to how the Commissioner had responded to the Jay report.

The Panel returned, having sought legal advice and the options available to them.

The Chairman on behalf of the Panel confirmed that they had carefully considered the response provided by the Police and Crime Commissioner today and acknowledged the significant strength of public feeling.

Resolved:- (1) That the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel had no

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL - 11/09/14

confidence in the Police and Crime Commissioner and called for his immediate resignation.

(2) That the Chairman, on behalf of the Police and Crime Panel, would write to the Home Secretary to support the recommendation of the Home Affairs Select Committee for an urgent review of legislation to ensure that Police and Crime Panels have the authority to be able to remove a Police and Crime Commissioner in exceptional circumstances such as this, and also to fundamentally review the current role and powers of Police and Crime Panels.

(3) That the Chairman, on behalf of the Police and Crime Panel, would write to Keith Vaz, M.P., to support his call for emergency legislation to be enacted to enable the urgent removal of Police and Crime Commissioners in these circumstances.

(4) That the Chairman, on behalf of the Police and Crime Panel, would write to the Chief Constable to ask for full and clear information with regard to those matters upon which the Police and Crime Commissioner failed to provide a response.

(Councillor C. Vines recorded his vote against this resolution and subsequently tendered his resignation from the Police and Crime Panel).