

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
Friday, 4th March, 2016

Present:-

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Councillor M. Dyson
Councillor R. Frost

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council

Councillor A. Jones

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Councillor C. Vines
Councillor E. Wallis

Sheffield City Council

Councillor J. Armstrong
Councillor S. Mair-Richards (**in the Chair**)
Councillor J. Otten

Co-opted Member

Mr. A. Carter
Mr. S. Chu

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Councillors G. Jones (Doncaster)
Councillors C. McGuinness (Doncaster)
Councillor J. Campbell (Sheffield)

F44. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

44.1 A member of the public asked the following question:-

“Can the area assemblies have all crimes reported not just a selected few. 2/3rds of the crimes are not reported to the area assembly i.e. assaults, domestic violence, fraud, drug possession etc.”

44.2 The Police and Crime Commissioner responded in writing indicating Area Assemblies were Council meetings. He understood that each Area Assembly was responsible for setting its own agenda and requesting the information required.

44.3 South Yorkshire Police provided detailed crime information at its “Partners and Communities Together” (PACT) meetings. To find your local PACT meeting contact the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner at info@southyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk and they would provide details of the next PACT meeting.

44.4 The Chairman reported that this was a matter for Rotherham and would be referring the content to Councillors Sims and Yasseen, relevant Cabinet Members with responsibility, to discuss with the various Chairs of Area Assemblies.

F45. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PANEL

45.1 Mr. Alan Carter, Co-opted Member, had submitted the following question:-

“The Sheffield First Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership Board meeting on 20th November, 2015, was informed that the community trigger was a new power contained in the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 and was advised of the criteria for applying its provisions.

My recollection of the meeting was that it was specifically agreed to raise awareness with Elected Members (of the Sheffield City Council) and inform them when a Community Trigger had been initiated in their area and also to broaden the publication of Community Triggers to include leaflets in libraries, give them to registered social landlords to distribute and to speak with Voluntary Action Sheffield and also with GP surgeries.

(Note I am given to believe that these actions subsequently may already have been followed up in Sheffield but only members who sit on the appropriate Partnership Boards (or their equivalent) in each of the four Districts may be privy to this information.)

I did wonder at the time of learning about this relatively new provision if the system might provide to be somewhat bureaucratic, costly and not necessarily sustainable in the longer term. However, I also wondered if similar publicity arrangements to those commenced in Sheffield had indeed been made across South Yorkshire and also, if the matter was considered to be of sufficient importance, if it might also be possible for a report about Community Triggers to be brought to our attention in order to raise Panel Members' general awareness as community representatives of the availability of the statutory provision?

Furthermore, I contemplated whether the two Independent Members of this Panel (along with our Elected Member colleagues) might also benefit from a more detailed knowledge about the prevalence across South Yorkshire to date of Community Triggers since their implementation. Might it be possible, therefore, for this information and some up-to-date statistics and an assessment of their value (or otherwise) to you on a County-wide basis to be made available to all members of this Panel in assisting with the determination of your priorities as our Police and Crime Commissioner?”

45.2 In response to the question, the Office of the Police and Crime

Commissioner had produced a report giving an update on the introduction of the Community Trigger (CT) within the South Yorkshire Partnership. The report was distributed to those present.

45.3 Mr. Carter expressed his surprise that no cost had been incurred operating this system and believed some form of cost element must have been borne, but thanked the Police and Crime Commissioner for his answer.

45.3 Councillor Otten asked the following questions:-

(a) "Do you accept the conclusions of the HMIC report published on 18th February, 2016 into the effectiveness of South Yorkshire Police and what steps are you taking to ensure its recommendations are implemented?"

(b) "Do you recognise the concerns expressed on page 8 of the PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 A national overview report regarding the degradation of community policing? Have you evidence that those concerns are not well placed in South Yorkshire given recent changes to neighbourhood policing structures?"

45.4 With regard to question (a), the Police and Crime Commissioner supplied an answer in writing which confirmed:-

"I do accept HMIC's conclusions as did the Chief Constable.

The Force had detailed action plans in place for addressing the recommendations made by HMIC and he would monitor these through his Governance and Assurance Board.

As he had said in a recent public statement, HMIC reports were useful for him when he held the Force to account. They helped him see more clearly the areas that needed greater attention.

The report concentrated on how effective the Force was at preventing and investigating crime and anti-social behaviour, tackling serious and organised crime and protecting victims and the vulnerable. It was a mixed picture of 'good' and 'requiring improvement'.

He was pleased that the Force was considered 'good' at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe. Keeping people safe was the overall outcome of the Police and Crime Plan that he produced each year.

It was also good news that the Force was 'good' at tackling serious and organised crime and fulfilling national responsibilities including cyber-crime. The report acknowledged that South Yorkshire had some very experienced and capable officers.

But the Force would have to work at improving the way it investigated crime more generally and managed offenders. The latter would require greater co-operation with other agencies. However, the Commissioner noted that victim satisfaction levels remained above the national average. He also noted the strain that had been placed on the Force due to cuts in grant and, therefore, in numbers. We needed to find more savings from areas other than the workforce if the good work was to be built upon.

I shall be particularly concerned to ensure that the Force this more carefully about how it protected from harm those who were vulnerable and those who became victims of crime.

He was very pleased that the report recognised the steps that had been taken to improve the Force's response to child sexual exploitation. It stated clearly that there was now strong leadership in place and it was 'well prepared' to tackled child sexual exploitation.

But more needed to be done to understand domestic abuse and help the victims and their children.

Protecting the vulnerable would be a key priority for the renewed Police and Crime Plan which he would be publishing in a few weeks' time. We need to expand our understanding of who the vulnerable were.

There was also growing categories of victims that needed sensitive help such as those suffering domestic abuse or those caught up in modern slavery and trafficking. We are only just beginning to recognise the scale of the problem.

The Commissioner would use the report to focus the attention of the Police on those areas of growing concern."

45.5 In a supplementary question Councillor Otten thanked the Commissioner for his answer which was very thorough and he accepted and agreed with what had been said. However, the HMIC report referred to had some quite specific recommendations and raised concern that the Force was not being sufficiently effective in protecting the vulnerable and supporting victims. There were specific recommendations and he was not seeing specific responses to those. It may well be that the Commissioner was including these in the Police and Crime Plan.

45.6 The Police and Crime Commissioner replied that he accepted the report of HMIC and gave him some idea of where the Force was performing well and where it was not performing well. The Commissioner would take the report to various forums that he had with the Police – 1:1 meetings with the Chief Constable, Senior Leadership Group and the Governance and Assurance Board where they would be discussed in some detail and hold the Force to account and ask them what they were doing about it. If there were specific things in the report that the Panel was not sure about or would like more information, it could be brought to

the Panel and show exactly what was being done but otherwise be assured that the areas HMIC were particularly flagging up such as domestic abuse and weaknesses around that up would be pursued through those various meetings.

45.7 The Chair pointed out sharing information with the Panel would be useful.

45.8 With regard to question (b), the Commissioner reported in writing that-

“I am committed to neighbourhood policing and it was his intention, in conjunction with the Chief Constable, to maintain the number of PCSOs there was across the Force.

The people of South Yorkshire valued highly visible, dedicated police teams who knew an area well, supported by locally based PCSOs (Police Community Support Officers).

During 2015 the Force moved to more flexible multi-skilled Local Policing Teams ('LPTs') which maintained the commitment to local policing and also provided greater resilience and more operational responsiveness at busy times. HMIC recognised that the new structure was not yet firmly embedded.

Further evaluation and review of the Local Policing model was planned for the next financial year. As part of the review, we will be consulting with the public (and partners) to better understand their policing needs and how responsive the re-modelled policing service feels.”

45.9 In a supplementary question Councillor Otten asked the impression he had got from the HMIC report was that they had seen the transition in terms of neighbourhood policing happen in a number of Forces and asked if it was known what the impact that transition had had on effectiveness? The Commissioner indicated that there would be further evaluation and review coming in the new financial year which suggested there had been some evaluation and therefore what were the results.

45.10 The Police and Crime Commissioner confirmed that essentially what was being talked about was neighbourhood policing and the future of neighbourhood policing at a time of austerity and cuts. The numbers of Police Officers were fewer and, therefore, action had to be taken around that. The previous response teams and previous neighbourhood teams were now combined into local policing teams with a neighbourhood focus and fewer numbers. That had been rolled out across South Yorkshire, district by district, and was really only just being embedded and settled in. It was probably too soon to know exactly what the consequences of that had been. It was known that there had been teething problems in some areas and that had had to be looked at and see what was needed in terms of resources. The Commissioner would

hesitate to form a more mature judgement at this moment in time.

45.11 The Chair explained that at her own Safer Sheffield Partnership meeting discussion had taken place about Local Policing Teams with reflected many of the issues being raised. She would endeavour to share the presentation that was provided with Councillor Otten.

45.12 Councillor Frost referred to their being adverse publicity this week in the media following a Freedom of Information request about response times answering 101 calls. The report said that times had trebled in the two years to 2014/15 and 50,000+ calls had been abandoned. Since then the Commissioner had reported that staffing issues at Atlas Court have been rectified. He, therefore, asked would response times have reduced for 2015/16, was the procurement process for the new ICT contract on schedule and when would the public be able to report incidents and concerns by email and social media.

45.13 The Police and Crime Commissioner confirmed that members of the public could already contact the Force by e-mail and social media. As far as the new ICT contract was concerned, it was going according to schedule and at the point where the contract would be signed and sealed in April. It did mean then that there would be a period of design of the system and consultation around that and would be towards the end of the year before the new technology was in place. There was recognition that the technology was not fit for purpose in Atlas Court and the new system was identified and costed in the Capital Programme at £12 million over two years.

The staffing levels at Atlas Court was a judgement call against a background of cuts and the numbers had been allowed to go too low at one point so additional had staff been brought in. Staff had been recruited and were on twelve weeks training courses and would be in place as from June.

The volume of calls had increased, which was worrying. Attempts would be made to deflect some of that demand because 30% of the calls were not related to policing matters.

Before 2015 the response times were an average of 30 seconds; it was now 1 minute 34 seconds which was not good enough.

45.15 Councillor Frost in a supplementary comment was pleased to learn that some of the callers were signposted in the right direction and the calls were not abandoned.

45.16 Councillor Wallis apologised for not following the correct procedure, but was not present when the finalised member question procedure was approved and because the events which gave rise to the question had arisen less than 48 hours previously. She was given permission to ask her query which related to how on Tuesday afternoon

she learnt via media reports that the Police and Crime Commissioner had established or was going to establish a Policing Panel to look at protests in Rotherham. The fact that this learnt of this via media reports concerned her slightly and it also concerned her because how could the Police and Crime Commissioner to account when Members were learning about such important matters after the event. Councillor Wallis, therefore, wished to ask the Police and Crime Commissioner, bearing in mind that this Panel had been set up in response to recommendations of a commissioned report following agitation within the community by groups who were widely regarded in Rotherham as seeking to justify the unjustifiable, could he give her assurance that members from those particular groups would not be on the Panel that had now been established.

45.17 The Police and Crime Commissioner reassured Panel Members that Rotherham was told in advance about this and apologised if this had not been passed on. He confirmed there had been a number of marches in Rotherham, and other places, by some far right groups that have caused a great deal of disquiet in those places. Not only had they disrupted businesses in the centre of town, but disturbed members of the public who were trying to be in the centre of town and caused real tensions within communities.

The march in September, 2015 caused particular disquiet in Rotherham and as a result a review was requested with two members on the Panel drawn from the Ethics Panel, the Chair and Iman Mohammed Ismail. Following the review a report was produced with recommendations. The principal recommendation was that a Policing Protest Panel be set up which would meet with the Police in advance of any march/demonstration planned and give some advice so that the policing of the event would be proportionate.

The Panel had yet to be established and there was to be a meeting shortly with the Chair of the Minority Communities Panel and the Ethics Panel to consider the membership. It was essential that this group be as independent as possible.

45.18 In a supplementary question Councillor Wallis was reassured by the comments and it was not widely shared that this Panel was for the whole of South Yorkshire, which was welcomed. However, she still sought reassurance that no members on the Panel would be drawn from groups who have previously sought to organise a boycott of South Yorkshire Police as this was not felt to be appropriate.

45.19 The Police and Crime Commissioner confirmed he would pass the comments onto the two Chairs, who were of good judgement and would make sensible recommendations about the Panel's membership.

F46. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 27TH JANUARY, 2016

46.1 Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting of the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel held on 27th January, 2016.

Action:- (1) That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27th January, 2016, be approved for signature by the Chair subject to the following amendments:-

“(2) That the contents of the documents detailing the Police and Crime Commissioner’s proposals for “Securing the Future of Neighbourhood Policing” be noted and the words “distributed to the Panel Members at this meeting” be deleted.

(3) That the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel supports the proposal, now submitted by the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner, increase in Council Tax for 2016/17 is £5 for a Band D property (a 3.3% increase) to £153.16. This is equivalent to an increase of 10p per week.”

F47. PUTTING SAFETY FIRST - SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PLAN 2013/17 - (RENEWED MARCH 2016)

47.1 Consideration was given to the refreshed version of the Plan previously submitted in March, 2015 (Minute No. 37 refers).

47.2 The Plan was a key document that set out, on behalf of the public, the priorities for the Police for the year ahead. Having listened to the views of a wide range of stakeholders including community groups, local authorities and the voluntary sector, the Police and Crime Commissioner had identified all shared a similar view with respect of being safe and feeling safe.

47.3 There was a consensus to retain the existing priorities for South Yorkshire of Protecting Vulnerable People, Tackling Crime and ASB and Enabling Fair Treatment. However, there was recognition of the need to change emphasis in some of the outcomes in order to reflect new and evolving policing and crime demands identified through consultation with the public and partners as well as results from needs/threats assessments.

47.4 After the Police and Crime Commissioner had completed summary of the report, Members of the Police and Crime Panel asked the following questions:-

- When would the report from Professor Drew be published and could this be shared with Panel Members.
- Publication of the strategic priorities and the shifting of resources by other public organisations following comments previously made.
- Giving fair treatment for all, meeting service delivery and ensuring a

visible Police presence, which was an older person's perception that visibility was reducing.

- Concerns that the Police Protection Unit was being disbanded.
- Managing the issues given that 80% of Police activity was not related to crime.
- Positive outcome of Operation Clover and paying tribute to bringing some of the perpetrators to justice.
- Increased reliance on technology and the proposed training on twitter and whether consideration should be given to including other Police Officers.
- Confidence levels in the Police and the decreased levels of confidence in Rotherham and how this could be restored.
- Advice provided by the Independent Advisory Panels and how participation in the Police Cadets could be encouraged from the minority ethnic communities
- Staff acting according to their respective codes of ethics and professional practice which was welcomed.
- Increasing staff confidence and dedication from officers.
- Funding to acquire the capital assets, equipment and infrastructure that were needed to deliver policing services in South Yorkshire and added concerns about the insufficiency of mental health placements with the burden falling on the Police.
- Force collaboration whether this be locally, regionally or nationally and the need to respond to challenges and ensure any devolution was efficient, effective and sustainable.
- Devolution of power to the Sheffield City Region and the continual monitoring of how this would be policed in the future.
- Collaboration across the public sector and partnership working and the need for a flexible approach.

47.5 The Police and Crime Commissioner gave an undertaking that he would continue to listen to the views of all those involved in the design and delivery of policing and crime services to inform priorities and assist in commissioning services that contributed to the delivery of the outcomes identified within this Plan and asked for any additional feedback.

Action:- (1) That the report be received and the detail noted.

(2) That the Panel submit any further comments to the Police and Crime Commissioner on the Police and Crime Plan 2013/17: Putting Safety First before the 14th March, 2016, deadline.

(Mr. S. Chu, Independent Member, declared a personal interest in that he was the Chief Executive of a local charity)

F48. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY

48.1 In accordance with Minute No. 22 of the meeting held on 16th October, 2015, the Police and Crime Commissioner presented a report on the engagement activity he had undertaken over the last twelve months as well as the engagements he would be focusing on over the coming months.

48.2 The focus of consultation over the Summer months and early Autumn had focussed on priorities for the Police and Crime Plan 2016/17. This was in the form of attendance at events and meetings.

48.3 In December, 2015 and January, 2016, a consultation exercise had taken place seeking the views of South Yorkshire residents to an increase in the Council Tax precept by 10p per week or £5 per year for Council Tax payers (3.7%). The consultation took the form of an on-line survey which was promoted via the media, social media, the Federation of Small Businesses and the engagement data base of around 5,000 contacts.

48.4 The Chair sought clarification on the 63% of respondents and as advised that this was from a total figure of 117, amounting to 66/67 respondents being in favour.

48.6 The Panel were in agreement with the improvement proposals for the Partners & Communities Together ('PACT') meetings by re-branding them as Community Engagement Meetings and forging closer links and it was also suggested that the member of the public that had submitted a question earlier today also be informed of the progress.

Action:- That the report and the Commissioner's commitment to engagement activity be noted.

F49. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE AND UPDATE

49.1 Stuart Fletcher, Legal Adviser to the Panel, presented a report on the handling of complaints received against the Police and Crime Commissioner.

49.2 The following complaints had been resolved:-

1. A compliant about the nature of South Yorkshire Police's response to

a robbery.

As this complaint was an operational matter it had been referred to South Yorkshire Police. The complainant had been informed that had happened.

2. The IPCC had now returned to the Panel stating that they did not intend to investigate the two complaints regarding the former South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner.

49.3 It was noted that should the Panel feel strongly enough that the two complaints about the former Police and Crime Commissioner should be investigated, this could be initiated by way of a Sub-Committee, but there was no evidence to suggest criminal offences had been committed.

49.4 The Chair suggested that a report be submitted to the next meeting to give greater clarity to the Panel on what it could and could not do with regards to complaints. The new Police and Crime Bill could well address the issues in relation to Police and Crime Commissioners and Deputy Police and Crime Commissioners and this detail should be included as part of the report.

49.5 Mr. Carter made a helpful suggestion in whether or not the Panel should be consulted or offer any advice on complaints coming forward. This was to be considered in more detail.

49.6 Stuart Fletcher, Legal Adviser to the Panel, also submitted proposed revisions to the current Complaints Procedure.

49.7 As previously discussed, it was proposed that the initial handling of complaints be delegated to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The remainder of the Complaints Procedure was unchanged.

49.8 Some Panel Members shared views about the handling of complaints, but were advised this would be revisited if it was found to be unsustainable.

Action:- (1) That the report be received and the contents noted.

(2) That the proposed revision of the Complaints Procedure be approved – immediate.

(3) That a further report be submitted to the next meeting on what the Panel could and could not do with regards to complaints.

F50. DATES OF FUTURE MEETING

Action:- That the next meeting take place on 15th April, 2016, and commence at 11.00 a.m. in Rotherham Town Hall.

