

This matter is being dealt with by:

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Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Panel

Mr Paddy Tipping
Police and Crime Commissioner
County Hall
West Bridgford
Nottingham

cc Kevin Dennis, Chief Executive

28 September 2015

Dear Mr Tipping,

OUTCOME OF PANEL'S CONSIDERATION OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15

I am writing to confirm the outcome of the Police and Crime Panel's consideration of your third Annual Report which you presented to the Panel meeting of 15 June 2015, along with your 12 month performance monitoring report.

As you are aware from attending the meeting, Panel Members raised concerns about the following issues (further details of which are contained in the attached minute extract from the meeting):-

- the proposed reduction in the number of Police and Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and the raising of public expectations around proposed increases in such officers. Members recognised the need to reduce expenditure and expressed concerns about the impact of further cuts in Government funding;
- the increase in the Ineffective Trial Rate in Crown Court cases.

Members also sought your views on the following issues:-

- the potential for increasing the precept to maintain the current levels of PCSOs;
- the value for money offered by PCSO posts;
- the potential for further savings from combining Forces and further collaboration;
- the implications of the anticipated further cuts in Government funding;
- the increase of the number of Confiscation and Forfeiture Orders whereas the overall value of income received had reduced;
- the increase in the overall rates of violent crime;
- sickness absence levels and steps taken to minimise absence;
- the recruitment and retention of officers and staff from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds;
- the retention of staff overall, with reference to the recent 'Responding to Austerity' report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary;
- reoffending by youth offenders.

Members recognised the very challenging financial constraints which you and the Force were having to operate within and congratulated you for remaining optimistic in the face of these and other challenges.

The Panel looks forward to receiving further updates on issues contained within the Police and Crime Plan at future meetings.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christine Goldstraw', with a large, stylized initial 'C'.

Christine Goldstraw OBE
Chair of the Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Panel

EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETING – 15 JUNE 2015

ITEM 9 - POLICE AND CRIME PLAN 12 MONTH MONITORING REPORT AND COMMISSIONER'S ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15

Rizwan Araf, Suma Harding and Bob Vaughan-Newton all returned to the meeting at the start of this item. The Vice-Chair thanked them all for their valuable contributions to the work of the Panel.

The Commissioner welcomed the new Panel members and confirmed he was happy for any Panel member to contact him between meetings.

The Commissioner explained it had been a very challenging year, especially in terms of the reduced budget, and spoke about some of the headlines contained in the report:

- The Force's alcohol and drug strategy would continue to be a major theme in the coming 12 months. The Home Office had been appreciative of the partnership working that had been carried out in Nottinghamshire and regarded it as an example of best practice.
- In the area of mental health, the use of the two triage cars and the input of the community mental health nurses had been a notable success. The Panel had been informed that from March 2015 no young person with mental health problems would be held in a police cell for non-crime related matters and that from October 2015 no adult with similar problems would be held in a cell. This had not been easy to achieve and the Commissioner praised the work of health colleagues in this area.
- The responsibility for the commissioning of victims' services had been transferred to the Commissioner during this year. This had therefore been a transitional year but funding decisions would be made in this coming year to enable new and different approaches to be developed.
- The Commissioner spoke of the Priority Plus areas, with five of these areas in the City and the County contributing to 25% of all crime. The Commissioner believed that through working with partners a real difference could be made. The actions arising from the recent Review led by the Chief Executive of the Commissioner's Office were around managing demand. The Commissioner informed the Panel that a National Audit Office report on Home Office funding had been published the previous week. The report concluded that while forces generally had been able to cope with the budget cuts, some forces had been affected disproportionately ie those such as Nottinghamshire who rely more heavily on grant funding. The report recommended that the Home Office undertakes work on a new funding formula.
- The Commissioner emphasised the need to concentrate on reducing back office costs in the face of continued budget reductions. The Force was in discussion with other Forces about the way forward but the Commissioner felt that more work was still needed. Work was also continuing on moving towards a shared IT platform.

During discussions the following points were raised:

- The Panel expressed its disappointment at the proposed reductions in the number of PCSOs though recognised it was driven by a need to reduce

expenditure dramatically. The Commissioner pointed out that after the reduction in numbers there would still be more PCSOs employed in Nottinghamshire than before he was elected and would still have a high number of PCSOs compared to many other Forces. Nottinghamshire had the highest number of PCSOs in the East Midlands, other than perhaps Leicestershire, and employed twice as many PCSOs as Derbyshire. He underlined that Nottinghamshire would also continue to provide Neighbourhood Policing services.

- In answer to a question about why couldn't the precept be increased to allow the current numbers of PCSOs to be maintained, the Commissioner explained that the precept could only be increased following a referendum and that until now all similar referenda had failed, including one in Bedfordshire where 70% of those voting voted against an increase. The Commissioner informed the Panel that he had asked for some analysis of the potential outcome of a referendum in Nottinghamshire and he felt that a similar result to the Bedfordshire referendum would be likely. Furthermore, the cost of running a referendum and undertaking a re-billing exercise was likely to cost in the region of £1m.
- The Panel was aware of media reports about the potential for cost savings through the combining of Forces and reducing the numbers of Chief Constables and Commissioners. Although the Panel was not necessarily in agreement as a way forward, the Commissioner was asked whether he thought there was any potential for major savings by adopting such an approach. The Commissioner replied that he spoke frequently to the Home Secretary and at the moment the merging of Forces was not on the agenda. The law was not clear either on whether two forces could share a Chief Constable and the Home Secretary was not of a mind to introduce legislation any time soon that would clarify the situation. The Chief Constable, who had now joined the meeting, confirmed that the Force had reduced the numbers of senior staff. Nottinghamshire now had only one Assistant Chief Constable when formerly there were 4 and there are now only 4 Chief Superintendents employed compared to 11 in the past. The Chief Constable also said that the sharing of senior officers between Forces made sense as the amount of partnership working increased.
- The importance of managing public expectations was raised by the Panel. In the case of the relatively recent appointment of the PCSOs, Members asked if the reduction in numbers could not have been predicted and queried whether so many PCSOs should originally have been appointed. The Commissioner replied that the Government had committed to reducing the deficit and it was now predicted that the Force would be facing a 5% annual reduction in its budget. Many letters of support had been received supporting the use of PCSOs and the Chief Constable was working hard to mitigate the effect of the reduction in their numbers.
- Members recognised that the introduction of the PCSOs seemed universally to be accepted as a good thing, but queried whether there was any evidence that justified expenditure on PCSOs rather than on PCs and the extent of the cost savings achieved through the expenditure on PCSOs. The Commissioner replied that he guided the relevant legislation through the Commons and was a supporter of the PCSO concept as it provided neighbourhood policing which is what the public wants. In terms of cost, two PCSOs can be provided for the cost of one PC, they also provide more flexibility and also, unlike PCs, they could be made redundant if required. The Chief Constable added that the PCSOs have

been a success despite some initial reservations, but that the Force did need to scale down to guarantee its survival in the future.

- The Panel queried whether there was more scope for collaboration. The Commissioner replied that he was certainly in favour and thought more could be achieved, though the concept was not universally popular. The Chief Constable emphasised that in Nottinghamshire collaboration was very much a part of how the Force worked and confirmed that there was already cooperation between 5 forces which meant funds could go further as a result.
- The Panel queried whether there was a contradiction in the fact that although the number of Confiscation and Forfeiture Orders had increased, the overall value of the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) orders had decreased. The Commissioner agreed that this was an area where the Force could improve but pointed out that the Police only receive 25% of the proceeds from POCA Orders with the remainder going to other elements of the criminal justice system. The Chief Constable pointed out that one multi million pound case could heavily skew the figures. In the last 3 or 4 years the Force had concentrated on the low and mid ranking criminals as these were the people most visible as living off a criminal lifestyle, though 'Mr Bigs' were also targeted. The Chief Constable agreed with the Commissioner that there was room for improvement and said that the Force could learn from the Leicestershire and Derbyshire forces who were among the best performers in the Country.
- The Panel expressed concern at the increase in the Ineffective Trial Rate in the Crown Court. The Commissioner replied that much analysis had taken place but that it was difficult putting theory into practice. There were 43 forces across the country, all with their own systems, the Crown Prosecution Service was organised on a regional basis and the court system was denuded of finance with the situation likely to get worse. The Commissioner felt that ultimately results would only improve when the management across all three elements was improved but that this would mean the agencies involved giving up some of their responsibilities and this was unlikely to happen. The Chief Constable highlighted problems with duplicated requests from the courts for the same information and the Force now logged the number of times it had shared the same information. The Chief Constable informed the Panel that performance was much better in Crown Courts than in Magistrates' Courts and agreed that further work did need to be done. The Chief Constable added that the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner provided an outstanding lead on this issue, working with the Ministry of Justice on the Criminal Justice review programme.
- The Commissioner was congratulated for remaining optimistic in the face of onerous demands and challenges and was asked whether overall the rates of violent crime were increasing. The Commissioner replied that it may seem peculiar but the Force actually wanted the incidence of some crimes to increase and was actively encouraging an increase in the reporting of such crimes involving domestic violence, serious sexual assault and hate crimes. The Chief Constable said that the changes in reporting were impacting upon the levels of crime, with relatively minor issues having to be now recorded as crimes (e.g. a washing machine left for collection being taken for scrap metal). The Chief Constable felt that further conversations were needed with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary to clarify expectations.

- Members asked about sickness absence and whether there were any patterns, for example was it mainly physical or mental illness, and what the Force was doing to minimise absences. The Commissioner replied that the sickness figures were rigorously monitored and levels were reducing. The Chief Constable confirmed that the type and length of absences were all recorded and that support was available, for example to those who work undercover. The Force's sickness figures were the best in the East Midlands but there was a financial cost involved in achieving them.
- The retention figures for those employed in the Force with a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) background was queried by the Panel. In one part of the report the figure given for BME representation in the Force was given as 4.3% but in another part of the report the figure was given as 15.62%. Also, the report mentioned a course and Councillor Khan asked about the outcomes of the course. The Commissioner replied that the percentage of officers employed from a BME background stood at approximately 4% compared to the BME population in Nottinghamshire of approximately 12%. The Commissioner said he was keen to make progress in this area but that the budget situation dictated that there would be no recruitment taking place this year and probably none the following year either. 12 to 18 months ago an outside consultant met all those in the Force from a BME background and found some good areas and some areas were highlighted for improvement. The Force was still working through the consultant's findings. The Chief Constable confirmed that the Force carried out work designed to foster the retention and development of those from BME communities. The Force undertook exit interviews for all leavers, including those from BME backgrounds.
- The Panel referred to the HMIC report entitled 'Responding to Austerity' and noted the concern expressed within the report regarding staff retention. The Commissioner confirmed that 110 officers had left in the current year and that 75 PCSOs would also be leaving. Of the 110 that had left the majority of them, approximately three-quarters, had completed 30 years of service and wanted to leave. There were now far fewer officers joining the Force whose intention it is to spend their entire career with the service. Detective Superintendent Pollock confirmed that many of the younger officers join with the intention of only serving for between 5 and 7 years. Being able to move one's pension around when changing jobs had contributed to the increased mobility of the workforce.
- The Panel was concerned at the effects of the projected 45% real terms cut in spending by the year 2020 and asked whether the scale of the cuts would put the existence of the Force in jeopardy. The Commissioner replied that the situation in Notts was not as serious as in some other Forces and gave the example of the Lincolnshire force which needed to reduce the numbers of officers but was not in a position to be able to do so. The debate about how much should be spent on public services took place during the General Election and the Government now had a mandate to reduce spending in the area and that the public sector as a whole now needed to be restructured, not just the Police. The Commissioner argued that there was a need to increase local discretion and flexibility around funding. The Chief Constable reassured the Panel that the Force would still be in existence in 2020 and it would use all of its powers to keep communities and individuals safe. He felt that the Force was better when it worked with its partners, focussing on the vulnerable, operating local, integrated teams and it trusting those teams to deliver. Mistakes would be made but there would be

fewer of them if the Force was allowed to get on with the job rather than being dictated to from central government.

- The Panel noted that 30% of youth offenders had reoffended in the previous 12 months and asked what the Force was doing to address the problem. The Commissioner stated that the youth offending teams in the City and the County were 'unsung heroes' and were amongst the best in the country. Their early intervention was crucial and they sometimes worked with those who were at risk but who had committed no crimes. Kevin Dennis, Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), agreed that the figure of 30% was too high but both of the teams were performing well. A recent inspection of the County team had only just been published but was particularly positive about the reoffending rate compared to national figures. There was always a hard core of offenders and there was now a focus on those coming out of custody, with the evidence suggesting that the work in this area was having an impact. First time offending figures had reduced. Members felt that the lack of information currently available within some court proceedings would be improved by the new body-worn cameras. The Chief Constable stated that the body-worn cameras were being rolled out across the Force, with training provided about its use to ensure consistency with other types of evidence. He also underlined the current challenges in transferring files electronically.

RESOLVED 2015/23

That the views of Panel Members on the Commissioner's Annual Report and performance in 2014/15 be fed back formally to the Commissioner's Office for publication.