

This matter is being dealt with by:

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W www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/thecouncil/democracy/partnerships/police-and-crime-panel

Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Panel

Mr Paddy Tipping
Police and Crime Commissioner
Arnot Hill House
Arnold, Nottingham
NG5 6LU

cc Kevin Dennis, Chief Executive

10 January 2018

Dear Mr Tipping,

OUTCOME OF PANEL'S CONSIDERATION OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17

I am writing to confirm the outcome of the Police and Crime Panel's consideration of your latest Annual Report which you presented to the Panel meeting of 18 September 2017.

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 net reduction in Police Officer numbers, especially when compared to national levels;
- the changed prioritisation of crime types through the THRIVE approach and the increase in acquisitive crime, aggressive begging and shop thefts which could be linked to the changed focus of the Integrated Offender Management team;
- the possibility that the reported reduction in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) was masked by a 92% increase in public order offences, the contrast between ASB incident levels in Nottingham City centre and elsewhere and whether previous Police practice around this issue needed to be refreshed.

Members welcomed:-

- the fact that the Force was now in a position to recruit again, whilst recognising the potential impact of the Government's recent decision to award a higher pay increase to Police Officers than the standard public sector pay increase;
- the ongoing work to address Child Sexual Exploitation;
- the funding of a domestic violence advisor post in Mansfield and Ashfield (whilst seeking clarification of the funding period and exit strategy).

Members also queried the following issues:-

- the reasons for the continuing under-performance against Proceeds of Crime Act targets;
- the reduction in risk of crime felt by Nottinghamshire household residents, as highlighted in the Crime Survey for England and Wales;

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- the likelihood of the Force utilising so-called 'paedophile hunters';
- the potential for the currently below-average early guilty plea rate to be improved by the earlier submission of court files and the submission of body worn camera evidence by officers;
- whether you felt that the current reductions in levels of risk of domestic violence were satisfactory;
- if an evaluation of the work commissioned from Nottingham Trent University about modern-day slavery could be shared with Panel Members;
- the sufficiency of the £500 annual contribution towards the police dogs retirement fund to cover veterinary costs.

Members commended you for the high compliance rates in terms of crime recording, particularly in comparison to neighbouring Forces, which reassured the Panel that crimes were being recorded correctly in Nottinghamshire.

The Panel looks forward to continuing its positive working relationship with you and the Chief Constable and to receiving 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 Police and Crime Panel Meeting of 18 September 2017

6. POLICE AND CRIME PLAN 2016-17 – ANNUAL REPORT

The PCC introduced the report, highlighting the main issues and thanking the former Chief Constables, Chris Eyre and Sue Fish, for their input into the progress made by the Force. The PCC referred to the national funding issues and the slight increase in incidents logged by Nottinghamshire Police, largely as a result of changes in accounting rules and a high compliance rate with those rules. He also mentioned that the British Crime Survey showed that crime continued to reduce.

The PCC referred to the £34 million national investment in armed policing, although the increase in funding in Nottinghamshire was relatively small compared to the significant investment in the Metropolitan Police. He highlighted how the nature of crime was changing with more online offences being committed, with resources needing to be targeted accordingly.

The report reflected the work undertaken in Nottinghamshire to address serious sexual violence, both contemporary and historical, and work was underway to quantify the resources involved compared to other crimes such as burglaries. The PCC highlighted the progress being made with the investigation into historical sex abuse in children's homes and felt that there was good co-operation between the PCC, the Force, the City and County Council and the Victims' Group. He underlined the need for any mistakes to be acknowledged, whilst he recognised that practice had improved greatly in the last 30-40 years with Nottinghamshire now seen as an area of good practice.

The PCC reiterated his commitment to regional collaboration and the potential savings this could achieve. He underlined that changes in PCCs in the region and the more favourable than expected funding settlement had seen the pace of progress slow down and Forces drift apart again.

The PCC also highlighted the benefits of the joint working with the NHS around issues such as the mental health triage cars and the reduction in children and adults being detained in police cells for their own safety. He also underlined the positive work with Black and Asian Communities which had resulted in the Stop and Search rate being lower than the national average whilst the rate of positive outcomes from such searches was more than double the national average.

During discussions, Members raised the following issues:-

- Members highlighted that the Force was losing Police Officers at a faster rate than it was recruiting. It was queried whether the change in the crime priorities through THRIVE (whereby the focus was now on more medium level crimes than low-level volume crimes) and the changes in crime accounting had led to a change in people's perception of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the City, as evidenced by the recent ASB Community Trigger meeting arranged by Nottingham City Council. Members highlighted the increase in acquisitive crime, aggressive begging and shop thefts and felt that this could also be linked to the changes in focus of the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) team rather than changes in crime accounting. The important role of the Street Engagement Teams in helping people who were addicted to Class A drugs, and who were likely to fund their drug use through acquisitive crime and begging, was also raised. The City Council was keen to improve partnership working with the Police, hence their investment in 88 Police and Community Safety Officers.

In response, the PCC clarified that the existing number of Police Officers was 1840 and he underlined his commitment to recruit a further 200 officers in order to have closer to 2000 officers ultimately (subject to the grant settlement and revised funding formula). He felt that it was right to focus resources on people most at risk although he accepted that the change in priorities had led to an increase in incidents and burglaries in two City wards (Radford and the Park). He felt that the Police were addressing aggressive begging and that research into aggressive behaviour had been produced, highlighting that most arrests around that issue were made by mainstream Police Officers. With regard to the PCSOs he clarified that the City Council had funded 80% of these posts. He underlined that the new system of IOM had only just been implemented and he did not think this was causing the problems. He underlined the importance of open dialogue in joint meetings and he did not feel that the City Council's adverts aimed at aggressive begging had been helpful.

ACC Cooper added that the new IOM model helped the Force to take an integrated approach to managing threat, harm and risk. It was clarified that the ASB incident rate was reducing but a lot of the incidents recorded were as a result of the accounting changes. The reported victim rate for ASB had reduced significantly and a paper was due to be considered by the Crime and Disorder Partnership on the 18 September about joint tasking. With regard to the increase in burglaries in the two City wards, the Force did deploy greater increases when genuine increases became apparent. Trends were considered on a long-term strategic basis (looking at three year trends and hotspots) as well as on a short-term daily, weekly and monthly basis.

- Members welcomed the fact that the Force was now in a position to recruit again but queried the impact of the Government's recent decision to award a higher pay increase for Police Officers than the standard public sector 1% pay increase. The PCC clarified that the Force had budgeted for a 1% increase and therefore the increase to 2% would double the budget requirement for the pay award to £2.4 million.
- Members commended the Force for their high compliance rates in terms of crime recording, in contrast to the performance of some of the Forces in the region. It was felt that this gave a superb baseline to work from and offered the Panel some reassurance that crimes were being recorded correctly. Members welcomed the work to address Child Sexual Exploitation and queried whether there were any plans to utilise the help of 'paedophile hunters'. The reduction in ASB was disputed and it was queried whether this was being masked by the 92% increase in public order offences. The reasons for the under-performance with the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) targets were also queried.

In response, the PCC acknowledged that the Force could improve performance with POCA, with discussions planned with Derbyshire, as a Force which has a better record on that issue. The PCC underlined that the compliance rate was greater than 95%. He accepted that there had been a shift away from ASB due to changes in recording practices. DCC Barber added that the Force would take a holistic view of an area and therefore if incidents were now being logged as public order offences rather than ASB then this should not greatly change the approach the Police were taking in an area.

With regard to 'paedophile hunters', DCC Barber stated that there was a fine balance between such practice and vigilantism and the Force would prefer to have

more resources to enable this sort of online investigative work to be undertaken by the Police. There had been a few reported cases in Nottinghamshire but the Force was not planning on collaborating with these people, although a similar approach to online investigations would be taken through the Force's own undercover online approach.

- Members queried the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) finding that the risk of crime felt by Nottinghamshire household residents had fallen from 6.8% in March 2016 to 3.7% in March 2017. With reference to the ASB Community Trigger meeting arranged by Nottingham City Council, this had highlighted a feeling that some of the procedures from previous years had fallen out of practice and Members queried whether this was the case and a refresh of practice was needed. It was also queried whether a distinctive divide between the incidence rate in the City Centre and elsewhere was evident.

In response, the PCC clarified that the CSEW was independently run and a better judge of trends than the local surveys undertaken. The OPCC planned to run quarterly local surveys going forward, instead of annually as previously. With regard to begging, the PCC clarified that a 'necessity to arrest' test needed to be met before arrests were made, otherwise the Custody Sergeant would be obliged to release a person. There was some variation between the approach taken by the Police and the British Transport Police in that respect.

- With regard to early guilty plea rates being below the national average, Members highlighted that defendants were advised to plead 'not guilty' until the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) brought the files to Court, thereby only offering a guilty plea at the last possible opportunity. Therefore, if files could be brought earlier then the early guilty plea rate would increase.

In response, the PCC stated that some officers rarely complete a submission to Court. Work was underway to ensure better file preparation. DCC Barber accepted that there were issues with file quality and submission rates, with some common mistakes. Best practice from elsewhere would be shared although it would take a while to see improvements from the ongoing work in the Courts.

- Members also suggested that the submission of body worn camera evidence earlier in the process could also increase the early guilty plea rate.

DCC Barber agreed and said that this was linked to the digitalisation of back office functions and this evidence had been factored into plans for improvements. The PCC added that discussions were ongoing with the CPS about the storage of the video cameras and some grant funding had been made available to the Courts and the CPS around this issue (but not to the Police).

- Members welcomed the funding for a domestic violence advisor in Mansfield and Ashfield but queried the length of the funding period and the exit strategy.

The PCC said that a meeting with the City and County Councils was planned about the resource implications of such roles. The PCC recognised that some victims of domestic violence were male and he was particularly keen to focus upon the impact on children in all cases.

- Members referred to the work of the voluntary organisation The Women's Quilt and queried whether the PCC was satisfied with the rates of reduction of risk, with a third of survivors having their risk of harm reduced.

The PCC underlined his commitment to continue to increase funding for services such as the Independent Domestic Violence Advisers but highlighted the difficulty in persuading other partners such as the NHS to provide funding. He felt that voluntary groups such as The Women's Quilt would assist in helping to see risk reduced.

- Members referred to Appendix C of the Annual Report and felt that this diagram illustrated the relatively high percentage of reduction in Police Officers in Nottinghamshire, compared to nationally, and the consequent impact on the Force.

The PCC agreed and stated that the funding formula had always disadvantaged Nottinghamshire. He had met with the Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service last week and the funding formula would be reconsidered once the grant settlement for 2018-19 had been finalised. The PCC also stated that a lot of the demand for the Police was not crime-related – for example, the cost of searching for missing persons nationally was £620 million and this included people who had gone missing from hospitals and care homes. The PCC offered to share a study undertaken by West Midlands Police that illustrated Police involvement was only appropriate in 6 out of 50 cases of people going missing from care homes. The Chair suggested that it would be helpful to look at this issue when considering the budget and precept.

- Members queried the outcomes of the work undertaken with Nottingham Trent University about modern day slavery and asked whether an evaluation of this work could be shared with the Panel. They queried whether the £500 per year contribution towards police dogs retirement fund was sufficient to cover veterinary costs.

The PCC said that the amount of funding was under review currently.

RESOLVED 2017/023

- 1) That the progress made be noted.**
- 2) That the issues raised by the Members in their consideration be collated and fed back to the PCC as the Panel's formal response to the annual report.**