

These minutes are draft subject to confirmation at the next meeting of the sub-committee

Housing Sub-Committee

27 February 2017

Present: Councillor S Cox (Chair)
Councillors D Drummond, John Hunter, N
Huscroft, M Madden, A Newman, M Rankin, J
O'Shea and M Thirlaway

HO37/02/17 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Darke, K Bolger and A Arkle.

HO38/02/17 Substitute Members

Pursuant to the Council's constitution the appointment of the following substitute member was reported:

Councillor J O'Shea for Cllr K Bolger

HO39/02/17 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

HO40/02/17 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

HO41/02/17 Police and Crime Commissioner Report

The Chair welcomed Steve Ashman, Northumbria Police Chief Constable and Vera Baird, Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), to the meeting. A report had been circulated with the agenda which reminded the sub-committee of its role in scrutinising crime and disorder issues. The Police and Crime Commissioner had been invited to the meeting to provide an update on current priorities and budget impacts. The Chief Constable had been invited to discuss some operational issues that had been raised by Members in relation to armed police officers.

The sub-committee was informed that Police and Crime Commissioners were elected to make sure that local police meet the needs of the community. The PCC is the voice of the people and holds the police to account. The main role of the PCC was to appoint the Chief Constable and hold them to account for running the force; set the police and crime objectives and set the force budget and determine the precept.

In relation to the current budget, it was highlighted that of the 43 police forces across England and Wales, Northumbria had experienced the greatest cuts to budgets. The result of this was that there were now 3250 officers across the force, 1000 less than in previous years. The number of support staff had also reduced and there was a much leaner senior management structure (50% reduction in senior officer team). Despite these cuts, Northumbria Police continued to enjoy good performance figures.

27 February 2017

Members were informed of initiatives that had been brought in to make officer time more efficient following the reduction in officer numbers. Frontline officers had hand held devices that they could upload information to following a call out rather than waiting to access computer software back at the station. It was also highlighted that 'resolution without deployment' was bringing efficiencies, whereby an officer was not deployed to every crime reported (if not deemed necessary). This has increased satisfaction rates with victims/complainants as it means not having to wait for an officer to arrive.

The sub-committee was informed of current compliance in relation to the National Crime Recording Standards. When inspected in 2014 compliance was as 72%; this meant that 72% of cases were recorded accurately. A re-inspection in 2016 demonstrated a compliance rate of 93%, which demonstrated a considerable improvement but was still short of the desired compliance rate of 95%. Instances such as a fight in the street where a witness calls the police but upon arrival the disturbance has moved on, was cited as an example of non-compliance with the recording standards as there would be little chance of tracking down those involved.

The sub-committee discussed the use of firearms and how officers carry these weapons at events with large crowds, such as football matches. It was explained that for the past few years police (nationally) have been operating on the second highest level of security, where an attack is highly likely. The armed officers are normal neighbourhood officers who had volunteered to carry a firearm. They have a clear direction to protect the public, make people feel safe and have been trained to a very high standard. Specific reference was made to the Christmas markets in Newcastle which had seen a high presence of armed officers, which received mixed reactions from members of the public. The Chief Constable assured the sub-committee that the decision to deploy those officers was proportionate to the current threat levels.

The Police and Crime Commissioner provided the sub-committee with an update on current work and priorities. It was noted that a consultation period had recently been undertaken in relation to the development of the new Police and Crime Plan. The public were consulted on what they wanted the police to deliver and key priorities were drawn from this dialogue. The consultation had included an online survey, public meetings in each local authority area and meetings with tenant associations, rotary clubs, trade unions and school pupils. The emerging priorities showed little change from the creation of the previous plan, with putting victims first; domestic and sexual violence; anti-social behaviour and community confidence (police presence) emerging as key themes from the consultation.

The sub-committee was informed of some work that had taken place in Gateshead to create a Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, which protected people against sexual exploitation. The hub coordinated the joint work of several agencies in order to provide a 'go through any door' system that would triage individuals and signpost to the correct place. An evaluation of this work had concluded that the process had worked well and demonstrated a social return on investment. It was highlighted that a conference was soon to take place that would involve all local authorities in the North East, looking at how this approach could be further rolled out.

The Chair thanked the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable for their time and contributions to the meeting.

It was **agreed** to note the update provided.

HO42/02/17 Community Safety – Prevent Strategy

The sub-committee received a report which advised members of the work that the Authority, and its partners, undertake to fulfil the obligations set out in the government's prevent strategy. Officers from the Authority's Resilience, Security and Community Safety team were in attendance to present the report. It was noted that the Prevent strategy formed part of the Government's CONTEST strategy, designed to help agencies and government address the threat of terrorism to the UK. There were several workstreams which formed this strategy: Prevent; Protect and Prepare and Pursue. The report provided an overview of specific duties that the Authority had in implementing the workstreams and described the context and objectives of the legislation as well as explaining how issues were tackled within the borough.

Prevent aims to respond to the threat of terrorism at its root, to stop recruitment of people and groups to ideological views and beliefs. This in turn aims to stop people carrying out acts of terror. It was first implemented in 2004 and last reviewed in 2011. A further review was expected in the near future. The three main objectives of the Prevent agenda were to respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat faced from those who promote it; to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support; and to work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation which need to be addressed.

Members were informed that, in North Tyneside, the objectives of Prevent were delivered, in part, via Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent training. This was a Home Office training package (with 3 tiers) which was delivered to all front line staff identified by line managers. To date, approximately 1400 staff from the Authority and its delivery partners (including schools) had completed some form of Prevent Awareness training. Channel Panels could be established if necessary when a referral was made about a concern for an individual, usually through the police, but also via front line staff. The Panel aims to identify ways to support individuals who are at risk of being radicalised. The Police would conduct a Vulnerability Assessment Framework to establish whether the person meets the criteria for Channel and a process was in place for the Authority to Chair the Panel. It was noted that it was a voluntary process for the individual identified and that no Channel Panels had been held in North Tyneside to date.

Protect and Prepare related to the threat of terrorism and how the UK was ready to respond. Risk was assessed nationally against the UK threat level, which had a five-point scale ranging from low to critical. The threat to the UK from international terrorism was currently assessed as severe. In North Tyneside, Protect related primarily to Resilience Planning and Security Services. It required local authorities, with partners, to conduct risk assessments and consider how the effects of a terrorist attack might be managed in response and recovery. The Prepare aspect linked to the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 which set out a range of statutory duties providing a framework for local authorities to assess risks, plan responses, consider recovery issues and conduct learning and debrief activity following any major incidents or emergencies.

It was highlighted that the Safer North Tyneside Board, the statutory community safety body in North Tyneside, oversees the approach in the borough to the implementation of the CONTEST strategy. The Board has ensured that necessary policies and operational procedures have been implemented and are appropriately reviewed. The Authority's Senior Leadership Team had recently received a detailed briefing from senior officers within the Authority and Northumbria Police on CONTEST and related activity. This was also being cascaded to Heads of Service for communicating with their teams.

In relation to Pursue, it was noted that this was most relevant to policing activity, which aimed to hold perpetrators to account for their actions. It was highlighted that the police have enforcement capacity in relation to laws which aim to hold people and groups to

account for their actions. Similarly, it was explained that local authorities have a responsibility to take action to protect communities which could include contributing to disruptive activity in relation to organised crime which may be linked to terrorism. Members were informed that the Authority has a range of regulatory activities which help to maintain safe practices and lawful business activity in the borough. This included licensing, trading standards and housing enforcement.

The Chair thanked officers for the information presented.

It was **agreed** to note the report.