



Cumbria
**Police and Crime
Panel**

Cumbria Police and Crime Panel Chairman's Annual Report 2021-22





Foreword from the Chair of the Police and Crime Panel

Welcome to our third Cumbria Police and Crime Panel Annual Report, and my first as Chair, which provides an update on the work of the Panel over the last year 2021-2022.

Following the re-election of Peter McCall as Cumbria Police and Crime Commissioner in May 2021, he brought forward his proposed priorities to be included in a new Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025. Following public consultation, the Panel has reviewed and will continue to scrutinise the delivery of the Plan, which sets out the objectives for policing and the work which will be undertaken with partner agencies to keep Cumbria safe.

The context in which we are operating in has changed over the last year. The Commissioner's business case to take on the governance responsibility for Fire and Rescue Services, if progressed, will have a significant impact on the work of the panel.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Members of the Panel over the last year for their commitment and contributions, and to the Police and Crime Commissioner and his staff for his co-operative and proactive approach to the Panel's work.



Councillor Mike Johnson
Chairman - Cumbria Police
and Crime Panel



Role of the Panel

The role of the Panel is to scrutinise and support the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in his engagement with the public, setting policing priorities and holding the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of policing in the county.

The Panel scrutinises the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan, which sets out the Commissioner's policing priorities, and the Commissioner's budget. The Panel's other statutory functions include:

- Annual scrutiny of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Council Tax Precept;
- Holding Confirmation Hearings on the appointment of a new Chief Constable & senior officer positions within the Commissioner's office;
- Handling complaints made about the conduct of the PCC;
- Reviews and scrutinises the PCC's annual report; and
- Reviews and scrutinises the PCC's decisions and actions.

Membership

The Panel is a joint committee and its membership is made up of elected Members of all seven local authorities in Cumbria - Allerdale Borough Council, Barrow Borough Council, Carlisle City Council, Copeland Borough Council, Cumbria County Council, Eden District Council and South Lakeland District Council – and independent co-opted members.



Cumbria Police and Crime Panel work 2021-2022

The following is an overview of the range of issues the Panel has looked at over the last year.

Budget and Resources

In January 2022, the Panel scrutinised the Commissioner's Council Tax Precept proposals for 2022/23. The Commissioner's proposal to raise the precept by £9.99 annually for a band D property (a rise of 3.67%) was supported without qualification.

The most significant proportion of expenditure within the 2022/23 budget is for the costs of policing in Cumbria. This includes neighbourhood policing, incident management, community liaison, local command team and support overheads. The precept proposals were formed on the basis that they will provide an additional income of almost £1.7m in 2022/23. Whilst savings are still likely to be required in the medium term, the precept increase will support stronger financial resilience and ensure the Constabulary is better placed to deal with the increasing demand for policing services.

The Government's continued commitment to recruit an additional 20,000 officer nationally by the end of the 22/23 financial year, known as Operation Uplift, has increased grant funding to Cumbria by £4.51m in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22. This has been committed to supporting the recruitment and training of an additional 68 police officers in 2022/23 locally. As the grant settlement makes little allowance for the effect of pay and price inflation on the cost of providing existing policing services, the precept proposal therefore will seek to balance the budget without cutting services.

Panel Members also regularly received monitoring information in relation to the budgets of the Commissioner and the Constabulary. The Panel recognised the financial challenges in policing nationally and within the local context in Cumbria and were supportive of how the budgets were managed effectively despite these challenges.

Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025

The Panel considered the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan at its meeting in October 2021, which set the policing priorities for the period 2021-2025. Panel members identified that there needs to be a clear and visible focus on performance and will seek to scrutinise this throughout the delivery of the plan. Panel Members also highlighted some other issues for consideration in planning delivery of the Plan. These are:

- The importance of early understanding of financial risks in relation to rising inflation levels, and of potential disruption to supply chains;
- The important role of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in the context of Operation Uplift;
- The approach to funding community-based projects and the opportunity for further integration of approach across public services in the county focused on reducing crime and improving outcomes for residents; and,
- A continued focus on the effectiveness of the 101 system.

Panel members will engage constructively with the Commissioner to ensure effective delivery of the Plan over the next 3 years.



PCC's Annual Report 2021

Panel members also reviewed the Commissioner's work over 2020/21 through the Commissioner's Annual Report. The Panel welcomed several achievements, including the recruitment of additional police officers through the Government Operation Uplift initiative with a focus on increasing police visibility in rural areas; an 18.8% overall reduction in crime over the year; and a series of focus groups which took into consideration the voice of young people in Cumbria.

Panel Members highlighted some areas for improvement in relation to drug offences and related crimes, the length of time for call to 101 to be answered, and arrangements to support relationships between local police officers and councillors within communities.

Accountability Framework

The Panel reviewed the Commissioner's Accountability Framework 2021-2024 at their meeting in July 2021. This had recently been reviewed by the Commissioner since the PCC elections in May 2021, and allows him to discharge his statutory responsibilities, make decisions and hold the Chief Constable to account.

Fire and Rescue Service Governance Reform

The Commissioner informed the panel at their meeting in January 2022 that he would be launching a consultation on options for transfer of fire and rescue service governance. This took place from 25 January to 21 March 2022 and sought views on two options – a Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) for Cumbria and a Combined Fire and Rescue Authority. The PCC's Business Case identified a PFCC for Cumbria as the preferred option and submitted the Business Case in March to the Home Office. The Home Secretary is expected to announce a decision over the summer. An informal development session for Panel Members by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner was held in June to update the Panel on progress. The role and functions of a Police, Fire & Crime Panel was also explored. The Panel will continue to receive updates with any developments and if it does progress, will plan for the impact this will have on the work of the Panel in the future.



Looking Ahead

During 2022/23 scrutiny of budget management and the development of Council Tax Precept proposals will remain a key part of the Panel's work, as will scrutiny of the Commissioner's annual report and the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan.

There have been a number of policy developments nationally that will impact on the work of the Commissioner, and therefore the Panel, that have been announced this year.

Outcome of Parts One and Two of the PCC Review announced measures with a direct impact on the Panel. These include a focus on the recruitment and retention of independent members, and whether a regional model of panel support could improve the quality and consistency of support provided to panels. As well as this a new code of conduct for complaints regarding the PCC that aligns with the regime for mayors and councillors is also being considered. Also an online training package for Panels has been developed and shared with Members.

A Draft Victims Bill was announced in the Queen's Speech this year and will look to place a duty on PCC's to collaborate with local authorities and Integrated Care Boards. In particular when commissioning victim support services, and to also ensure that the victims voice is heard and monitor compliance with the Victims' Code across the system locally. Members will continue to review and provide ongoing support across this agenda.



Conclusion

Panel Members remain focused on supporting and scrutinising the PCC in relation to key policing and crime issues in local communities. The implications of decisions in respect of the governance of fire and rescue services on the future functions and role of the Panel will also be closely monitored and responded to as appropriate.



