

**POLICE AND CRIME PANEL****25 June 2020****REPORT OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR DERBYSHIRE****MEMBER QUESTIONS****1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide written responses to pre-submitted questions from Panel members to the Police & Crime Commissioner.

**2. QUESTIONS**

Question 1: from Cllr Fay Atkinson

***With Tory austerity driven cuts to Policing budgets and to other services which support our communities. in particular youth provision, would the PCC comment on the Chief Constable's remarks to the PCP at our last meeting that austerity has had a negative impact on policing in Derbyshire by giving examples of where this might be the case?***

I have reported to the Panel previously that the cuts to policing since 2010 that formed part of the government's austerity policy has had a major impact on policing in our city and county. The Panel will be aware that Derbyshire lost approximately 450 police officers and nearly 300 police staff and, as the Chief Constable stated in his open letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020 regarding police funding, this meant that "the Constabulary has been operating at a level at which we have only been able to deliver essential service." Even the promised extra police officers, whilst needed and welcome, will not take Derbyshire Constabulary back to its pre-austerity numbers of police officers and does nothing to address the loss of PCSOs and police staff.

As well as impacting on the Forces ability to prevent and investigate crime, those cuts to police numbers affected public confidence in the police with nearly every community I visited raising the issue of the lack of police visibility and requesting a greater police presence. This is an issue that has troubled me greatly because our model of policing very much depends on the relationship between the police and the community they serve.

Austerity has also impacted on the services provided by partner agencies, often resulting in increased demand on policing. One of the most obvious areas has been cuts to children's services budgets. The loss of youth services for example, has placed greater demands on the police with the public now regularly turning to the police as the lead agency to deal with anti-social

## Agenda Item 5

behaviour involving young people. Police officers dealing with this type of “quasi-youth work” then have less time available to deal with other demands. Another noticeable consequence has been that both principle local authorities have contributed less to their respective MASH sites, making it more difficult for meaningful information sharing and early intervention to happen.

The recent flooding incidents brought to light the extra demand placed on the police call centre by the public telephoning the police for non-policing highway emergencies when they are unable to contact their local authority out of hours. Whilst that particular instance was perhaps an extreme occurrence, other examples have also been brought to my attention.

My office has also experienced increased demand, both in terms of victim services and requests for funding, due to some partners either withdrawing or reducing their provision of services. This has included my office stepping in to take over responsibility for the commissioning of standard risk domestic abuse services in the City that would have otherwise been lost.

As you know my office runs a number of grant schemes throughout the year and I have noticed a real upturn over the course of my four years in office of the number of applications for projects delivering activities for young people. This year for example, over fifty percent of funding requests for large grants were from organisations working with young people, many of these applications cited the loss of council youth provision as part of their rationale for seeking my funding. Whilst I have been able to support a number of these applications, I have not been able to support all of them and my funding is of a one-off nature rather than on going.

Another key issue we have faced is support for those who have mental health issues or other vulnerabilities. As I have explained to the Panel in the past this is a key priority for me as too much time is spent by our contact centre and by staff and officers dealing with issues that would be better dealt with by mental health and other professionals. In response I have driven forward the delivery of the mental health triage hub, based within our contact centre, that sees professionals from a variety of agencies working together to get the right support to those who need it. Once again, money and police time spent on plugging this gap isn't then available for use on more obvious policing activities.

It could be said that policing is a victim of its own success. It is seen as the service of last resort and is often where people turn to when they are not getting services elsewhere. However, as resources for all public services are under significant strain this impacts on the police's ability to deliver against its core functions as it is picking up the slack from elsewhere.

Agenda Item 5

Question 2: from Cllr Ged Potter

**How many Derbyshire Constabulary Police Officers and Civilian staff are or have been employed on secondments within any organisations serving outside the Derbyshire Constabulary area since 2010?**

There have been 60 individual officers who have been on secondment in the last 10 years.

There have been 36 Police Staff who have been on secondment.

Of these 96, 16 have been seconded but have worked within the East Midlands region.

My Chief Executive is about to go on a 6 month secondment to lead on work around the policing submission for the Spending Review from the Association of Police & Crime Commissioners and National Police Chiefs' Council linking into the Home Office who will ultimately make the submission to the Treasury.

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