

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

KENT AND MEDWAY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 4 November 2014.

PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE (Chairman), Mr Gurvinder Sandher (Vice-Chairman), Cllr P Clokie, Cllr P Todd, Cllr Mrs S Chandler, Cllr Mrs A Blackmore, Cllr L Wicks, Cllr R Turpin, Cllr P Fleming, Cllr M Dearden, Cllr M Rhodes, Mr R A Latchford, OBE, Mr I S Chittenden and Cllr K Pugh (Substitute) (Substitute for Mr A H T Bowles)

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs A Barnes, Mr M Stepney and Mr S Nolan

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Campbell (Policy Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

105. Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 9th September 2014 *(Item 4)*

1. The Chairman outlined one matter arising; that the Commissioner had agreed to provide an update as to the success or lack thereof in relation to securing Innovation Funding. The Commissioner explained that there had been excellent success in securing funding earlier in 2014 for the use of Body Worn Video cameras for officers but stated that there had been limited success in the second round of bids where only £40,700 had been awarded.
2. The Commissioner's Chief of Staff explained that the feedback from the Home Office was that the bids were good but there was limited evidence of the benefits to Kent and Essex.
3. The Commissioner also highlighted that she had been successful in securing £100,000 from the Ministry of Justice Innovation fund to support the serious sexual assault project and another £600,000 to assist in the setting up of the Victim Centre.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th September be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

106. Impact of the Youth Commissioner *(Item B1)*

1. The Commissioner explained that the appointment of a Youth Commissioner had been an election promise, designed to ensure representation of young people (under 24s) who represent 30% of Kent's population.
2. Kerry Boyd had been in post for nine months and has been listening to young people, initially via public engagement and latterly through a secondment with

CXK (Youth Charity based in Ashford that supports young people in developing skills and raising aspirations). Ms Boyd has been collating the feedback from this work and will be providing a report that will be published on the Commissioner's website in due course.

3. The Commissioner highlighted some key points that Ms Boyd had raised so far as being training and engagement opportunities, better use of online communication and how best to access young people.
4. The Commissioner referenced a recent report from the All Party Parliamentary Group for Children and Young People which highlighted the difficulties Police and Crime Commissioners and the Police face in engaging effectively with young people.
5. The Commissioner commented that Ms Boyd has performed very well in her role, showing that the concept of Youth Commissioners works. The Commissioner added that she is looking forward to the final report which will contribute to the refreshed Police and Crime Plan.
6. In response to Member questions, the Commissioner explained that the first Youth Commissioner had never formally taken up her role and that Ms Boyd had demonstrated the value of the Youth Commissioner role. The Commissioner stated that she was very pleased with Ms Boyd's work and that the future of the role would be discussed with the Police and Crime Panel.
7. The Vice-chair praised Ms Boyd and asked the Commissioner to explain how she herself engaged with Young People. The Commissioner stated that she engaged with young people all the time through regular engagement activities. She explained that the Youth Commissioner works closely with her on relevant issues, including recently agreeing to provide money to a youth charity that seeks to help young people at risk of 'drifting' into the Criminal Justice System.
8. Members praised the work being done by the Youth Commissioner, commenting that the engagement and prevention focus was very positive and they were keen to see the emerging recommendations. Members asked how the Youth Commissioner's work would feed into the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan.
9. The Commissioner explained that the Youth Commissioner worked in her office when not off-site and worked closely with the Commissioner's staff as well as Chief Officers. The Youth Commissioner's report will influence the proposed Police and Crime Plan before it goes out to consultation. Furthermore, the Youth Commissioner was advising on improving access to Police information for young people and how to encourage such engagement.
10. A Member asked how much the Youth Commissioner was linking with the Community Safety Units (CSU) and whether she was carrying out enough external engagement.
11. The Commissioner estimated that the Youth Commissioner had engaged with approximately 5000 young people but stated that there has been little direct contact between the Commissioner's office and the CSUs.

12. A Member asked whether any specific work was being done around engaging with children in care, given their vulnerability.
13. The Commissioner explained that Kent County and Medway Councils were leading on supporting and managing children in care through social services. The Chief of Staff, stated that the Force was addressing the issues surrounding children in care, using specialist officers. Additionally, the Force was working on a protocol with Children's Homes to limit the unnecessary criminalisation of young people in care.
14. Responding to a question, the Commissioner explained that the Ms Boyd would return to her studies once her contract expires early next year. The Commissioner stated that this experience will be of great benefit to Ms Boyd.
15. A Member suggested that closer engagement with the CSUs would be beneficial and suggested that the Youth Commissioner go out with Community Wardens and Police Community Support Officers. The Commissioner stated that work was being done to maintain a relationship with the CSUs and joint visits were taking place. The Commissioner reiterated her commitment to building bridges with young people.
16. A Member asked for reassurance that consideration would be given to how valuable the Youth Commissioner was in light of the high number of alternative youth engagement and access groups available to assist the public sector, such as the Youth Parliament, Youth Council and established youth groups.
17. The Commissioner stated that she respected all the other groups working with young people but emphasised that she believed the Youth Commissioner post was a positive addition to this and that it added value and should not be seen as an 'instead of youth group engagement' but rather a representative approach to youth engagement.
18. A Member praised the initial concept of the Youth Commissioner as it appeared innovative at its inception but explained that she was concerned that it had in practice, been a 'headline grabber' that had produced little in the way of practical outcomes with limited genuine engagement.
19. The Commissioner challenged this comment, stating that the Youth Commissioner was a genuine attempt to better engage with young people on Policing issues.
20. The Chairman thanked the Commissioner for her report and stated that the Panel looked forward to hearing the plans for the future of the Youth Commissioner.

RESOLVED that the Panel thank the Commissioner for her report; that the report be noted and that the Panel note the Commissioner's offer to discuss the future of Youth Commissioner role with the Panel.

107. Progress with the local Mental Health Concordat
(Item B2)

1. The Commissioner introduced the report, requested by the Panel. The Commissioner explained that the Concordat was developing well as an excellent piece of partnership working that affirmed the key partner agencies' commitment to providing joined up care for people in Mental Health Crisis.
2. The Commissioner stated that while there were some issues that needed addressing, such as better integration with the Kent Health and Wellbeing Boards, significant progress had been made; examples of success include the opening of places of safety and the Street Triage Pilot.
3. The latter has been part funded by the Commissioner to allow for seven days a week operation 08:00 – 20:00 with mental health nurses available to offer advice and psychiatric nurses able to provide assessments. It is expected that the Street Triage Pilot will be commended nationally in an HMIC Prison and Custody Inspection.
4. The Commissioner commented that the report included comparative data from Thames Valley Police but highlighted that there was no national data to work from, a fact that made detailed analysis and comparison difficult.
5. A Member criticised the lack of comparative data and suggested that accessing this information should be a priority. The Commissioner agreed but explained that the information was not held by other forces.
6. Responding to questions about the increase in police involvement in mental health incidents, the Commissioner and Chief of Staff explained that this was attributed to improved training and understanding of mental health within the force. This meant people with mental health issues were managed appropriately whereas previously they may have been dealt with as unco-operative or difficult individuals without appropriate support. The increased involvement was welcome as it showed the Force was becoming better at recognising mental health issues.
7. The Commissioner highlighted the importance of other services and partner agencies taking responsibility where appropriate as the Police should not be the main responder and manager for mental health issues and should only be involved when offences or safeguarding issues arise.
8. The Commissioner added that better communication was needed and that she hoped greater involvement through the Health and Wellbeing Boards would achieve this and made a request for Panel Members to encourage relevant agencies and staff to get involved. A member recommended that the Commissioner link with the West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group that was doing a mapping exercise which could be useful in supporting Police related Mental Health work.

RESOLVED that the Panel note the Commissioner's report.

108. Update on the new Policing Model
(Item B3)

1. The Commissioner provided an overview of the new policing model that went live on 24th June 2014. The Commissioner highlighted the positive responses the new model had so far received inside the Force and from members of the Public and public sector organisations. Of particular note in the new model is the deployment of Community Policing Teams (4 Police Constables and a Sergeant based in the Community Safety Units), which work closely with the PCSOs on dealing with local policing issues and public priorities. This locally focused approach is emphasised at management level where the District Commander, a local Chief Inspector, directly controls all resources at district level. This allows for greater flexibility and more capacity to focus on local priorities.
2. The Chairman commented that the new model sounded positive but he was concerned that another new model had been introduced as recently as 2011. He wanted reassurance that the new model would remain fit for purpose and would not be abandoned or altered as soon as the last.
3. The Commissioner stated the new model represented the best approach now and that the financial and policing needs situation had changed since 2011. The Force has lost 20% of its workforce in the interim and any policing model must reflect such practical realities. The Commissioner explained that the Chief Constable has embedded the new model with the community and the Community Safety Units and that it should be 'future-proof' for a few years. She further stated that a significant positive outcome is the determination to keep officers and staff in their current roles for as long as possible to ensure continuity for the community. The Chairman welcomed this assurance.

RESOLVED that the Panel note the Commissioner's report.

109. Annual Accounts 13/14 and Annual Report 13/14
(Item B4)

1. The Commissioner introduced her Annual Report for 2013/14, highlighting some examples of positive work undertaken in the period covered.
2. Key points included the decision to commission HMIC to conduct an inspection of the Force's crime recording accuracy which revealed some failings that have since been rectified. A second inspection has evidenced improved accuracy. People of Kent can now be confident that the Force maintains the highest accuracy levels in the country. Additionally, the Commissioner highlighted the key focus of all of her work had been to place victims at the heart of Policing and that engagement with the people of Kent had been a significant priority throughout. She commended the work of her staff and Kent Police in these endeavours.
3. Panel Members sought clarification of the work done by the Commissioner's innovation partner and asked when results might be apparent from this work. The Commissioner and Chief of Staff explained that the role of the innovation partner was to help the Force to position itself to make savings in the next 4 years.
4. Members asked the Commissioner to explain whether this work included consideration of outsourcing and the Commissioner advised that joint work with Essex, particularly in respect of the joint platform for support services, was producing significant savings.

5. Members referred to earlier discussions about engagement with young people and asked whether a version of the report could also be produced in a format that was more likely to engage young people and the general public, who might find the published report quite lengthy. The Commissioner agreed to consider this. The Commissioner was also asked to consider including some crime statistics and some graphic representations of data.
6. Members advised the Commissioner that, although the report referred to good progress in a number of areas, e.g. establishment of local policing teams, work to commission a Sexual Assault Referral Centre, work to improve the accuracy of crime recording, and support for the Special Constabulary, it did not mention the problems relating to the introduction of the first Youth Commissioner. It also did not mention the independent review which was commissioned to enable the Police and Crime Commissioner to learn lessons. The Chairman advised that, in view of the widespread publicity surrounding the problems involved with the recruitment of the first Youth Commissioner and the impact this had on the credibility of the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Annual Report should have referred to this matter. The Commissioner accepted the point but commented that the issue had been discussed at length at a previous Panel meeting in 2013.

RESOLVED that the Panel note the Commissioner's report, that a Panel Report be prepared, and published after consultation with Panel members and approval of the Chairman.

110. Commissioner's Decisions - September 2014 *(Item C1)*

1. Clarification was sought on the Commissioner's decision on the Victim Centre. The Commissioner explained that her recent decision reflected the work now being undertaken in Phase 2 of the Victim Centre development; the drawing together of all relevant partners to co-design the most effective joint working agreement that fits with corporate guidelines and best meets the needs of victims. This work is being supported by using consultants that are engaging with victims to identify their priorities.
2. Members asked where the Community Remedy options fit in with the victim centre and if the Remedy 'menu' could be made available to Panel Members. The Commissioner and Chief of Staff explained that it was now an operational issue for Police managing appropriate sanctions for low level crime and antisocial behaviour. The details are accessible on the PCC website. The Commissioner agreed to provide the Community Remedy Options to the Panel at the next meeting.

RESOLVED that the Panel note the Commissioner's decision and note the commitment to provide the Community Remedy options to the next Panel Meeting.

111. Future work programme *(Item D1)*

RESOLVED that the Panel note the work programme.

112. Minutes of the Commissioner's Governance Board meeting held on 26th August 2014
(Item E1)

RESOLVED that the Panel note the minutes of the Commissioner's Governance Board held on 26th August 2014.