

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 Thursday, 6 February 2020.

PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE (Chairman), Mr Gurvinder Sandher (Vice-Chairman), Cllr A Clark, Cllr L Dyball (Substitute) (Substitute for Cllr P Fleming), Mrs L Game, Ms S Hamilton, Cllr MJ Holloway, OBE, Cllr S Mochrie-Cox, Cllr R Palmer, Cllr H Tejan, Cllr R Wells and Mrs E Bolton

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M Scott (Kent Police and Crime Commissioner), Mr A Harper (PCC's Chief Executive) and Mr Robert Phillips (PCC's Chief Finance Officer)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr J Cook (Scrutiny Research Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

340. Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 21 November 2019

(Item 4)

1. The Commissioner provided a brief update, related to points raised at the previous meeting. He explained ongoing activity to manage the waiting list for the cadet scheme, indicating that additional volunteers were needed to assist in this. The Commissioner commented that the Chief Constable was keen to use some of the newly recruited Officers to support the cadet programme. Members commented positively on the cadet programme and the Commissioner welcomed the feedback.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2019 were an accurate record and that they be signed by the Chair.

341. Draft Police and Crime Plan and Associated Budget and Precept proposals

(Item A1)

1. The Chair introduced the item, clarifying that the intention was to scrutinise the proposed draft plan and to consider the need for the additional requested precept funds. It was confirmed that consideration of the Plan and Precept would be conducted in parts, as usual.

Policing Plan

2. The Commissioner provided an overview of the Plan and background as to the purpose of and legal requirements for the Plan. He highlighted that the Plan represented one of the most important elements of how the Police were held to account. He commented that while always mindful of his manifesto, he also took into account other key factors when reviewing his plan and associated precept, including changing trends, operational pressures, new challenges, feedback from

the public, Police Officers and Staff and the Panel. The Commissioner explained that the priorities in the Plan were based on the Policing Survey, community engagement and the operational opinion of the Chief Constable. He explained that he wished to strike a balance between operational needs and realities and the views and expectations of the public.

3. In outlining the Policing Survey, the Commissioner explained that the methodology had been improved, building on learning from previous surveys, maximising good practice and addressing flaws. This meant the most recent survey was more robust and he thanked the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) staff for their hard work in delivering and promoting the survey, which had resulted in a three-fold increase in responses. He noted that while the feedback from the survey was very important, some very key crime issues were not highlighted as priorities by respondents but in his view, these had to be treated as priorities because it was vital to recognise the impact of these crimes on victims. Key examples included domestic abuse.
4. The Commissioner explained that based on all the information considered, no significant changes were required to the Plan. He advised that various minor updates were proposed to reflect developing arrangements and projects related to Policing and the Plan. He drew the Panel's attention to the details outlined in the report and highlighted a few positive examples such as the Plan referencing Violence Reduction Units, the securing of additional government funding for unique policing pressures on Kent (e.g. Brexit) and also specific consideration of knife crime within the 'Fight Crime and Anti-social Behaviour' priority.
5. The Commissioner also commented on the improved situation in relation funding for Policing which had been unexpected in previous years and had led to significant review and updating of the Kent Police Medium-term Financial Plan (MTFP).
6. The Chair congratulated the Commissioner on the response to the Policing Survey and also commented that Kent Police had clearly been performing well, in view of national assessment and the previous positive updates provided by the Commissioner. The Chair opened the item to questions.
7. Members asked a range of questions in relation to the Policing Survey and the Plan. Key issues raised by the Panel and responded to by the Panel included the following:
 - 4.5 out of 10 result for victim satisfaction. The Commissioner agreed that this required improvement and gave assurances that he was raising with the Chief Constable. The Commissioner commented that there were no wider mechanisms to measure victim satisfaction as the Home Office removed the requirement to do so. He explained that it was important for Kent Police to communicate better on investigation processes and better manage expectations.
 - Members questioned the reach of the survey and how representative the results were. The Commissioner explained that he recognised the need to capture feedback from a diverse range of respondents. He noted that an online process was easy for organisations but reassured the Panel that online engagement was supplemented by paper copies and direct

engagement with communities as he was mindful of the need to contact hard to reach communities.

- Members highlighted ASB issues and queried the Kent Police response. The Commissioner explained that ASB remained as a priority in his Plan and the Chief Constable's control strategy and reassured the Panel that this was taken very seriously. He commented that ASB figures had fallen by 33% in terms of reports but noted that this was clearly not supported by the public perception. He advised that there was a similar situation with burglary, a key priority in the Plan and the Control Strategy but the figures were still down compared to previous years. The Commissioner highlighted some very positive outcomes for burglary cases managed by the Chief Constable's Crime Squad.
- Local Authority role in tackling ASB. Members and the Commissioner discussed the different non-enforcement approaches that can help reduce ASB. The Commissioner noted that different factors contributed to ASB in different areas and demographics.
- Roads Policing. The PCC agreed that proper enforcement was important and the Chief Constable was supportive of expanding the roads policing team further. He advised that the team had already grown significantly since 2016.
- Commissioned service. The Commissioner reassured the Panel that he was focused on value for money and sought limit overlap in any commissioned service with other partner agency activity. This was embedded in his commissioner strategy. He explained that the OPCC liaised with local Community Safety Units to minimise overlap.

Precept

8. The Commissioner introduced the Precept proposals, thanking his staff and the Chief Finance Officer in particular for their excellent work, especially in view of the late financial settlement.
9. He provided an overview of the proposals, as set out in the reports. The Commissioner emphasised that despite the ongoing recruitment, additional resources were still needed as the demand for policing and the public expectations required operational resourcing. He advised that this was due to particular demand pressures in the Force Management Strategy. The Commissioner explained that the proposals would fund an additional 36 PCSOs, including 15 dedicated to Crime Prevention, and also fund 100 additional civilian staff delivering a range of key roles. The proposals also allowed for additional Officer numbers on top of the planned national uplift (147 in Kent).
10. The Commissioner advised the Panel that despite the proposed precept increase and the positive settlement from government, he was still requiring the Force to make £9m in savings. The additional resources from the precept would fund inflationary pressures and the identified spending plans but efficiencies would still be taking place.

11. The Commissioner outlined a number key pressures and considerations from the Force Management Strategy that contributed to his proposals, including cybercrime growth, local developments increasing the population, increases in rural crime, increases in major crime, lack of staffing core investigative roles, increases in missing persons (mispers), more domestic abuse reports and increased modern slavery reports. These important issues and challenging pressures on the Force, the Commissioner argued, justified the increased resources detailed in his precept and budget proposals. In recommended his budget and precept proposals, he assured the panel that the use of resources had a clear evidential basis and that this would demonstrate that the Force would deliver value for money.
12. Members discussed the Commissioner's proposals and asked a range of questions, including;
 - Fair funding: The Commissioner explained that the funding formula used by Government was not entirely fair for Kent as it did not take into account a number of issues affecting specific communities or account for tourism's effect on demand for policing.
 - Resources needed to meet demand: The Commissioner explained that they planned for Kent Police to reach 4111 Police Officer establishment which would allow for meeting core demand also supporting proactive work and increased visibility.
 - Kent Police savings: The Commissions explained that few easy savings remained and was not looking to make short term cuts which could have damaging consequences, highlighting the increased demand on Police due for mental health issues due to reductions by other organisations. He was focused on ensuring Policing generally was more efficient in procurement and used his role as Chair of Blue Light Commercial to support this work.
 - Fraud: The Commissioner outlined the significant resources deployed by the Force to tackle this issue including joint Fraud and Economic Crime team with Essex Police. He commented that there was an underlying national problem with how fraud was managed in terms of processes. He advised that he would be working with the Chief Constable to further increase Kent Police's capability to deal with fraud.
 - Retention: The Commissioner noted Panel comments about the important of retention and highlighted that despite the proximity to London and increased wages paid by the Metropolitan Police Service, Kent had still been successful in recruitment and retention. He also commented that Kent had a good track record of attracting senior officers from the Metropolitan Police as transferees.
 - Performance: The Commissioner reassured the Panel that productivity and effectiveness were measured as part of him holding the Chief Constable to account for delivery against the Police and Crime Plan and that the monitoring processes were reviewed to ensure they remained fit for purpose. He also highlighted the work of HMICFRA and other independent bodies in monitoring police performance. The Commissioner advised the Panel that he was a member on of the National Board that was reviewing the performance outcomes framework.

13. The Chair thanked the Commissioner for the useful information and helpful answers as part of a robust discussion that allowed for effective scrutiny of his proposals by the Panel.

RESOLVED that the Proposed Plan, Precept and Budget be approved unanimously; and that the management of the required Panel report be delegated to Panel Officers.

342. Mental Health and Policing - Verbal Update

(Item B1)

1. The Commissioner provided a verbal update on key activity in relation to Mental Health and policing. He highlighted a research project conducted by Victim Support which had suggested increased risks to those with mental health issues faced, such as higher chances of burglary and being a victim of ASB or violence. The Commissioner explained that the recommendations from this work included the need for much more joined up working within the criminal justice sector as the crucial mental health factors were often not identified early enough. He advised that he was working to relevant partners to achieve this.
2. The Commissioner described some positive developments including more safe havens, improved telephone service for use prior to any s136 detentions. He also commented that CCGs and Mental Health trusts were taking these issues more seriously.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

343. New Complaints Legislation

(Item C1)

1. The Panel considered the decision taken by the Commissioner to take on the Model 1 approach to the changed Police Complaints system. Mr Harper, OPCC Chief Executive, explained the implications of the change and the Commissioner taking on the Appeals function. It was explained that the process would apply only to those complaints where there is no serious or gross misconduct. The process and review responsibilities coming under the control of the Commissioner related to low level complaints.
2. He advised that the main focus of the change was shifting the emphasis from blame toward practice improvement. The new approach would make the complaints system much more efficient and more transparent in due course.
3. Mr Harper highlighted that scale of the work and volume of complaints which may require review was not yet known as the definition of relevant complaints had been expanded. An additional member of staff was being recruited to help manage the expected significant increase in workload.

RESOLVED that the Commissioner's decision be noted.

344. Panel Annual Report - 2019/20

(Item D1)

RESOLVED that the report be approved.

345. Future work programme

(Item D2)

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

346. Questions to the Commissioner

(Item E1)

Question 1:

Can the PCC advise the Panel whether he is taking any specific action to hold the Chief Constable to account on Kent Police's response to Modern Slavery and Sexual Exploitation, particularly regarding vulnerable children? Also, can the Commissioner advise whether this holding to account, includes consideration of whether Kent Police are collaborating effectively with relevant partner agencies, such as Border Force and HMRC?

(Richard Palmer – Swale Borough Council)

1. The Commissioner advised that he held the Chief Constable to account on these and other key issues via the Performance & Delivery Board meetings. He had received relevant reassurances from the Chief Constable and reports at the Performance & Delivery Board had shown the significant efforts made by Kent Police to tackle these issues. These included the investment in the Misper and Child Sexual Exploitation teams, working with partners and communities and making numerous arrests and referrals.
2. The Commissioner advised that he was assured that Kent Police did collaborate with the Border Force, HMRC and the National Crime Agency. He also commented that the OPCC were committed to working with suppliers to ensure that his office is not investing in any organisations with links to modern slavery or other organised crime.

Questions 2

Over the past two years, this Panel has supported the Commissioner's request for additional resources, in particular for the recruitment of more Police Constables. Can the Commissioner please confirm (a) where this additional capacity has been allocated both in terms of activity and District, and (b) give evidence of the difference this additional resource has made in reducing crime and improving visible community policing? And can the answer to (b) please be supported by a document (info graphic) which can be easily shared with residents who ultimately pay and want to see where their money is being spent?

(MJ Holloway – Dover District Council)

3. The Commissioner provided a note on the recent allocations of Officers. He advised that geography was a difficult point to capture as the resources have been provided at a Divisional level rather District. This meant that there would not be an even spread of extra officers in each District but he explained that the

resources had been deployed based on demand. The Commissioner accepted that this would not please all residents but he was satisfied that this deployment based on demand was appropriate.

4. The Commissioner commented that crime was down in areas with new Town Beat Officers but also highlighted some other positive operational activity such as Operation Eminent which sought to tackle knife crime and had led to 1152 arrests, 292 warrants, 1247 stop and searches and 127 cash seizures. He advised that such operations would not have been possible with reduced resources, so evidenced the benefits of the increased Officer numbers he had supported.
5. In terms of sharing more information about the deployment, he advised that he would engage with Kent Police about improved communication and infographics to assist.

Question 3:

*At a recent meeting of the Gravesham Borough Council Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee, Town Centre Policing was discussed with praise given for the two police officers assigned. Given the positive impact of this initiative so far and the expected additional resources made possible within the updated Police and Crime Plan and associated Budget, can the Commissioner advise the Panel if and how he plans to work with the Chief Constable to develop this scheme, so that the success and benefits may be expanded further to include 24/7 coverage and increased visible policing dealing with the night time economy across all Districts in Kent?
(Shane Mochrie-Cox – Gravesham Borough Council)*

6. The Commissioner welcomed the positive feedback about the Town Police Officers from Gravesham Borough Council. He advised that the deployment continued to be based on demand but that a 6-month review was planned. If this review was positive, then consideration would be given to expanding the scheme further. In terms of the hour coverage, the Commissioner explained that working patterns would be looked at but that depended on considering a range of different available resources.

RESOLVED that the Commissioner's answers to questions from Panel Members be noted.

347. Minutes of the Commissioner's Performance & Delivery Board meeting held on 25 September 2019
(Item F1)

Noted

At the conclusion of the meeting the Commissioner made a brief statement. As this was the last meeting scheduled prior to the PCC Elections, wanted to thank the Panel for their robust scrutiny, highlighting the importance of effective scrutiny and transparency for roles such as his with significant authority. The Commissioner praised the constructive approach the Panel had taken and the beneficial relationship that had developed over the course of his term of office. The Panel welcomed the positive comments from the Commissioner.