

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 Wednesday, 8 December 2021.

PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE (Chairman), Mr Gurvinder Sandher (Vice-Chairman), Mrs E Bolton, Cllr A Clark, Cllr G Hackwell, Mr M A J Hood, Cllr S Mochrie-Cox, Cllr R Palmer, Cllr J Purle, Cllr H Tejan and Cllr L Dyball

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: Mrs A Taylor (Scrutiny Research Officer) and Mr M Dentten (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

24. Membership

(Item 2)

RESOLVED that the change in membership be noted.

25. Declarations of Interests by Members in Items on the Agenda for this Meeting

(Item 4)

No declarations were made.

26. Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 7 September 2021

(Item 5)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2021 were an accurate record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

27. Appointment of Independent Members

(Item 6)

1. The Scrutiny Research Officer gave an overview of the Independent Member open recruitment process. It was confirmed that all applicants were interviewed by a sub-panel consisting of three Panel Members and that they recommended the reappointment of Mrs Elaine Bolton and Mr Gurvinder Sandher to the Panel.
2. The Chair welcomed Mrs Bolton and Mr Sandher back to the Panel.

RESOLVED that the Panel re-appoint Mrs Bolton and Mr Sandher as Independent Members of the Panel for a further four years and that an application process be run at the end of this four-year term to recruit two new Independent Members.

28. Victim Satisfaction

(Item B1)

1. The Commissioner congratulated the Independent Members on their reappointment and welcomed the Panel's new Members.
2. The Commissioner updated the Panel on victim satisfaction in Kent. Members were reminded that putting victims first was one of his key priorities for the Chief Constable, as outlined in the Safer in Kent Plan 2021-2022. He confirmed that Kent Police ran surveys to better understand the experiences of hate crime, domestic abuse and rape victims. An overview of each survey's results was given. He recognised that overall victim satisfaction had remained stable and highlighted his scrutiny of the Chief Constable on the issue, at the Performance and Delivery Board, 1 December 2021. In relation to the plausibility of further surveys, the Commissioner noted significant financial and manpower constraints, though committed to investigate how the resources of his Office and other independent organisations could be used to expand survey capabilities. Reassurance was given to the Panel that satisfaction requirements would be included in the recommissioning of victim support services in 2022.
3. Members asked a range of questions in relation to the Victim Satisfaction update. Key issues raised by the Panel and responded to by the Commissioner included the following:
 - a. A Member asked how the Commissioner would ensure that the positive progress made on hate crime victim satisfaction was sustained and whether social restrictions during the pandemic had made it easier to counter hate crime. The Commissioner acknowledged that as a result of the need to police the pandemic, officers had faced difficulty tackling hate crime. He informed the Panel that a Diversity and Inclusion Academy had been set up by the force to tackle the issue and expand its expertise in the area.
 - b. Following a request from a Member, the Commissioner agreed to closely monitor rape victim satisfaction, given the small decrease over the past year. He added that the issue was of significant importance, especially when the link to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and the increase in reports following the easing of social restrictions was considered.
 - c. The Commissioner was asked to consider an anti-social behaviour (ASB) victim satisfaction survey. The Commissioner recognised the merits of an ASB survey and noted that it was an issue which required a cross authority response.
 - d. A Member encouraged the use of contextual data when understanding rape victim satisfaction. The Commissioner agreed to share a briefing note with the Panel, on the use of contextual data.
 - e. The Commissioner was asked to provide an indication of the percentage of victims which chose not to complete a victim satisfaction survey. He agreed to share the statistic with the Panel after the meeting.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

29. Violence Against Women and Girls Inquiry

(Item B2)

1. The Commissioner introduced the report which detailed national and local VAWG developments. The Panel were reminded that Government ran a 10-week public consultation on the issue to inform a new national strategy, which closed on 26 March 2021. The new national strategy was published on 21 July and made multiple policy commitments. He confirmed that he had launched his own local inquiry on 4 August, in order to better understand the extent of VAWG in Kent; required prevention and necessary police response. The local survey ran for 2 months, and the Commissioner attested that it had succeeded in engaging women in Kent widely, with 8,200 responses. He noted that a quantitative and qualitative analysis of survey responses was being carried out. General findings were shared and included widespread night-time safety concerns. The Commissioner reassured Members that further information would be published in 2022. In relation to the victim workshops mentioned in the report, the Commissioner confirmed that he had attended three and sought to continue public engagement. He concluded by informing Members that VAWG had been discussed at the Kent Criminal Justice Board.
2. Members asked a range of questions in relation to the Violence Against Women and Girls Inquiry. Key issues raised by the Panel and responded to by the Commissioner included the following:
 - a. A Member asked how the Commissioner held the Chief Constable to account on the work done to safeguard areas with high amounts of nightlife. The Commissioner confirmed that he had encouraged the Chief Constable to pursue a perpetrator focused response and that there had been an increase in visible and non-uniform patrols in Canterbury and other areas with significant night life as a result.
 - b. Members commended the Commissioner on his inclusion of qualitative research methods in the VAWG call for evidence survey.
 - c. Concerns were raised by a Member on the organisation of women's community outreach events organised by Kent Police. The Commissioner recognised that some events had been organised poorly and with little notice and agreed to ensure that the Chief Constable delivered accessible events in the future.
 - d. A Member asked that online abuse and interactions be taken into account in future policies. The Commissioner recognised the importance of addressing online abuse and hoped that the upcoming Online Safety Bill would help to counter the issue.
 - e. A Member highlighted the importance of tackling concerning male behaviour in schools and asked that the Commissioner work with other local partners on the issue. The Commissioner recognised the key role officers within the

Schools Team played in tackling the issue, highlighted workshops and their role in antibullying week.

- f. A Member asked that the Commissioner share future public surveys with local councillors in order that they can be disseminated further and shared with community groups. The Commissioner agreed to share future surveys with councillors at their request.
- g. In relation to community outreach, a Member asked if any work had been planned to engage minority communities on VAWG. The Commissioner confirmed that there was no specific programme planned, though agreed to discuss the topic with the Member outside of the meeting.
- h. Following a question from a Member on police officer vetting and training, the Commissioner reassured the Panel that home visits were carried out and that all new officers underwent a comprehensive education and training programme.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

30. Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit *(Item B3)*

1. The Commissioner provided a brief overview of the Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit's work. He noted that the Unit was in its third year of operation, highlighted its strategic objectives, noted its benefits in streamlining multiple authorities' work into one response and confirmed that Mr Phillips chaired the VRU Oversight Board on his behalf. The work of the Unit on issues including young people and gang intervention, as well as rehabilitation and community based preventative programmes was brought to the Panel's attention.
2. Mr Phillips provided further detail on partner collaboration and the Unit's financial arrangements. He noted that there had been good participation from all authorities involved, with new partners, including housing associations, added. He explained the Oversight Board's role of holding the VRU's leadership to account on performance against its strategic objectives. Regarding funding, he confirmed that the Unit was funded annually and that there was an ambition to secure multiyear funding. He concluded by recognising that many of the Unit's objectives were long term and required a sustained effort.
3. The Chair asked that the performance of the Violence Reduction Unit be reported back to the Panel, at the appropriate time.
4. Members asked a range of questions in relation to the Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit update. Key issues raised by the Panel and responded to by the Commissioner included the following:
 - a. The importance of prevention was emphasised by a Member who asked that the Commissioner ensure that all partners, including district councils, be given

a say in shaping the Unit's work. The Commissioner agreed to ensure that views from all local authorities were received and considered.

- b. In relation to measuring prevention, a Member asked whether the Commissioner would investigate the use of technology in modelling behaviour, in order that the Unit be given a better understanding of what prevention is required. The Commissioner recognised the importance of involving data in the Unit's work and stressed the need to properly understand the significance and quality of any data used.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

31. Questions to the Commissioner

(Item D1)

In his role in holding the Chief Constable to account, can the PCC offer reassurances to concerns about community policing across Kent, which does not seem to be sufficiently resourced or allocated correctly? Residents continue to be concerned with a lack of visible policing on the streets and in busy areas with a lack of policing resource being given as the reason. Access and reporting via 101 also seems to feature in these concerns which results in crime and anti-social behaviour not being reported and therefore not being taken into account regarding Kent Police's approach to resource allocation. (Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox, Gravesham Borough Council)

1. In response to the question, the Commissioner stated that he had regularly held the Chief Constable to account on community policing. He recognised the influence police presence had on public perception. Regarding 101, he confirmed that information published and discussed at the Performance and Delivery Board had corroborated the Member's view and that demand had not changed. The Commissioner reassured the Panel that he had begun a review of the service. He agreed to speak to the Member on any specific local issues.

RESOLVED that the answers provided by the Commissioner be noted.

32. Future work programme

(Item E1)

1. The Scrutiny Research Officer detailed the work programme and confirmed that further updates on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and the Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) had been added.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

- (a) **FIELD**
- (b) **FIELD_TITLE**