

By: Anna Taylor – Panel Officer
To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel
Subject: Draft Panel Annual Report – 2022/23
Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

Preparation and publication of an Annual Report by the Panel is a legal requirement under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

The Panel is asked to consider and approve the below content for the 2022/23 Panel Annual Report.

Draft Annual Report

Introduction

1. This report summarises the work of the Panel between February 2022 and February 2023. It follows annual reports that have been produced every year since the Panel was established in November 2012. The objective of the Panel is to scrutinise and support the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner in his role in helping tackle crime and disorder in Kent and Medway.
2. The Panel provides a 'check and balance' on the performance of the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding his priorities for Kent Police contained within his Making Kent Safer Plan. The Panel plays a vital role in holding the PCC to account and supporting him in the effective exercise of his duties, in particular in the way he holds the Chief Constable to account.

Meetings

3. During this period the Panel met formally 5 times – 2 February, 16 June, 27 September, 12 December 2022 and 1 February 2023. The Panel also received a briefing from the then Temporary Chief Constable in November which addressed Kent Police's performance, service demand, workforce and finances. In addition to this, the Chair communicated with the Commissioner to assist and support the smooth running of Panel business.
4. The Panel also met informally in November 2022 and January 2023 to discuss the development of the precept proposal with the Commissioner's Officers.

Panel business

5. The Panel met its statutory duty in February 2022 to consider and make recommendations on the Commissioner's draft "Making Kent Safer 2022-25" Police and Crime Plan, as well as his proposed budget and precept. The Commissioner attended to present his proposal and answer questions from the Panel. The Panel noted that the Commissioner's priorities within the plan remained unchanged and the Panel supported the Plan and precept proposal.
6. The Panel approved the Commissioner's proposed maximum permitted precept increase of £10 for the year for an average Band D, which equated to a 4.58% precept increase. The Panel noted that under the proposal a Band D property would pay £228.15 a year towards policing. The Panel noted that the Kent PCC remained within the lowest quartile of precepting PCCs across the country and Kent remained in the lower quartile for Government funding for PCCs.
7. The Panel met its statutory duty to consider the Commissioner's Annual Report for 2021/2022, which it considered at its meeting on 27 September 2022.
8. The Panel held a confirmation hearing for the Chief Constable at its meeting on 6 December 2022 and, following questioning, agreed to the appointment of Mr Tim Smith as Chief Constable of Kent Police.
9. The Panel received reports on the following issues between February 2022 and February 2023:
 - a. HMICFRS PEEL Inspection 2021/22 – The Panel was provided with an overview of Kent Police's Inspection, the Panel having previously received a copy of the full report, and an outline of how the PCC would hold the Chief Constable to account in relation to this. A further update was provided to the Panel in September. In December 2022 the Commissioner provided the Panel with an update on Kent Police's progress responding to the findings of KMICFRS' PEEL Inspection 2021/22 report as well as his scrutiny of performance. The Panel resolved to receive a further update in April 2023.
 - b. Update on Fraud – Members requested this update following concerns about the impact of fraud on victims. The Panel was provided with an overview of how fraud was reported and handled in Kent along with local and national activity to safeguard victims, the report also outlined how the PCC would hold the Chief Constable to account. A further update was requested by the Panel for June 2023.

- c. Update on the Commissioner's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Inquiry– The VAWG Inquiry report was published on 26 July 2022. The Panel received an update in June and December 2022 and requested a further update in June 2023. The Panel had previously commended the Commissioner on his ongoing prioritisation of work against Violence Against Women and Girls and requested that this continued.
- d. The Commissioner's Annual Report 2021/22 – The Commissioner highlighted three key operational areas where significant progress had been made – prevention; neighbourhood policing; and combating county lines. Future risks included a less experienced police force as well as 999 and 101 line underperformance.
- e. Update on the Police Uplift Programme – The Commissioner provided an overview of Kent Police's progress as part of government's Police Uplift Programme. At September 2022 all targets had been met and the force was on track to meet the overall target by March 2023.
- f. Update on the Violence Reduction Unit – This update was requested by a member of the Panel. The Commissioner provided a verbal overview of the Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit's key functions, impact and funding arrangements, in addition to information provided in his report on the Unit's performance, structure, interventions, future plans and challenges.
- g. 101 response times – The Panel requested an update from the Commissioner on the management of non-emergency 101 calls due to the deterioration of Kent Police's performance in this area. The Commissioner explained that the Chief Constable had agreed a programme of strategic transformation which was underway – this would build a Force Control Room (FCR) that sought to provide a first-class service, meeting multi-channel future requirements. It was recognised that the current issues were not a reflection of the staff who worked in the FCR and the Commissioner thanked them for their hard work and resilience. Members of the Panel visited the FCR on 16 March 2023.

10. "Questions to the Commissioner" continued as a regular item at each meeting. The Panel welcomed the Commissioner's willingness to answer questions, of which he had been given prior notice. This agenda item continued to provide a greater opportunity for Panel members to raise issues with the Commissioner that do not form part of his formal reports. Question topics included issues

such as Police Officer numbers, countywide policing priorities, 999 response times, 101 response times, anti-social behaviour, PCSO numbers and policing priorities.

Complaints

11. The Panel, via its Officers, maintained oversight over formal complaints made against the Commissioner under the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012. One complaint was progressed to a Complaints Sub-Committee hearing in January 2023. The Panel resolved that the complaint not be upheld and no further action should be taken against the Commissioner. Officer contact with other Panels suggests that the number of complaints (recorded or otherwise) against the Kent Commissioner remains low compared with other Commissioners. The annual report setting out the number of complaints received against the Commissioner will be submitted to the Panel in September as usual.

Commissioner's decisions

12. The Commissioner published the following decisions during this period, which were considered and noted by the Panel:

- a. Decision OPCC.D.029.22 - Legally Qualified Chairs and other members of Police Misconduct Panels (June 2022)

To approve the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners wording and provide indemnity for Legally Qualified Chairs and other members of Police Misconduct Panels until such time as a national solution is found.

- b. Decision OPCC.D.030.22 – PCC Succession Plan (September 2022)

To formally adopt and publish the PCC Succession Plan until such time as the Commissioner decides to appoint a Deputy, or the Government mandates the appointment of a Deputy in law.

- c. Decision OPCC.D.031.22 - Appointment of Temporary Chief Constable (September 2022)

To appoint Deputy Chief Constable Timothy Smith as the Temporary Chief Constable until the appointment and arrival of the new Chief Constable.

Panel terms of reference

13. The Panel's terms of reference require them to be reviewed annually. It is considered convenient to do this at the same time as the Panel reviews its work over the past year. Minor wording changes, clarifications or

consequential amendments to address changes in law or external arrangements may be made from time to time by Officers, subject to review by the KCC Monitoring Officer. No significant changes to the terms of reference are proposed at this time for the Panel's consideration and approval. The full terms of reference can be found by following this [link](#).

Panel budget

14. The Panel's terms of reference also require the Panel to review its budget on an annual basis. Finance for the Panel's work comes from an annual Home Office grant of £71,700. The expenditure incurred is predominantly on staff support to the Panel, but also relates to subscriptions to relevant membership bodies and payment of co-optee member allowances and expenses. The forecast outturn for 2022-23 is £37,371 (compared to £34,900 in 2021-22 and £37,594 in 2020-21). The Panel has, while meeting all statutory obligations and undertaking appropriate work as a Panel, kept its costs contained well within the existing Home Office Grant, demonstrating that Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel continues to deliver good value for money.

Conclusions

15. Panel Members remain focused on supporting and scrutinising the PCC in relation to key policing and crime issues in local communities. Meetings of the Panel have continued to be webcast to promote public engagement and the Panel welcomes the positive approach taken by the Commissioner in responding to questions as well as the standing invitation to all Panel Members to attend the Commissioner's Performance and Delivery Board meetings. As in previous years, the professional and balanced approach taken by all parties involved, with an emphasis on transparency and constructive criticism, has ensured that Panel Members have been able to make appropriate challenges to and ask important questions of the Commissioner, who has in turn been in a position to provide relevant information, assurances and commitments for the benefit of the wider public. This process allows for transparency around the strategic criminal justice and policing arena in Kent and Medway and also highlighted the many examples of excellent work by Kent Police. The Panel and Commissioner have, at several of the formal meetings this year, jointly recorded their praise for frontline officers, who face significant daily challenges in their role. They have also recognised the vital contribution made by support and specialist officers and staff whose work allows policing to function effectively.

RECOMMENDATION

To consider and approve the draft Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel 2022/23 Annual Report.

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