

KENT AND MEDWAY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 8 October 2013.

PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE (Chairman), Cllr R Turpin (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Mrs A Blackmore, Cllr J Burden, Cllr Mrs S Chandler, Mr G Cowan, Cllr M Dearden, Cllr Mrs I Johnston, Mr D Jukes, Cllr M Lowe (Substitute for Cllr P Fleming), Councillor A Perkins, Cllr K Pugh (Substitute for Mr A H T Bowles), Cllr M Rhodes and Mr Gurvinder Sandher

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs A Barnes (Kent Police and Crime Commissioner), Mr M Stepney (Chief of Staff), and Mr S Nolan (Chief Finance Officer)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Campbell (Policy Officer) and Mrs A Taylor (Scrutiny Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

43. Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 September 2013 (Item 4)

1. In response to a query about the letter sent to Mr Vaz the letter would be re-circulated to members of the Panel. POST MEETING NOTE: the letter was circulated to the Panel on 8 October 2013.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2013 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

44. Minutes of the Commissioner's Governance Board held on 15 August 2013 (Item 5)

1. The Chairman explained that these minutes were primarily to note and to inform members of the Panel unable to attend the Commissioner's Governance Board meetings, to which there was a standing invitation to all Panel members. The Chairman said that members could ask questions or seek clarification but if there were any substantive matters, these should be the subject of a fuller report at a later Panel meeting POST MEETING NOTE: the dates of the Commissioner's Governance Board meetings were re-circulated to all members on 8 October 2013.
2. Members asked questions and received responses from the Commissioner on the following areas:
3. Agenda page 13 – the Commissioner explained that the Force was working with mental health practitioners in developing a pilot scheme where they would go out on patrol with officers. This was the subject of ongoing discussion.

4. In response to a question about “drunk tanks” which had recently been reported in the media the Commissioner felt that these were not practical, consideration would need to be given to mental health issues for example.
5. The Commissioner confirmed that she was satisfied with the Force’s Recovery Plan on crime recording. A weekly meeting was held with the Chief Constable on this issue and it would also form part of the agenda for the next Governance Board meeting.
6. It was agreed that in view of the importance of this topic the Police and Crime Panel might include an agenda item on the Force’s Recovery Plan on their forward work programme.
7. In response to a question around the police officer recruitment which had taken place over the previous fortnight the Commissioner confirmed that deployment of officers and staff was a matter for the Chief Constable, however Mrs Barnes was satisfied with the recruitment process used to recruit these individuals. The recruitment was for front line policing staff.
8. With regard to violent crime and the night time economy, the Commissioner explained that deployment of resources was a matter for the Chief Constable; the Commissioner was planning on visiting other town centres with the Police Force on their late shift as she had done in Canterbury recently. The Commissioner was hugely impressed with the calibre of the officers and their approach to dealing with those frequenting Canterbury City Centre at night.
9. The Commissioner explained that a predictive policing day, during which areas where crime was predicted to take place were focused on by the Police Force, had taken place and another day was planned. She said that the Metropolitan Police Service were exploring the use of predictive policing. It was considered by Panel members that there needed to be further explanation of the process behind predictive policing to the public.
10. In response to question about the withdrawal of CCTV the Commissioner explained that CCTV was considered to be an extremely useful tool in providing evidence of crime.
11. The Commissioner confirmed that she was satisfied that the figures relating to hate crime were accurate; there was ongoing training to ensure that hate crime was recorded accurately.

RESOLVED that Members note the minutes of the Commissioner’s Governance Board held on 15 August 2013.

45. Commissioner’s Decisions (Item B1)

1. The Commissioner had taken three decisions in August/September 2013.

2. In response to a question about funding for staffing the Commissioner confirmed that there was one off funding for these short term contract posts to kick start projects.
3. The Commissioner confirmed that the contracts for her two advisers expired at the end of October 2013.
4. In relation to neighbourhood watch the Commissioner explained that the officer would be based in Police Force Headquarters and was managed by the Police Force.

RESOLVED that Members note the key decisions taken by the Commissioner in August/September 2013.

46. Independent Review of the Youth Commissioner Recruitment Process - to follow
(Item C1)

1. The Commissioner explained that she had wanted this report to be produced by someone with experience, independence and someone that provided good value for money. It had proved difficult to commission someone but University of Central Lancashire had the expertise in their police and criminal investigation department to carry out the review of the Youth Commissioner recruitment process. The review confirmed that it was a comprehensive process, but that it fell at the last hurdle, the Commissioner's office did not ask for social media vetting and those advising the Commissioner's office did not advise it. However, the same vetting procedure was used to recruit police officers. A new procedure had been put in place to ensure that anyone applying for a job at the Commissioner's office would have to give permission for their social network sites to be viewed. The Commissioner assured Members that points around equality and diversity would be made more explicit in the job description.
2. The Commissioner would be recruiting her Youth Commissioner over the coming months but she valued the comments of the Panel and would take any comments on board before the young person was recruited.
3. During the course of the discussion Members made the following comments and received the following responses:
4. Members praised the report and it was agreed that the process was well run and transparent but was the vetting system that was used appropriate? The Commissioner confirmed that in future an alternative vetting process would be used.
5. The Commissioner confirmed that she was still in touch with Paris Brown; that Paris was well and was working with young people.
6. Members raised concerns about the language used when talking to young people and the need to ensure that they understand the significance of comments made in the past. The Commissioner concurred with the views, but had experience of teaching young people and in addition a peer panel had been used in the

interview process and social media was discussed and built into the selection process.

7. Members had concerns that the Commissioner was looking for someone who was 'street savvy' and by following the new process it was going to prove extremely difficult to find the right person, however a Panel member commented that there was a difference between 'street savvy' and having respect for all people in society. The Commissioner confirmed that 30 young people had already contacted her office to express their interest in the role, and the Commissioner was confident that she would find someone who was representative of their age group.
8. Members asked how the Youth Commissioner and his/her family would be supported throughout the process bearing in mind the exposure they would be subject to. This was applicable not only throughout the recruitment process but in the future as well. The Commissioner explained that the concerns were valid and she did delay the announcement of the previous Youth Commissioner to allow for vetting on the individual and checks to be undertaken on their wider family and a care package was being put together to support the young person in line with need. The post of Youth Commissioner was for a year to give experience of working in a busy office and the final decision on the length of care package for the young person and their family had not been made.
9. A Member asked about the timescale of the process. The Commissioner confirmed that she hoped to have a Youth Commissioner named by Christmas.
10. Concerns were raised about continuing down the route of a single Youth Commissioner, as Kent was a big, diverse county and a youth group covering the county could be used to share their views. The Commissioner explained that she genuinely believed that a Youth Commissioner was the best option for Kent and Medway. There was a need to maintain a connection with young people and the Youth Commissioner would be working with youth groups and schools. The public were overwhelmingly supportive of the idea of a Youth Commissioner and there would be a strong support network around the successful individual.
11. A member asked whether consideration had been given to raising the age limit of applicants to 18 years rather than 16 years. The Commissioner confirmed that the person specification would be made more explicit and that the age limit would remain at 16 years.
12. A member suggested that the Commissioner might look at alternative options to engage with young people, such as the Youth County Council, Medway Council, and an open invitation was offered to the Commissioner to attend a Youth County Council meeting and talk to the young people. The Commissioner had looked at alternatives and would attend the Youth County Council meeting, pending diary commitments, but she wanted one person to represent the views of all the groups across the County.
13. The Commissioner thanked the Panel for their comments and she looked forward to the next round of recruitment.

RESOLVED that the Panel supported the concept of engagement with young people and agreed that the previous recruitment process was well designed and robust. The Panel noted that vetting procedures would be strengthened during the next round of recruitment.

47. Future work programme

(Item D1)

1. A Member asked for the opportunity for the Panel to discuss different ways of working with the Commissioner which would provide benefits for the whole of Kent.
2. The Chairman confirmed that he would welcome any suggestions for collaborative working with the Commissioner's Office and would ask the Officers of the Panel and the Commissioner's Office to work together.
3. On the point of decision making and the Interim Protocol between the Panel and the Commissioner, it was considered that this should be reviewed by the officers and considered at a future meeting.

RESOLVED that Members note the forward work programme and asks the officers to review the interim decision-making protocol.