

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, 3 February 2015.

PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE (Chairman), Mr Gurvinder Sandher (Vice-Chairman), Cllr P Todd, Cllr T Martin, Cllr Mrs S Chandler, Cllr Mrs A Blackmore, Cllr L Wicks, Cllr R Turpin, Cllr M Rhodes, Mr R A Latchford, OBE, Mr G Cowan, Mr Dan McDonald, Cllr K Pugh (Substitute), Cllr M Lowe (Substitute) and Cllr H Scobie (Substitute)

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Campbell (Policy Officer) and Mr J Cook (Scrutiny Research Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

113. Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 4th November 2014
(Item 4)

RESOLVED that, subject to amending the attendance to show Cllr Rhodes was present at the 4th November 2014 meeting, the Panel agree that the minutes of the 4th November 2014 meeting were a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

114. Draft Police and Crime plan 2015/16 and Precept proposal
(Item B1)

1. The Commissioner introduced her draft Police and Crime Plan, explaining that it was a high level strategic document that outlined key spending plans. The Force maintains the relevant delivery plans that will be used to implement the strategic outcomes. The Plan represented a refresh of previous years' versions, the significant alterations being the additional measures taken to respond to reviewed priorities. The Commissioner commented that this annual refresh approach was useful as it kept the stability of maintaining key priorities but allowed the flexibility to respond to changing circumstances. The Plan had been developed through wide consultation, including public engagement, social media, a Policing in Kent conference, and discussions with District, Town and Parish councils. Throughout the consultation, visible community policing remained a key priority.

2. The Commissioner outlined some of the key points of the refreshed plan;

- £200k additional funding per annum for the next three years being provided to the Chief Constable expressly for improving police and partner agency work on dealing with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
- Victim Services are now being commissioned by the Commissioner. The development of the Victim Centre and the associated multi-agency

working agreements represent a good opportunity to improve victim experiences and place them at the heart of policing.

- Increased support for challenging the use of legal highs and the promotion of e-safety.
- Increased emphasis on the key role of partnership working to address the varied issues impacting on young people.

3. The Panel noted the extent of the Commissioner's consultation on the draft Plan and precept and asked about the level of response to consultation. The Commissioner explained that the response to formal consultation had been low but that informal consultation (for example at public meetings) had shown strong support for increasing precept.

4. The Commissioner explained that she sought approval for an increase in the police precept of 1.99%, which would enable the Force to retain 30 officers who would otherwise be lost due to grant reductions. The Panel noted the Commissioner's comment that the police precept in Kent was still well below the national average and that, even with her proposed precept increase, the Force would have to lose 53 officers during 2015/16. In total, the Force would be losing 115 jobs, including 62 civilian police staff. The Commissioner explained that medium term financial planning was being conducted on the basis that the Force budget would need to be reduced by a further £60m by 2019 and that this was based on reasonable rather than worst case scenario assumptions.

5. The Panel expressed support for the work of the Youth Commissioner and asked the Commissioner what her plans were for continuation of this work once the Youth Commissioner completed her contract. Panel members were advised that work had been commissioned to consider how to continue to engage with young people who, in the Commissioner's view, did not engage with Councils. Panel members drew attention to existing channels of communication with young people and reminded the Commissioner of her commitment to discuss her future plans for the Youth Commissioner role with the Panel. The Commissioner undertook to consult with the Panel and the interested parties.

6. The Panel noted the provision of resources to support work to combat child sexual exploitation. The Panel sought information from the Commissioner as to the intended use of the money and were advised that the Chief Constable was developing a plan. Panel members asked the Commissioner to bear in mind the roles of other partners across the County in this work.

7. Panel members welcomed the Commissioner's continued financial commitment to support Community Safety Partnerships and to visible neighbourhood policing. The Panel noted with approval the Commissioner's frequent references to partnership working in her Plan.

8. The Panel noted the Commissioner's intention that there would not be any satellite victim centres across the County and encouraged her to make sure that the victim centre in Ashford linked up with other victim support work going on across the County. The Commissioner explained that the new Victims Centre was on target for completion in April 2015 and explained that the Centre was a hub for victim support

work across the County and a location where both the police Witness Care Team and Victim Support could work together to provide a first class service to victims.

9. The Panel outlined concerns relating to increases in complaints against Kent Police and sought an update as to the Commissioner's views. The Commissioner was requested to provide an update to the next Panel meeting on the action she was taking to hold the Chief Constable to account in light of the report.

10. Panel members sought and received an explanation of the bids made by the Commissioner to the Innovation Fund. These related to Digital Evidence processes, 7 days a week Virtual Court, CSE investment in partnership with the Child Exploitation Online Protection Centre (CEOP) and Liverpool University, in addition to the ongoing Athena Programme which will overhaul Police IT systems.

11. The Commissioner responded to comments relating to privatisation of 'back office' police functions; stating that she and the Chief Constable had considered the approach but could not support its adoption. The Commissioner stated that to reduce the current significant transformational change in policing to one simplistic solution was the wrong strategy at this time. The Commissioner explained that whilst she was not wedded to keeping everything under local control, the Home Secretary was calling for collaboration, not privatisation. The Commissioner highlighted that Kent Police is not a stand-alone organisation and already has a 'mixed economy' approach with cleaning, catering and some IT already contracted out. The Commissioner also explained that much of the back office function is tied in with Essex which had already delivered 15% savings and to unpack this would be foolhardy. The Commissioner expressed her hope that the national structure of police forces would soon be reviewed properly and that this would provide guidance on how to progress such radical organisational changes. With this in mind, the Commissioner stated that whilst everything is always considered she had no intention of implementing piecemeal changes on staffing and would focus instead on developing the savings identified through collaboration with Essex Police.

12. After discussion the Panel decided that it supported the Commissioner's draft plan, noting especially the commitment to partnership working, support for Community Safety Partnerships and the focus on tackling child sexual exploitation. The Panel also approved the Commissioner's proposal to increase the precept by 1.99%

RESOLVED that the Panel support the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan and that the Panel approve the proposed Precept.

115. Commissioner's decisions for November & December
(Item C1)

RESOLVED that the Panel note the Commissioner's decisions.

116. Panel Annual report
(Item D1)

RESOLVED that the Panel approve the Panel Annual Report.

117. Future work programme
(Item D2)

RESOLVED that the Panel require the Commissioner to report on the action she is taking to hold the Chief Constable to account in respect of an increase in Violent Crime to the next Panel meeting.

118. Notes of the Commissioner's Governance Board meeting held on 14th October 2014
(Item E1)

RESOLVED that the Panel note the notes of the Commissioner's Governance Board meeting.