

From: Ann Barnes, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner
To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel
Subject: Partnership working
Item & Date: Item B1 14 April 2015

Executive summary: One of the core principles underpinning the Police and Crime Plan is the value of partnership working and this is also reflected in the Commissioner and Chief Constable's joint vision for policing in the county.

The priorities within the Police and Crime Plan, developed through consultation, are the 'golden thread' that runs through the Commissioner's approach. To reduce duplication and strengthen established services, the Commissioner is committed to working with existing partners whilst ensuring there is effective and proportionate governance. Where required though, the Commissioner will also develop working arrangements with new partners in order to support the Police and Crime Plan priorities.

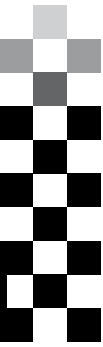
In addition to providing support to both county wide and district based initiatives, the Commissioner has provided funding for three years to identified partners to give certainty in these austere times. There are many examples of the OPCC working successfully with partners and making a real difference, including the victims centre in Ashford and Sexual Assault Referral Clinic.

The Commissioner works with a range of public, voluntary and community sector partners and is represented at a number of strategic partnership boards. In the face of further public sector spending cuts though, there are significant challenges ahead - particularly in terms of contraction in services. However, the Commissioner is committed to working with community safety partners, criminal justice agencies and the voluntary sector to deliver what's important to local communities.

Introduction:

1. Community safety, tackling issues such as anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse, and protecting the vulnerable are not just matters for the police. To deliver effective and sustainable change requires the involvement of statutory organisations such as Local Authorities, fire and rescue, Youth Offending Service and voluntary organisations and community groups.
2. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 put in place a framework for Police and Crime Commissioners to work in partnership. It includes two related, reciprocal duties that are deliberately broad and flexible, to allow partnership working arrangements to develop in a way that is most meaningful locally.
3. Though the two duties are worded slightly differently, their aim is the same - to make sure that local leaders work together to achieve the most effective outcomes:
 - Community safety duty - states the Commissioner and responsible authorities on a Community Safety Partnership must act in co-operation and, in carrying out their functions, 'have regard to' each others' priorities.
 - Criminal justice duty - states the Commissioner and criminal justice organisations must work together, 'so far as is appropriate', to 'provide an efficient and effective criminal justice system for the police area'.





Commitment to partnership working:

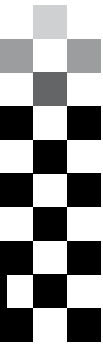
4. One of the core principles underpinning the Police and Crime Plan is the value of partnership working in recognition of the fact that crime and anti-social behaviour cannot be tackled by the police alone. For communities and victims, it does not matter which agency is responsible for the issues they face; what they care about is whether or not the issue is being resolved.
5. In light of the challenging financial environment, the Plan also acknowledges the importance of eradicating 'silo working', reducing duplication and working in collaboration so the community safety and criminal justice system provides a seamless service to victims and witnesses in Kent
6. This commitment is clearly articulated through the Commissioner and Chief Constable's joint vision for policing in the county:

"Our vision is for Kent to be a safe place for people to live, work and visit and by protecting the public from crime and anti-social behaviour, we will allow our communities to flourish. We will work closely with our partners to ensure that a seamless service is provided and that opportunities for joint working are explored. By working with partners and listening to the public we will provide a first class policing service that places the victim first and is visible and accessible. We will ensure local visible community policing is at the heart of everything we do. We will be there when the public need us and we will act with integrity in all that we do."

Approach to partnership working:

7. The priorities within the Police and Crime Plan are the 'golden thread' that runs through the Commissioner's approach to partnership working and commissioning. These priorities have been developed in consultation with key partner agencies to ensure alignment between the Commissioner's approach, partner's priorities and the needs of Kent's communities.
8. There are a number of partnerships in existence in Kent and it is important that duplication is avoided, therefore, the Commissioner is committed to working with existing partners to enhance and strengthen established services. This can be evidenced through the support provided to those organisations and groups documented in the Police and Crime Plan, for example Community Safety Partnerships, Kent Criminal Justice Board and Drug and alcohol Action Teams. Ensuring accountability and effectively monitoring services through existing governance structures, including participation in the business planning process and regular review of performance returns is central to this approach.
9. However, in addition, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) will develop separate working arrangements with new partners to develop projects that support effective delivery of the priorities within the Police and Crime Plan. This may include the development of commissioning prospectuses or direct liaison with providers.
10. Historically, funding to partners including the Community Safety Partnerships was awarded on an annual basis, which affected the viability of projects that were making a significant difference both at a district and county level. To support the delivery of projects by providing greater certainty, the Commissioner has provided funding for three years to identified partners. This has enabled more effective long term planning, and coupled with the monitoring process ensures the 'golden thread' of the Police and Crime Plan is delivered.





11. However, Kent is a large and diverse county, and whilst there are common themes across the county, the Commissioner's approach also recognises that each district may have bespoke and individual needs. A 'one size fits all' approach doesn't necessarily allow for these needs to be met and the Commissioner provides support to both county wide initiatives such as the Independent Domestic Violence Advisers and more district based initiatives such as youth diversion programmes and Community Speedwatch.
12. Examples of successful partnership working include:
- Development of the victims' centre / victims' centred approach, which has seen the OPCC working in collaboration with Kent Police and Victim Support to improve access and support through the victims' centre. This approach has now been extended, with the OPCC jointly chairing the co-design meeting with the Kent Criminal Justice Board, which is tasked with improving the experience of all victims across Kent.
 - The Sexual Assault Referral Clinic (SARC) saw the OPCC working closely with partners, to ensure the delivery of a new fit for purpose SARC. This is now established in Maidstone and replaces the previous service, which was generally accepted as not fit for purpose. Work is ongoing to further develop the provision of this service.
 - Developing support for rural and business communities as both face a number of challenges, which has included re-energising the Crime Rural Advisory Group (CRAG) and the Business Crime Advisory Group.
 - Developing links with organisations representing Kent's diverse communities, such as the Independent Police Advisory Group, to ensure their views are represented.
13. To support delivery of the Police and Crime Plan, the OPCC works with a broad range of public, voluntary and community sector partners. These include:
- Community Safety Partnerships
 - Drug and Alcohol Action Teams
 - Youth Offending Service (YOS)
 - The National Probation Service and recently formed Community Rehabilitation Company
 - Criminal Justice Board
14. In addition to a regular cycle of visits to local Community Safety Partnerships, the PCC's senior officers also represent the Commissioner at a number of strategic partnership boards including:
- The Joint Kent Chiefs Meeting
 - Kent Criminal Justice Board
 - Kent Community Safety Partnership
 - Crisis Care Concordat Steering Group
 - Kent Fire Officers Meeting
 - Medway Drug and Alcohol Group
 - SARC Management Board
15. The partnership landscape in Kent is complex and diverse in nature, which at times can create its own challenges particularly when managing competing demands. It is important that where possible duplication is avoided and the overlap between various structures reduced. During these times of austerity, this ensures a more streamlined and co-ordinated approach to service provision.



16. Engagement with the Commissioner is strong at district, parish and Community Safety Partnership level (including Kent and Medway Community Safety Partnerships), yet the Commissioner feels there are opportunities for further development at county-wide level with other elected leaders.
17. In conclusion, there is a mature and very strong partnership approach in Kent and a number of structures in place to support the delivery of collaborative approaches across a range of topics. The value of a partnership approach in tackling crime and ASB is recognised by the Commissioner and this is reflected in both the Police and Crime Plan and grants provided to partners. The Commissioner believes in supporting a range of organisations as it is important to have diverse services in place for the people of Kent.

Challenges to partnership working:

18. Commissioners hold the ultimate statutory responsibility for resourcing police and crime services and are democratically accountable to the community for that role. Their position as the interface between police, partners and the public places them in a unique position with a perspective on:
- local and national expectations, risks, opportunities and priorities;
 - resilience of local services; and
 - the needs of increasingly diverse communities.
19. The spending cuts since 2010 have already increased local risks and created pressures which have impacted adversely on communities. Nationally, there are examples of partners withdrawing, or threatening to withdraw funding, or organisations increasingly focusing inwards.
20. The impact at a local level of police funding cuts is multiplied when it occurs at the same time as a contraction in other local public services. The contraction in police resource has not been accompanied by any reduction in public or partner expectations. As the only 24/7 service, the police are becoming the agency of 'first and last resort'.
21. However, since most agencies are facing similar austerity cuts, the Commissioner recognises the importance of public services aligning their objectives, funding streams and delivery mechanisms. The Commissioner will continue to work with community safety partners, criminal justice agencies and the voluntary sector to help deliver what's important, locally. Where partnerships work well, the Commissioner will always encourage practices that prevent duplication, reduce costs and tackle issues by using a joined-up approach.
22. The Commissioner recognises that while in some cases she may not have a statutory role, she does have an important enabling role on behalf of the public. For the Commissioner, partnership working is part of core business and integral to the Police and Crime Plan as it is essential in order to effectively reduce crime and tackle anti-social behaviour.
23. Undoubtedly, effective partnership working has led to positive outcomes for the communities of Kent – the county continues to be among the safest to live and work in the UK.

