

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, 2 June 2015.

PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE (Chairman), Cllr P Clokie, Cllr P Todd, Cllr Mrs A Blackmore, Cllr P Fleming, Cllr M Dearden, Cllr B Luker, Mr H Birkby, Mr I S Chittenden, Cllr J Cubitt, Franklin, Cllr H Tejan and Cllr K Pugh (Substitute)

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs A Barnes, Mr A Harper, Mr S Nolan and Mr N Wickens

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

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

126. Election of Chairman & Vice-Chairman *(Item 2)*

Cllr Clokie proposed that Mr Hill be elected Chairman. Mr Hill nominated Gurvinder Sandher as Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED that Mike Hill be elected Chairman and that Gurvinder Sandher be elected Vice-chair.

127. Membership of Panel - post election update *(Item 4)*

1. The Clerk advised the Panel that confirmation of membership from all District Councils was still awaited and that consequently, co-optees had not been formally confirmed. Additionally, the Panel was advised that one of the two independent members, Dan McDonald, had been elected to Medway Council and was therefore no longer eligible to continue as a Panel Member.

2. The following changes to Panel Membership had been recorded in line with District Council Nominations;

- Dartford: Cllr Chris Shippam replaces Cllr Anthony Martin
- Dover: Cllr Keith Morris replaces Cllr Sue Chandler
- Gravesham: Cllr John Cubitt replaces Cllr John Burden
- Medway: Cllr Michael Franklin replaces Cllr Les Wicks and Cllr Habib Tejan replaces Cllr Rupert Turpin
- Tonbridge & Malling: Cllr Brian Luker replaces Cllr Mark Rhodes

RESOLVED that the panel delegate authority to the Head of Democratic Services to take steps to achieve political balance via appropriate co-optees; and that the Head

of Democratic Services facilitate the recruitment of a new independent member to replace Dan McDonald.

128. Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 14th April 2015

(Item 6)

1. The Panel requested that page six, paragraph three be corrected to include 'tackled' in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation.

RESOLVED that subject to the correction, the minutes of the meeting held on the 14th of April 2015 were an accurate record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

129. Chief of Staff confirmation

(Item B1)

1. The Commissioner introduced the report that set out the proposed job description and person specification for her Chief of Staff. The report also explained the number of applications, the selection process and the professional and independent advice the Commissioner had received during the process. The report explained the reasons why the Commissioner had decided to make a temporary appointment and to advertise only amongst staff in the Force and in her Office.

2. The report advised the Panel that, at the conclusion of the selection process, the Commissioner proposed to appoint Mr Adrian Harper. The panel were satisfied that the Commissioner's report provided them with the information set out in Schedule 1(9) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

3. The Panel were advised that Mr Latchford who had been nominated by the Panel, in response to the Commissioner's invitation, to sit as an observer at the final selection process felt the selection process had been carried out fairly and objectively and that a reasonable decision had been made.

4. The Panel sought clarification about whether all applicants were serious, referring to the fact that 2 applicants for the Chief Finance Officer role had withdrawn prior to interview. The Commissioner confirmed that all 3 shortlisted applicants had attended the interviews. Some Panel members expressed disappointment that the Commissioner had sought only internal applicants as they felt external applicants might bring a broader experience and perspective but other Panel members felt that the enhanced understanding of policing that internal applicants would bring was a positive point. The Panel noted that the Commissioner felt she needed to appoint a replacement for Mr Stepney quickly and that the person appointed needed to be fully effective quickly and that these factors had contributed to the decision to advertise internally only. The Panel also noted that the Commissioner had advised the Panel Chairman of her plans in advance and sought advice from other Police and Crime Commissioners.

5. The Panel asked Mr Harper to explain his background. Mr Harper said he had 32 years' experience as a police officer with the MPS and Surrey Police and his current role was Kent Police Crime Registrar. Mr Harper felt that his experience in Forces outside Kent would give him the broader perspective which some Panel members had referred to. Mr Harper assured the Panel that, although he understood this was a temporary appointment his personal intention was to continue working for a number of years.

RESOLVED that the Panel agree that a thorough recruitment process had been undertaken and that they support the Commissioner's appointment of Mr Harper as her Chief of Staff.

130. PCC Annual Report 2014/15
(Item B2)

1. The Commissioner provided a verbal introduction to her report and advised the Panel that the report was presented in advance of the accounts for 2014/15 in order to comply with the Panel's request that the Annual Report be presented as soon as possible after the end of the year to which it referred.

2. The Commissioner drew the Panel's attention to several areas of progress in implementing her Police and Crime Plan. She referred to the opening of the Victim Centre at Compass House which she said was on time and on budget. She also drew the Panel's attention to the implementation of the new policing model; to the improved accuracy of crime recording; and to the contribution of the wider policing family, notably the KCC Community Wardens and the Special Constabulary.

3. The Panel noted that the report was comprehensive and that many of the items in the report had been the subject of full reports and discussion at Panel meetings during the year.

4. The Panel noted particularly the work on victim support described in the report, in which they felt that Kent was leading the country. They also welcomed the improved accuracy of the crime figures.

5. The Panel sought an explanation from the Commissioner about why the Force was working with eastern Forces on technology matters rather than with neighbouring Forces such as Sussex and Hampshire and were advised by the Commissioner that the technology co-operation resulted from the existing strong links with Essex.

6. The Panel noted the introduction of the new policing model and were advised that the Commissioner receives regular reports to her Governance Board on progress.

RESOLVED that the Panel note the Commissioner's Annual Report and that the Policy Officer prepares a Panel report for approval by the Chairman.

131. Proposals for youth engagement following departure of Youth Commissioner
(Item B3)

1. The Commissioner introduced her report on proposals for youth engagement, explaining that the Youth Commissioner had finished her contract in February 2015. The Commissioner praised the Youth Commissioner, stating that she had done very well in the role despite some of the adverse circumstances. The Commissioner stated that she was pleased that the Youth Commissioner role had been created as it was a manifesto promise and that she remained committed to ensuring greater involvement for young people. She accepted that the approach to youth engagement had to change, stating that while a Youth Commissioner was a good concept, the focus on a single young person led to too much pressure and public exposure.

2. The Commissioner explained that to identify appropriate ways of developing the youth engagement model, a workshop had been held with key partners from around the County including youth engagement charities, elected councillors, youth service users, youth parliament representatives and professional youth workers. The outcome of the workshop had informed the Commissioner's decision to set up a Youth Advisory Group (YAG). This group would feature representation from existing youth forums across the county to ensure the focus is on the views of young people. The money previously used to fund the Youth Commissioner post would be ring-fenced for use by the YAG for commissioned work.

3. The Commissioner noted that the Portsmouth University research conducted in 2014 evidenced the need for additional work to understand the needs of victims of crime. This was important as a significant proportion of victims of crime were under 25 and that she hoped that the new proposed model of youth engagement would be effective in capturing their views, concerns and experiences.

4. The Commissioner praised the report delivered by the Youth Commissioner as an example of the practical benefit of actively listening to the views of young people. The Commissioner explained that she had already included several of the report's recommendations in her Police and Crime Plan for 2015/16 though it had to be accepted that some of the recommendations were too resource intensive in the current financial situation.

5. The Chairman commented that the Panel had always been supportive of the Commissioner's commitment to engaging with young people and whilst some had been wary of the Youth Commissioner approach, others had supported it. He added that he was pleased that the Commissioner would continue youth engagement through interactions with existing forums as well her new YAG.

6. Responding to comments from the Panel, the Commissioner explained that she had opted to set up a new youth engagement forum rather than just using existing ones because she wanted to encourage greater collaboration between the various groups. The Commissioner was aware of the positive contribution made by members of the various groups such as District Youth Advisory Groups and the Youth Parliaments and she was keen to ensure that they were represented at her YAG meetings.

7. The Panel discussed the past issues related to the Youth Commissioner and how they had been addressed, including consideration of advice or comments made by the Panel at previous meetings and whether the appointment of a YC had been the best option. Members expressed varying views on the options around youth engagement but the Panel agreed that the Youth Commissioner had done excellent work; including her recently published Youth Engagement Report and that she should be commended.

8. The Panel agreed with the Commissioner that there were risks in only engaging with civically active and involved young people, as this would miss opportunities to build links with disaffected and marginalised sections of the community who are often at greater risk of being involved in crime and anti-social behaviour. The Panel highlighted certain groups within the community that they felt should be engaged with including the Gypsy and Traveller community, those coping with homelessness and those from new communities. Panel Members offered to provide the Commissioner with details of relevant charities and support workers in districts that could assist in achieving broad representation.

9. The Commissioner thanked the Panel for the offers of support and assistance, explaining that she was keen to ensure the new approach to youth engagement would be holistic in nature with the capacity to fund additional commissioned work with a wider selection of the community.

RESOLVED that the Panel note the Commissioner's Youth Advisory Group model of youth engagement and that the Commissioner be asked to provide the Panel with an update in early 2016.

132. Delivering value for money *(Item B4)*

1. The Commissioner advised the Panel that Victims were at the heart of all policing processes and that Kent Police does provide value for money, noting that Kent has the 4th lowest policing cost per head in the country. The Commissioner confirmed that any underspends achieved were funnelled back into the Force or Community Safety Partnerships, ensuring that all relevant funding is used to protect the public and promote good community safety.

2. The Commissioner explained that recent inspections by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), including Kent's first PEEL assessment (Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy) and the value for money profiles were very positive, reporting positively that Kent Police provided good value for money. Since financial restrictions led to savings having to be made, 20% of the workforce has left the organisation while greater investment has been made in technology and innovation development. The digitisation of police work (ensuring all data and processing can be managed on shared secure systems) was an excellent long term investment that would assist the whole criminal justice process.

3. In terms of achieving greater long term value for money and general efficiencies, the Commissioner commented that she would like to see more Forces collaborate in the sharing of 'back-office' functions as Kent and Essex already do. Developing and sharing this further would require a co-ordinated approach, as the Commissioner had explained at previous Panel meetings.

4. Panel members pointed out that the Commissioner had drawn attention to areas where HMIC had assessed that Kent provided good value for money and asked whether there were areas where HMIC had said that Kent did not provide such good value for money, and what action the Commissioner had taken. The Commissioner said that crime recording costs had gone up and she was happy with the reasons for this. The Commissioner said that the Force was performing well and she would have been concerned if the profiles had shown it was not performing well. She also acknowledged Estates expenditure and Public Protection Unit costs as areas where she was working with the Force to reduce costs.

5. The Commissioner advised the Panel that it was expected that Kent Police would have to find a further £60m in savings in the near future and that this would place additional strain on the service. However, the Panel was advised that Kent Police has a good record of financial planning, with reserves in place and a secure policing model.

6. The Panel asked questions in relation to additional funding streams being considered by the Commissioner, including the Infrastructure Levy. Mr Nolan, the Commissioner's Chief Finance Officer, explained that Kent Police and the Commissioner considered all possible funding opportunities to ensure that all appropriate sources could be tapped to support delivery of policing in Kent. Views were exchanged in relation to funding processes for strategic and service delivery budgets.

RESOLVED that the Panel note the report.

133. Complaints against the PCC and Policy Review
(Item D1)

1. Mr Campbell advised the Panel that the number of complaints had increased compared to last year but that the overall figure remained very low. He explained that three complaints had been heard by the Complaints Sub-committee and that none had been upheld.

2. Responding to Panel questions, Mr Campbell explained that, in accordance with Provisions concerning disapplication in the Complaints Regulations, complaints deemed to be vexatious or an abuse of process were not considered by the complaints sub-committee. It was explained that the Commissioner's Chief of Staff, acting as the Monitoring Officer, made the decision on when to disapply the regulations for complaints but that, as agreed by the Panel, this was discussed with the Panel's officers on each occasion. Mr Campbell confirmed that no changes were required to the complaints process in terms of policy or legislative change.

RESOLVED that the Panel note the report.

134. Future work programme
(Item D2)

RESOLVED that the Panel note the future work programme.

135. Minutes of the Commissioner's Governance Board meeting held on 25th February 2015
(Item E1)

RESOLVED that the Panel note the Governance Board Minutes.