

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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### 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, 17 November 2015.

PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE (Chairman), Mr Gurvinder Sandher (Vice-Chairman), Cllr A Horton (Substitute for Mr A H T Bowles), Cllr G Galpin (Substitute for Cllr P Clokie), Mr T L Shonk (Substitute for Cllr L Fairbrass), Cllr M Franklin, Cllr R Hogarth (Substitute for Cllr P Fleming), Cllr B Luker, Cllr R Wells (Substitute for Cllr C Shippam), Cllr K Morris, Cllr Sloan, Cllr P Todd, Cllr F Wilson, Mr R A Latchford, OBE, Cllr H Tejan, Dr M R Eddy, Cllr J Burden and Mrs E Bolton

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

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

#### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

##### **147. Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 22 September 2015** (Item 4)

1. One Member noted the comments at the previous meeting about the Force's use of Body Worn Cameras and the recent press coverage regarding their cost and value for money. The Commissioner was asked for the rationale behind the choice of camera purchased and whether she considered them to be value for money. The Commissioner explained that a business case was submitted before any money was released for the body worn cameras. The Commissioner was content that they demonstrated value for money, they were specialist pieces of equipment which were securely encrypted, with built in GPS, auto-delete functions and they had been procured in compliance with complex EU/UK rules, there was a statement on the Commissioner's website regarding this issue.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2015 were an accurate record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

##### **148. Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 26 October 2015** (Item 5)

1. The Chairman reminded Members that this minute was the open summary of the exempt item discussed at the Panel meeting on 26 October. The Chairman had received a letter from the IPCC in response to the Panel's letter of 27 October. This letter had been circulated to Panel Members by email on 3 November 2015. The Chairman said he had received an assurance from the Commissioner's Chief of Staff that he had put in place a system to regularly check the insurance documents of the Commissioner and any of her staff who drive on business.

RESOLVED that the open minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2015 were an accurate record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

**149. Update on Victim Centre and Victim Support Work**  
*(Item B1)*

1. The Commissioner introduced the report highlighting some of the key points regarding Compass House and Victim Support work. Members were given an open invitation to visit Compass House which the Commissioner said was a blueprint for delivering victim services.
2. In response to a question the Commissioner explained that she did not envisage satellite 'Compass Houses' being rolled out across Kent, instead it's about providing local services for local victims of crime and making best use of services that already exist around the county. The Commissioner said that despite the financial climate, the core victim service will always be provided; any reduction in funding would not impact on this but have to come from the provision of specialist services. The Commissioner added that to help specialist services such as charities apply for funding, her Office had organised training on how to effectively write and submit bids.
3. A Member asked about paragraph 13 of the report, the service would reach an estimated 14,000 more victims than the previous Ministry of Justice model, how had this been done? The Commissioner explained that the use of Compass House as a call-centre meant that victims could access services directly, instead of going through what was effectively a 'middle man'; every penny of funding was spent on victims.
4. A number of members congratulated the Commissioner on the facilities provided at Compass House. In response to a question the Commissioner confirmed that the main constraint of running the centre was funding, it was essential to target funding to ensure it was used most effectively. Mr Nolan explained that £1million was spent on victim services at Compass House which often took the first phone call from a victim and then directed victims to specialist support services. The Commissioner had also provided grants to fund a range of specialist services.
5. One Member asked how services could be expected to continue without any certainty about their funding and their future and the Commissioner explained that all the funding available had been and would continue to be distributed to services for victims but if funding wasn't available it couldn't be given out. The first phone call from victims was vitally important.
6. The Chairman commented on the facilities and how impressed he was with Compass House.

RESOLVED that Members note the Commissioner's Update on Victim Centre and Victim Support work.

**150. Protecting the Public from Harm**  
*(Item B2)*

1. The Chairman asked that, in due course, a report be provided to the Panel on the long term effect on Kent Police and their resources of recent events in Paris. Other Members also requested this information as appropriate.
2. The Commissioner introduced the report and highlighted the main areas within it. The number one priority for the public continued to be visible community policing, but there was also a need to maintain specific specialist resources to effectively deal with spontaneous incidents. The Commissioner stated that if ever there was a time not to reduce spending on policing it was now and that she would write to the Home Secretary to set out the uniqueness of Kent, including its position as the gateway to Europe.
3. One Member referred to the problem of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and the role played by taxi-drivers, lodging houses, hotels etc. The Commissioner explained that the Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation boards for Kent and Medway had strategic oversight, the CSE team was new and partnership working was essential in this area, every authority and agency had a responsibility to report any concerns.
4. Referring to the letter the Commissioner was due to send to the Home Secretary one Member requested that it also refer to Dover District and the special circumstances experienced around the Docks.
5. In response to a question about a backlog in cases of Child Sexual Exploitation the Commissioner explained that she was not aware of the matter being referred to and so was unable to comment.
6. A Member asked about cross border working and the Commissioner confirmed that there was a large amount of cross border work going on, particularly with Essex. Due to its depth and complexity, the Commissioner felt she couldn't do justice to collaborative working at this meeting and offered to report back to the Panel.
7. With reference to hate crime the Commissioner was asked how much partnership work was taking place with local authorities. The Commissioner said she had recently attended a Community Safety Partnership meeting in Swale, the Community Liaison Officers did invaluable work with hard to reach and new and emerging communities. The Chairman requested that this be revisited next year and agreed that partnership working was increasingly important.

RESOLVED that Panel Members note the report on Protecting the Public from Harm; that the Commissioner report to the next meeting on the impact of events in Paris on policing in Kent; and that the Panel receives an update report in summer 2016 on hate crime.

**151. Financial Planning for 2016/17 Onwards**  
*(Item B3)*

1. The Commissioner introduced this report explaining that it was extremely difficult to plan for the future when there was limited information about how much funding would be received, although confirmation was expected near to Christmas. There had been £61.4million cuts to police funding in Kent since 2010, there were

reasonable Reserves and recorded crime had reduced. A decision had been made by the Home Office not to pursue the revision of the funding formula at this time and this introduced a further continuing element of uncertainty. The Commissioner considered that there were likely to be further cuts of between 25-40% to the Force budget over the next 5 years. There was an increasing focus on better use of and developing technology, such as Body Worn Cameras; reducing numbers of Police Officers would be a last resort, however this would be difficult bearing in mind 80% of the Force's budget was staffing costs.

2. A Member referred to the non-pay efficiencies and the references to restructuring within the report. Mr Nolan explained that non-pay efficiencies related to procurement savings, better utilisation of property, and targeted use of specialist facilities and lease arrangements etc. Responding to the restructuring question the Commissioner explained that an example of such restructuring had been the criminal justice units, there were previously two units and these had been rationalised to one, staff had been offered the opportunity to move with the unit.
3. One Member referred to the Government's commitment of more investment in specialist services by 2020, however in his experience Parish Councils were concerned about not seeing police on the streets and police response times. There was also a query about the 'delaying' of local policing. The Commissioner explained that the present police model was the local district model and this would remain in the short term. Delaying referred to the removal, for example, of one Chief Inspector rank where there was the opportunity for two divisions to share a Chief Inspector.
4. Following a discussion about the responsibility of district commanders it was suggested that if there was dissatisfaction with the levels of service received from the district commanders this be discussed outside of the meeting.
5. In relation to the savings from further assumed staff turnover of £2.5million the Commissioner was asked about dissatisfaction amongst staff. The Commissioner disagreed that there was general dissatisfaction and explained the £2.5million represented the money saved when officers or staff left at the top of their pay scale and were replaced at a lower pay scale. One Member considered that there were added difficulties with the loss of experience and operational knowledge. The Commissioner stated that Kent's workforce should reflect the county and new officers benefitted the Force. Another Member referred to the previous dissatisfaction comment and it was established that this related to police staff and the Commissioner offered to discuss this with the Panel Member who raised it and the Chief Inspector.
6. The Commissioner was asked whether she had explored the potential savings from combining police forces. The Commissioner explained that there were close links with Essex Police and millions of pounds of savings had been made by sharing services and close collaboration. The Commissioner confirmed that while it was possible to formally integrate and combine police forces she was not sure that this was what the people of Kent would want.
7. In the short term the Commissioner considered that the current policing model was sustainable, however she said this was unlikely to remain the case in the medium term if cuts were to the levels suggested.

8. One Member referred to problems within the Thanet District, which he represented, where there was a concern about a lack of policing. The Commissioner explained that the Force had lost a huge number of officers due to funding cuts and the demand for policing had unfortunately not reduced. In response to a further comment about the problems in Thanet the Commissioner explained that there was a Task Force in each district which would deal with persistent issues and the problems described by the Panel Member should be discussed with the relevant district commander.
9. The Commissioner said that the planned budget for 2016/17 assumed a 1% increase in receipts from the precept due to new buildings. The Commissioner said she intended to stick to her plan of increasing the precept by 1.99% if the Government continued to set this as the cap above which a referendum would be needed. If the cap was removed there would be further discussions with the Panel over the appropriate level of increase.
10. The Chairman congratulated the Commissioner on the 'outstanding' grading that Kent Police had received from HMIC for financial planning. He said that the lack of clarity about funding and increased demand was understood and it was essential that the Home Office were aware of the demands on Kent Police. The Chairman urged the Commissioner to make this point strongly to the Home Office.

RESOLVED that Members note the Financial Planning for 2016/17 Onwards report.

**152. Commissioner's Decisions**  
(Item C1)

1. The Chairman invited Members to question the Commissioner on the decisions recently made. One Member referred to the approval for Kent Police to evaluate unmanned aircraft (drones) to support policing activity. The Member had seen these tested previously and raised a number of points that the Commissioner may wish to consider such as potential limited time in the air, battery life, constraints in wet weather and how these could be overcome. The Commissioner thanked the Member for the comments and would ensure these were discussed.

RESOLVED that Members of the Panel note the Commissioner's Key Decisions – October 2015.

**153. Future work programme**  
(Item D1)

RESOLVED that the Panel note the Future Work Programme.

**154. Exempt minute of Independent Police Complaints Commission discussion held on 26 October at Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel**  
(Item E1)

1. The Panel resolved that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 & 3 of part 1 of schedule 12A of the Act.

2. Mrs Barnes, Mr Harper and Mr Nolan left the meeting.

RESOLVED that the exempt minute of the meeting held on 26 October was an accurate record and that it be signed by the Chairman.