

Report by: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel

SUBJECT: Kent Police and Crime Commissioner's draft Police and Crime Plan 2013-17 and proposed precept for 2013/14

Date: 5 February 2013

DECISIONS

- The Panel to be informed of the outcome of any discussions between the Commissioner and the Chief Constable on PCSO powers;
- The Panel to be provided with the outcome of the police resource deployment mapping exercise and details of the intended numbers and deployment of mobile police stations; and
- That the Commissioner's proposed precept for 2013/14 be approved

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the Commissioner publicises the powers of PCSO's;
- That the Youth Commissioner, when appointed, should work closely with existing agencies and arrangements to engage with young people in Kent and Medway;
- That the Commissioner provides information to the Panel in due course on what the Local Policing Forums are achieving and how they are working with existing democratic processes;
- That the Commissioner investigates the possibility of compiling some statistics to identify the extent to which alcohol and /or drugs are factors in crimes even if the offences are not about alcohol or drug use;
- That the Commissioner increases the number of specific references to "Kent and Medway" within the final Police and Crime Plan;
- That the Police and Crime Plan includes a willingness to work with social housing providers on issues associated with crime and anti-social behaviour; and
- That the Commissioner shares her thinking on grants for 2014/15 with the Panel at the earliest possible stage.

Background

1. The Panel have a statutory duty under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and associated Regulations to:

- Review and report on the Commissioner's draft Police and Crime Plan; and
- Review and report on the Commissioner's proposed level of precept.

In addition the Panel may:

- Make any recommendations on the draft plan or proposed precept; and
- By a two thirds majority, veto the proposed precept

Draft Police and Crime Plan

2. The Panel were pleased to have, in addition to the draft plan a full presentation by the Commissioner of her proposals. The panel welcomed the Commissioner's draft plan and acknowledged the work that was involved in producing a comprehensive document in the short period since her election in November 2012.
3. The Panel welcomed and supported the Commissioner's commitment to increased visible policing and supported her plan to increase the number of PCSO's by 60 and the number of police officers by 20, both by June 2013. The Panel noted the assurance in the Commissioner's presentation that the Chief Constable supported her commitment to these increased visible resources. The Panel were aware that in some other Force areas the potential legal powers of PCSO's are used to a fuller extent. While accepting the Commissioner's point that this is an operational matter for the Chief Constable to determine, the Panel wished to be kept informed of any discussions the Commissioner may have with the Chief Constable on this issue. The Panel also recommended that the existing powers of PCSO's be publicised by the Commissioner.
4. The Panel supported the Commissioner's intention to appoint a Youth Commissioner and recommended that, when appointed, the person should work closely with existing agencies and arrangements to engage with young people in Kent and Medway.
5. The Panel were pleased to hear that the Commissioner had reflected further on her original idea of local Policing Boards and now intended to pilot the concept of Local Policing Forums, starting in Maidstone. The Panel stressed that Forums must work closely with existing democratic processes and recommended that the Commissioner should provide information to the Panel in due course on what the Forums are achieving and how they are working with existing democratic processes.
6. The Panel expressed interest in the Commissioner's plan for mini mobile police stations and noted her assurance that they would not consume the same amount of staff resources as had previously been used to staff local police stations. The Panel noted that, at present, the Commissioner did not have detailed information about the

numbers of mobile police stations or their planned deployment. The Panel noted her intention to work with the Force to map current resource deployment throughout Kent and Medway and to use that information to guide the decision-making on mobile police stations. The Panel agreed to ask the Commissioner to provide them with the outcome of the mapping exercise and to report back with the intended numbers and deployment. The Panel noted the Commissioner's assurance that her commitment to mobile police stations would be implemented by the end of 2013.

7. The Panel drew attention to the apparent link between alcohol, drugs and crime and recommended that the Commissioner investigate the possibility of compiling some statistics to identify the extent to which alcohol and/or drugs were a factor in crimes even if the offences were not to do with alcohol or drugs.
8. The draft Plan, and the Commissioner's responsibilities, extend to the residents of both Kent and Medway but the Panel commented that there was only a very limited number of occasions when Medway was specifically referred to in the draft Plan. The Panel felt it important to make the scope of the Plan clear and recommended that the Commissioner increase the number of specific references to "Kent and Medway" within the final plan.
9. The Panel welcomed the Commissioner's intention to work with Housing Associations on issues to do with crime and anti-social behaviour. The Panel were pleased to note the Commissioner assurance that she is willing to work with social housing providers as well as Housing Associations. The Panel recommended that her Plan be amended to reflect this intention.
10. The Panel welcomed the Commissioner's intention, announced during her presentation, to give grants at the same level as in 2012/13 and commended her for finding the money necessary to offset an 11% reduction in the grant she received from Government for this purpose. The panel noted her assurance that the grant should be used for projects rather than staff "wherever possible". The Panel pointed out that the funding was a one-off decision for 2013/14 but appreciated that, at this stage, the Commissioner was not able to give any assurance about grant levels in 2014/15. The Panel recommended that the Commissioner share her thinking on grants for 2014/15 with the Panel at the earliest possible stage.

Proposed Precept

11. The Commissioner advised the Panel that she had found support for her proposed precept increase both during her election campaign and in her consultations on the draft plan and budget. The Panel noted the Commissioner's explanation that, although she could have received a 1% one-off Government grant increase had she chosen not to increase the precept this might have created a financial problem in 2014/15 and could not sensibly have been used to increase staff, which was her reason for raising the precept. The Panel asked the Commissioner why she had not increased the precept by 3.6%, which she could have done without a referendum and noted her explanation that she judged 2% to be both necessary and reasonable.

12. Having considered the reasons put forward by the Commissioner the Panel approved the proposed 2% precept increase.