

## **Annual Report of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel for 2015**

1. During the year the membership of the Panel was adjusted following Council elections to ensure appropriate representation of the political parties in Kent and Medway. The Panel currently comprises 12 Conservative, one UKIP and one Liberal Democrat Member; these are Leader nominations from each district council, Medway Council and KCC. The Panel also co-opts one additional Member from Medway in recognition of the size of Medway and then 3 additional Council Members to, as far as practicable, ensure political balance across Kent and Medway (one UKIP and two Labour Members). Gurvinder Sandher remained as one of the two required independent members and Elaine Bolton was appointed as an independent member in place of Dan MacDonald, who stood down following his election as a Medway councillor. Mike Hill was Chairman and Gurvinder Sandher Vice-Chair throughout the year.

### **Meetings**

2. During the year the Panel met 6 times and the Complaints Sub-Panel met once. In addition to the formal meetings Panel members also met with the Commissioner and her staff for a briefing on the work of her Office. The Chairman and Vice-Chair held meetings with the Commissioner from time to time to assist and support the smooth running of Panel business.

### **Panel business**

3. The Panel met its statutory duty to consider and make recommendations on the Commissioner's draft Police and Crime plan and her proposed precept. The Panel supported the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan and approved her recommended 2% precept increase.
4. The Panel met its statutory duty to consider the Commissioner's Annual Report and accounts for 2014/15. In noting the accounts the Panel congratulated the PCC and the Force on their work so far in managing the financial pressures successfully.
5. The Panel also held a confirmation hearing for the Commissioner's new Chief of Staff and approved her proposed appointment of Mr Harper.
6. The Panel received 2 reports during the year on the Commissioner's work to support victims and the establishment of a Victim Centre. The Chairman and Vice-Chair also visited the Centre, accompanied by the Commissioner. The Panel expressed its support for this work.
7. Following the Commissioner's decision to create a Youth Advisory Group after the end of the second Youth Commissioner's term, the Panel considered a report on youth engagement. The Panel supported the work and the decision to seek views from a wider group of young people, while noting that this should not be limited to the civic-minded but should also seek views from hard-to-reach groups.
8. Following the HMIC report into crime recording data accuracy in 2014 the Panel sought and received 2 reports on crime recording and crime performance. The Panel were pleased to note that recording accuracy is now at 96% and were also pleased to see that, once data at this level of accuracy was available for a full twelve month period, it showed reducing levels of crime. The Panel commended the Commissioner and the Chief Constable for their progress in this area.
9. During the year the Panel also received and noted reports on value for money, working with the business community and the work of the Commissioner's Ethics Committee. The Panel

received a report on complaints against the Commissioner and were pleased to note that, as in the previous year, the number of complaints was very low and none had been upheld.

10. The Force received a critical HMIC report on its Custody suites and the Panel sought and received assurances from the Commissioner that the issues identified were being addressed and that she was holding the Chief Constable to account for achieving the necessary improvements.
11. In September 2014 the Panel Chairman was told of a possible misconduct matter involving the PCC and, in accordance with Regulations, arranged to refer the matter to the IPCC to investigate. The Panel received and considered an IPCC report of their investigation in October 2015. The Panel expressed its concern at the time to investigate and to produce the report and also concluded that the whole episode had caused damage to the PCC herself, to her Office and to the administration of justice.

### **Commissioner's decisions**

12. The Commissioner met her responsibility to inform the Panel of decisions of significant public interest at each meeting. Towards the end of the year a format was adopted which enabled the Panel to understand more fully the reasons for those decisions. Generally, decisions were noted by the Panel but there were a few occasions when members sought clarity or further explanation, which the Commissioner provided. The Commissioner also published details of expenditure in excess of £500 and Panel members were briefed by officers on expenditure of particular interest.