

Report by: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel

SUBJECT: Kent Police and Crime Commissioner's updated Police and Crime Plan - 2016/17

Date: 8th September 2016

PANEL DECISION

That the Panel supports the updated Police and Crime Plan.

Background

1. The Panel has 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;

In addition the Panel may:

- Make any recommendations on the draft plan
2. Although the Panel had already considered (in February 2016) a Police and Crime plan for 2016/17, presented by the previous Commissioner, Section 5 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 requires a Commissioner to produce a Police and Crime Plan in the financial year in which an election is held, and as soon as practicable after an election. It then requires the Panel to consider and report on that draft Plan.

Report

3. The Panel were provided with the Commissioner's draft updated Police and Crime Plan, together with a report explaining the main changes. The Panel were satisfied that the draft Plan met the legal requirements placed on the Commissioner. The Panel noted that, as the plan was being introduced partway through the year, the budget and medium-term financial strategy were unchanged, except for an additional £146,000 provided by the Ministry of Justice to support child victims of sexual assault.
4. The Panel noted that the updated Plan honoured the commitments made in the previous Plan for commissioning allocations to Community Safety partnerships and others. The Panel also noted that the updated Plan contained changes to governance arrangements with an increased focus on the Commissioner's Governance Board, where the Commissioner holds the Chief Constable to account in a meeting held in public. The Panel noted the Commissioner's invitation to all Panel members to attend meetings.

5. The Panel noted that the updated plan was based on the six-point Plan put forward by the Commissioner during the election and that mental health was a “golden thread” running through the Plan.
6. The Panel noted that value for money appeared to be given a higher priority than in the previous Plan and asked what the Commissioner intended. The Commissioner explained the collaboration work being undertaken with Essex in relation to back office work and also drew attention to the options to collaborate more closely with Kent Fire and Rescue Service. The Commissioner also commented that he saw opportunities to work more closely with others and referred in particular to the KCC Community Warden service.
7. The Panel asked whether the budget still contained provision for additional firearms officers, as provided for in the previous Plan. The Commissioner confirmed that funding for 24 additional officers remained in the budget, and it was an operational decision for the Chief Constable whether he chose to recruit a higher number. The Panel noted that the Commissioner was working with the Chief Constable to encourage officers to consider volunteering for this role but noted the difficulties as other Forces were also seeking additional officers.
8. The Panel asked about the proportion of the pay budget that was spent on overtime and asked whether this money could be better spent on additional officers. The Commissioner explained that, of the £258m pay budget, approximately £5m related to police officer overtime and £1m related to police staff overtime (including PCSO's). The Panel felt this was a very low proportion and that it could be shown separately in the budget to highlight the relatively low proportion.
9. The Panel noted with approval the emphasis in the Plan to increase the visible presence of police officers, noted the intention to recruit police officers and asked whether this was replacing losses or was a net gain. The Commissioner confirmed that the budget would enable a net gain of personnel to officer strength of 3260 and PCSO strength of 300.
10. The Panel pointed out that the Commissioner's priorities, based on his six-point plan, placed emphasis on local policing, which they felt probably reflected the priorities of local people and asked about the Commissioner's commitment to national priorities and strategic policing issues. The Commissioner explained that he was fully committed to national priorities and that he felt that local people would also understand Kent's strategic position and the need to devote resources to counter terrorism and other national priorities.

Conclusion

11. After discussion the Panel supported the updated Plan.