

Report by: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel

SUBJECT: Kent Police and Crime Commissioner's Annual Report for 2016/17

Date: 20th July 2017

1. Police and Crime Commissioners have a statutory duty under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and associated Regulations to prepare an annual report on:-

- the exercise of the their functions in each financial year, and
- the progress which has been made in the financial year in meeting the police and crime objectives in their police and crime plan.

Police and Crime Panels must review this report at a public meeting and must make a report or recommendations on the annual report. Commissioners must, in turn, produce a response to the Panel's report and any recommendation and this response is to be published in a manner determined by the Panel.

2. The Panel was provided with a copy of the Commissioner's Annual Report for 2016/17. At the Panel meeting on 20th July the Commissioner provided a verbal introduction to his report.
3. The Commissioner drew the Panel's attention to several areas of progress. In particular he noted the increase in police officer numbers, the first increase for several years. He also advised the Panel that the Force had recruited additional firearms officers and was now near to the planned number. The Commissioner also told the Panel that he was pleased to report his support for maintaining the number of PCSO's at 300 and that the Volunteer Police Cadet Scheme had been established.
4. The Commissioner drew attention to the funding he had provided to support people with mental health issues in order to decrease demand on the police. He pointed out that he had provided funding to help the Force clear a backlog of applications for firearms licenses.
5. The Commissioner drew the Panel's attention to his duty to challenge the Force where necessary and said that he had challenged the Force on its use of reserves and had refused to agree to some projects where the business case was not convincing enough.
6. The Commissioner also said that he had improved engagement with Councils, MP's and Ministers across the political spectrum.
7. The Panel was pleased to note the establishment of the Volunteer Police Cadet Scheme and asked for a full report in due course. While expressing support for the maintenance of PCSO numbers the Panel sought an assurance that they would be deployed in the communities and that each PCSO would remain in a particular area

for as long as possible. The Panel noted the Commissioner's comment that he continued to press the Chief Constable to give this assurance.

8. Panel members said that some of their constituents took the view that there was little point in reporting incidents to the police as they did not do anything. The Commissioner pointed out that resources were stretched but that reporting was always important as it could affect funding.
9. The Panel drew the Commissioner's attention to his priority of "cutting crime" and asked if it was being achieved. The Commissioner acknowledged that recorded crime had increased and that although certain categories of crime had decreased violent crime was up and certain crime categories, notably cybercrime, had been introduced to the figures.
10. The Panel asked whether there was a hierarchy of priorities in the Commissioner's Plan as he had, on separate occasions, highlighted various priorities as being the most important. The Panel noted the Commissioner's view that he had 3 guiding principles set out in his "Plan on a Page" and that all his priorities related to these principles.
11. The Panel noted expenditure on Smartphones for officers (£2m) and asked whether the money could have been better spent elsewhere. The Commissioner advised that this was capital expenditure which could not be spent on revenue matters but also said use of the smartphones would save each officer about one and a half hours per shift in reduced paperwork.
12. The Panel drew the Commissioner's attention to his priority of focussing on front-line policing but noted that his report did not mention the 101 number which, the Panel felt, was part of the front-line service. The Panel noted the Commissioner's view that the 101 service was not as good as it should be.
13. The Panel drew attention to the reference in the report to enhanced public engagement and asked what additional information the Commissioner had gained from this consultation. The Commissioner advised the Panel that it had improved the quality of information he received and that it enabled more people to speak to him directly, when they might not have been so willing to engage with the police directly and gave use of the 101 number and child grooming as examples.
14. The Panel asked about the effectiveness of body worn cameras. The Commissioner advised that there was evidence that they had led to a decline in frivolous complaints and also evidence of earlier guilty pleas when the camera evidence was clear. The Panel asked for a full report at a later date.
15. The Panel received and noted the Commissioner's Annual report for 2016/17.