

Report by: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel

SUBJECT: Kent Police and Crime Commissioner's Annual Report for 2017/18

Date: 19th July 2018

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 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.

2. The Panel was provided with a copy of the Commissioner's Annual Report for 2017/18. The Annual Report included Key Financial Information for 2017/18. The Commissioner also used the Annual Report to discharge his statutory duty to report on the Ministry of Justice's Grant Agreement for Victim Services and on the number of deaths and serious incidents in Kent police custody suites. At the Panel meeting on 19th July the Commissioner provided a verbal introduction to his report.
3. The Commissioner explained that, while the accounts had received an unqualified opinion, he had decided, in the interests of transparency, to report that a technical error in the Police financial systems had recorded small overpayments over a number of years. This had led to £1m in unspent funds being accumulated, which having now been identified had been added to the reserves. He also reassured the Panel that the technical glitch had been fixed.
4. The Commissioner drew the Panel's attention to several areas of progress. In particular he drew attention to the introduction by the Chief Constable of the New Horizon policing model, in support of his Police and Crime plan, which he said had maintained focus on neighbourhood policing while also providing resources to specialist units, such as the missing children and exploitation unit, which had resulted in a significant reduction in officer time dealing with such cases. The Commissioner pointed out that, unlike in some other areas, he had been able to use the additional funding to increase the number of police officers and to maintain the number of PCSO's.
5. 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 gave examples of where these projects were starting to produce positive results. The Commissioner also drew attention to the funding he had provided for restorative

justice, which had doubled from the previous year. The Commissioner said that there was good evidence that restorative justice was helping to reduce re-offending.

6. The Commissioner said that there had been an increase in the number of cases of modern day slavery and child sexual exploitation and that the projection was that cases of these types would continue to increase in the future.
7. Finally the Commissioner drew attention to his continued support for volunteering and for the Community Safety Partnerships, where he had maintained funding levels from the previous year.
8. The Panel drew attention to the reducing level of reserves and asked whether 3% general reserve was considered adequate. The Commissioner explained that, while not a formal recommendation, 3% was considered by HMICFRS to be an adequate provision. Panel members then drew attention to the capital budget which had been significantly underspent. The Commissioner explained that this was due to several factors, including national projects that were progressing more slowly than planned and a degree of over-ambitious planning by the Force. The Commissioner said that closer monitoring was being introduced together with a more flexible approach which would enable other projects to be undertaken if those originally planned fell behind schedule. The Panel were pleased to note the unqualified opinion on the accounts and also the fact that the accounts had been closed very quickly after the end of the financial year.
9. The Panel asked the Commissioner how he held the Chief Constable to account in respect of deaths in custody and the Commissioner explained that he received data on the use of force generally at his Performance and Delivery Board and that when particular reports were received he met with the Chief Constable to discuss them.
10. The Panel commended the Commissioner on the survey he was conducting into cyber-bullying and sought an assurance that he would continue to invest in projects that helped to tackle an increasing problem. The Commissioner said that, once the survey results were known, he intended to develop ideas further in the light of those results.
11. The Panel asked about the level of interest in volunteer PCSO's and the Commissioner explained that, while there is interest, progress is quite slow, most likely because Kent police is recruiting to many other roles - regular officers, police staff, PCSO's and Special Constables - at the same time.
12. In conclusion the Panel commended the progress shown in the Annual Report and also commended the Force on its exceptional performance over a number of years, noting that it had been rated as good or outstanding in every category of HMIC FRS PEEL assessment over several years.
13. The Panel received and noted the Commissioner's Annual Report for 2017/18 and asked the Commissioner to pass on to the Force the congratulations of the Panel.