

KENT AND MEDWAY POLICE & CRIME PANEL

By: Joel Cook & Anna Taylor – Panel Officers
To: Kent and Medway Police & Crime Panel
Subject: Draft Panel Annual Report – 2019/20
Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

Preparation and publication of an Annual Report by the Panel is a legal requirement under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

The Panel is asked to consider and approve the below content for the 2019/20 Panel Annual Report.

Draft Annual Report

Introduction

1. This report summarises the work of the Panel between February 2019 and February 2020. It follows annual reports that have been produced every year since the Panel was established in November 2012.

Meetings

2. During this period (2019) the Panel met 4 times – 6 February, 12 June, 24 September and 21 November. The Chairman also met and otherwise communicated with the Commissioner to assist and support the smooth running of Panel business.

Panel business

3. The Panel met its statutory duty in February to consider and make recommendations on the Commissioner's refreshed draft "Safer in Kent: The Community Safety and Justice Plan 2017-21", as well as his proposed budget and precept. The Panel supported the Plan.
4. The Panel unanimously approved the Commissioner's proposed maximum permitted precept increase of £24 for the year for an average Band D, which equated to a 14.2% precept increase. The Panel noted that this raised an additional circa £16.6m for policing in Kent which would help to pay for things like the rising costs of pay and national insurance, pensions and vehicle insurance, there was also an intention to recruit another 180 additional police officers. The Panel also recognised that the Commissioner had required the Force to make a further £10million of efficiency

savings in 2019/20. [The published report of the Panel's view of the Plan and Precept is available online.](#)

5. The Panel met its statutory duty to consider the Commissioner's Annual Report for 2018/19, which it considered at its meeting on 12 June 2019.
6. The Commissioner has continued to place a strong emphasis on mental health in his plan and the Panel received updates on his work at every meeting.
7. The Panel received reports on the following issues between February 2019 and February 2020:
 - a. Crime Data Integrity – this included further reassurance that the historic issues identified in HMICFRS inspections had been resolved with sustainable solutions.
 - b. Brexit – this included noted the Commissioner's continued engagement at a local and national level around preparedness in Kent.
 - c. HMICFRS PEEL Assessment – this provided a very positive review of Kent Police with the Force receiving ratings that showed it to be best Force in England and Wales.
 - d. PCC's expenditure to support the Police and Crime Plan – updates were provided on a range spend areas, with items selected for consideration by the OPCC and Panel Officers.
 - e. Police Officer Recruitment – updates were provided as to the swift pace of recruitment, including positive comment on the hard work of the recruitment and training staff.
 - f. Victim Satisfaction and Community Engagement – this allowed for a discussion about the current approach for satisfaction measurement and community engagement as well as plans being developed for expanding both areas. Update reports on this were requested for consideration at future meetings.
 - g. Violence Reduction Update – this involved updating the Panel on the work of the Commissioner in terms of his Violence Reduction Challenge, as well as other work that had pre-dated the governments Serious Violence Strategy. This included reference to the associated research the Commissioner had commissioned into how best relevant agencies can work together to tackle serious and violent crime.
 - h. ONS Crime Statistics for Kent – this provided an update on crime levels and charge rates, both of which raised concerns from the Panel but reassurances were provided by the Commissioner as to the work being undertaken to address identified issues.
 - i. Overview of Citizens in Policing, covering the full range of volunteers engaged in policing the county – this provided a clear overview of the extensive and valuable work done by volunteers across the policing family, all of which was formally commended by the Panel.
8. "Questions to the Commissioner" continued as a regular item at each meeting. The Panel welcomed the Commissioner's willingness to answer questions, of which he

had been given prior notice. The agenda item continues to provide a greater opportunity for Panel members to raise issues with the Commissioner that do not form part of his formal reports. Question topics included issues such as visible policing, engagement with District Councils, funding for Community Policing Teams, appropriate measures to hold the Chief Constable to account for delivering the Safer in Kent Plan, preparations and plans for coordinating actions in Kent in the event of a no deal Brexit, Taser Training, monitoring the success of Town Centre Officers deployment, increasing the policing powers available to PCSOs and exploring opportunities for better data sharing with councillors.

Complaints

9. The Panel received a report on complaints against the Commissioner and noted that there had been an increase in the number of recorded complaints made against the Commissioner, albeit against a very low number from the previous year. It was also noted that no complaints had been progressed to consideration by the Panel's Complaints Sub-Committee. Officer contact with other Panels suggests that the number of complaints (recorded or otherwise) against the Kent Commissioner remains low compared with other Commissioners.

Commissioner's decisions

10. The Commissioner published one Key Decision in 2019, which was considered by the Panel. The Commissioner provided the Panel with a clear statement of the business case and reasons for his decision which the Panel found very helpful. The Commissioner also published details on his website of expenditure in excess of £500 and continued to provide reports to the Panel drawing attention to some of these items and their significance. As agreed in the previous year, Panel Officers have worked with the Commissioner's Office to identify spend items for consideration by the Panel.

Panel terms of reference

11. The Panel's terms of reference require them to be reviewed annually. It is considered convenient to do this at the same time as the Panel reviews its work over the past year. Minor wording changes, clarifications or consequential amendments to address changes in law or external arrangements may be made from time to time by Officers, subject to review by the KCC Monitoring Officer. No significant changes to the terms of reference are proposed at this time for the Panel's consideration and approval. The full terms of reference can be found by following this [link](#).

Panel budget

12. The Panel's terms of reference also require the Panel to review its budget on an annual basis. Finance for the Panel's work comes from an annual Home Office grant of £64,340. Expenditure has increased annually in line with support staff pay changes, the introduction of Co-optee Member allowances and relevant membership fees / subscriptions. In 2017/18 it was £32,779.02 and in 2018/19 it was £33,931. The forecast final outturn for 2019/20 is £39,886. While meeting all statutory obligations

and undertaking appropriate work, the Panel has ensured its costs are contained well within the existing Home Office Grant, demonstrating that the Panel continues to deliver good value for money.

Conclusions

13. This year, which is the final one in the 2016-2020 Commissioner's term of office, has seen continued positive engagement between the Panel and the Commissioner balanced with robust challenge and questioning on a range of key issues. The relationship between Panel and Commissioner continues to be positive and Panel consideration has reflected good information sharing and transparency as well as appropriate praise and commendation of the work of the Commissioner and Kent Police.

Recommendation:

To consider and approve the draft Kent and Medway Police & Crime Panel 2019/20 Annual Report.

Contact: Anna Taylor / Joel Cook
Scrutiny.committee@kent.gov.uk
03000 416478 / 416892