

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

KENT AND MEDWAY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 12 June 2019.

PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE (Chairman), Mr Gurvinder Sandher (Vice-Chairman), Cllr J Gideon, Cllr F Gooch, Ms S Hamilton, Cllr MJ Holloway, OBE, Cllr S Mochrie-Cox, Cllr M Rhodes and Mrs E Bolton

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M Scott (Kent Police and Crime Commissioner), Mr A Harper (PCC's Chief Executive) and Mr Robert Phillips (PCC's Chief Finance Officer)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr J Cook (Scrutiny Research Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

312. Election of Chair

(Item 2)

1. Cllr Gooch nominated Mr Hill as Chair of the Panel, seconded by Cllr Rhodes. No other nominations were made.

RESOLVED that Mr Hill be elected as Chair.

313. Election of Vice-Chair

(Item 3)

1. Mr Hill nominated Mr Sandher as Vice-chair of the Panel, seconded by Cllr Mochrie-Cox. No other nominations were made.

RESOLVED that Mr Sandher be elected as Vice-chair.

314. Membership

(Item 4)

1. Mr Hill advised the Committee that Cllr J Hollingsbee had been appointed to the Panel after the agenda was published and he welcomed her.

RESOLVED that the Membership changes outlined in the agenda pack and those clarified at the meeting be noted.

315. Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 6 February 2019

(Item 7)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2019 were a correct record and that they be signed by the Chair.

316. PCC's Annual Report 2018/19

(Item A1)

1. The Commissioner congratulated the Chair and Vice-chair on their re-election to the Panel before providing an introduction and overview of his annual report. He drew the Panel's attention to the inclusion, for a second year, of data on deaths and serious incidents in police custody which had been included in the interests of full transparency and to support the recommendations of Dame Elish Angiolini's review.
2. The Commissioner thanked his team at the OPCC, Neil Wickens in particular, for their hard work on the Annual Report. He also highlighted the Kent Police Finance Team, and in particular Sonia Virdee, for their excellent ongoing work, some of which had been recognised nationally and also on completion of the draft Statement of Accounts.
3. The Commissioner provided an overview of the key points from the report, including;
 - The Police and Crime Plan had been updated to include keeping roads safe and protecting vulnerable road users.
 - The largest recruitment drive in Kent Police's history had been undertaken.
 - Additional resources had to be funded via a council tax increase because funding was not available from central government.
 - Additional staff recruited to the Force Control Room (FCR) which had improved 101 and 999 call-handling.
 - Implementation of the Chief's Crime Squad to provide county wide proactive and preventative investigative capability and capacity.
 - Restorative Justice programme had been in place with the same provider for a full year, allowing more victims and offenders to come together in a positive way to discuss how to repair the harm.
 - Further investment in technology via the Athena system which had replaced Genesis in Kent and allowed easier data sharing between Forces.
 - Investment in mobile technology had improved efficiency for frontline officers.
 - The governance processes for holding the Chief Constable to account had been updated, including a focus on case studies and consideration of impact of crime and disorder rather than just statistics.
4. The Chair thanked the Commissioner for the report and the verbal update before inviting questions from the Panel.

The Panel meeting was adjourned at 10:16 due to disruption by members of the public.

Meeting reconvened at 11:20

5. Responding to questions regarding the accessibility of the Force, the Commissioner explained that accessibility was tested via public engagement, community and local government meetings. He advised that where this engagement was taking place, he was satisfied that the local police were

working to make themselves accessible. The Commissioner also highlighted that there were now multiple channels for reporting crimes and incidents to Kent Police and that he remained committed to making best use of the Police estate and maintaining public Front Counters services in police stations and locations where they already exist.

6. In answer to a question on how the Chief Constable was held to account regarding local crime and ASB, the Commissioner explained that a specific priority existed for these issues and that there was a standing item on his Performance & Delivery Board agenda, consideration of which included the Chief Constable providing the latest figures and relevant updates. The Commissioner also advised that as part of his weekly Monday morning meeting with the Chief Constable, the Assistant Chief Constable for Local Policing provided reports to the Commissioner on important local issues around the county. He advised that there had been a 13% reduction in ASB but that he knew ASB was also reported directly to councils, so he and Kent Police worked with them on these issues where possible.
7. In response to a question about deployment of the additional Officer resource provided by the recruitment drive and the need for increased police visibility as soon as possible, the Commissioner advised that the last of the recently recruited 200 Officers had now finished their training and would be out serving as warranted officers in local communities. Linked to this year's precept increase, a further 180 Officers were now being recruited and trained. In terms of deployment, the Commissioner reminded the Panel that this was a decision for the Chief Constable, subject to the priorities in the Police and Crime Plan. The Commissioner highlighted an increase in the size of the rural policing team, the roads policing team, the establishment of the Chief Constable's Crime Squad and introduction of Sexual Offence Liaison Officers dedicated to working with victims of sexual violence. He said that overall, of the 200 Officers recruited last year, just over half had gone into visible, accessible, community policing roles and the other half into investigative roles. He added that of the 180 this year, half again would be going into local policing roles, including an extra 38 Officers for town centre policing, and the other half into investigation roles.
8. Responding to a question regarding the Medway Taskforce, the Commissioner explained that this would mirror the work of the Margate Taskforce and would be resourced with one Sergeant and six Constables. He also confirmed that relevant expertise had been secured to assist in running the Taskforce.
9. A Member commented that the report was very comprehensive and that it showed good progress had been made over the last year, which was positive. The Member particularly highlighted the successful recruitment drive as a positive indication that Kent Police was an organisation people wanted to work for.
10. The Commissioner thanked the Panel for the positive comments but advised that the hard work of policing was done by the staff and officers on the ground and that he was always keen to ensure they received the thanks they deserved for delivering a good service.

11. Responding to a question about Compass House and the victim support arrangements, the Commissioner explained that the Compass Points were not fixed points around the county but instead operated like mobile surgeries.
12. In response to a question regarding the Council Tax increase, the Commissioner advised the Panel that he was pleased the increase had been generally supported and the public could see something tangible from it – extra officers. He said that whilst Commissioners had been given more flexibility around council tax, it hadn't impacted the general grant settlement and it was expected that it wouldn't in the future. The Commissioner hoped that the comprehensive spending review would, when it took place, give a clearer picture and take into account the challenges facing policing. He also reminded Members that Kent Police received the 7th lowest funding per head of population and had the 6th lowest council tax, but was the best performing Force in the country.
13. Members commented positively on the improvements made in call-handling, confirming that concerns about difficulties in contacting the police were no longer raised to them as issues by the public. The Commissioner confirmed that he had regular meetings with the Chief Constable to monitor the issue and that recent briefings on this had shown that call grading processes were still managed appropriately, with High Grade calls being attended as soon as possible while emergency calls were treated as urgent. The Commissioner highlighted that it had been shown at his Performance & Delivery Board that Kent Police were still attending over 80% of residential burglaries, with every victim visited by a PCSO even though many other forces did not send people to attend such crimes.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

317. HMICFRS - PEEL Assessment

(Item B1)

1. The Commissioner introduced the report, commenting that the excellent results of the assessment were achieved due to a huge amount of hard work by Kent Police Officers and Staff. He commented that the assessment was rigorous and involved extensive data review and interviews with Officers. The Commissioner noted the good work done by his predecessor, Ann Barnes in terms of challenging crime data integrity which now helped confirm a truer picture of the situation in Kent. He also highlighted the improving picture Kent Police had achieved over recent years in terms of HMICFRS assessments.
2. Kent Police had now been rated Outstanding in Efficiency, which included planning and understanding of demand, resources and finances, and Outstanding in Legitimacy. The Commissioner highlighted that Kent was the only Force to maintain this rating for four consecutive years. He also noted that Kent had been rated as Good for Effectiveness and advised that he was keen to see this move up to Outstanding.
3. The Commissioner commented that HMICFRS inspections were immensely valuable as they provided good external scrutiny and an unbiased perspective. He noted that while this latest inspection evidenced that Kent was the best Force

in England and Wales, there was still room for improvement and he reassured the Panel that he would be working with the Chief Constable to make this happen.

4. The Commissioner advised the Panel that HMICFRS also conduct thematic inspections, with recent examples being Stalking & Harrassment and Fraud, and that he would bring papers to future meetings as appropriate. The Commissioner also explained that Kent Police had used the Stalking and Harassment thematic inspection, which had been commissioned by the PCC for Sussex, to conduct its own internal review. As a result of this, Kent was now looking at updating training arrangements and the Commissioner was considering commissioning a stalking and harassment support service for victims.
5. The Commissioner also outlined his concerns around how fraud was managed nationally. He emphasised that this was not due to failings on the part of individual Officers but the problem was rather that the national policing response was not appropriate and often let victims down because of the established processes and lack of co-ordination. He highlighted that Kent did have a dedicated fraud team, a cybercrime team and an economic crime team. The Commissioner explained that HMICFRS had recently inspected ten Forces in relation to fraud, not including Kent Police, and had developed a number of recommendations including; better national co-ordination, better resourcing for Action Fraud and the recruitment of an additional 600 investigators. There was also an action for Chief Constables to ensure that there were sufficient resources and a local strategy for dealing with fraud and the Commissioner reassured the Panel that the Chief Constable had confirmed this was in place in Kent.
6. The Chair congratulated the Commissioner and Kent Police on the excellent PEEL Assessment result. Members supported the Chair's positive comments.
7. Responding to a question regarding an ICT problem noted in the report, the Commissioner explained that it related to the implementation of the Athena system and reassured the Panel that most issues had now been resolved.
8. In response to a question relating to better joint working and information sharing between councils and Kent Police, the Commissioner confirmed that local Community Safety Units were a fundamental part of the process, enabling reports to either police or council to be picked up and managed appropriately. He also highlighted that Kent Police did work with third party reporting services.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

318. Update on PCC's expenditure to support the Police and Crime Plan *(Item B2)*

1. The Commissioner introduced the report, outlining the different items that had been selected for consideration. Of the three items requested by Panel Officers, the first related to a positive youth engagement project involving music and positive interaction with the Police, the second supported school engagement involving discussion of the consequences of gang involvement and criminal activity and the third item related to investment in a big data exercise as part of

developing and progressing the Violence Reduction Challenge (VRC). The Commissioner explained that the VRC was his response to the government's Serious Violence Strategy and had been supported by KCC, and partners from across the county. He said the data exercise involved reviewing crime data going back 16 years, which whilst challenging due to Home Office Counting Rules changes over the period, had identified victim and offender trends, as well as vulnerability factors. He added that the work provided some of the evidence base to support the Medway Taskforce and was being used by Kent Police to support its own review of knife crime.

2. The fourth item covered in the report had been identified by the OPCS and related to specialist support services for victims of sexual violence. The key change had been moving from a grant and short term funding model involving two organisations to the commissioning of a county-wide service via a three year contract in order to deliver a better service, provide consistency in provision and ensure value for money. He added that he wanted to highlight this to the Panel as it was a good example of positive use of his commissioning budget.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

319. Mental Health - verbal update

(Item B3)

1. The Commissioner provided an update on recent activity in this area, both at a national level as the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) lead for mental health and also at a local level. Key points included the following:
 - Participating in the independent review of the Mental Health Act and now also the Government's Advisory Group on how the recommendations should be implemented.
 - Working with Kent Police, CCGs, KMPT, SECamb and other partners to provide better support to those in crisis, including putting appropriate governance arrangements in place.
 - The Kent Police Mental Health Policing Team had been dealing with around 80 crime report investigations each month from mental health units across the county.
 - Kent Police s136 detentions had increased by 16% - details were still being reviewed to confirm causes and identify patterns.
 - HMICFRS had updated their definition of a mental health incident for the Police – 'Any Police incident thought to relate to someone's mental health, where their vulnerability is at the centre of the incident or where the police have had to do something additionally or different because of it.'
 - £137k being provided via the Mental Health and Policing Fund (MHPF) to continue funding wellbeing cafes, early intervention programmes and other preventative activities. This would be the final year of the MHPF.
2. The Commissioner clarified that the ultimate goal was that people experiencing a mental health crisis received the right care from the right people at the right time. He said the police were not the right people to provide that care but were called on as a 24/7 service that would always respond, adding that this was not sustainable.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

320. Support for increase in Taser trained officers

(Item C1)

1. Members were supportive of the decision to invest in increased numbers of Taser trained officers in the interests of officer safety.
2. The Commissioner advised the Panel that Taser was a very effective tool for Policing and reassured the Panel that discharge rates remained low and that the threat of Taser continued to be sufficient to achieve compliance in most cases. He recognised that it was a serious issue though and confirmed that he would be monitoring usage and drew the Panel's attention to the existence of a Kent Police scrutiny panel which also reviewed and monitored this matter.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

321. PCC Complaints Report

(Item D1)

1. Members commented on whether there was a need to consider further communications regarding the role of the Panel and how complaints work should be developed.
2. The Chair confirmed this would be considered in the future.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

322. Future work programme

(Item D2)

1. Following a brief discussion around Community Policing Volunteers and how they work in practice, the Commissioner suggested that a paper be brought to a future meeting on Citizens in Policing, which would cover the full range of volunteers in policing.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

323. Questions submitted by Panel Members

(Item E1)

In light of the Commissioner's comments at previous meetings about working with the Chief Constable to ensure that the additional officers available from the continuing recruitment drive by Kent Police support visible policing, can the Commissioner advise whether this will involve Town Centre Police Officers being provided in all Districts?

(Mark Rhodes – Tonbridge & Malling)

1. The Commissioner confirmed that additional Town Beat Officers would be being deployed across the county. He explained that there were eighteen such officers in place already and an additional thirty-eight were due to be deployed by March 2020. He advised the Panel that the Chief Constable had assured him that the

deployment would be based around local crime issues and demand assessment but that it would be county-wide.

*Can the Commissioner advise the Panel if and how he engages with District Councils to consider local policing issues and if the feedback from this engagement is used to hold the Chief Constable to account for delivering the police and crime plan?
(Shane Mochrie-Cox - Gravesham)*

2. The Commissioner confirmed that he did engage with District Councils to help identify local issues and local trends. He clarified that he had decided not to attend formal or statutory crime and disorder committees at District Level as he expected Kent Police to attend these meetings to ensure appropriate local engagement and responses. He felt that his presence at such meetings may undermine local Police SMT or distract from the work of the relevant Officers.
3. The Commissioner explained that he regularly engaged with councillors from all parties via the Panel, via informal meetings and other methods of contact and that any operational issues raised with him were referred to Kent Police as appropriate.
4. As part of a supplementary question, Cllr Mochrie-Cox explained that he had observed a tension between strategic issues and local operational matters, sometimes leading to a gap in provision or appropriate contact. He asked the Commissioner to clarify his view when local police cite lack of resources as a challenge but where this view is not supported at a corporate level.
5. The Commissioner confirmed that he would be happy to look into the specific circumstances being referred to and would engage further outside of the meeting. He commented that if District Police felt they lacked resources; they should flag this to the Chief Constable.

RESOLVED that the Commissioner's answers to Member questions be noted.

324. Minutes of the Commissioner's Performance & Delivery Board meetings held on 12 December 2018 and 20 March 2019
(Item F1)

RESOLVED that the Performance & Delivery Board minutes be noted.