

To: Scrutiny Committee

Date: 28 February 2017

Report of: Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel

Title of Report: Update on work of the Panel

Summary

Purpose of report: To update the Scrutiny Committee on the work of the Panel

Key Decision: No

Executive lead member: Cllr Dee Sinclair, Board Member for Community Safety

Report author: Cllr Trevor Egleton, PCP Chairman
Clare Gray, PCP Scrutiny Officer

Appendices

Appendix 1: Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel Annual Report 2015/16

Background

The Scrutiny Committee requested a report to update them on the work of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel (PCP). The PCP is a scrutiny body, made up of locally elected councillors (most of which have links to their Local Community Safety Partnership) and independent lay members, which exists to scrutinise the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 set up PCPs which are now an essential part of the accountability structures for policing. Panels have an important ongoing scrutiny role to ensure that the electorate can make a fair and balanced judgement on the performance of the Police and Crime Commissioner. PCCs were elected for the first time in November 2012 to make the police more accessible, accountable and transparent to the public; they are now in their second term.

Update on the work of the Panel

1. The intention of Government was that PCPs would provide a light-touch scrutiny function in holding the PCC to account. Panels do not have the power to directly intervene in a planned activity or decision of the PCC, nor is it within their remit to hold the Chief Constable to account. The PCC is allowed to undertake the following:-
 - Contribute to the development of the PCC's police and crime plan (this was reviewed at our December 2016 meeting and will be implemented in April 2017)
 - Review the PCC's proposed precept (this was reviewed at our February 2017 meeting)
 - Review the PCC's proposed appointments of Chief Constable, Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer of the Office of the PCC and Deputy PCC. A confirmation hearing for the Deputy PCC was held in December 2016
 - Making reports and recommendations on matters relating to the PCC on which the PCC is obliged to provide a response but not accept
 - An informal role in investigating complaints about non-criminal behaviour of the PCC, without any explicit powers to investigate
 - Making comments on the PCC's Annual Report
2. Despite limited powers a number of PCP's are now actively engaging in proactive scrutiny work. Thames Valley PCP has undertaken this through 'themed' meetings looking at a variety of areas such as taxi licensing, unauthorised encampments, rural crime, victims commissioning, cyber-crime, collaboration arrangements and domestic violence. There are also regular items looking at issues discussed at the PCC's public meetings (where the PCC holds the Chief Constable to account) which includes performance reports and topical issues.
3. The Panel also has a Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation-Sub Committee, a Complaints Sub Committee and Task and Finish Groups looking into the PCC's precept and Police and Crime Plan. The Preventing CSE Sub-Committee was set up following the Bullfinch Case and at the last meeting two Safeguarding Board Chairs attended to discuss current issues around CSE.
4. The Government have just passed the Policing and Crime Act which will increase the PCC responsibilities and probably that of the Panel. The Act enables PCCs to take on the duties and responsibilities of fire and rescue authorities, where a local case is made. Currently our PCC is minded to put forward a business case but there are a number of different models that could be proposed and the PCC will be keeping the Panel updated on this issue. There are also other responsibilities in the Act which includes complaints.
5. Other issues that are currently relevant to the Thames Valley are as follows:-
 - There is currently a review of the police national funding formula and at this stage it is not known what impact the new formula will have.

- Review of local policing – the Chief Constable has changed the model to deliver more efficient and smarter ways of working whilst ensuring that resourcing matches demand and that the right person is deployed to the right job at the right time. He believes that the public should not notice much change but each hub area will have Response, Investigation and Problem Solving Teams.
 - Property Asset Management Plan - aligned to the review of the model for local policing and rollout of mobile ICT, new approaches to neighbourhood policing will be essential to facilitate change which includes a reduction in the neighbourhood office estate e.g. St Aldates Police Station has been identified as a potential future disposal
 - The Panel are hosting a joint event with Buckinghamshire County Council on cyber-crime to look at a consistent way to tackle cyber-crime which does not respect geographic boundaries.
6. The Panel will continue to scrutinise the Police and Crime Plan and the new Plan will be implemented in April 2017. The PCC particularly refers to the significant change in the types of crime the police are dealing with. The Panel can scrutinise the PCC through his Delivery Plan and his key objectives in the Plan. He has selected five themes for his strategic priorities as follows:-
- Vulnerability
 - Prevention and Early Intervention
 - Reducing Reoffending
 - Serious Organised Crime and Terrorism
 - Police Ethics and Reform
7. As an example of our work programme at our next meeting on 7 April, the Panel has asked the PCC to present his new Delivery Plan and give an update on roads policing and the Local Criminal Justice System as there is a reciprocal duty for the PCC and certain criminal justice bodies to co-operate in ensuring an efficient and effective criminal justice system.

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List of background papers: None - all documents are published on the South Bucks District Council website.

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