

DEVON AND CORNWALL POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Subject: Findings and Recommendations in respect of the Devon & Cornwall's Police and Crime Panel's Scrutiny of the "Police and Crime Commissioner's Joint Announcement with the Chief Constable in Respect of Devon & Cornwall Police "Public Contact Strategy" – Station Enquiry Offices' Rationalisation".

Date: 19 December 2014

Author: Sarah Hopkins, Community Safety & Partnerships Manager

Host authority: Plymouth City Council

Contact details: Tel: (01752) 305542 Email: sarah.hopkins@plymouth.gov.uk

Executive Summary:

In accordance with Section 28(6)(a) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Police and Crime Panel (PCP), is responsible for scrutinising and supporting the actions and decisions of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). The PCP meeting held on 20 June 2014 agreed its first 'reactive' Scrutiny topic for 2014/15 would be the "Police and Crime Commissioner's Joint Announcement with the Chief Constable in Respect of Devon & Cornwall Police "Public Contact Strategy" – Station Enquiry Offices' Rationalisation".

The scrutiny review took place at the PCP meeting held on 17 October 2014 and was undertaken adopting a 'select committee' style approach. The findings of the scrutiny review were presented at the PCP meeting and it was agreed that they would be used to inform any recommendations to be made to the PCC and Chief Constable in a final report, to be formally reviewed and agreed at the next meeting of the PCP. It was also agreed that the report would be made available to the PCC and Chief Constable in draft form prior to the deadline of 31 October 2014.

Immediately following the PCP meeting, the Host Authority compiled a draft report (**Appendix 1**) containing a summary of the scrutiny discussion and the PCP's findings and recommendations. The PCP recommendations were drafted by the Host Authority from the findings agreed at the PCP meeting and the draft report was circulated to PCP Members for initial comment. The draft report was then emailed to the PCC and Chief Constable on 29 October 2014, in advance of the stakeholder consultation closing date of 31 October 2014, for their consideration prior to a final decision being made in relation to the station enquiry desk closure proposals.

The PCC has responded in writing to the PCP's report and this response, dated 2 December 2014, is attached (**Appendix 2**) along with:

- The full engagement plans (**Appendices 3-7**) referred to in the PCC's report. If engagement plans exist for Plymouth and the Isles of Scilly, they are not available on the link provided by the PCC, and in the same place as the engagement plans covering the rest of the force area. The Host Authority has tried, but not succeeded, in identifying if one exists for Plymouth and one for the Isles of Scilly, and if so, where they can be located.
- The Equality Impact Assessment in relation to the Station Enquiry Office closure decision which the PCP requested be provided (**Appendix 8**).
- The PCC's Mid-Term Financial Strategy 2014-18 (**Appendix 9**), which makes reference to alternative options considered in relation to the front desk closure proposal.

To assist the PCP, the Host Authority has provided an update on the PCC's progress in addressing the PCP's Recommendations (**Appendix 10**), informed by the PCC's written response.

The PCP is asked to formally review and agree its report to the PCC and consider the PCC's response.

The PCC and Chief Constable will be given an opportunity to verbally comment on, and respond to, the report at this meeting.

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

It is recommended that the PCP:

- Reviews and agrees the draft report to the PCC as a final version in respect of its findings and recommendations to the PCC (**Appendix 1**), and
- Reviews the PCC's response to the draft final report (**Appendix 2**) and the PCC's progress (**Appendix 10**) and considers any items for inclusion in the PCP work programme.

The above reflects the PCP role to effectively and robustly scrutinise the PCC's decisions in an open and transparent manner and ensure that issues of mutual concern or interest can be shared in a way that is both constructive and supportive.

Alternative options considered, and reasons for recommended action:

An alternative would be not to undertake a reactive scrutiny role which would limit the PCP's influence on the "Police and Crime Commissioner's Joint Announcement with the Chief Constable in Respect of Devon & Cornwall Police "Public Contact Strategy" – Station Enquiry Offices' Rationalisation." This would mean the PCP is not fulfilling its function in legislation¹ to carry out investigations into decisions made by the PCC and into topics of particular interest, or public concern.

Background Papers: None.

¹ Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 s28(6)