

DEVON AND CORNWALL POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Subject: Scrutiny of “How is the Police & Crime Commissioner Strengthening Relationships and Showing Leadership in Partnership Working?”

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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 on 20 June 2014 agreed its first ‘proactive’ Scrutiny topic for 2014/15 would be “How is the Police and Crime Commissioner Strengthening Relationships and Showing Leadership in Partnership Working?” The scrutiny review is to be undertaken adopting a ‘select committee’ style approach, but would draw the PCP’s attention to paragraph 2.3 in this report.

In liaison with the Chair and Vice Chair of the PCP, the Host Authority has conducted, on behalf of the PCP, a range of direct engagement with communities, businesses and organisations across the force area. This has been carried out to determine how they think the PCC is strengthening relationships with them and how they think the PCC is showing leadership in partnership working. The Host Authority has acquired some additional relevant information from the PCC to assist the PCP in scrutinising this topic.

In preparing for this scrutiny topic, the Host Authority has taken account of the legislation, Panel Arrangements and Rules of Procedure, and Local Government Association Guidance¹.

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

It is recommended that the PCP:

- adopts a select committee style approach and scrutinises the “How is the Police and Crime Commissioner Strengthening Relationships and Showing Leadership in Partnership Working?”
- agrees its findings, which will be used to inform any recommendations to be made to the PCC in a final report to be formally reviewed and agreed at the next meeting of the PCP. This report will be made available to the PCC in draft form.
- agrees to add CoPaCC’s thematic report findings on “PCCs and Partnership” - at an appropriate point on the PCP work programme - when it is made available in early 2015 and if there is no associated cost in acquiring a copy.

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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 "How is the Police and Crime Commissioner Strengthening Relationships and Showing Leadership in Partnership Working?" This would mean the PCP is not fulfilling its function in legislation² to carry out investigations into decisions made by the PCC and into topics of particular interest, or public concern.

Background Papers:

² Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 s28(6)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 20 June 2014 the PCP agreed its first 'proactive' scrutiny topic for 2014/15 would be "How is the Police and Crime Commissioner Strengthening Relationships and Showing Leadership in Partnership Working?." The PCP is not only required to scrutinise this topic but to also offer support and act as a critical friend. The scrutiny review is to be undertaken adopting a select committee style approach.
- 1.2 The PCP may be interested to know that the organisation "**C**ompar**e**s **P**olice and **C**rime **C**ommissioners" (CoPaCC)³ produces occasional thematic reports. These examine key PCC-related areas in more detail by "comparing PCCs and sharing best practice". CoPaCC's fourth Thematic, on "PCCs and Partnership" is to be published in early 2015 and PCCs and OPCCs have been invited to contribute. This Thematic will contain a number of expert "partnership" perspectives. CoPaCC are interpreting 'partnership' as broadly as possible so as to include all possible examples of such partnership good practice and can cover any form of collaborative activity between an OPCC or force and any other public sector organisation eg third sector, private sector, charitable or academic organisation, or indeed work with individuals (whether individually or collectively).
- 1.3 The Host Authority forwarded this to the OPCC who have responded to say they are intending to make a submission, and have identified a great example of partnership work as their Directory approach to Victims Care. The OPCC will provide the Host Authority with a copy of their submission in due course. The Host Authority will seek to acquire CoPaCC's report findings and provide this to the PCP - if there is no associated cost in doing so – when it becomes available in the new year.
- 1.4 In the run up to the elections of the first PCCs, the Home Office produced a document "Have You Got What it Takes – Working in Partnership"⁴ which described how PCCs should work in partnership with others and specifically:

"The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 puts in place a flexible framework for working in partnership. This includes two related, reciprocal duties to co-operate which will support partnership working across community safety and criminal justice. Though the two duties are worded slightly differently, their aim is the same - to make sure that local leaders work together to achieve the most effective outcomes."

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 11 July 2013, the PCP adopted some principles for selection of scrutiny topics. The Chair and Vice Chair are satisfied that this scrutiny topic meets those criteria in particular:-
- **Public Interest:** the concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen for scrutiny
 - **Ability to Change:** priority should be given to issues that the PCP can realistically change

³ <http://copacc.org.uk/thematics/>

⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/117407/partnership.pdf

2.2 The Chair and Vice Chair, in liaison with the Host Authority, agreed it would be worthwhile carrying out some direct engagement with communities and organisations across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly seeking their views on how they thought the PCC was strengthening relationships with them and how they thought the PCC was showing leadership in partnership working. This was carried out in two ways, as follows.

2.2.1 Firstly, consideration was given to contacting relevant agencies and organisations throughout Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly across a range of disciplines. A letter was prepared (**Appendix 1**) and sent direct, including to the following agencies⁵:

- Local Authority Leaders and Chief Executives
- Community Safety Partnerships
- Chairs of Health & Wellbeing Boards
- Chairs of Adults Safeguarding Boards
- Chairs of Children's Safeguarding Boards
- Youth Offending Services
- Dorset Devon & Cornwall Community Rehabilitation Company
- Age UK (Devon) and Age UK (Cornwall)
- Victim Support
- Devon & Cornwall Community Watch Association
- Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership
- Cornwall Local Enterprise Partnership
- Cornwall Association of Local Councils
- Devon Association of Local Councils
- Devon ReForm
- Chambers of Commerce

There were only 9 responses received, and these are attached (**Appendix 3**).

2.2.2 Secondly, an 'open letter' from the Chair of the PCP was prepared and published (**Appendix 2**) for a time limited period on the Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel Website, containing similar content to the letter referred to in paragraph 2.2.1, seeking views from members of the public in respect of the proposals. No responses have been received to the 'open letter'.

2.3 The engagement in paragraphs 2.2.1-2.2.2 above usually assists the Host Authority with identifying potential witnesses to add further value to the PCP's scrutiny process by them giving verbal evidence and responding to questions from the PCP members. However, on this occasion, and despite the Host Authority's best efforts, no witnesses have been identified that are either willing or able to attend for this particular scrutiny topic.

2.4 What stood out as the main points of feedback from the engagement exercise carried out in paragraphs 2.2.1-2.2.2 was:

- Despite having written out to the many partnerships and agencies in 2.2.1 above, the level of feedback received was very low.
- Of those that replied, in general the responses were fairly positive.

⁵ This is not an exhaustive list.

- There may be some merit in the PCC more proactively and directly engaging with Safeguarding Adults Boards.
- The PCC needs to consider how he can broaden his engagement with and in aspects of democratic processes and exposure beyond those in leadership roles, such as budget scrutiny sessions.
- It would be helpful if the PCC would consider informing CSPs when he is making planned visits/carrying out activities in their respective areas so that CSPs could inform and support the PCC with such visits/activities.
- The way in which the funding allocated by the PCC to CSPs to address strategic assessment priorities has been welcomed and seen to strengthen partnership working and was managed well without too much bureaucracy being applied.
- The PCC might wish to consider prioritising attendance at Plymouth's Health and Wellbeing Board, rather than sending a representative, in order to share his strong views on the impact of alcohol misuse and alcohol-related crime which he has demonstrated leadership across Devon, Cornwall and nationally. It is felt that the detail or benefit of the work the commissioner undertakes regionally and nationally has not been reflected/communicated at a local level in Plymouth.

2.5 The Chair and officers from the Host Authority have liaised with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) prior to this Panel meeting, in order seek relevant information that would add context and assist the Panel to conduct a robust and effective scrutiny of this topic. Their reports are attached (**Appendices 4 and 5**).

2.6 The information provided by the PCC in 2.5 above has been analysed and the PCP may wish to probe for example:

- The PCC states that he sits on all five Health and Wellbeing Boards, but it is apparent, from the feedback provided in paragraph 2.4 above, that this is not the case in Plymouth.
- Clearly the PCC has invested a lot of funding in a wide range of projects and partnership activities, which stakeholder feedback above has shown has been welcomed. How is the PCC evaluating this investment, and is the PCC confident this is having a positive impact on performance and driving down crime across the force area?
- It is apparent that the PCC is using a range of opportunities to champion issues, push for change and influence decisions made in Westminster that reflect the needs of the force area. Other than alcohol, what are the other issues and changes the PCC is hoping to influence and does he expect to be successful in any of these?

3.0 NEXT STEPS

3.1 At this Panel meeting, the PCC will be asked to agree its findings which will be used to inform the recommendations to be made to the PCC in a final report to be formally reviewed and agreed at the next meeting of the PCP. This report will be made available to the PCC in draft form.