

DEVON AND CORNWALL POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Subject: Findings and Recommendations in respect of in respect of “Is the significant reduction in engagement of neighbourhood watch volunteers in Plymouth reflected across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and, if so, what is the Police and Crime Commissioner doing to address it?”

Date: 11 December 2015

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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 held on 3 July 2015 agreed its first ‘reactive’ Scrutiny topic for 2015/16 would be “Is the significant reduction in engagement of neighbourhood watch volunteers in Plymouth reflected across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and, if so, what is the Police and Crime Commissioner doing to address it?”

The scrutiny review took place at the PCP meeting held on 3 July 2015 and was undertaken adopting a ‘select committee’ style approach. It was agreed that the findings of the scrutiny review would 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. It was also agreed that the report would be made available to the PCC in draft form.

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 in liaison with the Chair and Vice Chair of the PCP. The draft report was then emailed to the PCC on 18 September 2015, for his consideration. The response was expected to be reviewed at the Panel meeting on 9 October 2015 but was deferred to this meeting.

The PCC has responded in writing to the PCP’s report and this response is attached (Appendix 2).

To assist the PCP, the Host Authority has provided an update on the PCC’s progress in addressing the PCP’s Recommendations (Appendix 3), 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 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 (Appendix 2), at this PCP meeting, to the draft final report and progress on how he is addressing the PCP's recommendations (Appendix 3).
- 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 "Is the significant reduction in engagement of neighbourhood watch volunteers in Plymouth reflected across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and, if so, what is the Police and Crime Commissioner doing to address it?" 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)