

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

3 July 2015

Annual Report from the Host Authority

Report by The Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

Recommendations

That the Panel:

1. Notes the budget outturn for 2014/15;
2. Notes the new mileage rate of 49.26p per mile.
3. Notes the requirement for the publication of Panel expenditure on the Police and Crime Panel website (see para 3.1).

1. Background

1.1 The Panel received funding from the Home Office to cover administrative costs and members' travelling expenses in the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 as follows.

- £53,300 for administrative expenses.
- £1,873 for members' expenses.

Total: £55,173

1.2 The Panel previously requested that a summary of its operating costs is considered at its annual meeting.

2. Discussion

2.1 The Panel formally met three times in 2014/15.

2.2 Reflecting ongoing concerns raised by residents, in June 2014 the Panel highlighted the continuing unsatisfactory performance of the non-emergency 101 call handling arrangements, with members being concerned that Sussex Police's performance had not improved significantly over the preceding 12 months. The Commissioner undertook to raise the Panel's concerns with the Chief Constable during a Performance and Accountability Meetings. The Panel toured the Contact Centre in September 2014, to learn at first hand of the work underway to improve performance, and the positive results it was starting to yield.

- 2.3 At its 2014 Annual Meeting, the Panel conducted its statutory review of the Commissioner's 2013/14 Annual Report, focussing in particular on collaboration with neighbouring forces, the estates strategy, recruitment, and the incidence of hate crime. Following the conclusion of the Annual Meeting, the Panel held a confirmation hearing for the Commissioner's proposed appointment of the Chief Constable, and of the Chief Finance Officer, these being also key statutory duties for the Panel.
- 2.4 At its October meeting the Panel scrutinised the Commissioner's work in restorative justice. Evidence was heard from a victim of crime who had engaged with the perpetrator as part of the process, who spoke about the benefits of the programme for victims, and of the wider benefits accruing to society more widely, through reduced re-offending rates. At its January meeting, the Panel considered a report from the Commissioner, on the findings of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary investigation into the inaccuracy of crime data reporting at Sussex Police.
- 2.5 The Panel ran two working groups, which met a total of three times. The Police and Crime Plan Working Group acted as a critical friend to the development of the "refreshed" Police and Crime Plan and the budget, and presented its report to the Panel's meeting in January 2015, it having been previously agreed that the Group would remain permanently constituted for this purpose, meeting as appropriate during each year's preparation cycle. The Victims' Services Working Group (VSWG) continued to work to give independent consideration and evaluation to the victims' services commissioning process. The VSWG plans to visit the Victims Assessment and Referral Centre, in order to inform its work.
- 2.6 In the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015, the total Panel running costs were:
- £54,538 in administrative expenses
 - £1,873 in members' expenses.
- Total: £56,411
- The administrative expenses are almost exclusively for staffing (including on-costs).
- 2.7 The Home Office will reimburse up to a maximum of £18,400 (£920 per member) for PCP members' travelling expenses. As was the case in previous years, the Panel has only claimed a relatively small proportion of the available travelling expenses funding.
- 2.8 It is anticipated that the staff costs of administering the Panel will be achieved within the envelope of funding provided by the Home Office, for the forthcoming year.

3. Funding and expenses claims for 2015/2016

- 3.1 Funding - The Home Office has confirmed that funding will remain unchanged for 2015/16, £53,300 (for Panel administration costs), and up to £18,400 (20 x £920, available for members' expenses). The funding will be paid in arrears, in six-monthly instalments. Unlike for previous years, the grant payment will be consolidated into single payments (not ring fenced for administration or expenses, as is currently the case). As a condition for the removal of the ring fence, the PCP must publish details of all Panel expenditure, including administration costs and individual Panel member claims for expenses, on its website.
- 3.2 Mileage Rate - The host authority (West Sussex County Council) of the Sussex Police and Crime Panel is responsible for the payment of travelling expenses including a car mileage rate at the level paid to members of WSCC. On 1 May 2015 West Sussex County Council reduced its mileage rate to 49.26p per mile. This will now be the rate that members of the Panel will be able to claim for travel by car on Panel business. This rate will apply to all claims from 1 May onwards.

4. Resource Implications and Value for Money

- 4.1 The Constitution of Sussex Police and Crime Panel states that its total running costs shall be contained within the funding provided by the Home Office.

5. Risk Management Implications

- 5.1 None

6. Other Considerations – Equality – Crime Reduction – Human Rights

- 6.1 Not applicable

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