

Report from the Police and Crime Panel Working Group

24 January 2014

Police and Crime Plan Working Group – Final Report

Report by the Chairman of the Working Group

Recommendations

The content of this report is intended to be read in conjunction with the Draft Police and Crime Plan 2014/17 presented under item 5 ii) of this agenda.

That the Panel considers whether sufficient emphasis has been placed within the draft 2014/17 Plan on:

1. Seeking and actively supporting residents wishing to volunteer to deliver appropriate services.
2. Encouraging the public to do more for themselves.
3. Seeking cooperation with Surrey Police at a faster pace than has hitherto been the case (potentially including a merger), with a view to making greater savings, sooner.
4. That the Panel, when scrutinising the draft 2014/17 Plan, recognises that the Group did not have the opportunity to scrutinise sections on:
 - Community Priority 4: Cyber Crime
 - Policing Budget and Precept
5. That the Commissioner refines the performance framework used to demonstrate achievement of the Police and Crime Plan 2014/17, so that it provides better evidence for the Plan's successful delivery.
6. That the Panel in future identifies themes arising from the Police and Crime Commissioner's performance monitoring reports for detailed scrutiny by the Panel.
7. That the Panel agrees for the Police and Crime Plan Working Group to meet in support of future budget and plan cycles, while continuing to report its work back to the Panel.
8. That the Panel agrees for the terms of reference for the Police and Crime Plan Working Group to be broadened to include acting as a critical friend to the development of the policing budget and precept.

1. Background and Methodology

- 1.1 Following the Police and Crime Commissioner's election in November 2012, the Commissioner was legally required to prepare, within a short period of time, the Police and Crime Plan 2013/17 (the Plan), and set a policing precept. The timescale allowed only limited opportunity for effective scrutiny of their development.
- 1.2 This Working Group (WG) was established by Sussex Police and Crime Panel (PCP) at its meeting of 28 June 2013, to act as critical friend to the

development of the Police and Crime Plan 2014/17, and report its findings back to the Panel.

- 1.3 The WG comprised five Panel members and met twice, in November 2013 and January 2014. After scrutiny of the PCC's draft 2014/17 Plan at the first meeting, staff of the Office of Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (OSPCC) reviewed the Group's comments and presented a revised draft to the second meeting. The Group considered this draft and made further comments. OSPCC considered these comments and prepared the draft which is reported under item 5ii) of this agenda.

2. **Discussion and Recommendations.**

Style

- 2.1 The Working Group considered and informed the style of the working draft.

- 2.2 The Group made general suggestions to:

- Explain concepts in ways that the public would find easier to understand.
- Consider whether the level of detail provided was appropriate (where either too much or too little detail had been proposed)
- Correct errors
- Update sections, where events had moved on since the text was originally written.
- Make language gender-neutral

- 2.3 By the close of the second meeting, the Group were satisfied with the style of the draft Plan.

Policy

- 2.4 The Group considered policy areas set out in the 2014/17 Plan in the context of the financial challenges facing the public sector in the short and medium term, and the strategies which local authorities in particular adopting in the light of these.

- 2.5 The following recommendations were passed to the OSPCC during the course of the first meeting. However, given their significance, the Group felt that the Panel should consider whether they had been adequately addressed in the latest draft.

Recommendations

That the Panel considers whether sufficient emphasis has been placed within the draft 2014/17 Plan on:

1. Seeking and actively supporting residents wishing to volunteer to deliver appropriate services.
2. Encouraging the public to do more for themselves.
3. Seeking cooperation with Surrey Police at a faster pace than has hitherto been the case (potentially including a merger), with a view to making greater savings, sooner.

2.6 Two sections of the draft Plan were not ready in time for the Group to review. The Panel may wish to comment on the following sections in particular.

- Community Priority 4: Cyber Crime
- Policing Budget and Precept

Recommendations

4. That, when scrutinising the draft 2014/17 Plan, the Panel recognises that the Group did not have the opportunity to scrutinise sections on:

- Community Priority 4: Cyber Crime
- Policing Budget and Precept

Performance Framework

2.7 When Police and Crime Plan for 2013/17 was scrutinised by the PCP in January 2013, the performance framework had not yet been determined. It has since been finalised and the Working Group considered the appropriateness of the performance measures in the draft 2014/17 Plan.

2.8 The Group concluded that some of the chosen measures were not reliable indicators of the desired outcomes, having concerns about measurability, the lack of baseline figures, and whether the measures were sufficiently time-bound.

Recommendations

5. That the Commissioner refines the performance framework used to demonstrate achievement of the Police and Crime Plan 2014/17, so that it provides better evidence for the Plan's successful delivery.

Performance Monitoring

2.9 The Group reviewed the format of the performance monitoring report, used to monitor implementation of the Plan (most recently in October 2013).

2.10 The Group suggested that reporting one Sussex-wide statistic against each theme made it difficult to draw any conclusions on performance. It would be better to break down the data to show the data for the different parts of Sussex, or to show the outliers (so, best and worst performance across Sussex).

2.11 The Group suggested a more effective approach might be to use the performance monitoring report to select a theme for more detailed scrutiny. The value added through such scrutiny could be maximised if the selected theme reflected an area of poor performance.

Recommendations

6. That the Panel in future identifies themes arising from the Police and Crime Commissioner's performance monitoring reports for detailed scrutiny by the Panel.

Budget Planning and Precept Setting

- 2.12 The Group reflected that, while the PCP had considered the medium term financial forecast in October 2013, the Panel had not been further involved in the preparation of the 2014/15 budget, and setting of the policing precept. Since good scrutiny practice is to scrutinise a plan in tandem with its budget, it would make sense for 2015/16 if the terms of reference for the Police and Crime Plan Working Group could be broadened to include scrutiny of budget development.
- 2.13 The work of the Group was originally envisaged as being time-limited, to cover development of the 2014/17 Plan alone. However, members reflected that the arrangement had worked well, had added value, and (with the refinements proposed under 2.12 accepted) that the Group should remain constituted, in order to support the process in future years.

Recommendations

7. That the Panel agrees for the Group to meet in support of future budget and plan cycles, while continuing to report its work back to the Panel.
8. That the Panel agrees for the terms of reference for the Police and Crime Plan Working Group to be broadened to include acting as a critical friend to the development of the policing budget and precept.

3. Resource Implications and Value for Money

- 3.1 The cost associated with the Working Group has been met from within the funding received by Sussex Police and Crime Panel from the Home Office.

4. Risk Management Implications

- 4.1 Scrutinising the Annual Police and Crime Plan is a core aspect of the Panel's role. A failure to adequately undertake this duty risks breaching the applicable sections of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

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

- 5.1 The Police and Crime Plan sets out the strategic direction for policing in Sussex. The Police and Crime Plan sets out the strategic direction for policing in Sussex. As such, there are clear implications for local authorities' duty to avoid or to reduce crime or anti-social behaviour, or to assist partners to do so.

- 5.2 There are no implications which compromise Human Rights. The recommendations treat all members of the community equally.

TFG membership

Godfrey Daniel, Hastings Borough Council
Chris Dowling, East Sussex County Council
Sandra Prail, Independent Member
Dave Simmons, Adur District Council
Brad Watson, West Sussex District Council (Chairman)

Contact:

Ninesh Edwards - 0330 222 2542