

Report from the Police and Crime Panel Working Group

20 January 2017

Police and Crime Plan and Precept Working Group – Final Report

Report by the Chairman of the Working Group

Summary

This report is intended to inform scrutiny of the proposed Police and Crime Plan 2017/21 presented under agenda item 6, and the proposed policing precept for 2017/18, presented under agenda item 5b.

The Police and Crime Plan and Precept Working Group made recommendations related to the Plan, which the Panel is asked to consider.

Recommendations

The Plan

1. That the Panel notes the sections identified in para 2.3, and satisfies itself that these areas are adequately scrutinised during the meeting.
2. That the Commissioner and the Panel note the risks associated with setting objectives which are not measureable.

1. Background and Methodology

- 1.1 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. At the January 2014 meeting, it was agreed that the Group would meet at the appropriate point during each year's cycle (while always reporting back to the January Panel meeting), and that the Group's terms of reference would expand to include consideration of budget and precept development.
- 1.2 During 2016 the Group met twice, on 31 August and 14 December 2016. The Group heard evidence from the Commissioner's Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer.
- 1.3 The Panel has a statutory duty to:
 - Review and make a report or recommendations on the draft Plan, or variation, to the Commissioner.
 - Review the proposed precept and make a report to the Commissioner on the proposed precept. The report may include recommendations.
- 1.4 In support of the Panel's statutory duty the Group acted as a critical friend to the Commissioner as the Plan was drafted and the medium term financial

forecast was developed. The Group's recommendations are intended to inform the Panel's statutory scrutiny of the proposed Plan, and the proposed policing precept, at its formal meeting on 20 January 2017.

2. Discussion and Recommendations

- 2.1 Following the elections on 5 May 2016, the Commissioner was required to publish a new Plan as soon as practicable, but, in any case, within the 2016/17 financial year. The Group made syntax and stylistic comments on the draft Plan text, which the Commissioner's officers will have considered and addressed in the draft formally presented to the Panel, as appropriate.
- 2.2 In developing the new Plan, the Commissioner has established a reference group which included representatives of the Youth Commission, the Elders' Commission and other stakeholders. The group was consulted on the four objectives, prior to consideration of these by the Working Group. Sam Williams, (Assistant Director Planning, Performance and Engagement, East Sussex County Council) having attended reference group meetings, attended the Working Group's second meeting to feed back the views of the reference group.
- 2.3 The following sections of the draft Plan had not been drafted in time for the Group to review:
- Foreword
 - Collaboration – Sussex Police and South East Region
 - Policing Budget and Precept

Recommendation 1

That the Panel notes the sections identified in para 2.3, and satisfies itself that these areas are adequately scrutinised during the 20 January session.

Plan - Performance and Measures

- 2.4 The Group was concerned by the lack of performance measures, or even detail or definitions, in respect of achievement of the objectives. These are to instead be included in a separate document, to be agreed between the PCC and the Chief Constable. The Group felt this made it difficult for the public and the Panel to hold the Commissioner to account for successful delivery of her Plan, but were informed that this approach was being adopted by PCCs in other areas.
- 2.5 The Group reflected that the issue of performance measures had been one of significant interest and concern, both to the Group, and to the wider Panel, for some years. The Group was unconvinced that the proposed approach represented an improvement in accountability for holders of public office.

Recommendation 2

That the Commissioner and the Panel note the risks associated with setting objectives which are not measureable.

- 2.6 The Group felt residents still understood the term “local policing presence” to mean a visible local policing presence. Use of words such as “accessible” might equally raise unrealistic expectations in respect of the local policing model to be delivered within Sussex’s communities.

Precept

- 2.7 The Group did not review the proposed precept, as the Commissioner’s consultation on a proposed rise for 2017/18 was still running at the time of the Group’s second meeting.

3. Working Group 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 and its variations, and reviewing the proposed policing precept are core aspects of the Panel’s role. A failure to adequately undertake these duties 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. 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

Bill Bentley, East Sussex County Council
Eileen Lintill, Chichester District Council
Tony Nicholson, Lewes District Council
Peter Nightingale, Independent Member
Dave Simmons, Adur District Council
Lee Wares, Brighton and Hove City Council
Brad Watson, West Sussex County Council (Chairman)

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