

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CLEVELAND POLICE & CRIME PANEL

10 JUNE 2013

REPORT OF HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

SUMMARY

The report discusses the approach to setting a work programme for the Panel for 2013/14 in line with guidance from the Local Government Association and Centre for Public Scrutiny, with a view to agreeing a programme of prioritised issues at the next meeting of the Panel to be held on 18 July.

RECOMMENDATION

That the best practice guidance in relation to the Panel's approach to their scrutiny role be noted and the next steps outlined at paragraph 12 of the report be approved.

DETAIL

Role of the Panel

1. As Members are aware, the Police and Crime Panel role is to scrutinise the actions and decisions of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), thereby holding the PCC to account. Statutory responsibilities of the Panel include:
 - Reviewing the police and crime plan
 - Reviewing the PCCs Annual Report
 - Reviewing the policing precept
 - Carrying out confirmatory hearings for certain senior appointments
 - Carrying out confirmatory hearings for the Chief Constable
 - Investigating complaints about non-criminal behaviour of the PCC
2. There are wider duties in the Act for the Panel to make reports and recommendations on matters relating to the PCC and to carry out investigations into decisions made by the PCC.
3. Best practice guidance from the Local Government Association and Centre for Public Scrutiny comments that in order to carry out its statutory functions, the panel will need to have a good understanding of policing priorities and community safety issues in the area and that to develop this understanding the Panel will need to build up its knowledge of complex, cross cutting issues.
4. For example, the Panel will be receiving quarterly performance data, monitoring progress against the Police and Crime Plan. This report will not only cover police performance, but also a range of performance indicators from other criminal

justice agencies. The data will allow the Panel to scrutinise by exception allowing Members to focus their attention on areas they can add value to rather than scanning across a range of data.

5. In addition, the Panel may wish to carry out an in depth scrutiny review into a particular issue or concern. This may be a policy or performance issue in relation to priorities contained in the Police and Crime Plan.
6. Any additional work which the Panel may wish to undertake should be supportive and complementary to its statutory functions with the Panel's acting act as a critical friend; a supportive, but independent voice seeking to scrutinise the PCC in the interests of recommending appropriate changes and improvements. In addition, the work programme should avoid duplication and remain flexible and responsive.
7. To ensure the Panel carries out its responsibilities in an efficient and effective way it is proposed that a work programme is set for 2013/14 comprising:
 - Statutory Responsibilities
 - Performance Management Reporting
 - Scrutiny Reviews – making recommendations to decision makers

Programme of In Depth Scrutiny Reviews

8. When developing the work programme, it is proposed that the Panel consult with
 - Panel Members
 - the PCC
 - other partners, including community safety partners
 - Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSCs) in the Cleveland area (who have a statutory responsibility to scrutinise the work of the Crime and Disorder Partnerships)
9. The additional work that the Panel undertakes may take the form of investigating PCC decisions, expanding its understanding of policing priorities and community safety issues, and/or identifying relevant areas or issues of interest or concern. For example, the Panel may wish to consider examining particular policy issues or performance against priorities in the police and crime plan. It is, however, important that when identifying topics for additional work, the Panel takes into account the capacity and resources needed to carry out the investigation, to ensure that the review programme is manageable. It is also important to prioritise the issues identified, so that the work of the Panel is adding value. It is therefore proposed that, as a guide, the Panel should select no more than three topics for each year although the nature and extent of the work undertaken and its completion will depend on the complexity of the issue, the approach to the investigation and the resources available. The Panel may also wish to consider provisionally extending the work programme into subsequent years, subject to annual review.
10. In selecting topics, the Panel may wish to consider whether:
 - there is public demand / a real need for the review
 - there is a genuine opportunity through the reviews to influence policy and practice

- there is a clear focus for the review, recognising that going ‘deep and narrow’ can have more impact than ‘broad but shallow’
11. In addition, the Panel should consider the most effective format and approach to any review, ensuring that it is tailored to the particular subject (i.e. not just carrying out all reviews in a Town Hall committee room, receiving officer presentations or commenting on official reports). There are different approaches that the Panel may wish to use to carry out their work. It may be appropriate to invite the PCC or PCC’s staff to a meeting to give a briefing on an issue, giving Members of the Panel an opportunity to ask questions in order to hold officers to account. The Panel are able to invite other parties as witnesses to give evidence, including the Chief Constable, but should only do so where this will assist in scrutinising the PCC. Where the Panel decides to carry out a more substantial investigation, this can be undertaken by:
- An in-depth review, receiving evidence at formal meetings
 - A focussed Task & Finish review, either carried out by a smaller group of members appointed by the Panel separate to the formal meetings, or by the full Panel

Next Steps

12. The Panel are invited to forward items in relation to priorities contained in the Police and Crime Plan for inclusion on the Scrutiny Programme to the Chair by 30 June 2013, so that the Panel can set the 2013/14 work programme at their next meeting on 18 July.

Name of Contact Officer: Margaret Waggott

Post Title: Head of Democratic Services

Telephone No. 01642 527064

Email Address: Margaret.waggott@stockton.gov.uk