

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CLEVELAND POLICE & CRIME PANEL

21 JULY 2016

JOINT REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND ASST. DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION, DEMOCRATIC AND ELECTORAL

POLICE & CRIME PANEL SCRUTINY PROGRAMME 2016/17

PURPOSE

This report provides detail of the work undertaken for the PCP Scrutiny Work Programme 2015/16 and requests topics for scrutiny during 2016/17.

DETAIL

1. On 30 July 2015 Members were asked to identify possible scrutiny topics whilst also being provided with information regarding topics that were previously agreed to be undertaken. The topics were:
 - Shared Services
 - Overall budget strategy
 - Victims' Services
2. At the PCP meeting on 21 September 2015 no topics were submitted so Task and Finish Groups were established for the outstanding reviews.
3. The matter of the overall budget strategy has been reviewed annually and subject to amendment continues to be scrutinised by a Task and Finish Group in order to facilitate sufficient time and analysis to the financial arrangements of the PCC and commissioned services. The number of agenda items for a full PCP meeting might preclude sufficient scrutiny of budget and its impact on the level of precept set.

Overall Budget Strategy

4. The Task and Finish Group was established to understand the key issues and financial pressures as part of the budget setting process in order to inform the work of the Panel and PCC. This included both the longer term financial planning process and the impact of the Government grant settlement. This settlement was announced in December during the timescale of the Group's work.
5. The Task and Finish Group met on 7 January 2016 to receive information about the Police and Crime Commissioner's overall budget strategy for 2016/17. Discussion took place about funding assumptions, total funding projections, the precept, PCC priorities, as well as taking recognition of local policing towards 2020.

6. The Group met with the Police and Crime Commissioner on 21 January 2016 to enable more consideration prior to the Police and Crime Panel meeting on 4 February when the precept was set for 2016/17.
7. The Task and Finish Group supported the increase to the PCC precept of 1.99%.

Victims' Services

8. In October 2014, the Commissioner took on new responsibilities to commission further services for victims and witnesses of crime and from 1 April 2016 would commission victim referral services and specialist support based on local need.
9. The Task and Finish Group learned that a new contract provider was being sought to commence services for a maximum term of 4 years. The description of services to be available are:
 - To receive referrals from a wide range of agencies and individuals;
 - conduct thorough needs assessments for the victims, promote and deliver high quality support services tailored to individual needs;
 - achieve improvements in every victim's ability to cope and recover from the impact of crime;
 - assist victims, where appropriate, to access a range of further relevant local support.
10. The Group felt that the timing of this review should be revisited to allow the successful applicant to provide victims' referral services time within the contract before scrutinising the performance of the new service.
11. The Group recommended to the Police and Crime Panel that this review be rescheduled to take place during 2017/18 when the performance of the new victims' referral services can be scrutinised.

Shared Services

12. The review of shared services was postponed until after the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May 2016.
13. It was expected to re-establish this review as part of the 2016/17 work programme. The scope of the review is suggested to be focused on the Evolve Programme, an umbrella term to cover a whole range of activities which the Cleveland, Durham and North Yorkshire police forces will plan and undertake together. The review is suggested to specifically look at Major Crime, Serious and Organised Crime, and Dog Handlers.

PANEL RESPONSIBILITIES 2016/17

14. The Police and Crime Panel is reminded of its role as scrutinising the actions and decisions of the Police and Crime Commissioner, thereby holding the PCC to account.
15. In addition, the Panel may wish to carry out one or more in-depth scrutiny reviews 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.

16. Any additional work which the Panel may wish to undertake should be supportive and complementary to its statutory functions with the Panel acting 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.
17. 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.
18. The Panel is therefore asked to identify and consider suitable topics for scrutiny review during 2016/17. 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'

NEXT STEPS

It is recommended that:

19. The review of Shared Services from the previous municipal year and the annual review of the PCC budget strategy be undertaken as part of the scrutiny work programme during 2016/17.
20. Panel members be identified to form the task and finish groups for the reviews of Shared Services and Budget Strategy.
21. The Panel forward scrutiny topic suggestions in relation to priorities contained in the Police and Crime Plan for inclusion in the scrutiny work programme to the Chair of the PCP, or Asst Director of Administration, Democratic and Electoral Services, by 19 August 2016 so that the Panel can consider additional items for the 2016/17 scrutiny work programme at its meeting on 8 September 2016.

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