

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CLEVELAND POLICE & CRIME PANEL

18 JULY 2013

**JOINT REPORT OF HEAD
OF COMMUNITY
PROTECTION & HEAD OF
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

POLICE & CRIME PANEL SCRUTINY PROGRAMME

PURPOSE

This report presents proposals for the PCP Scrutiny Work Programme for 2013/14.

DETAIL

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.

The report presents all topics (10) received from Panel Members and those that have arisen from the regular discussions between Cllr Stephenson as Chair of the Panel and the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC).

It is recommended that no more than four topics are chosen for the 2013/14 year, in order that the chosen topics can be covered in sufficient depth. In selecting topics, the Panel may wish to consider whether there is a public demand / a real need for the review, if there is a genuine opportunity through the review to influence policy and practice and whether there is a clear focus for the review.

The report considers each topic against the aforementioned criteria and suggests how each review could be approached, it should be stressed that this is merely to aid the Panels consideration and it is not binding in any way.

RECOMMENDATION

The PCP is asked to review the suggested topics and agree the priorities for review during 2013 / 14

TOPICS

1. Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs)

For several years Cleveland Police have facilitated a system of five IAGs, i.e. one for each of the four Boroughs and a Cleveland-wide Group. The key purpose of the IAGs is to promote dialogue between BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) communities and the

police. As with many other community groups, a considerable investment in staff support is necessary in order to support and retain membership of IAGs.

Any work in this area is likely to raise again the issues about the request from Stockton IAG for the Panel to apply to the Home Secretary for additional places for independent co-opted members.

Recommendation	Format
Not recommended – previously considered	N/A

2. Management of police officer hours

There are some significant issues in relation to accumulation of entitlement to time off in lieu by police officers, in the context of a shrinking police workforce and even more rapid reductions in budget provision for overtime/additional hours.

Any such work in this area would require the Panel to invest time in learning about police conditions of service and current practices, so would require support from the PCC's Office and/or Cleveland Police.

Recommendation	Format
Not recommended - operational	N/A

3. Work in schools

Work in this area could either have a relatively narrow focus on the 'schools liaison' work done by Cleveland Police, both by officers in specialist roles and by officers and PCSOs from Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs), or a wider focus extending also across the community safety related work done by partners. For example, in Stockton the broader focus would involve at least the work done by the Multi Agency ASB Team (led by Stockton Council, but with seconded officers from Police and Fire), the work of Junior Neighbourhood Watch, and the work of the D.A.R.E. (Drug and Alcohol Resistance Education) project in Billingham schools, and similar lists probably exist for the other three Boroughs.

Recommendation	Format
Recommended	Task & Finish by sub group from panel – 5 members 1 from each authority + independent member

4. 'Drug Treatment'/Substance Misuse Interventions in Custody

The Home Office has transferred about £1.7m of funding to the Cleveland PCC for 2013/14 which was formerly allocated variously to the four Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), the four Drug and Alcohol Action Teams (DAATs), the three Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) and a range of voluntary and community groups. Of this, about half has historically been invested in the Cleveland wide Drug and Alcohol Arrest Referral Service, which undertakes brief interventions with arrestees in custody suites and

signpost them to treatment services, and for which Cleveland Police has a contract valued at approximately £600k with a registered charity called Addaction, and a Drug Testing Grant of approximately £250k to Cleveland Police which funds testing for arrestees, for heroin and cocaine only. Over the last two years there has been a significant shift in the pattern of drugs and offending in Cleveland, with reductions of about 50% in the numbers of positive tests on arrestees, as crime reduces and there is a trend away from heroin and cocaine in favour of other drugs such as benzodiazepines ('benzos') which are not picked up by the current approved Home Office testing. The current system was set up about 8 years ago on a national set of assumptions that there were large numbers of class A misusing offenders not in contact with drug treatment services. If this was ever true in Cleveland, it is much less true now, given that the vast majority of those who do still test positive in custody are either currently in treatment or have a significant history of being in treatment.

This would be a complex area of investigation requiring input from specialist staff in the four DAATs, but relates to a significant amount of expenditure where key decisions will need to be made.

Recommendation	Format
Recommended – work underway	Officer reporting in

5. Shared Services

As pressure on policing budgets means there is likely to be renewed interest in 'shared service' options, either between two or more Public Services or between Public Services and other partners.

Existing examples include the shared Roads Policing Unit ('Traffic') between Cleveland and Durham, between Cleveland and Durham, and the fully Regional Crime Intelligence Unit. In the longer term (maybe beyond the lifetime of the current Cleveland Police contract with Steria) there are potentially options in relation to a range of support services.

As with topic '2' above, coordination of this work would require a lot of support from the PCC's office and/or Cleveland Police.

Recommendation	Format
Not recommended – operational	N/A

6. Energy efficiency in the changes and use of buildings and procurement and use of vehicles.

These are live issues for the whole of the public sector, as for other sectors of the UK economy. The four Local Authorities have significant expertise in relation to these issues.

Recommendation	Format
Recommended	Officer reporting in

7. The future of Probation Services

The Government has recently consulted on radical plans to privatise the bulk of probation work, including national commissioning of 21 contact packages for new providers which will be co-terminous with the probation trust. This issue has a major bearing on reoffending rates and therefore crime rates, and therefore relates directly to the ‘and crime’ part of the Police & Crime Commissioner’s role

Recommendation	Format
Not recommended – unable to influence policy	N/A

8. Complaints

Potential scrutiny topics may emerge from any recurring patterns in the complaints received by or about the PCC.

Recommendation	Format
Not recommended – no topics from this area at present	N/A

9. Crime levels

Provided that crime levels continue to fall or stay at about the same level then they are unlikely to be a major focus for the Panel. However, if we come to a time when reductions in police resources, the resources of other key partners, the impact of ‘welfare reform’ and/or other factors lead to significant increases in crime, the Panel is likely to feel motivated to start looking more closely at the PCC’s performance in terms of delivering on the Police & Crime Plan.

Recommendation	Format
Not recommended – panel will consider crime levels as part of its performance monitoring role	N/A

10. Overall budget strategy

The Home Office has advised that for 2014/15 there will be no separate allocation to PCCs for the ‘Community Safety Fund’, i.e. the £1.7 million in Cleveland. Up until the financial year 2012/13 the four Borough based CSPs received allocations of funding from the Home Office to support their programme of works, which they invested in a range of activities addressing local needs and priorities. The approximate figures in each Borough were as follows:

Hartlepool - £79,000

Middlesbrough - £162,000

Redcar & Cleveland - £85,000

Stockton - £103,000

For 2013/14 a position has been negotiated in which the PCC will broadly continue to fund the activities funded by the CSPs, pending further review during 2013/14 and potential changes for 2014/15 and subsequent years.

As well as the issues of the transferred funding, there may be a related issue about CSP structures. There have been some informal discussions about the potential of CSP mergers, either to two or to a single CSP for Cleveland. To date, both Hartlepool and Stockton have indicated that for at least the next 12 months they are committed to the retention of their own CSPs. The new 'functional' structure for Cleveland Police may be considered to facilitate mergers but on any merger model there would be a risk of reduced engagement from the Local Authorities.

The constitutional position is that for two or more CSPs to merge, all the statutory partners (including Police, Local Authority, Probation, Fire Authority, and Clinical Commissioning groups – CCGs) must confirm in writing their wish to merge.

The power to approve such mergers, formerly vested in the Home Secretary, has been transferred to PCCs.

Given that there is also currently an unresolved £5million gap in the Cleveland Police budget in the medium term, budget strategy will arguably be the most important issue for decision making by the Commissioner. It is therefore recommended that the Panel prioritises this issue.

Recommendation	Format
Recommended	Full review by sub group from panel – 5 members 1 from each authority + independent member

NEXT STEPS

Following agreement of scrutiny topics for the 2013 / 14 the

- Panel will appoint members to the sub-groups as required
- Officers will meet to develop the initial scopes and project plans for the consideration of the Panel / sub-groups. Officers will programme meetings of the sub-groups in liaison with the relevant members.

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