

<b>COUNCIL</b>	AGENDA ITEM No. 11
<b>22 MAY 2013</b>	<b>PUBLIC REPORT</b>

## **CAMBRIDGESHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

<b>R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S</b>
<b>FROM: Executive Director, Operations</b>
<p>That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notes the activities of the Police and Crime Panel; and</li> <li>2. Agrees that questions from Council to the Police and Crime Commissioner will be directed through the Police and Crime Panel and an agenda item added to future meetings accordingly.</li> </ol>

### **1. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To apprise Members of the responsibilities and work of the Police and Crime Panel
- 1.2 To advise members on the process for questions to be put to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

### **2. BACKGROUND (& CONSULTATION)**

- 2.1 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 introduced significant changes in police governance and accountability, in particular replacing the Police Authorities with directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners (Commissioners).
- 2.2 The public accountability for the delivery and performance of the police service within each force area has been placed into the hands of the commissioner on behalf of the electorate. The commissioner will draw on their mandate to set and shape the strategic objectives of their force area in consultation with the chief constable. The commissioner is accountable to the electorate; the chief constable is accountable to the commissioner. The Chief Constable retains responsibility for all operation policing matters.
- 2.3 The Act also requires the local authorities in each police force area to establish a Police and Crime Panel (Panel) as a joint committee, to scrutinise, challenge and support the commissioner. The Act also prescribes many of the arrangements with regard to the panel and the way in which it conducts its business. The Panel has power of veto over the Commissioner's proposals for appointments of certain staff, suspension and dismissal of the Chief Constable and over the policing budget.
- 2.4 A Panel was constituted in 'shadow' form across Cambridgeshire during 2012 and held its first meeting in shadow format on 12th September 2012. It was agreed that Peterborough would provide Panel support as the 'host authority'. The Home Office has provided a proportion of funding to support host authority functions. All documents relating to the Panel's meetings are publically available on the Council's web site at [www.peterborough.gov.uk/cpcp](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/cpcp).
- 2.5 The Cambridgeshire Panel comprises eleven elected members and in accordance with the Act appointed two Independent Members at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2012.

- 2.6 Following the election of the Police and Crime Commissioner on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2012, the Panel became fully constituted and held its first full meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2012. The Panel's membership at the time of writing this report is as follows:

Councillor Mac Maguire, Cambridgeshire (Chair)  
Councillor Irene Walsh, Peterborough (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Richard West, Cambridgeshire  
Councillor Kevin Wilkins, Cambridgeshire  
Councillor Nazim Khan, Peterborough  
Councillor Gavin Elsey, Peterborough  
Councillor Tim Bick, Cambridge City  
Councillor Jason Ablewhite, Huntingdonshire  
Councillor Martin Curtis, Fenland  
Councillor James Palmer, East Cambridgeshire  
Councillor Ben Shelton, South Cambridgeshire  
Mrs Christine Graham (Independent Member)  
Mr Raja Ali (Independent Member)

- 2.7 The Panel has now met in its full form on three occasions (6<sup>th</sup> December 2012, 7<sup>th</sup> February and 21<sup>st</sup> March 2013). It has approved the appointment of a Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Mr. Brian Ashton; debated and approved the Commissioner's budget and precept; debated and approved the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan.
- 2.8 In addition, the Panel have determined the complaints procedure and begun work to scrutinise the decisions of the Commissioner. All decisions of the Commissioner are published on the Commissioner's web site. The Commissioner also notifies the Panel of such decisions by decision notice. The most recent decision notice is appended to this report at appendix A.

### 3. IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 **The Commissioner, Council and Community Safety Partnerships:** The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 does not replace the Crime and Disorder Act 1998; the Act which saw the introduction of Community Safety Partnerships.
- 3.2 Moreover, the Government continues to support Community Safety Partnerships and has recently afforded them more responsibility such as the reducing reoffending responsibility and that of carrying out Domestic Homicide Reviews.
- 3.3 The Council retains its local crime and disorder scrutiny through the duties of the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.4 However, the introduction of the Commissioner sees a new line of accountability for the Community Safety Partnership (in Peterborough known as the Safer Peterborough Partnership). The Commissioner can request a report from any Community Safety Partnership to discuss areas of concern and there is a reciprocal duty co-operate. Community Safety Partnership Plans should align with the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan although tailored with a local focus. All funding that has hitherto gone to the Community Safety Partnerships will in future go to the Police and Crime Commissioner with no ring-fence.
- 3.5 **The role of the Council and the Commissioner:** As part of its standing council agenda, members of this authority were previously invited to ask questions of the former police authority. The police authority was directly responsible for holding the police (the Constabulary) to account. However, since this role transferred to the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Commissioner is held to account by the Police and Crime Panel.
- 3.6 Thus, any questions from Council for the Commissioner should be addressed through the members of the Police and Crime Panel which is the statutory body set up for this purpose.

- 3.7 It proposed therefore that for future council meetings an item is included in the agenda to direct questions for the Commissioner through the Police and Crime Panel. Members may also wish to have an item on the Council agenda to receive a periodic report from the panel on the work it has carried out and the outcome of any scrutiny.
- 3.8 Questions from members about operational policing decisions are not within the remit of the Commissioner and thus not within the remit of the Panel. Operational questions should thus be directed to the Chief Constable of the Constabulary.
- 3.9 The Council's rules of procedure will be updated accordingly.

#### **4. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

None.

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