

CAMBRIDGESHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL	Agenda Item No. 12
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Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner

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HOLDING TO ACCOUNT

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to demonstrate to the Police and Crime Panel (“the Panel”) how the Police and Crime Commissioner (“the Commissioner”) holds Cambridgeshire Constabulary to account for force performance, ensuring value for money and engaging with local people.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the report.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 3.1 To review or scrutinise decisions made or other action taken by the Commissioner in connection with the discharge of the Commissioner’s functions.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 As Commissioner I have a statutory duty under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (“the 2011 Act”), amongst other duties, to hold the Chief Constable to account for force performance, ensuring value for money and engaging with local people.
- 4.2 The Policing Protocol Order 2011 (“the Protocol”) sets out to all Police and Crime Commissioners, Chief Constables and Police and Crime Panels how their functions are exercised in relation to each other. It does not supersede or vary the legal duties and requirements of the Commissioner or the Chief Constable.
- 4.3 The Protocol provides that Commissioners have the legal power and duty to scrutinise, support and challenge the overall performance of the force including against the priorities agreed within the Police and Crime Plan.
- 4.4 The Protocol also makes it clear that the will of Parliament is that the Chief Constable shall remain operationally independent from the Commissioner. As with any legislation there are some definitive statements within it but there has to be some element of interpretation.
- 4.5 However, in the spirit of the Protocol the relationship between Commissioners and Chief Constable should be one built on principles of goodwill, professionalism, openness and trust and in Cambridgeshire it is.
- 4.6 My role as Commissioner is strategic and the Chief Constable’s operational. However, this may appear somewhat simplistic as the Chief Constable has strategic responsibilities for running such a large organisation. In practical terms the way that the Protocol has been interpreted is that day to day running of the force, including deployments of staff and decisions in relation to specific incidents, is exclusively the responsibility of the Chief Constable. Whilst at times the

Chief Constable informs me of specific operations and I can ask the Chief Constable concerning operational issues, the responsibility for such issues remains with the Chief Constable. As Commissioner I need to exercise caution to ensure that I do not interfere with the Chief Constable's operational independence as provided for in statute. For example, the deployment of Police Community Support Officers is an operational issue.

4.7 The exact wording of the Protocol makes it clear:

“The Chief Constable is responsible to the public and accountable to the PCC for—
being the operational voice of policing in the force area and regularly explaining to the public the operational actions of officers and staff under their command.”

5. HOLDING TO ACCOUNT

5.1 As Commissioner I can hold Cambridgeshire Constabulary (“the Constabulary”) to account through the Chief Constable. The relationship between me and the Chief Constable is a key one. I have worked hard to ensure that our relationship is one of support and challenge. I have instituted a range of formal and informal meetings to ensure this relationship is a positive one.

5.2 The key formal meeting is the Business Co-ordination Board (BCB). The agenda for these meetings are divided into four key areas: strategy, governance, business and holding to account. BCB enables me to discuss, scrutinise and hold the Chief Constable to account for efficient and effective policing and also to be kept informed of the Chief Constable's decisions and operational activity in a timely manner. For example, this includes how the Constabulary is delivering against my Pledges, such as joint multi-agency working to tackle crime and 101 call handling performance.

5.3 The BCB papers are published on my website providing for transparency and accountability in decision making and demonstrating how I am delivering against my Pledges.

5.4 Strategy, governance, business and holding to account all need to function well. This can only be achieved through having effective procedures in place that enable business to be done in the right way, for the right reason at the right time. This is achieved through a governance framework that comprises of systems and processes which provide controls to ensure that business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards. Equally, it ensures that public money is used economically, effectively and efficiently, and any risks are managed accordingly. For instance, the Governance Framework and Risk Registers along with forums such as an independent Joint Audit Committee and one that has oversight of the Professional Standards Department ensures that appropriate controls assurances are in place for Cambridgeshire but also for business areas where the Constabulary has collaborated with other forces. Taken together, these should mean that these controls enhance public trust and confidence in myself, my office and the Constabulary.

6. EXAMPLES

6.1 Efficient and Effectiveness

6.1.1 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) independently assesses the efficiency and effectiveness of police forces and policing across a number and range of policing at both individual police force level and critical national issues and themes (thematic inspections). Examples of recent inspections range from serious crime, adherence to crime recording processes, information management and whether the police are delivering value for money.

6.1.2 HMIC has an annual inspection programme for both individual and thematic inspections. As a guide, they have carried out a number of inspections of Cambridgeshire Constabulary since January 2014, with more planned for this calendar year.

6.1.3 I have a statutory duty under section 55 of the Police Act 1996 to comment on reports published by HMIC about the Constabulary and arrange for those comments to be published in such manner as appears to the Commissioner to be appropriate. I hold the Chief Constable to account for the outcome of the HMIC inspection through BCB by requesting what the Constabulary's response is. For instance, recent responses to HMIC inspections have been an action plan or a change in the relevant business area to take forward and embed recommendations made. I also fulfil my statutory duty to comment on HMIC reports by publishing the minutes of BCB meetings; meetings where I have held the Chief Constable to account for the report's findings and the Constabulary's response.

6.2 **101 Call Handling – an example of holding to account**

6.2.1 Since November 2012 I have focused on call handling performance in response to public concerns. The issue has featured regularly in my monthly BCB meetings allowing me to actively monitor and scrutinise performance and hold the Chief Constable to account in this important area of business.

6.2.2 As I reported to the Panel at their June 2014 meeting, call handling performance of both 999 calls and non-emergency 101 calls remains steady and the Constabulary continues to work to improve their performance. However, the 101 calls that are of a general or crime recording nature are routed through to separate staff within the Police Service Centre and it is here at this secondary pick-up that a caller can experience some delay, particularly at peak times.

6.2.3 As the secondary pick-up is still a cause of concern for members of the public it therefore remains a priority for me. As such, I have continually scrutinised the Constabulary's performance in ensuring work continues to improve the service.

6.2.4 The Chief Constable has submitted reports to BCB regularly since October 2013 to update me on performance, the actions that the Constabulary are taking to improve performance and the number of complaints received about the service. BCB have noted the issues on the performance level but also further highlighted their continued concern regarding the secondary pick-up and that there was further work to be done in relation to complaints.

6.2.5 Given the concerns over the performance, I have met with the Head of Contact Management and the Local Policing Commander to both emphasise and reiterate my concerns and to stress the imperative need to get the secondary pick-up service right for the public. I have also visited the call centre on a number of occasions.

6.2.6 One of my staff has also linked with the Constabulary's Head of Contact Management and Police Service Centre staff to further understand the influencing factors relating to performance and closely analyse the actual performance statistics. This will inform the further analysis work I have asked the Constabulary to provide me with of 101 answering times via a paper at a forthcoming BCB meeting.

6.2.7 In addition, and to further support the need for continual improvement in the service, I am conducting an online survey of users of the 101 service, to help identify what the specific issues are and how they can be addressed. This survey was originally scheduled to run until the 23rd June 2014. However, as I realise service delivery of 101 will remain important to the public, I am intending to run the survey on an indefinite basis so that it becomes a means by which the public can share their experiences of calling 101. The on-going capture of these experiences will enable me to continue to hold the Constabulary to account for their performance.

7. **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

7.1 Policing Protocol Order 2011 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/2744/contents/made>

BCB meetings – papers and minutes <http://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/business-coordination-board/>

Governance information <http://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/accessing-information/>

Report to Panel '*Objective 1 – Maintaining Local Police Performance*' June 2014
<http://democracy.peterborough.gov.uk/ielistDocuments.aspx?CId=543&MId=3391&Ver=4>

Police Act 1996 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/16/section/55>

101 call handling survey [http://cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/survey/101-call-handling/.](http://cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/survey/101-call-handling/)

Police and Crime Plan <http://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Cambridgeshire-Police-and-Crime-Plan-10-June-2014.pdf>