



Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel: Annual Report 2015

Foreword

The Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel (the Panel) holds the Police and Crime Commissioner (the Commissioner) for Cambridgeshire to account by acting as a 'critical friend'. Its role is to scrutinise, challenge and support the Commissioner, maintaining a check and balance on the performance of the Commissioner in regards to the strategic actions and decisions made.

The Panel is not responsible for holding the Chief Constable or the Constabulary to account; this is a role for the Police and Crime Commissioner. Nor is it a direct replacement for the former Police Authority. The principal role of the Panel is to scrutinise the actions and decisions of the Commissioner, not the performance of the police force. Key functions of the Panel are:

- To review the PCC's Police and Crime Plan
- To hold the PCC to account for the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan – the panel has powers to request any necessary information from the PCC on his decisions
- To review and report on the appointment of the Chief Constable and other senior appointments – the Panel has powers to veto the appointment of the Chief Constable
- To review the Commissioner's proposed police precept – the panel has powers to veto the precept
- To scrutinise the PCC's annual report
- To consider complaints against the PCC.

This is the second annual report of the Panel covering its work throughout 2014-15.

The work of the Panel

During 2014-15, the Panel met on six occasions and has scrutinised a number of key areas of the Commissioner's work. These include –

- HMIC's report into the Constabulary's approach to tackling Domestic Abuse
 - The Panel questioned the Commissioner's response to the report and received assurance that the issues identified had been addressed, in particular the training of police officers and reporting mechanisms.

- Objective 3 of the Police and Crime Plan – Continue to Tackle Crime and Disorder
 - The Panel discussed with the Commissioner arrangements for rolling out the Cadet Scheme, Community Safety Partnerships, Community Remedy and the issues surrounding the Libyan soldiers based at Bassingbourn.
- Distribution of Police Cover
 - The Panel considered amongst other items, the role and functions of PCSOs and Specials.
- 101 Call Handling
 - Several Panel members undertook a visit to the 101 call centre to understand first-hand how the service operates. Members were extremely impressed by the service and dedication of the staff who operate it. The Panel discussed 101 with the Commissioner and noted that a key issue remained where calls are transferred to a secondary pick-up.
- Objective 4 of the Police and Crime Plan – Keeping People Safe
 - The Panel discussed with the Commissioner issues surrounding domestic abuse, hate crime, Victims Hub and the integrated offender management scheme. The Panel were concerned regarding an apparent increase in victim based crime. The Commissioner's view was that reporting procedures had been improved which has led to more people reporting crime leading to an increase in reported crime.
- Objective 5 of the Police and Crime Plan – Maintain the Resilience of Protective Services
 - The Panel and Commissioner discussed road policing and the number of people killed or seriously injured on Cambridgeshire roads. Cybercrime is an emerging issue both locally and nationally which is high on the agenda for the Commissioner and the police.

In addition, the Panel has scrutinised the Commissioner's variations to his Police and Crime Plan throughout the year. Full details of the issues that the Panel have considered can be found on the website [here](#).

Commissioner Budget Precept

The Commissioner proposed that for 2015/16 there would be 0% increase in the precept. The Panel has the power to veto any proposed precept from the Commissioner through a two thirds majority vote of its members. The Panel undertook a thorough scrutiny in the Commissioner's budget for the Constabulary asking a number of detailed questions on areas of expenditure including:

- Costs of the 101 service and staff
- Details of the Commissioner's office running costs
- Victims Hub running costs
- Capital expenditure

The Panel were disappointed that the Commissioner had not engaged with the Panel earlier in the budget setting process. The Panel recommended that the Commissioner consider involving the Panel earlier for the 2016/17 budget.

The Panel endorsed the Commissioner's proposed precept.

Chief Finance Officer

During much of 2014/15, the Commissioner was without a permanent Chief Finance Officer (although the duties were fully discharged through an interim appointment). In December

2014, the Panel received notification from the Commissioner that he wished to appoint Josie Gower to the position.

The Chief Finance Officer is a senior appointment to the Commissioner's office and the Panel have statutory functions regarding such an appointment. A confirmation hearing was held on 15th December 2014 where the Panel considered:

- The criteria used to assess the candidate's suitability for appointment
- Why the candidate satisfied those criteria
- The terms and conditions on which the candidate was proposed to be appointed

The Panel questioned the candidate in relation to her proposed appointment to consider her suitability for the role. Following a detailed question and answer session, the Panel recommended that the Commissioner appoint Josie Gower to the role.

About the Panel

The Panel comprises the current membership:

- Councillor Mac McGuire (Cambridgeshire County Council)
- Councillor Jason Ablewhite (Huntingdonshire District Council)
- Councillor Vince Campbell East Cambs District Council)
- Councillor Michael Shellens (Cambridgeshire County Council)
- Councillor Ben Shelton (South Cambs District Council)
- Council David Oliver (Fenland District Council)
- Councillor Lewis Herbert (Cambridge City Council)
- Councillor Peter Reeve (Cambridgeshire County Council)
- Councillor Andy Coles (Peterborough City Council)
- Councillor Stephen Lane (Peterborough City Council)
- Councillor Asif Shaheed (Peterborough City Council)
- Edward Leigh (Independent Co-opted Member)
- Vacancy for Independent Co-opted Member