

Edward Leigh
Chair
Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel
c/o Jane Webb
Peterborough City Council

Email: paulina.ford@peterborough.gov.uk

21 January 2022

Dear Edward

I refer to the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel's (the "Panel") report of the 15th November 2021 entitled 'Police and Crime Panel – Actions – November 2021'. In accordance with Section 5(6) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, this letter acts as my formal response to the Panel's report.

- 1. Recommendation:** The Panel recommended clarification of the wording of the following points in the Plan:
 - P15 "I will always support the police when they act lawfully." This perhaps needs nuance to acknowledge there is a grey area in the interpretation of the law and discretion in its application, in particular with respect to the proportionality of police actions and the public's perception of those actions (e.g. stop & search, management of protests and out-of-court disposals).
 - "When standards fall short of expectations" on page 15 of the Plan should also include that the Commissioner would oversee changes that would assure that standards would not fall below expectations in the future.
 - P34 "The capital budget is usually for spending in relation to the purchase, construction or improvement of assets such as buildings. It is a legal requirement to set a balanced budget, so that spending cannot be more than income." The two parts of the paragraph appear contradictory, since capital spending does not have to balance within a financial year, unlike revenue spending.

PCC Response: As stated following the Panel's formal consideration of my Police and Crime Plan, I was pleased to have received such positive comments from the Panel during the meeting regarding the Plan. I am confident that, following the wide consultation I undertook and feedback since I published it, the Plan will provide the strategic direction to deliver what our residents expect for tackling crime and keeping our communities safe. I carefully considered the comments made by the Panel and made some updates to the final version of the Plan to reflect the Panel's feedback.

- 2. Recommendation:** The Commissioner agreed to provide the Panel with information on the current court times.

PCC RESPONSE: Although I am unable to provide exact timescales due to restrictions in data sharing, I am assured that listings within the Magistrates Courts have now returned to pre-Covid levels and there are very little delays. Crown Court listings do remain higher than prior to the pandemic, although they are slowly decreasing. The pandemic caused significant challenges for the Crown Court, with social distancing limiting the number of individuals who could be within the court room. This resulted in multiple court rooms being used for one trial, therefore decreasing the number of trials that could be listed at any given time.

With the installation of Perspex screens and additional court estate capacity, Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) have been able to extend the Crown Court capacity to five trial courts which is instrumental in bringing down the delay.

- 3. Recommendation:** That the Commissioner consults with partners on how best to fund Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) in the future.

PCC RESPONSE: Locally we continue to contribute to the countywide pooled budget funding arrangement. This enables the local authority Domestic Abuse Partnership to commission and oversee quality reviews and feed the learning back into local agencies.

Within our own governance we are developing a process to transparently, but supportively, understand how the constabulary is responding to recommendations aimed at them. Nationally the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Office is focusing on DHRs and we intend to feed in how the current guidance is open to interpretation and would benefit from a review and being put on a statutory footing. The question of national funding has been posed to the Home Office via senior policy staff. Thank you for your offer of writing to the Home Office; at this stage we feel there are alternative avenues to progress.

- 4. Recommendation:** The Reporting of Future Decisions

The Panel agreed that it would like to receive advance notification of important areas of decision making (particularly in transformation) and asked that the OPCC (Office of the Police and Crime Commissioners) bring a new recommendation on this back to the next Panel meeting.

PCC Response:

A report including a new recommendation will be provided at the upcoming Panel meeting of the 2nd February 2022.

In addition to the formal recommendations, I have also noted any additional comments raised by the Panel during the meeting and shall act on these accordingly.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DP', enclosed in a light grey rectangular box.

Darryl Preston

Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

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