

CAMBRIDGESHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL	Agenda Item No. 8
20th September 2023	Public Report

Report of Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

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HIGH HARMS BOARD

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel (the “Panel”) with details of the Police and Crime Commissioner’s (the “Commissioner”) approach to supporting partnership working through the High Harms Board.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Panel is recommended to note the contents of this report.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 3.1 Item 6 – to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, by the Police and Crime Commissioner in connection with the discharge of the Commissioner’s functions.

Item 8 - To support the effective exercise of the functions of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

4. BACKGROUND

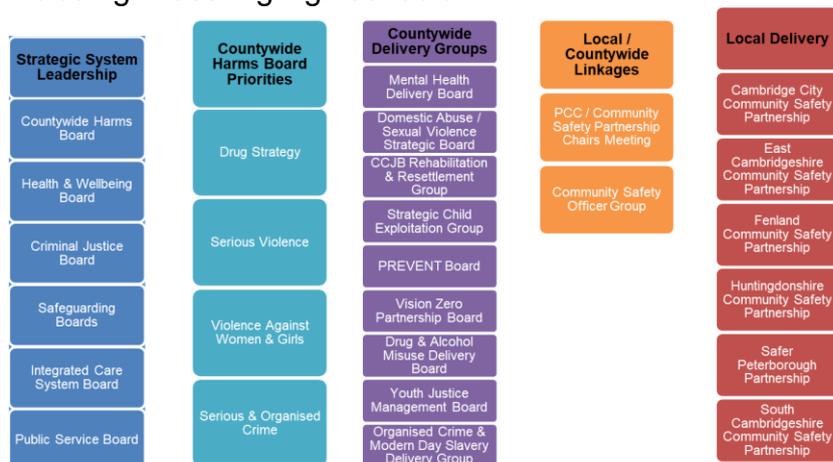
- 4.1 Under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (the “Act”) the Panel has a role in scrutinising the Police and Crime Commissioner’s (the “Commissioner”) in the exercise of his statutory functions.
- 4.2 As well as the Commissioner’s duties for holding the Chief Constable to account, the Act places wide-ranging statutory duties and powers on Commissioners relating to working in co-operation with community safety partners.
- 4.3 Increasingly, the Government is also placing a convening role with Commissioners across wide range of issues, sometimes with a role in allocating national funding locally.
- 4.4 The levers in the partnership arena are different from policing. The legislation does not provide for a holding to account role, rather reciprocal duties, and powers for co-operation. This includes:
- mutual duties for co-operative working;
 - having regard to respective priorities;
 - PCC powers to convene community safety and criminal justice partners and ask for reports; and
 - PCC power to make grants.

The landscape is complex with a wide range of partners, each with specific duties. Good partnership working is, therefore, key. The PCC and the OPCC are uniquely placed to provide system leadership, facilitating, and enabling these agencies to work effectively together.

- 4.5 The Commissioner is required to produce a Police and Crime Plan (“the Plan”) which sets out how he will deliver against his statutory role set out in the Act. At the heart of the Plan for 2021-24 is the Commissioner’s role in preventing and reducing crime, as well as his expectations of robust enforcement.

5. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

- 5.1 Across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough there is a complex backdrop of mutual duties for co-operative working across multiple agencies and through multi-agency partnerships, including those highlighted below:



- 5.2 The Crime and Disorder Act requires the “responsible authorities” in a local area (police, local authorities, probation, health, fire) to work together and implement strategies to tackle local crime & disorder – these partnership arrangements provide support on those issues which are suited to a countywide approach.
- 5.3 To provide support and leadership around higher harm issues, countywide delivery groups ranging from the Domestic Abuse / Sexual Violence Strategic Board to the counterterrorism PREVENT board are well-established and were identified previously where complexity or wider impact suggests a countywide approach would add value.
- 5.4 Following a review of previous Countywide Community Safety Strategic Board arrangements, the Countywide High Harms Board (the “Board”) was established by the Commissioner in July 2022. The Board is chaired by the Commissioner and meets quarterly. It provides strategic direction and leadership across four priority issues:
- Harm to Hope Drug Strategy;
 - serious violence;
 - violence against women and girls; and
 - serious and organised crime.
- 5.5 This enables organisations across the county to take and demonstrate a joined-up approach to these key agendas. It also helps partners fulfil national partnership governance requirements. More recently, the government has been defining precise requirements for local governance arrangements for key themes. For instance, each area is now required to have a Combating Drugs Partnership. The Board fulfils this function. Each area is also required to have appropriate partnership arrangements in relation to serious violence. Again, the Board fulfils this function.
- 5.6 Although some of these issues can be seen as ‘policing’ issues, in reality there are much wider impacts in our communities. Whether that is a higher risk to children or an increase in violence, drugs etc. For instance, large scale domestic cannabis production and

‘cuckooing’ (when criminals take over a person’s home for illegal purposes such as drug dealing) are likely to have wider impacts on the community such as anti-social behaviour. When these issues present to policing, they are often symptomatic of wider issues. The Commissioner is clear that while crime prevention has always been part of the role of policing, it cannot be achieved by the police alone.

6. HIGHLIGHTS SO FAR

6.1 There has been good engagement with the Board, including from wider partners such as education and the voluntary sector. There has been an emphasis on working at a system level to “join the dots” and maximise the impact of existing insights and delivery, as well as seeking to fill gaps. There is a strong focus on early intervention and prevention which is a cross-cutting theme for the high harms agenda and beyond.

6.2 Harm to Hope Drug Strategy

- Ensured that national governance requirements for the Drug Strategy are met.
- Ensuring previous delivery plans are updated and mapped to new requirements.
- Ensuring a needs assessment is undertaken.
- Ensuring a local performance framework is established and monitoring Drug Strategy outcomes.

6.3 Serious Violence

- Lead partners identified and engaged.
- Initial needs assessment undertaken by the Constabulary. Further partner data and insights being explored.
- Supporting partner engagement in serious violence workstreams and funding decisions. Opportunity to maximise national funding 2023-25. Early intervention with those young people most at risk is an area of focus, building on existing work.

6.4 Violence Against Women & Girls

- Long-standing mature partnership arrangements through Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership continue.
- New VAWG needs assessment underway which, with the serious violence needs assessment and annual domestic abuse needs assessment, provide a comprehensive picture across this part of the system.

6.5 Serious & Organised Crime

- Updated local profile shared with partners.
- Introduction of local Multi Agency Mapping Panels and good partner engagement.
- Home Office is working with Cambridgeshire, starting in Peterborough, to pilot a new Clear, Hold, Build strategy to reduce serious and organised crime. This is in the context of significant operational activity to tackle serious and organised crime.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Police and Crime Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan 2021 – 2024
<https://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/police-crime-plan/>

Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/13/contents>