

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE & CRIME PANEL

REPORT TO THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

25TH APRIL 2019

Subject:	Review of a revision of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's Police & Crime Plan
Recommendations:	That the Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Has regard to this report by the Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel arising from its review of his revised Police & Crime Plan in accordance with Section 5(6)(d) of the Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011.b) Gives the Panel a response to this report in accordance with Section 5(6)(e) of the Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011.c) Reviews his Police & Crime Plan in light of recommendations in this report in accordance with Section 5(9) of the Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The report is intended to set out the results of a review by the Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel of a revised Police & Crime Plan issued by the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011 requires the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire ("the Commissioner") to issue a Police & Crime Plan. The Plan should set out:
- (a) the Commissioner's police and crime objectives;
 - (b) the policing of the police area which the Chief Constable is to provide;
 - (c) the financial and other resources which the Commissioner is to provide to the Chief Constable to exercise their functions;
 - (d) the means by which the Chief Constable will report to the Commissioner on the provision of policing;
 - (e) the means by which the Chief Constable's performance in providing policing will be measured;
 - (f) the crime and disorder reduction grants which the Commissioner is to make, and the conditions (if any) to which such grants are to be made.

- 2.2 The Commissioner must keep his Police & Crime Plan under review and may issue a Plan, or revise his existing Plan, at any time.
- 2.3 The 2011 Act requires the Commissioner to send a proposed Police & Crime Plan, or a variation of an existing Plan to the Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel (“the Panel”) before the Commissioner may issue the Plan.
- 2.4 Upon receipt of a draft Plan or variation of an existing Plan the Panel must:
 - (a) review the draft Plan or variation; and
 - (b) make a report or recommendations to the Commissioner on the draft Plan or variation.
- 2.5 The Commissioner must:
 - (a) have regard to a report and to any recommendations made by the Panel; and
 - (b) give the Panel a response to its report and to any recommendations in the report.

3. Review of the proposed Police & Crime Plan for 2019-21

- 3.1 The Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel met in public on 4th April 2019 to review the Commissioner’s revised Police & Crime for 2019-21.
- 3.2 In presenting the revised Plan the Commissioner emphasised that since taking office in 2016 he had acted to deliver the public’s priorities and to help to support a sense of pride and excellence across Northamptonshire Police. He had set a new direction involving investment in early intervention and the provision of new technology to frontline police officers. The force was also taking action on key issues such as knife crime, which was an area of growing national and local concern. This kind of work was supported by the funding that he had committed to policing in the county. The revised Plan set out how additional funding would now be used to deliver further improvements and efficiencies. Investment would enable the number of frontline officers to be increased by 100 over the next two years, meaning that the force would have more than 1,300 officers for the first time since 2010. There would be a greater focus on addressing rural crime, anti-social behaviour and low-level drug dealing. Every burglary incident would be attended by the force. The additional officers would also help to strengthen neighbourhood policing, engaging with communities and partner agencies and providing visibility and reassurance. The Commissioner stated that 75% of respondents to consultation on the revised Police & Crime Plan and his proposed Fire & Rescue Plan agreed with the themes set out in the plans. As Commissioner he was listening to the concerns of Northamptonshire residents and was determined to help to deliver the public services that they deserved.
- 3.3 The Panel subsequently questioned the Commissioner on key focus areas of the revised Plan.

Increasing accessibility to and visibility of policing in both urban and rural areas

- 3.4 Panel members commended the overall mission and aims set out in the revised Plan, which seemed to be logical and focussed on the right areas. The increased investment in policing made available by the Commissioner was noted: Panel members also

expressed confidence that the Chief Constable of Northamptonshire Police would be able to take forward the force effectively.

- 3.5 The Panel went on to emphasise the role of community policing in increasing the visibility of the force and supporting public confidence in the service it provided. Panel members highlighted the benefit of ensuring that contact arrangements for local policing teams were clear and consistent. Members also encouraged that Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) worked closely with local community representatives such as councillors and in local community settings. The Commissioner agreed the importance of maintaining and improving continuity in contact between the force and members of the public in Northamptonshire. This had informed his approach in introducing sponsored PCSOs, which were a way of supporting visible, local policing in the current financial context. There was also scope for the force to learn from some of the community engagement work done by Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service. The Commissioner considered that the last Target Operating Model introduced by the force had not been sufficiently effective at supporting visible policing compared to the Basic Command Unit model used in the past. The force was now reviewing its approach and could potentially move back more in this direction, although the outcome of its work was still to be determined. In response to further points that Commissioner stated that there was not an issue in Northamptonshire with the number of patrol cars available for deployment. He highlighted that the provision of IT technology enabling police officers to complete paperwork remotely represented another action that had been taken to support visible policing.
- 3.6 Panel members noted that partnership working between different organisations would be crucial to delivering many of the outcomes identified in the Plan. The potential for the Plan to refer to this more explicitly was highlighted. The Commissioner agreed that partnership working had a vital role in a range of areas, including crime prevention and addressing domestic abuse. This extended beyond statutory organisations: the use of proceeds of crime money to support a grant funding scheme for community projects was an example of partnership working with voluntary and community sector organisations that contributed to community safety. He thought that the importance of partnership working was implicit in the Plan but acknowledged that it could be made clearer. The Plan was ultimately intended to serve a specific statutory purpose: at the same time he aimed that partners should also feel involved in the Plan that he produced.

Increase data sharing across agencies to better target services to the needs of the people of Northamptonshire

- 3.7 Panel members recognised that collaboration between public sector organisations was essential to achieving the best outcomes from public money in the county. They encouraged that further attention be given to opportunities for organisations to develop common contact arrangements, which would enable members of the public to receive an effective response irrespective of which organisation they contacted first. The Commissioner advised that he had previously started discussions with Northamptonshire County Council about common contact arrangements. This reflected that only 25% of contacts with the force related specifically to crime. He would therefore welcome further discussion of potential opportunities in this area.

Ensuring value for money

- 3.8 It was highlighted that achievements listed in the revised Plan were not in themselves a demonstration of success, in that they could potentially have been delivered whether crime levels in the county had increased or decreased. The Panel sought reassurance about how the Commissioner proposed to measure and demonstrate the success of the Plan. The Commissioner advised that he and the Chief Constable aimed to create a performance pack that would sit underneath the Plan and would be used to judge its effectiveness at both the strategic and operational levels. A blueprint for the performance pack had been developed, which the Commissioner could present to the Panel. The performance pack was intended to enable a cohesive overview of performance to be taken, rather than looking at different areas of performance in isolation. The Commissioner considered that his latest announcement of increased investment in policing in the county was a practical demonstration that outcomes were being achieved. However, the performance pack would enable progress towards outcomes to be monitored and demonstrated. At the same time, he encouraged the Panel to recognise that performance could be affected by a range of factors that were not under the control of the Commissioner or the force: the planned opening of a new prison in Northamptonshire in the near future was an example of such a factor.
- 3.9 A Panel member noted that the Police & Crime Plan was statutorily required to set out the resources that the Commissioner would provide to the Chief Constable to exercise their functions. However, there was not much information reflecting this requirement in the current Plan in comparison with plans produced in some other force areas. The Commissioner stated in response that he was comfortable that he had a sound understanding of the financial environment that would apply for the near future. The Plan was intended to have a more strategic, longer term focus than an individual budget. Panel members subsequently proposed that this part of the Plan's purpose could be set out more strongly.

Improving services to victims of crime

- 3.10 The Panel considered issues relating to the support provided to victims of burglary and domestic abuse. It was noted that the Commissioner had committed to increasing the focus on dealing with burglary. It was questioned whether this could make use of a previous arrangement that had operated in the county that involved the Care & Repair organisation assisting people to secure their property following a burglary. This helped people to feel safer and reduced the risk of a repeat burglary.
- 3.11 A Panel member subsequently highlighted that people who had experienced domestic abuse often returned to the home where it had occurred, particularly if there was no alternative available to them. The Commissioner was questioned about what more could be done to support them to find alternative accommodation rather than needing to return to a potentially-dangerous environment, even if as an interim measure. The Commissioner advised that crime prevention was a key focus of activity in Northamptonshire, reflecting that it was no longer possible to deal with crime solely through enforcement. He was willing to consider different options for addressing and preventing domestic abuse, although it would assist in this if there was more certainty about partners' commitment to fund services and refuge facilities. He wished to see an

overall joined-up strategy for addressing domestic abuse in the county, but this would need to be owned by all of the partners involved.

- 3.12 A Panel member commended the support offered by Voice and questioned whether there was scope for it to offer services to other areas on a commissioned basis. The Commissioner highlighted that the reorganisation of Voice during his period in office had made it far more effective. It was now in a position where his aim for all victims of crime coming into contact with the force to be referred to Voice could be implemented from 1st May 2019. Voice was now being cited as an example of good practice. However, it needed to be able to provide an outstanding service to Northamptonshire before the Commissioner would consider expanding it to deliver services to other areas.

Further areas of assurance

- 3.13 Panel members sought further clarification and assurance on other aspects of the revised Plan. The Commissioner was challenged to ensure that he was holding the force to account sufficiently in relation to the duty to have a specific and measurable objective relating to equalities. Reassurance was also sought that stop and search powers were being used appropriately and proportionately in Northamptonshire. The Commissioner highlighted that the force was taking action in areas such as recruitment to support equality and help it to reflect the communities it served. He noted that the use of stop and search powers was an operational matter and that members of the public could see the use of these powers as an important part of the response to issues such as knife crime. There was an opportunity for Panel members to observe the Reasonable Grounds Panel to see how stop and search powers were being used in practice. The force's approach had also been informed by learning from a recent independent review of usage in the county.
- 3.14 A Panel member questioned how feasible it would be to refresh the Community Remedy, which was proposed as part of work to tackle anti-social behaviour and hate crime to improve community safety. The Commissioner advised that various action was being taken to help to address anti-social behaviour and hate crime and he welcomed the opportunity to work with local community representatives to quantify the effect of this. A Panel member highlighted outreach work by Peterborough Prison in relation to housing for ex-offenders as an example of the type of preventative work that could be emulated in Northamptonshire. The Panel was advised of comparable work already underway in the county supported by Ministry of Justice funding, which sought to provide targeted support to address the issues that had caused individuals to offend rather than treating them simply as ex-offenders.

Outcomes of the Review

- 3.15 At the conclusion of discussion the Panel agreed the following resolutions:
- (a) That the Panel supports the overall direction and aims reflected in the proposed update of the Police & Crime Plan.**
 - (b) That the Panel recommends that the Plan on a Page section of the updated Police & Crime Plan makes more explicit reference to the role of partnership working in delivering the aims set out in the Plan.**

- (c) That the Panel recommends that the updated Police & Crime Plan makes more explicit reference to the financial and other resources that the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner will provide to the Chief Constable to exercise their functions.
- (d) That the Panel encourages continuity in the contact arrangements relating to community policing in Northamptonshire, to assist in providing clarity and confidence to the public.
- (e) That the Panel encourages effective joined up communication arrangements between different organisations working in support of policing and community safety in Northamptonshire, to reduce the need for service-users to provide information more than once.
- (f) That the Panel requests that a draft of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's new Performance Pack, to be used in assessing the force's delivery of Plan outcomes, be presented to the next Panel meeting.

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Background Papers:	Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011 Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel Rules of Procedure