

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL FOR LEICESTERSHIRE

Report of	POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER
Subject	COMMISSIONING IN SUPPORT OF THE PRIORITIES OF THE POLICE & CRIME PLAN
Date	WEDNESDAY 30 JANUARY 2013
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Purpose of the Report

1. To briefly explain the approach to be adopted to commissioning services in support of the priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan 2013 – 2017

Background

2. I am delighted that elsewhere on this agenda the draft Police and Crime Plan for the period 2013 – 2017 has been discussed. I am very clear that, due to the short period of time between my election and the date of this meeting, this Plan forms the basis for significant consultation with partner organisations, the public and other stakeholders.
3. I am also clear that while Leicestershire Police are the main focus of the Plan, I will be supporting them by seeking to develop a shared understanding, and course of action, with a wide range of agencies to reduce the reoccurrence of crime and reoffending. This will include both building upon existing, successful partnerships and initiatives as well as creating new ones where appropriate.
4. On 19 December 2012, as part of the written ministerial statement on the provisional police funding announcement, the Home Office announced the creation of the Community Safety Fund (CSF). This transitional fund (in subsequent years the fund will be consolidated with the main grant) is not ring fenced and totals £90m; the share for the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Leicestershire is £1.649m and is to be used to support the achievement of Police and Crime Plan objectives.
5. In announcing the CSF, the Home Office made it clear that the vast majority of drugs, crime and community safety funding, that it currently provides to a range of partners, will cease as at 31 March 2013. As such the Home Office was unwilling to identify individual funding streams currently paid to organisations in Leicestershire (or the area of any other policing body).

The Rationale

6. During the months before the election for PCCs, the officers of the then Police Authority committed much effort to researching the existing partnership landscape. Amongst other things, this involved the creation of a Partnership

Transition Board from which expertise was drawn in order to develop a better understanding of the potential impact of the transition on the existing arrangements. Many partners contributed to this discussion, and offers to participate were extended to any who had relevant expertise.

7. Over those past months, work has been in progress to understand exactly what initiatives and services have received funding from the aforementioned Home Office Grants, with a view to understanding the risks around changes in funding to the overall crime, disorder and community safety agenda as well as organisational functioning and continuity.
8. In addition, the Partnership Transition Board wanted to use the knowledge, information and experience from previous initiatives to inform the *future* effective commissioning of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Community Safety Fund.
9. When the Home Office announced its allocation of the CSF on 19 December, the staff of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner had a good understanding as to what funds were ceasing. This was much more than many other PCCs had. There was also, therefore, an understanding of the funding gap between the total of the sums ceasing and the CSF grant allocated; £1.992m and £1.649m respectively.
10. As the Police and Crime Plan was developing, the potential role of partners in delivering a mutually beneficial agenda was becoming much clearer. The Police and Crime Plan reflects this clarity (notably 4.3), and I will be very pleased to receive comments on how these sections can be made even stronger.
11. Prior to my election, partners in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland had created a unified Strategic Partnership Board (SPB), bringing together organisations from the community and criminal justice sectors under the chairmanship of the Chief Constable. This body was, and still is, unusual and innovative. It is clear to me that this Board has a key role to play in steering the partnership agenda in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, and I have sought to begin working with it.
12. The dilemma arises from the constraints of time and money. The Plan begins in earnest on 1 April 2013 and it would be ideal for a range of carefully commissioned services to be in place from the inception. However, to identify, let alone create, appropriate initiatives and source suppliers, followed by discussing options and negotiating contracts (including prices and performance measures) before 1 April is just not feasible.
13. There is also not enough money merely to perpetuate what has gone before even if that were desirable; the sum allocated for the CSF is only 83% of the sum of grants known to be ceasing, and there may yet be more grants to be discovered. In addition, there are now more objectives to be addressed, including mental health and missing persons, for example.
14. Furthermore, during the discovery phase of the work, it was clear that it was not always possible to establish the effectiveness of the initiatives that were currently in place. That is not to say that they were not effective, but that there were not good quality performance regimes that allowed effectiveness to be determined. The pursuit of value for money requires such clarity.

Towards a Solution

15. I have begun to work with the SPB to oversee this agenda. I will spend time with the partners sharing the Police and Crime Plan and discussing with them how we could assist each other. As a result of a recent workshop event held in January we have begun to build the rapport that will be, I am sure, an essential foundation for successful commissioning. The SPB will meet again at the end of February/early March to consider proposals for sub-groups to address reoffending, mental health and vulnerability, community and neighbourhoods. I am grateful to the Probation Service for the offer of a secondee, and will welcome such offers from other partners.
16. Since September 2012 the team in the now OPCC has been strengthened to provide a commissioning resource, using experienced commissioning experts, best practice models and partner skills in specific commissioning areas, for example data analysis.
17. It is recognised that the £1.649m that is in the CSF is small by comparison to the sums available in the core budgets of the partners, so I am very interested in seeking ideas as to how the CSF can be used to augment the performance of the bigger sums. We are working with partners to develop a robust commissioning framework, which we intend to use from April onwards. In seeking to further develop our relationships with partners, we have accelerated our partnership arrangements to help us analyse the existing commissioning processes.
18. Given the time and money dilemma, I have undertaken to allocate the equivalent of 50% of each partner's 2012/13 funding for the first six months of 2013/14 (i.e. some 8 months until 30 Sept 2013) to allow for a successful transition to the new arrangements. This will enable partners to keep staff on beyond 1 April 2013 and to work with me and my team to identify how we can mutually support each other with carefully thought through commissioning arrangements.
19. This is not, however, merely to be seen as the status quo. I intend to issue a "contract", which is intended to enable the OPCC to collect information to inform our "best practice" and "evidence base". I will be asking partners to report on their own indicators and measures of success/outcomes relating to the use of the funding as well as related costs. This will therefore support the ongoing commissioning process.

Conclusion

20. The Government left PCCs and partners with a difficult agenda; making the election late in the year with the allocation of the CSF even later, set against the need to put in place a Police and Crime Plan before 31 March 2013 was always going to represent a demanding agenda. I do believe, however, that the transition arrangements are the correct compromise between stability and progress towards our new commissioning landscape.
21. I am confident that, with a positive and mutually supportive attitude, together we can commission and deliver innovative and value for money solutions in support of the priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan.

List of Appendices

None.

Background Papers

None.

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