

Police and Crime Panel - 30th January 2013

I am very pleased today to have this chance formally to present the first draft of my Police and Crime Plan to the Panel. I am equally grateful for the opportunity to speak to you about the Plan and to take a few minutes to outline what I consider to be the key issues. In particular, during these 10-15 minutes or so, I hope that I can clarify areas of potential concern that you may have and thus clear the way for the constructive discussion which I am sure will follow.

As you will have seen, the Plan covers an extensive range of priorities, reflecting the breadth of my role (which encapsulates policing, crime, victims, community safety, linkage to criminal justice, and the wider partnership worlds of health and offender management). I will move on later to describe the ways in which I will do all I can to help ensure that the best outcomes are achieved – through the commissioning of outcomes with Partners, through effective performance management, and through continually reviewing the needs of our communities. It is only by rigorous challenge of processes and procedures, coupled with assuring access to effective performance data, that we can truly understand where things might be going wrong or where recalibration of systems are needed. Or, indeed, where things are going well, so that we can (where appropriate) reinforce success.

The plan also seeks to illustrate my desire to identify new opportunities and initiatives, and my broader aspirations for improving the lives of the people of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. This will be achieved by looking at the areas that will maximise the OPCC working not only with the Force, but also with the voluntary sector and with community safety partnerships. I have already asked my Chief Executive to contact the chairs of CSPs to arrange meetings during February so that the important work of building those strong links can continue, develop and then prosper in a manner to which we would all aspire.

It is also necessary for me to state here that some of this plan may be viewed as two-dimensional at this point. By which I mean there are elements of the narrative where the focus is perhaps seemingly from a slightly narrow policing perspective when, in fact, achieving these outcomes requires strong partner engagement and joint working. Clear examples of this lie in the areas of mental health, vulnerability and reoffending. My team is already working with Helen West from the Probation Trust and we are beginning discussions with Toby Sanders in early February to flesh out the health priorities. My final draft, for which we have set a provisional date in mid-March to be brought to you, will not just provide the policing perspective on this but, by consulting now with partner colleagues, will aim to present a much improved three dimensional perspective of these challenges. I have always said that I saw the “and Crime Commissioner” part of my role to be both the greatest challenge but also the greatest opportunity of the PCC initiative. Such an approach will provide me with the real opportunity to understand joint priorities and thus to commission most effectively, allocating funding to the right place, at the right time, with the right outcomes identified, and in concert and harmony with Partners’ aspirations and targets....

Although I am pleased with the progress made on the Plan since my election, it is because of this relatively short period of time that I want to ensure that this draft is subjected to significant consultation throughout February and early March. It is now on my website and already we are receiving comments and suggestions from

members of the public and local organisations – something which is essential in my role of connecting with the public...

The plan will be published, with appropriate amendments, by the 31st March and I will be making sure that everything that is contained within it provides the necessary focus, priority and rigour so that I can hold the Chief Constable to account and work with you as partners to deliver our joint priorities and outcomes. We will of course refer any significant changes made to this draft back to this panel prior to publication (...and I will be discussing with the Chair of this Panel how this might happen). I appreciate the value of this consultative period and I embrace it.

Let me just touch briefly on 2 aspects regarding the Policing aspect of this plan.

Firstly, regarding the nature of the targets contained therein. So these new targets are not figures plucked from the ether or without suitable intellectual provenance, as I hope you will have already noted in your pre-reading. Instead, they represent the areas of crime that matter to our people, which were conveyed repeatedly to me during the lead up to, and since, the election, and also many of which have been encapsulated in previous Plans. It is worth noting that we are building on work that has reduced crime and ASB – a legacy left by the Police Authority and others in this room; crime is already at a 20 year low. So these aiming points do not represent easy targets – there is little point in setting standards which the Force could achieve without trying to excel. But there is equally little point in setting such high standards that we run the risk routinely of failing to achieve them. We won't, in all probability, hit all of the targets all of the time. And we might even amend them as we go through the 4 year period over which this Plan will be 'in force'. But these targets do represent what the citizens of this area expect of us in driving down crime and making our streets safer; that, after all, is a core duty of a PCC. You will see also that I have tried to lay suitable emphasis on those crimes that "cause the most harm". Of course, it is sad when your car is stolen, or indeed when something is stolen from your car. But so much more human harm is done as a result of such crimes as sexual assault/grooming, domestic violence, rape, child abuse, hate crimes and so on. That is why I have laid great emphasis on upping our game, to the maximum extent possible, in looking after the victims of crime, as well as trying to drive down those crime categories that create such victims. You may like to discuss this later.

The other thing regarding the Policing aspect of this plan is the fact that, at my suggestion and the Chairman's subsequent kind invitation, I am accompanied by the Chief Constable today. How could you not have noticed.....! I am grateful to Simon Cole for making the time to be here too. The reason is simple – that I wanted you, the Panel, to be able to reassure yourselves that this is a plan to which all parties have signed up, and against which we expect to deliver. Indeed, my team and I have written this plan in close consultation with the Force and, a little over a week ago, we had the final meeting between the OPCC and the Chief Officers' Team, to finalise the draft before it came out to you or, indeed, any other partners. Be clear, though, it is my plan and I bear responsibility for it.

If I can now turn to the second agenda item, the County Council's request for me to explain to you my approach to the commissioning of services. As I have already

implied, this is one of the fundamental changes brought about by this particular aspect of the Police and Criminal Justice Reform Bill. That is, the mandate for Police and Crime Commissioners to do everything in their power to bring about improved outcomes for the people they serve - in my case the people of Leicester city, Leicestershire and Rutland. To do this I need to work with partners to understand what is happening now, what is working well, what is falling short in terms of outcomes, what does – and what does not – represent value for money in the commissioning marketplace, and - most importantly, of course - what we can do together to instil innovation and enterprise.

The supplementary paper that I circulated for the agenda sets out some background to the work already carried out, and the proposed way forward. I would like to highlight some key points:

Even before the elections in November 2012, the Police Authority transition team proactively worked with all relevant partners and created a Strategic Transition Board where all partners were represented. This Board commenced in January of 2012 and met every month in order to facilitate a robust and positive transition to the new arrangements. Part of that work was to create a comprehensive document that described the current partnership landscape. This document was advocated by the Home Office as an example of good practice and I can assure you was regarded by me, as a candidate, as a tremendously helpful description of the landscape beyond policing – the “and crime commissioner” element of the role
(Note: copy of document shown as a prop).

Throughout the transition period leading up to the election, the Police Authority team, under the capable leadership and direction of my Chief Executive, continued to facilitate discussions with CSP chairs. There was a Commissioning Conference held in July 2012, and a further candidate event held in September where I was given a most welcome opportunity to meet and discuss hugely important partnership issues with managers and service users alike. I also have a list of the work undertaken by the transition team to show you if you wish, but suffice to say a lot of groundwork was covered in the lead up to the election – thanks must be given here to Barrie Roper as the chair of the main Transition Board, who wholeheartedly supported the provision of resource to this very important work. Despite looking hard to find one, I am not aware of any other Authority area that came close to this amount, or quality, of preparatory work in this most important area.

Given the time constraints against which we are all working, I have taken the view that 2013/14 will be a year of transition. We have continued to work with partners to understand the current funding arrangements and to try to gain a better perspective on the achievement of positive outcomes with the funds allocated through specific grants. In some cases, understanding (i.e. getting suitable information on) the outcomes generated, or indeed the cost of generating them, has proved extremely difficult. I am not yet certain that we have identified all the current funding streams that are ceasing along with respective recipients. That is why I am so keen to build on this work and am proposing an allocating of initial funding, at the 2012/13 grant levels, for the first six months of the next financial year.

Coupled with this, I am also promising that, by June this year, I will communicate the commissioning intentions for all of the functional clusters – more on these a little later – so that we, and partners, can move forward with defining the second half of the year – and, indeed, future years. I believe that with the continued engagement with partners this is achievable. This seems to me to be a pragmatic way forward and, based on the information we have, also the most sensible response to ensure that our joint priorities can be assessed, evaluated and commissioning actions taken.

Is this the only option?

Of course, I could have decided merely to passport all of the current funding to current partners pro rata to past levels, but I think that this would be “lazy commissioning”. And clearly this would not answer the imperative laid upon me to demonstrate clarity of linkage to the police and crime plan objectives. In addition it would leave everyone about 20% underfunded – or I would have to ‘dip’ into the Force funds by a total not far short of £1/2M.

Alternatively, I could have pressed “pause” until I had set up the new commissioning regime. But then partners would have faced considerable funding uncertainty in the early part of 2013/14 and perhaps some valuable initiatives would fall over in the meantime – initiatives that, with due analysis completed, would have been carried on with my funding stream. Babies and bath water spring to mind.

That is why I am proposing what I am proposing....!

At this point I want to mention the very positive partner workshop that we held on the 15th of this month. As a result of this workshop, attendees agreed the need to group the strategic priorities into thematic clusters or “commissions”. These were agreed to be:

1. **Offending and reoffending**. As I said already, being led by Helen West and work is under way to define this. We also have a seconded Senior Probation Officer working with the team to help shape this – I would welcome such offers from other partners too.
2. **Mental health and vulnerability**. Toby Sanders has very kindly offered to support this work and to help define and shape the outcomes.
3. **Communities and neighbourhoods**. To include areas such as ASB, links to neighbourhood policing and the work of CSPs. At my request, my CEO has already asked John Sinnott whether he will be prepared to be the Executive lead on this as it is hugely important that local authorities in this force area are able to come together and shape this agenda with us.
4. **The fourth and final area is “reducing crime and supporting victims”**. Here, the Force, through the leadership of the Chief Constable and his senior team, will drive through the strategic priorities set out in the Plan.

So you can see there has been much work done over the last year or so to facilitate the enhanced understanding of this complex landscape, but I am always willing to

learn from others – and I know that you will wish to return to this area in questions/debate. Perhaps when we discuss this agenda item in full, colleagues around the table can suggest ways in which my team and I can improve on the approach that I have now outlined. I am, indeed, still on receive.

Perhaps I might now move on to the budget and precept.

In developing the Plan with the Chief Constable, and in now discussing it with partners and the public, I am very conscious that the priorities and targets set out must be realistic. And this means, in particular, being realistic within the resources available to all of us. I am also mindful of the fact that seemingly discrete funding decisions by one body can impact the ability of others to achieve their objectives. Or indeed result in more money corporately spent than was saved by the original decision.

The Panel is only too familiar with the current trend in public sector funding, so I do not need to rehearse that here; suffice to say that there are unlikely to be any ‘sunny uplands’ until 2017/18 or beyond. That is why part of the consultation will be focused on making sure that the Plan works in the context of diminishing resources.

So what does the future look like in terms of the resources available to me? For 2013/14 there is a 1.6% reduction in overall formula funding, from £117m to £115m. This, combined with continued pressure on the council tax via the collection fund and base, further squeezes the resources available to me for deployment. Overall, funding has moved downward by £850,000 against an upward pressure in spending.

However, it is not the short term that causes most concern, but the medium term. You will see, from both the Plan and the Budget report, that there is a significant funding gap in the later years of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) – a gap eventually amounting to some £20m. Of course, it is not possible to be precise about this number because we do not yet know the steepness of the downward slope caused by funding reductions, or of the impact of changes to the funding formula that we know are coming, or indeed the continuation (or not) of the current council tax constraints and freeze grants. Nor can we yet assess the impact of the Local Council Tax Support schemes. But we do know that there will be a large gap – predicted to be in excess of 10% of the current funding level.

Thankfully, I am inheriting a prudent approach to financial planning and management from the Police Authority and the Force. Both have a good track record of having wisely sought to “mend the roof while the sun was shining”. Hence some £23m has been taken out of costs in the last two financial years. The resultant tight budgets have been well managed to create small under-spends, and a Budget Equalisation Reserve is in place to help us to plan for the longer term while absorbing the shocks of the shorter term changes.

But I now sense that this journey to an organisation that is “fit for 2016/17” must be undertaken faster and more radically so that I can be sure of achieving the priorities set out in the Plan within the resources available. That is why I am very supportive of the Chief Constable’s change programme, which is aiming (and I quote) “with

our staff and partners, to transform the way we protect our communities and deliver over £20m in revenue savings by 2016”.

That Change Programme is expected to have identified, by the end of June 2013, the work streams that will contribute to eliminating the funding gap over the medium term. With that information and feedback on the Plan contents, I will be well placed to revise the document and then reissue it with a balanced financial plan.

So you might ask why I am not proposing a council tax increase for next year in the light of the medium term predictions for funding. I have four reasons:

- Firstly, the Force has been able to prepare a budget for 2013/14 that essentially maintains the same resources as at the end of 2012/13 with minimal new savings required.
- Secondly, the Change Programme is being formulated, and I am positive about what will be delivered through that.
- Thirdly, the equalisation reserve will provide investment funds to enable change to occur, not least via a ‘spend to save’ mindset.
- Fourthly, while I do recognise the cumulative effect of council tax increases, the availability of the freeze grant in the forthcoming year will enable me to avoid putting further financial pressure on council tax payers. You will note, however, that the modelling beyond 2014/15 assumes that some council tax increases will be needed in order to seek to reduce the funding gap that is predicted to emerge.

For these reasons, therefore, I believe that the budget, and hence the Precept, being proposed for 2013/14 is realistic in the context of the expectations arising from the Plan, but that the challenge around balancing the medium term remains. With the help of the Change Programme deliberations and initiatives, I hope and expect to be able to resolve the remaining questions regarding the Medium Term Financial Strategy during the first half of this coming financial year.

In conclusion, regarding this set of very important agenda items, I would only reiterate that they are the product of much thought, of much professional advice, and of many meetings and frequent discussions since I took office in November 2012. A lot of hard work and effort has gone into the development of this plan and I personally want to convey my thanks both to Chris Haward from the Force and to my OPCC team for their perseverance, dedication, commitment and support. The production of this plan within an eight week timeframe is no mean feat.

Lastly, may I issue an invitation? It is that, in addition to considering the Plan and budget/precept today, you will also find time subsequently, through your respective organisations, to meet with me and my team, to feed back to us, and work with us to produce a plan of which we can all be proud and which provides a good baseline for future working for the benefit of all of our residents. Thank you.

Sir Clive Loader
Police and Crime Commissioner
Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland
30th January 2013