

OUTSIDE BODY – ANNUAL UPDATE

Outside Body:
Hertfordshire Police and Crime Panel

Purpose:
The Hertfordshire Police and Crime Panel has been established to scrutinise and support the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Commissioner is required to consult with the Panel on plans for policing, as well as the precept (the money collected from council tax for policing) and certain key appointments.

East Herts Council Representative(s):
Cllr Alexander Curtis

Update:
4 meetings of the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Panel ('the Panel') were held during the last civic year. I attended all of these meetings, along with the associated pre-meetings held remotely by MS Teams.

In June 2021, the Panel held a confirmation hearing for the proposed appointment of a new Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Lewis Cocking. Following detailed review and questioning of the proposed appointee, the Panel voted unanimously to endorse the appointment.

3 working groups have been set up by the Panel during the last civic year to examine topics of interest, namely disproportionality, finance, and the use of the 'Prevention First' approach. I serve as the Panel's lead member for finance, in which capacity I have worked with the Police and Crime Commissioner's office ('the OPCC') to ensure that all financial papers presented by the OPCC (for use by the Panel) are as clear and consistent in format between years as possible. This has enabled improved scrutiny of the finance function of the OPCC.

As usual, the Panel reviewed the latest annual report of the Police and Crime Commissioner ('the PCC'), along with those of the Independent Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel, the Independent Custody Volunteers Scheme, and police dog welfare.

In November 2021, the Panel reviewed the OPCC's financial performance against budget, along with progress towards the realisation of actions listed in the latest Community Safety and Criminal Justice Annual Delivery Plan.

In February 2022, the Panel reviewed the PCC's proposed precept, and agreed to support the proposed policing annual element of Council Tax (Band D equivalent) of £223.00 for 2022/23. This represented a £10.00 increase on the previous year. The possibility of a report on police welfare was also discussed. Proposals related to this important subject have since been included in the PCC's new Police and Crime Plan, which was presented to and reviewed by the Panel in March 2022. Through this key blueprint, the PCC aims to keep crime low, focus on victims, recruit more officers, protect local policing, increase efficiency, and keep tax low. Taking a prevention-based approach to policing, maximising the use of evidence-based methods, and tackling violence against women and girls are key priorities for the PCC over the lifetime of his new plan. The delivery of actions to address disproportionality, tackle cybercrime, and increase the diversity of backgrounds amongst Hertfordshire Constabulary officers, also continue to be important areas of focus for the PCC and the Panel.

The next meeting of the Panel is scheduled to be hosted by East Herts District Council at Wallfields at 6 PM on Thursday 23rd June 2022. Members are encouraged to attend if interested in the work of the Panel.

Update provided by: Cllr. Alexander Curtis

Date: 5th April 2022