

SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Communications Protocol

13 December 2012

SUMMARY

This report sets out the proposed methods by which the Surrey Police and Crime Panel will promote its role and activities to ensure that the public have access to the information they need to hold Surrey's Police and Crime Commissioner to account.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Police and Crime Panel is asked to:

- (i) Note the responsibility of the Panel to actively promote its role and activities;
- (ii) Agree the content to be provided on the Panel's web pages, as detailed in paragraphs 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 of the report;
- (iii) Agree the proposals for promoting the work of the Panel through council newsletters and relevant events, as detailed in paragraph 2.6 of the report;
- (iv) Agree the proposals for Panel Member updates to their respective local authorities, as detailed in paragraphs 2.7 and 2.8 of the report;
- (v) Agree the proposals for webcasting Panel meetings, as detailed in paragraph 2.9;
- (vi) Agree the protocol for media relations, as detailed in Appendix A.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011 requires that arrangements be made for administrative support for the Police and Crime Panel (“the Panel”) and for the role of the Panel to be promoted.
- 1.2 This report sets out the proposed support to be provided to the Panel to communicate to a wider public audience its scrutiny activities of the new Police and Crime Commissioner, in the interests of transparency.

2.0 ANALYSIS AND PROGRESS

Promoting the Role of the Police and Crime Panel

- 2.1 The Panel Arrangements agreed by all 12 Local Authorities in Surrey included a section on the promotion of, and support for, the Panel. This included two relevant clauses for promoting the Panel, as detailed below.

6.1 *The role of the Police & Crime Panel will be promoted, with information provided on all 12 local authority websites and opportunities identified to promote with the public through existing resident newsletters and events as appropriate.*

6.4 *The appointed members of the Panel will act as the main conduit between the Panel and their local authority. They will report back to the local authority on the work of the Panel as appropriate and provide support and guidance to members and officers of the relevant local authority on the functions of the Police and Crime Panel, signposting to officers or other organisations as necessary.*

Police and Crime Panel Website

- 2.2 The County Council hosts a dedicated website which provides information for the public on the role of the Police and Crime Panel and links to the membership, meeting dates and agendas once published. It will also be updated as appropriate with current events or developments that relate to the Panel.
- 2.3 The pages can be accessed via the following URL:
www.surreycc.gov.uk/policeandcrimepanel
- 2.4 The address for the dedicated website has been shared with all 11 Districts and Boroughs so that they can provide a link on their respective websites.
- 2.5 Media releases will be used proactively to signpost members of the public and other interested parties to the website, alerting the public to forthcoming meeting dates, agendas and any media releases from the Panel.

Resident Newsletters

- 2.6 The Panel's support officer will use the Surrey Communications Officer Group to identify council newsletters or relevant events held across the 12 local authorities in Surrey where the work of the Panel could be promoted. The support officer will provide information to local authorities as necessary and work with communications teams to draft articles as appropriate. Panel members will be made aware of any articles due to be placed in resident newsletters.

Panel Member Updates

- 2.7 In accordance with clause 6.4 of the Panel Arrangements agreed by all 12 Local Authorities in Surrey, appointed members of the Panel are encouraged to provide regular updates to their local authority, by, for example, signposting members and appropriate officers to the Panel's website or providing statements or reports to council meetings.
- 2.8 The support officer for the Panel will provide information and advice to appointed members when requested. Members promoting the role of the Police and Crime Panel through statements or similar at council meetings should let the support officer know so that all promotional activities can be captured and reported back to the Panel regularly to help identify best practice.

Webcasting Meetings

- 2.9 The Panel intends to webcast two meetings this financial year - its initial meeting with the PCC on 13 December 2012 and the meeting at which it considers the PCC's proposed precept. The use of webcasting will then be reviewed and a further report brought to the Panel with recommendations for future meetings.

Media Relations

- 2.10 The Panel's statutory functions will be promoted to local communities via proactive and reactive media relations in accordance with the draft media protocol attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.11 Media inquiries for the Panel will be managed through the Panel's Support Officer, who will support the Chairman in his or her relationships with journalists, getting advice from the host authority's media relations team as appropriate.
- 2.12 The host authority's media relations team will provide specialist advice to the Panel's Support Officer in producing media communications strategies for specific reviews, and in liaising with members of the press attending the Panel's meetings. The Chairman will be supported with the production of letters and comment pieces for publication as required.

3.0 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Surrey County Council is committed to providing an accessible website that is easy to use by anyone, whatever their age, background, access device or level of ability/disability. The Panel's web pages will adhere to the same standards.
- 3.2 As previously outlined, the Panel has a duty to ensure that the public has access to relevant information concerning the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner. To ensure that the Panel's communications are accessible to as many people as possible, all written material will adhere to the principles of plain English.

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Panel is asked to agree the promotional arrangements at set out on the first page of this report.

5.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The Surrey Police and Crime Panel has a duty to ensure that residents have access to the information they need to hold Surrey's Police and Crime Commissioner to account. The recommendations contained in this report will ensure that this responsibility is fulfilled.

6.0 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 6.1 Once agreed, the proposals contained in this report will form the basis of the Panel's promotional activities.

LEAD OFFICER: Damian Markland, Scrutiny Officer, Surrey County Council

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 020 8541 9993

E-MAIL: damian.markland@surreycc.gov.uk

CONTACT OFFICERS: Damian Markland / Rachel Crossley

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 020 8541 9993

E-MAIL: damian.markland@surreycc.gov.uk
rachel.crossley@surreycc.gov.uk

**Protocol for media relations to support the work of the Surrey
Police and Crime Panel**

In order to promote the role of the Panel, the Panel's Support Officer will work with the Chairman of the Panel to identify any of its activities that have potential press or public interest, consulting with other members of the Panel as necessary.

The Support Officer will inform the host authority's Media Relations Team about reviews, recommendations or decisions that are planned and seek advice about the most appropriate communications strategy in each case.

The Chairman of the Panel will be offered media support and advice by the host authority to enable him or her to explain the Panel's work and its findings to the media.

In consultation with the host authority's media relation team, the Support Officer will respond to requests for information from the media about reports and decisions by the Panel and all media statements issued must be approved by the Chairman. All media interview requests relating to the work of the Panel will be referred to the Chairman and only the Chairman (or Vice-Chairman in the Chairman's absence) may make comment to the media on the Panel's behalf.

The Police and Crime Commissioner will normally be informed in advance where the Panel intends to issue a media release, for information purposes.

Media releases will be issued in plain text format on behalf of the Panel and will also be distributed to all members of the Panel by email beforehand. They will be published on the Panel website as soon as they are issued.

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