



Communities Select Committee  
16 January 2013

**Scrutiny of Community Safety and the Election of  
a Police & Crime Commissioner for Surrey**

**Purpose of the report:** Policy Development and Review

The purpose of this report is to a) provide the Committee with a summary of the community safety landscape following the election of a Police & Crime Commissioner for Surrey, and (b) following the election consider how the Committee might best deliver its duty to scrutinise community safety.

**Introduction:**

1. Following the election of the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Surrey there is a need to review the Communities Select Committees role in the scrutiny of community safety. This report describes the position to date and offers a possible way forward in the future that is intended to be of mutual interest and avoids duplication.
2. The information in **appendix one** describes the community safety landscape prior to the appointment of the Police & Crime Panel (PCP) and the election of the Surrey PCC in November. **Appendix two** describes the key bodies that exist following the election of the PCC. It is envisaged that in the coming year to 18 months that there will be some rationalisation of the bodies and their functions.

**Scrutiny – current position:**

3. Each of the community safety partnerships (CSPs) is accountable under the crime and disorder scrutiny provisions as set out in the Police & Justice Act 2006 and therefore they have been scrutinised by the relevant overview and scrutiny committee in each of the district or borough councils. The Surrey County Council Communities Select Committee has undertaken an annual county wide scrutiny of community safety that has involved Councillors from the districts and boroughs and taken information and witnesses from key agencies including the Police, Probation, and the County Council Cabinet Member.

4. The PCC is not a responsible authority<sup>1</sup> on a CSP and therefore, the overview and scrutiny committees will not be able to directly scrutinise or hold to account the PCC – this will be the role of the PCP.
5. The role of the PCP is to hold to account and assist the PCC in the way they exercise their role. The Panel consists of one elected member from each of the twelve local authorities in Surrey and two independent co-opted people. The Panel will have responsibility for:
  - a) reviewing the PCC's draft police and crime plan;
  - b) reviewing the PCC's annual report; and
  - c) holding confirmation hearings for key PCC appointments, for example, deputy PCC.
6. They will also have the power to veto (on a two thirds majority) the PCC's proposed precept and the proposed appointment of a chief constable.
7. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act, the legislation that created PCCs, places a mutual duty on PCCs and responsible authorities in CSPs to cooperate to reduce crime, disorder and reoffending. This reciprocal duty requires a PCCs police and crime plan to 'have regard to' the priorities of each CSP and in turn CSPs must have regard to the priorities established by the PCC in their police and crime plan.
8. The Surrey Community Safety Unit (SCSU) has coordinated this single crime and disorder strategic assessment, supported by a multi-agency project group, in collaboration with community safety colleagues across the county including staff from the now Office of the PCC for Surrey.
9. The purpose of a strategic assessment is to provide knowledge and understanding of key community safety issues that will enable partners to set clear and robust priorities for their location, develop activities driven by reliable evidence that meet the needs of communities, and deploy resources effectively, presenting value for money. In practice, the outcomes from this document in Surrey are the identification of a set of countywide priorities to be led by the Community and Public Safety Board (CPSB), and borough and district priorities for inclusion by CSPs in their partnership plans.
10. It is likely that the PCC's forthcoming police and crime plan will be influenced by the single strategic assessment. It is envisaged that in future the two processes could be aligned to deliver clarity and opportunities for joint working, commissioning, economies of scale and investment.

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<sup>1</sup> CSPs are made up of representatives from the police and police authority, the local council, and the fire, health and probation services. These agencies are known as the 'responsible authorities'. The responsible authorities were defined by the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) and as amended by the Police and Criminal Justice Act 2002, the Police and Justice Act 2006 and associated regulations.

## **Scrutiny - options for in the future:**

11. Following the Police and Justice Act 2006, Local Authorities are required to undertake annual scrutiny of the local CSPs. Surrey County Council's Communities Select Committee can meet the requirements of the Act as it has legal power to scrutinise and make reports or recommendations regarding the functioning of the responsible authorities that comprise a CSP.
12. There is not a route for the Communities Select Committee to directly scrutinise the PCC as this is the function of the PCP. However the Select Committee can scrutinise issues which fall within its remit including community safety and relations with the Police and this might well involve asking questions of the PCC.
13. Given that PCCs will have the power to make grants to CSPs there is the potential for CSP scrutiny to cut across areas of the PCP's responsibility.
14. However, given the likely alignment of the single strategic assessment, its priorities and the actions that flow for CSPs and partners, and the PCC's police and crime plan there would seem to be an opportunity for the Committee to involve the PCC in future scrutiny sessions.

## **Conclusions:**

15. The option not to change the current scrutiny arrangements is unrealistic and in recognition of the changing community safety landscape it is recommended that the Select Committee continues to exercise its statutory function to scrutinise community safety but does so using a different starting point, that of the annual single strategic assessment. It should also consider how to involve the PCC in future scrutiny arrangements, identifying areas of mutual interest and concern to avoid duplication and achieve common outcomes.

### **Financial and value for money implications**

16. Continued scrutiny of CSPs and where possible joint scrutiny with the PCC will ensure that public funds invested in community safety are monitored to ensure that monies are being used effectively and efficiently and making a difference for the residents of Surrey.

### **Equalities Implications**

17. CSPs across Surrey work with a range of vulnerable people and those who are the victims of crime including, young people, victims of domestic violence, those experiencing anti-social behaviour and those who feel vulnerable. The work CSPs do with these groups and the community as a whole in making both their areas safer and residents feel safer contributes to the County being safer and feeling safer for all residents.

### **Risk Management Implications**

18. Surrey is one of the safest places to live and work and has the highest public confidence figures (police and local councils working together to reduce crime) in

the Country. A great deal of effort will continue to be invested to ensure that this position is maintained but the increasing pressure of an economic downturn and greatly reduced public expenditure makes this a real challenge.

### **Implications for the Council's Priorities or Community Strategy**

19. In maintaining and amending the scrutiny process that the Select Committee undertakes will ensure that information made available to the public on the effectiveness of community safety in the County is clear and transparent, demonstrates value for money and shows the value of working together in partnership.

<b>Recommendations:</b>
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20. Scrutinise the single strategic assessment:

- a) The Committee scrutinises the effectiveness of the delivery by the partners against those issues identified in the assessment. Such a scrutiny offers an opportunity to involve the PCC in scrutinising the effectiveness of the CSPs. The PCC has the ability to call the Chairs of CSPs to a meeting to discuss strategic priorities. Using the strategic assessment provides for a county wide view to be taken by both parties, elected councillors and the elected PCC, and the consideration of mutually beneficial recommendations and desired outcomes.
- b) To ensure the effectiveness of the recommendation and to avoid duplication of work by all parties concerned, discussions need to be started to identify issues of mutual interest and concern and selecting the best forum and timing that is advantageous to all to investigate those issues.

<b>Proposed next steps:</b>
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Officers to contact and discuss the principles and practicalities with the PCC's Office and bring back a report to a future meeting of the Committee on progress.

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**Sources/background papers:**

- 'Police and crime panels - A guide to scrutiny', Local Government Association & Centre for Public Scrutiny publication.  
[http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=8d1c912f-eb6d-47ac-bbfd-6e6eeec7cac6&groupId=10171](http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=8d1c912f-eb6d-47ac-bbfd-6e6eeec7cac6&groupId=10171)
- 'Police and crime commissioners - A guide for community safety partnerships', Local Government Association publication.  
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