

Title: Resourcing the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel

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Purpose of Report

To provide an overview of draft indicative costs for supporting the Police and Crime Panel for the Panel's agreement.

Background

1. The Home Office will provide funding to Host Authorities to support the running costs of Police and Crime Panels. The confirmed annual funding will be £53,000 per annum for running costs plus an additional £920 per annum per member to fund necessary expenses. **This will provide an annual budget for the Panel of £71,700 in a full year from 2013/14.**
2. For the financial year 2012/13 the Home Office has confirmed that it will be providing pro-rata funding from a start date of 1 October 2012. **The total budget provided by the Home Office for 2012/13 is expected to be £35,850. The Home Office has confirmed that the funding will be paid in one lump sum, including the notional allocation towards member expenses.** The funding notionally allocated towards member expenses is unringfenced and can therefore be used flexibly to support the Panel as it sees fit.
3. The Thames Valley Panel Arrangements, signed-off by all 18 Authorities, sets out that the Host Authority will provide a level of service to support the Panel within the resources granted by the Home Office. In subsequent years, Authorities could choose to top up the Home Office funding through its own resources, however this would need to be agreed by all Authorities (Panel Arrangements, para 5.0).

Budget Assumptions

4. Some decisions have already been made by the Member Steering Group which oversaw the initial set-up of the Panel and these have been factored into the indicative Budget Plan as set out in paragraph 8 below.
5. The funding from the Home Office is limited. A flat rate is being provided to Host Authorities with no account taken on the size or complexity of force areas. Given this constraint, steps have been taken to minimise costs wherever possible. This includes:
 - *Start-up Costs:* Buckinghamshire County Council is underwriting all of the initial start-up costs of the Police and Crime Panel as the Home Office funding only commences on 1 October 2012. These costs are therefore not included within the Budget Plan. This support has to date included a range of professional expertise from scrutiny, Legal and Democratic Services and Community Safety teams over a six month period. It has included backfilling the post of a Scrutiny Officer to provide capacity for this project. It

has also necessitated providing Independent Legal Advice from Bevan Brittan in relation to the Panel Arrangements and Rules of Procedure.

- *Expenses and Allowances:* The Member Steering Group agreed that each individual Authority should pay expenses and allowances of their representative on the Panel and that no allowance should be paid to co-optees. These points are reflected in the signed-off Panel Arrangements (para 6.0) and reflected in the Indicative Budget Plan. Reasonable expenses will be paid by the Host Authority for co-optees.

- *Meeting venue costs:* The Member Steering Group agreed the principle of rotating venues across the Thames Valley for Panel meetings. The Authority offering the facilities will meet the costs of providing the venue and refreshments.

6. The Member Steering Group agreed that the Home Office funding should be used to provide a full-time Scrutiny Policy Officer to support its work as this would be the core officer support needed to help the Panel conduct its business. On this basis the Host Authority has appointed to this position. Please note that the budget set out below is for a six-month period.

Indicative 2012/13 Budget Costs (1 October 2012–31 March 2013)

7. As a new entity there are inevitably uncertainties around the activity of the Panel which will impact on how the Home Office funding will be utilized. This includes the number of meetings to be held and the extent that legal and specialist expertise is needed. The table below sets out an overview of how the Host Authority proposes to utilize the Home Office funding to provide the necessary support to the Police and Crime Panel.

Service	Description	Indicative cost £
Scrutiny Services	1 FTE, policy support for the Panel & review groups; management support, ongoing procedural set-up in year one; organisational on-costs – NIC/Pensions/HR/ICT; recruitment costs for Scrutiny Officer position	26,000
Democratic Services Support	Clerking	2,200
Legal services	Complaints procedure, use of veto powers and other special functions	2,000
Communications	To deliver Communications Strategy, including media support & co-ordination; basic design support for communications; materials; annual stakeholder conference; webcasting	3,000
Co-optee expenses	2 Independents – travel/subsistence	920
Contingency	Options available for this expenditure pending Panel decisions on public engagement; website.	1,730
Total Budget 2012/13		35,850

8. The budget shows that there is little flexibility for additional expenditure to support more extensive public engagement activity; commission research or pay member allowances and expenses. It is suggested that the contingency of £1,730 is allocated at a later

point in the year by the Panel, once the Panel has had the opportunity for greater discussion on its work programme and activities.

Budget Monitoring Arrangements

9. The Host Authority is responsible for the sound financial management of the funds to support the Panel, including ensuring that the support provided is contained within the central government grant. Monitoring of actual spend against the grant funded budget will be carried out by the Host Authority and it is proposed that only significant variations will be reported to the Panel.

Recommendation

- 1. To consider and agree the indicative budget as set out above, subject to any significant variations to be reported back to the Panel for its agreement.**