

**Title: Police & Crime Panel Lines of Enquiry and Evidence**

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## **Purpose of Report**

To suggest lines of enquiry that the PCP may wish to address on an ongoing basis. To begin to consider evidence sources that the PCP could draw upon to inform its work.

## **Context**

1. To exercise influence, the PCP should aim to develop with the PCC a relationship based on constructive 'critical friend' challenge. As part of this, the PCP may decide to evaluate policy and procedures which will require subject-specific lines of enquiry to be developed. These can be developed on a case-by-case basis.
2. For example, if the PCP were to undertake a review of subject X, then subject-specific lines of enquiry might include:
  - The extent to which the PCC has prioritised subject X
  - The extent to which subject X is an important issue for residents
  - The extent to which partners are engaged in addressing subject X
3. Lines of enquiry can also be developed regarding the overall performance and general role of the PCC. Such lines of enquiry would be pursued whenever the PCP met with the PCC and would not be subject-specific. They could be considered 'standing'<sup>1</sup> or 'default' lines of enquiry, as they would be pursued by the PCP on an ongoing basis.

## **Ongoing PCP Lines of Enquiry**

4. The following sub-headings (A-E) are proposed ongoing lines of enquiry for the PCP, with an accompanying rationale for each. If agreed, the lines of enquiry would:
  - Help to underpin meetings of the PCP and PCC, making them more methodological
  - Add to the effectiveness of PCP scrutiny, as they would provide consistent focal points from meeting-to-meeting
5. Agreed lines of enquiry need not be raised explicitly at every meeting; they can be equally useful as a guide to the ongoing issues that the PCP considers significant. If anything raised by the PCC is relevant to a line of enquiry, then it can be developed further in the meeting by the PCP.

### **A. To what extent is the PCC communicating with the public?**

The PCC has a statutory duty to communicate with the general public. The PCC's mandate is derived from public election; therefore there is also a democratic imperative to stay in touch. The PCP can continually seek assurance that the PCC is fulfilling duties regarding engagement with the public.

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<sup>1</sup> Similar to a 'standing' or recurrent agenda item

**B. Is the PCC involving others in decision making to a sufficient extent?**

The complexity of the issues facing the PCC makes effective engagement with partners essential. The PCP can play a vital role in ensuring that decision making is inclusive, evidence based and joined-up with that of other agencies.

**C. To what extent is the PCC successfully balancing national and local priorities?**

PCCs need to have regard to national as well as local priorities. National priorities are outlined in the Strategic Policing Requirement, but there will also be strong voices championing local priorities. Additionally, the PCC will have been elected on the basis of their own priorities. The extent to which the PCC is balancing these competing priorities will be a key line of enquiry for the PCP.

**D. To what extent is the PCC steering the police service?**

Exercising strategic (not operational) influence over the direction of the Thames Valley Police is the fundamental role of the PCC. It is appropriate for the PCP to question the extent to which the PCC is exercising control, effectively monitoring performance and enacting his or her mandate. It is also legitimate to question the extent to which the PCC is adhering to and delivering against the Police & Crime Plan.

**Recommendation 1**

It is recommended that the PCP consider further lines of enquiry to be pursued on an ongoing basis.

**Evidence Sources**

6. The work of the PCP should be evidence-based, and therefore will rely upon various sources to inform enquiries. The PCP will need to decide which of these evidence sources are utilised and how frequently. Some performance information will only be used on a case-specific basis; if, for example, the PCP undertakes a scrutiny review of a specific subject, then data specific to that subject would be utilised.
7. There is also high-level performance information that the PCP may wish to monitor on a more frequent basis. Currently the Thames Valley Police Authority (PA) / PA Performance Review Committee receives the following reports on a quarterly basis to allow it to monitor performance:
  - Progress against the Annual Delivery Plan
  - Force Performance Summary reports (see Appendix A)
  - Data Quality Standards (see Appendix B)
  - Operational Command Unit Reports (see Appendix C), including:
    - Force Intelligence & Specialist Operations
    - Tactical Support
    - Roads Policing
8. In addition to this, the Force operates its own system of performance scrutiny which revolves around two types of meetings - Force Performance Groups (bi-monthly) and Force Crime Meetings (FCMs), which meet fortnightly and alternate between 'Risk/Theme' and Local Policing Area 'Clusters'. The Force Performance Groups look

at corporate performance where the Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable hold each other to account, along with the various heads of departments.

9. FCMs are usually chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable and are a problem solving-type meeting that look at data, but also encourage LPA Commanders to share best practice. They are also an opportunity for the Deputy Chief Constable to link strategic and operational matters. In all of these performance forums, Members of the Performance Review Committee are privy to restricted papers and briefing notes that contain sensitive operational data. Members of the Police Authority Performance Review Committee observe these meetings as part of a 'watching brief' but do not actively participate; however, the insight from these meetings provides a broader picture of Force performance activities which, in-turn, informs members' roles.
10. The PCP can also generate its own evidence through the use of resident focus groups, surveys and the use of social media to garner opinion. These methods have to be carefully managed and the results used, ideally, in conjunction with quantitative data to develop the most accurate picture of Force performance. More innovative methods of gathering evidence that the PCP may wish to use include customer journey mapping and mystery shopping.
11. Other potential sources of information for the PCP include Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessments; the IQuanta Home Office database; the LGInform website; other local public sector intelligence. A good general principal is to use as many different sources of information as necessary, whilst remembering that the core purpose is to hold the Police & Crime Commissioner to account.

#### **Recommendation 2**

It is recommended that the PCP allow the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to develop a reporting schedule to be incorporated into the PCP work programme, to be ratified at a later date by the full PCP.

### **Benchmarking**

12. Performance data can be used over the term of the PCC to assess the impact of his or her period in office. Setting a benchmark early in the term of the PCC, involving the establishment of a suite of performance indicators with baseline figures, would allow the indicators to be evaluated periodically by the PCP. This would give some indication of the overall impact of the PCC, although issues affecting performance outside of the PCC's control would have to be factored in to the overall evaluation.
13. The suite of indicators selected for benchmarking purposes by the PCP could correlate with the priorities of the PCC, as outlined in the Police & Crime Plan. For example, if the PCC stated in the Police & Crime Plan that his or her priorities were X, Y and Z then the PCP would select performance measures that would allow evaluation of progress in relation to issues X, Y and Z. Progress could be tracked quarterly, twice-yearly, or annually.

**Recommendation 3**

It is recommended that proposals around how best to use performance data to hold the PCC to account be developed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for presentation to the full PCP.

**List of Recommendations**

1. It is recommended that the PCP consider further lines of enquiry to be pursued on an ongoing basis.
2. It is recommended that the PCP allow the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to develop a reporting schedule to be incorporated into the PCP work programme, to be ratified at a later date by the full PCP.
3. It is recommended that proposals around how best to use performance data to hold the PCC to account be developed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for presentation to the full PCP.