

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Support to the Thames Valley Police &amp; Crime Panel</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities: Cllr Egleton</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	<b>Director of Resources</b>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	<b>Jim Burness. Tel: 01895 837217</b> Email <a href="mailto:jim.burness@southbucks.gov.uk">jim.burness@southbucks.gov.uk</a>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED</b>	<b>All</b>

## 1. Purpose of Report

To seek Member agreement to putting in place the necessary support arrangements if the provision of support services to the Police & Crime Commissioners Panel transfer to South Bucks DC.

### RECOMMENDATION

The Acting Chief Executive is authorised to incur expenditure to be funded by a grant from the Home Office in order to provide support to the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel including:

- Administrative and co-ordination support for meetings and work of the Panel
- Costs of providing/hiring venues
- Policy and Communications support for the work of the Panel
- Administering the process for dealing with all non-criminal complaints against the Police & Crime Commissioner.

## 2. Reasons for Recommendations

If the Cabinet decides it wishes for the Council to take on this role it will be necessary to put in place the resources for the work, and these have been identified with Bucks CC who currently undertake this work.

## 3. Content of Report

3.1 As part of the national arrangements for establishing Police & Crime Commissioners the legislation required the setting up of Police & Crime Panels to provide the scrutiny function for the work of the Commissioners. The Thames Valley Panel was set up in 2012, and its work includes:

- Review of the Commissioner's Crime Plan
- Review of the Commissioner's Annual Report
- Comment on the proposed Policing budget

3.2 The full terms of reference and other relevant documents can be found on Bucks CC website.

3.3 The Panel meets six times a year, and annually elects a Chairman. To date the Chairman has come from Bucks CC and they have consequently provided the

support to the Panel. Bucks CC have served notice that they will give up the support to the Panel from November 2015, but will review that decision if the County nominee is elected as the Chairman of the Panel.

- 3.4 The next meeting of the Panel is on 17<sup>th</sup> July, and that meeting will elect a Chairman for the year. If the South Bucks representative on the Panel (Cllr Egleton) is elected Chairman there is the possibility that the support of the Panel will transfer to South Bucks DC.
- 3.5 Supporting the Panel involves the following elements of work.
- Arranging and clerking meetings, including the costs of hiring venues and facilities. The Panel traditionally has met at a number of venues each year across the Thames Valley area. The work involves co-ordinating reports for each meeting of the Panel
  - Providing press and communications around the work of the Panel.
  - Providing some policy support to the Panel
  - Administering the complaints procedure on non- criminal matters against the Police & Crime Commissioner. This procedure is set down in regulations.
- 3.6 Funding is provided by the home Office as a specific grant, towards the costs of supporting Police & Crime Panels. For the Thames Valley Panel this has been £65k per annum, and has been sufficient to cover costs incurred by the hosting authority.
- 3.7 Officers have considered the implications of being the authority to support the Panel. From discussions with officers of Bucks CC it is clear the main work revolves around a) organising and clerking the meetings, and b) administering the complaints procedure. The complaints received whilst being in single figures tend to be complex and time consuming.
- 3.8 Therefore if the Council were to take over the role it would need an extra full time post in the Democratic Services team, estimated cost including oncosts £40k. The policy, communication and legal support to the Panel are of a level that they can be absorbed within those services, but resources consumed will be recovered against the Home Office grant.
- 3.9 Some of the venues used by the Panel have facilities that allow for webcasting the Panel's meetings. This is something officers would explore for Capswood, if South Bucks took on the supporting role, but on the basis of costs being containable within the grant funding, and any project not affecting joint working projects.

#### **4. Consultation**

Not applicable

## 5. Options

The option is for South Bucks to decide it does not wish to support the Crime Panel. This may or may not have a bearing on the election of the Chairman of the Panel.

## 6. Corporate Implications

Financial

- 6.1 Providing support to the Crime Panel would be a new activity for South Bucks and would be undertaken on the basis that any additional costs are contained within the Home Office funding. Historically this has been £65k, but could reduce in the future as part of Government spending reductions, so it would be prudent to plan any resources around a lower figure of for example £55k.

Legal

- 6.2 The operation of the Panel is set down in regulations. This includes the complaints process that would form part of the work undertaken. There would be some call on in-house legal resources but these would be recoverable from the grant.

Other Considerations

- 6.3 Capacity does not exist within the current Democratic Services structure to absorb the work that would come with this role for the Council. Therefore an additional post would need to be established for this work.
- 6.4 In terms of Communications there would be a limited amount of interaction with the press. The website would also need some amendments to present content related to the work of the Panel.

## 7. Links to Council Policy Objectives

The Police & Crime Panel links to the Council's objective of working towards safer, healthier local communities.

## 8. Next Steps

If the decision is to be prepared to take on the role of supporting the Police & Crime Panel if the South Bucks representative is elected Chairman of the Panel then the next steps would be.

- Draw up a job description and person specification for the Police & Crime Panel support officer, in order to recruit to the position by September.
- Agree transition arrangements with Bucks CC for supporting the Panel to be completed by November 2015.

- Appointed support officer to project manage setting up:
  - Website information relating to the Panel
  - Process for producing agendas in the Council's modern.gov application
  - Process for organising meetings and venues
- Process set up to receive and deal with complaints.
- Set up financial process to record expenditure for reclaiming under the Home Office grant process.

The timescale for the transition work to be completed by November is tight and it will need to be carefully project managed.

<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
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