

Portfolio Holder Decision

Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel – Revised Operating Arrangements

Portfolio Holder: Ric Pallister, Strategy and Policy
Director: Alex Parmley, Chief Executive
Service Manager: Angela Watson, Monitoring Officer
Lead Officer: Angela Watson, Monitoring Officer
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Purpose of the Report

The Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Policy is requested to agree that, should there be a future shortfall in funding for the Police and Crime Panel, then SSDC will contribute a pro-rata share towards the funding shortfall.

Public Interest

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 brought in new structural arrangements for policing, including the election of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) in November 2012.

Other than through the ballot box by local people, PCCs are held to account by a Police and Crime Panel (PCP), which is made up of locally elected councillors along with some lay members. The panel scrutinise and support the work of the PCC and are funded by the Home Office.

The Host Authority support arrangements for the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel have recently transferred to Somerset County Council who has asked that the partner Authorities agree a mechanism to cover any potential future shortfall in funding the Police and Crime Panel.

Decision Taken

The Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Policy has agreed that, should there be a future shortfall in funding for the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel, then SSDC will contribute a pro-rata share towards the funding shortfall.

Reason

To confirm that SSDC will contribute a pro-rata share towards any future funding shortfall associated with the running of the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel.

Background

In January 2012 SSDC appointed Ric Pallister, as Leader of the Council, to the Leaders Joint Selection Committee (LJSC) which was responsible for the establishment of the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel (PCP). Martin Wale is currently serving as SSDC's appointed member on the Panel.

The Police and Crime Panel is supported by a Host Authority (currently Somerset County Council) and all direct costs associated with the running of the Panel are funded by a Home Office allocation.

Report Detail

It remains the intention of the Host Authority that all direct costs associated with the running of the Panel be met from the Home Office funding allocation, but it is considered prudent at this point to expand on the provisions within the Panel's Operating Arrangements which makes provision for a shortfall in funding. Whilst the LJSC agreed that any shortfall would be met by the Constituent Authorities, the Host Authority has indicated that the mechanism by which this would happen was not formalised, the most likely reason being that the Panel has operated within budget since 2012. Accordingly, as part of its considerations, the Panel is now looking to the Constituent Authorities to agree a suitable indemnity mechanism to cover any potential shortfall in funding and offset any financial risk to the Host Authority in the future.

There is no deliberate intent to overspend the funding allocation and this is a purely precautionary measure for the future. Should the position arise where it is anticipated that the funding allocation will be exceeded, then the Constituent Authorities will be given as much advance notice as possible. The indemnity mechanism will be submitted for each Council's approval alongside a revised Operating Arrangements document in due course, and in accordance with the legislation which requires the Panel to revert to the Constituent Authorities with any proposals for amendments to the Operating Arrangements.

Based on a notional shortfall of £10,000, SSDC would be required to pay a contribution of £487 and this level of contribution falls within the delegated authority of the Portfolio Holder. The amount of contribution sought is based on the population size of each authority.

The Panel Operating Arrangements document will normally be reviewed by the Panel and referred to the Constituent Authorities every 2 years (next review to take place in February 2020). If any changes are recommended to the contents these will be submitted to the Constituent Authorities for approval.

Financial Implications

The Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel estimate that contributions based on a funding shortfall of £10,000 would require a contribution of £487 by SSDC. This would be met from the Miscellaneous Expenditure budget.

Council Plan Implications

Council Plan 2016 to 2021 – Health and Communities:-

- Work with partners to keep our communities safe.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

There are no carbon emission or climate change implications in taking this decision.

Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no equality or diversity implications in taking this decision.

Privacy Impact Assessment

There are no personal data or risks to the security of data in taking this decision.

Background Papers

- Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel Report to Council – January 2012
 - Annual appointment of SSDC representative to the Police and Crime Panel – Full Council May 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017
 - Letter to all Somerset Chief Executives from the PCP dated 20th September 2017
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