

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL – 10 NOVEMBER 2015

COMMISSIONING OF SERVICES BY THE PCC

REPORT BY THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To present members with an outline of the commissioning process in operation by the PCC.

1. OVERVIEW

The priorities within the Police and Crime Plan are at the heart of the PCC's approach to commissioning. In addition, the focus is predominantly upon helping victims of crime to cope and recover.

Under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the PCC (the "elected local policing body") is guided by the following:

Crime and Disorder Reduction Grants

- (i) The elected local policing body for a police area may make a crime and disorder reduction grant to any person.
- (ii) A crime and disorder reduction grant is a grant which, in the opinion of the elected local policing body, will secure, or contribute to securing, crime and disorder reduction in the body's area.
- (iii) The elected local policing body may make a crime and disorder reduction grant subject to any conditions (including conditions as to repayment) which the body thinks appropriate.

2. INITIAL CHALLENGES

It is important to reflect that there had never been PCCs prior to November 2012, therefore in the first three years there have been some significant initial challenges to overcome:

- a) Started from a position of 'we don't know what we don't know' regarding commissioning and the extent and diversity of the market!
- b) It has been imperative that the PCC builds strong professional relationships with a wide range of partners and of partnerships, in order to (a) avoid duplication, (b) better understand 'the market', (c) capitalise on co-commissioning opportunities.

- c) Although a portion of the overall policing settlement was identified with which to commission services, a proportion of available funds for commissioning are received via Ministry of Justice and Home Office grants. The nature of government funding however, means a range of different grant streams tend to be announced over the course of a year, with varying Grant Conditions and sometimes extremely short timescales to bid for and commission them!
- d) The PCC inherited significant commitments from the Force and from the three Dorset Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) – eg was ‘tied’ into continuing to fund some projects with long contract dates. For example, the Dorset Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) was committed until 2018, although the provider Serco gave 1yr notice to quit last year, so it had to be re-commissioned this year (*see para 4 b below*). Contracts such as the Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) service and the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service were committed until 2015 and there were ongoing significant contributions to other projects such as what is now the single Dorset Combined Youth Offending Service (YOS).
- e) With finite resources, the available funds for commissioning are never enough to allow for the commissioning of every potentially worthy project. Despite the relative freedom the legislation allows (*as at para 1. above*), the PCC here in Dorset has decided to introduce robust transparent processes that help to prioritise and identify the most important projects for commissioning. These processes are summarised below.

3. PROCESSES INTRODUCED

Since the beginning of the 2015/16 financial year, all commissioning funds have been brought under one umbrella of the Safer Dorset Fund (SDF). Within the SDF, two main strands have been created (i) the Major Grants and Commissioning scheme, and (ii) the Community Fund, which now offers grants of up to £3,000.

The processes introduced are as follows:

- (i) SDF Major Grants and Commissioning
 - a. Each project, whether directly commissioned or as a result of a request for funding, must be accompanied by a completed application form and monitoring and evaluation information, along with report submission dates.
 - b. Each application is assessed using an agreed matrix for scoring and checks made with Charity Commission and Companies House where relevant.
 - c. Conflicts of interest are sought with the PCC, DPCC, OPCC Staff and Dorset Police - if any are notified, these are added to a log and referred to the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer prior to any final decision being taken.
 - d. The Force Lead for each project area is notified for a view on the application.
 - e. If the application has met the minimum scoring threshold, the application is forwarded to the PCC for decision.
 - f. Information, including Force Lead and reporting mechanisms are recorded for each funded project.
 - g. Successful applicants sign a grant agreement prior to invoicing.
 - h. Regular monitoring and evaluation is undertaken, either via appropriate strategic boards, stakeholder groups, or via written 6 month reports to the Grants and Partnerships Officer.
 - i. Annual report or end of grant report required at end of financial year.

(ii) SDF Community Fund

(Designed primarily for Community and Voluntary sector community based applicants)

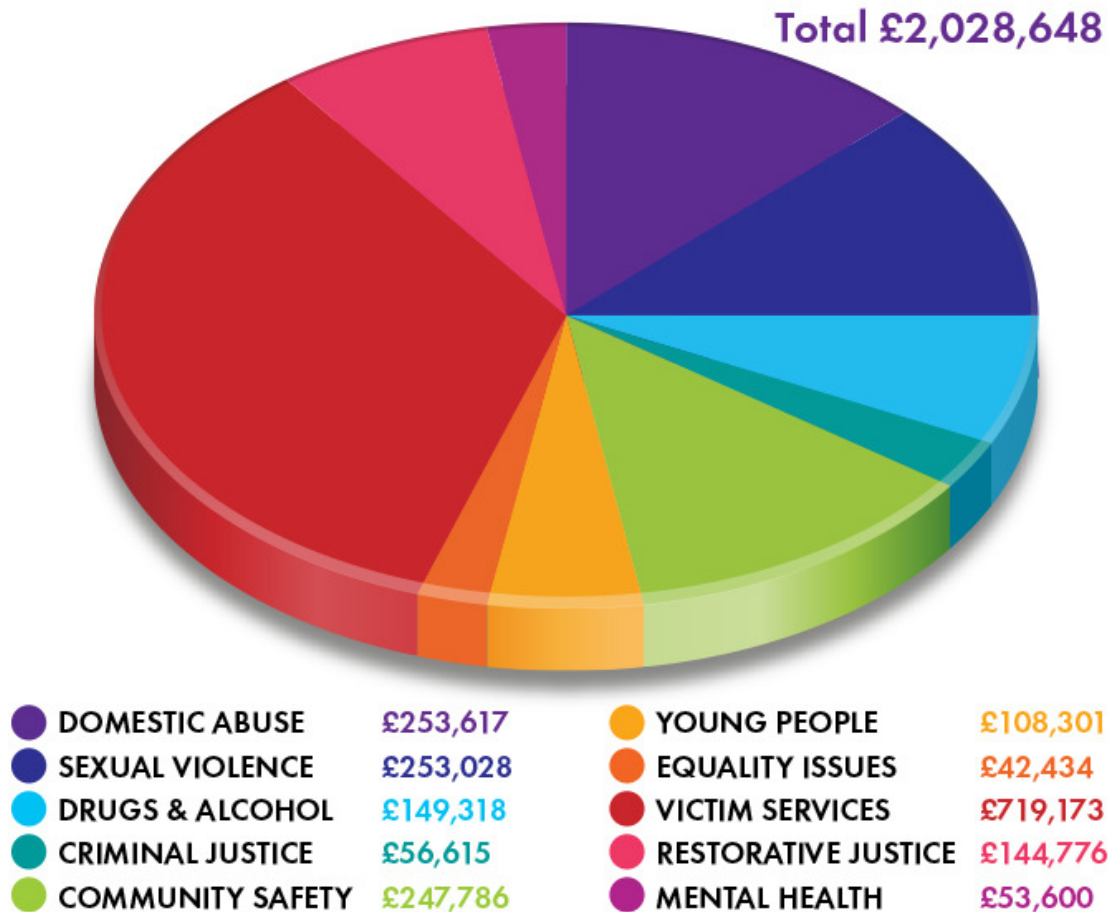
- a. Each Round is promoted with opening/closing dates published on PCC website.
- b. Applications received and go through a sifting process to check they meet criteria, and all necessary supporting documents have been received.
- c. Conflicts of Interest sought from OPCC Staff and Dorset Police - if any are notified, these are added to a log.
- d. References taken up, checks made with Charity Commission and Companies House where relevant.
- e. Applications sent to independent Panel members to score against funding criteria.
- f. Panel meeting - Panel Members can discuss any discrepancies in scoring through a moderation process and can alter scores by up to one point for each criteria.
- g. Applicants notified of outcomes and receive feedback.
- h. Project outcomes agreed, Grant Agreement sent for signing prior to payment being released.
- i. 6 month monitoring undertaken, plus site visits where appropriate.
- j. Annual report or end of grant report required at end of financial year.

In addition to the above processes, internal auditing forms a formal part of the Office of the PCC's governance of grants and commissioning. South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) is contracted to provide this function and a report produced by SWAP is tabled for the next meeting of the Joint Independent Audit Committee (JIAC) in December 2015.

Ultimately, the PCC is committed to ensuring an open and transparent approach to commissioning and the issuing of grants. For the Community Fund scheme in particular, the PCC is keen to remove himself from the decision making process which is why an independent panel has been established to assess applications against an agreed set of outcome based criteria.

With major grants and commissioning then clearly the PCC is the final decision maker, but all applications are reviewed initially by OPCC staff against set criteria before recommendations are made to the PCC for consideration. Where any potential conflicts of interest are identified then these are referred to the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer for further review prior to any final decision being made.

4. 2015/16 COMMITMENTS YTD (INCLUDING SDF COMMUNITY FUND)



Some of the key programmes/projects the PCC has commissioned in Dorset to date include:

- a) Commissioned Victim Support in October 2014 to deliver Victims' Services until 2017, following a competitive procurement process.
- b) Worked in partnership with NHS England (and Dorset Police as the 'senior user') to re-commission the SARC, following notice of withdrawal by the provider Serco in 2014, with a one year notice period as per the conditions of contract. G4S were the successful provider (there were some very good 'bids' received) and the Dorset SARC has now been rebranded as 'The Shores'.

Because NHS England and the PCC agreed to include the Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) service within the procurement process, the same provider now delivers both services, providing vital support to the unfortunate victims of these horrendous crimes. G4S currently continues to use the Third Sector organisation Dorset Rape Crisis Support Centre (DRCSC) to deliver the ISVA service.

- c) The Maple Project – only started at the beginning of October 2015 but has built on a model successfully operating in Northamptonshire (called The Sunflower Centre), where Police Domestic Abuse Officers and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) will all be IDVA qualified, to deliver a more comprehensive service to help victims of Domestic Abuse.
- d) A number of services supporting Young People have been commissioned, such as co-commissioning Barnardo's to provide support for previously Missing Children

(which is a major risk factor for child sexual exploitation - CSE), co-commissioning the award winning Safe Schools and Communities Team and co-commissioning the now single Combined Dorset Youth Offending Service (YOS).

- e) The PCC has been pro-active in commissioning and advocating a number of projects that address Mental Health issues, particularly within the Criminal Justice System, such as co-commissioning Street Triage, commissioning a pilot MH Victims project and attempting to join these up with other related MH services such as Liaison & Diversion, more effectively.
- f) Community Fund – small grant awards using a ‘community panel’ making decisions on all bids. Since introducing this scheme in 2014, the PCC has provided grants of between £248 and £3,000 to 37 different smaller community led projects. Details of each are available on the PCC website here: <http://www.dorset.pcc.police.uk/working-in-partnership/approach-to-commissioning/safer-dorset-fund-projects-funded/>

5. FUTURE CHALLENGES

- a) PCC elections in May 2016 – The PCC is fully conscious of the need to not over-commit to programmes that may then leave whoever is successful post-election, with little freedom to commission innovative solutions to emerging problems!
- b) Austerity – with the major cuts in public spending set to continue and the impending Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) likely to announce further reductions for policing, the likelihood is that the PCC will have increasingly less available funding with which to commission services in the future!
- c) As mentioned above, some significant contracts have had to be committed to for a long period, in order that they are able to operate effectively (eg a SARC needs to be funded on a longer-term basis than year by year). Those commitments will potentially utilise the bulk of any available grant funding.
- d) The PCC has consciously steered the awarding of grants towards supporting services that other ‘mainstream’ agencies either don’t or can’t deliver. Many important projects fall into a category where no single agency sees it as their ‘core business’, especially with their own challenges in times of austerity. This also means the PCC is one of the few commissioners in Dorset able to support innovative approaches (and without innovation, progression ceases!)
- e) Co-commissioning is unquestionably the way forward (to reduce duplication, achieve mutual efficiencies, ensure a ‘joined-up’ approach for the public), but it comes with inherent challenges. In a world of Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), Public Health, NHS England, Local Authority Children’s and Adults’ Services, Safeguarding Boards, Criminal Justice Boards, Community Safety Partnerships, changes to Probation services, Prison services and Courts services, etc (the list goes on), the biggest challenge is sometimes even knowing who best to speak to! Add to all of these and more, a whole wider world of Community and Voluntary Sector organisations and it is evident that in order to provide the public of Dorset with the best possible service, the challenge is immense!

6. RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to note the report, which outlines the commissioning process utilised by the PCC and provides a brief summary of the context, of some key successes and of some of the future commissioning challenges faced by PCCs.

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