

**DERBYSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

**15 SEPTEMBER 2016**

**Report of the Director of Legal Services of Derbyshire County Council**

**BRIEFING ON GRANT THORNTON/FRONTLINE CONSULTING'S  
REPORT: POWER CHECK – REVIEWING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF  
POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY: INSIGHTS FOR A SECOND TERM**

**1. Purpose of Report**

To brief Panel Members on the report reviewing the effectiveness of Police and Crime Panels, undertaken by Grant Thornton and Frontline Consulting.

**2. Information and Analysis**

Frontline Consulting and Grant Thornton have conducted a first term review of police and crime panels (PCPs). This looks at their effectiveness and the strength of their relationships with their police and crime commissioners (PCCs). The review also considers the impact of panels' work across wider policing.

The briefing, attached as in Appendix One summarises the key messages of the report and provides potential actions for the Panel to consider in its role of challenging and supporting the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and developing the Panel's own skills and expertise.

**3. Other considerations**

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: financial, legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, human resources, environmental, health and transport considerations.

**4. Background papers**

Held with the Improvement and Scrutiny Officer, Derbyshire County Council.

**5. OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

The survey provides some valuable data on perceptions of effectiveness, barriers to effectiveness and how the work of the Panel can impact on the

wider area of policing. The recommendations offered in the report do contain some which have already been implemented by the Derbyshire Police and Crime Panel.

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Regularly discusses with the PCC the Panel's effectiveness at balancing challenge and support.
2. Develops a communications strategy to enhance the Panel's public profile and increase public engagement.
3. Appoint a member champion for each Police and Crime Plan objective.
4. Refresh the panel's performance framework upon the newly agreed Police and Crime Plan.

**John McElvaney**  
**Director of Legal Services**  
**Derbyshire County Council**

## **Briefing for Police and Crime Panel – Power Check- Reviewing the effectiveness of police accountability: insights for second term**

### **Introduction:**

Frontline Consulting and Grant Thornton conducted a first term review of police and crime panels (PCPs). This looked at their effectiveness and the strength of their relationships with their police and crime commissioners (PCCs). The review also considered the impact of panels' work across wider policing.

The findings were drawn from surveys sent to all 41 PCPs, PCCs and chief constables in England and Wales. Responses were received from 95% of PCCs and 71% of PCPs, including from the Derbyshire Police and Crime Panel. 25% of chief constables also provided survey responses and comments on the impact of panels on wider policing.

The report, which can be found [here](#) combines data and comments from the surveys with insights shared during private meetings, national conferences and regional seminars held by both Frontline Consulting and Grant Thornton throughout the first term.

### **Summary of findings:**

#### **Perceptions of Panel Effectiveness:**

- 96% of panels felt they were at least moderately effective, but only 41% considered themselves very effective.
- 82% of PCCs felt that panels were effective in challenging and supporting their work.
- 51% of PCCs felt panels were usually effective when it came to support, but only 40% felt the same when it came to challenging.
- Only half of panels (54%) and PCCs (42%) felt panels got the balance right between challenge and support.
- 44% of PCCs felt that panels provided more challenge than support, compared to 28% of panels.

*This last bullet point represents one of the biggest perception differences between panels and PCCs over the panels' work. Also, the data highlights that whilst PCCs think the PCPs are better at supporting, they actually challenge more than they do support.*

### Proactive Scrutiny:

- Only 42% of panel members viewed their proactive scrutiny work as being very or extremely successful. Task and finish groups (67% of panels) and agenda items at panel meetings (70% of panels) were the two most popular means for undertaking proactive scrutiny.
- 61% of PCCs said that recommendations or observations from panels had influenced or changed their decision making.

*The survey also showed that there has been a significant increase in proactive scrutiny work by panels over the past three years. However, the survey allowed respondents to follow their own perception of what proactive scrutiny means.*

*The survey also highlights the use of budget working groups to monitor and report on a PCC's budget and precept proposals as a key part of proactive scrutiny.*

### Impact on wider policing:

- The impact on wider policing is less clear, with only 50% of chief constables saying the work of the panel influenced their work of the force.

*The survey showed that a key element of PCCs dissatisfaction (albeit from a small number) was a perception that their panels are slipping into the role of a former police authority. For example, if the panel was overtly scrutinising operational police matters.*

*However, the report does state that panels are justified in having access to sufficient operational performance information, to support effective scrutiny of the PCCs strategic role and performance.*

### Barriers to panel effectiveness:

- Panels and PCCs did not agree on the main barriers to effectiveness. While panels had a clear main barrier in 'limited powers', PCCs were more diffuse in their responses with no one issue dominating.
- Equally, areas considered to be the main barriers for one body were considered very minor barriers for the other.

*The survey shows that neither the PCCs nor the panels believed their relationship with each other is acting as a main barrier to effectiveness. The survey suggests that panels would find it beneficial to focus developing positive relationships with their PCCs and making the best use of the Home Office grant, their host authority's officers and their panel members.*

### **Recommendations from the report:**

The survey has numerous recommendations for panels to consider when developing their work programme, communication, skills and engagement. They are:

#### **Stakeholder engagement:**

- **Perceptions over the balance of challenge and support:** Panels should gauge PCC perceptions of the balance of their work periodically, and use that to inform self-assessments of their effectiveness throughout their term.
- **Enhanced profile:** Panels should use 'soft' influence to enhance their effectiveness and develop a common focus. This should underpin a communications strategy aimed at building a public profile.
- **Networking:** Panels should engage with other panels and scrutiny bodies to keep abreast of emerging good practice and use this to inform their scrutiny and enhance their effectiveness.
- **Ensuring a range of skills, knowledge and experience:** Panels should be clear about the purpose of their work and how they are going to achieve that purpose. They should undertake a short skills audit to identify gaps across the membership and seek to ensure a range of skills, knowledge and experience among panel members.

#### **Member development:**

- **Training needs, including complaints-handling training:** Panels should consider their training needs, request support for such training, and make time to attend.
- **Induction training for all members:** Panel chairs should ensure all new members receive induction training.
- **Having champions for different issues within the panel:** Panels should consider identifying and appointing champions to focus on

different themes to improve the overall effectiveness of scrutiny and increase panel capacity to cover the PCC's priority areas in the police and crime plan.

Work stream planning:

- **Structured work programme of proactive scrutiny:** Panels should maintain a structured work programme of proactive scrutiny that they can communicate with their members, the PCC/OPCC and the public. This should be supplemented by less-planned proactive scrutiny in response to current issues during the PCC's term and relating to the PCC's activities.
- **Briefings by the OPCC and PCC on their work:** Panels should request briefings from the OPCC and PCC on the PCC's work. This should inform panel planning and preparation for effective challenge and scrutiny sessions.
- **Co-planning with the OPCC:** Panels should pursue co-ordinated work planning with the OPCC.
- **Liaison officer in the OPCC:** Panels should request a dedicated link or liaison