

**AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND CRIME
PANEL**

1st February 2023

Host Authority Arrangements

Recommendation

The Panel is invited to note that Somerset County Council is withdrawing its notice of resignation as Host Authority of the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel, tendered on 17th March 2022, and will remain the Host Authority until at least May 2025, subject to the continuance of the collective annual indemnity mechanism of £5k agreed with the component authorities in 2022.

1. Summary

Since June 2017, the role of Host Authority has been undertaken by Somerset County Council (SCC). This arrangement includes the provision of administrative and other specialist support to the Panel.

Following notification of SCC's resignation on 17th March 2022, consultation commenced with the constituent authorities in an effort to agree the transition arrangements of the Host Authority to another local authority area. This has not led to a transfer of the Host Authority as no other authority volunteered to undertake the role. Consequently, to ensure the Panel is adequately supported to carry out its statutory functions, SCC will continue to provide these services until 12 months after the next PCC elections at which point a further review will be undertaken.

SCC accordingly withdraws its resignation and will act as Host Authority until at least May 2025, subject to the continuance of the £5k funding mechanism agreed with the component authorities earlier in the year.

2. Shortfall in Funding

The Panel has received a range of reports and briefings over the last year regarding the shortfall in funding and it is not proposed to go into the same detail here. In a joint response from the Panel on 17th December 2021, the Host Authority was notified by the representatives of the constituent authorities that the Panel supported a decision to make an annual contribution of £5k from 2022/23 onwards to enable the Panel to undertake its statutory requirements going forward, and to ensure that the Host Authority is not compromised by the development of the Panel's work area.

To formalise this, a letter was sent from the SCC Monitoring Officer to all CEXs on 2nd February 2022 and all contributions have since been received.

Notwithstanding the high level of corporate governance support required by SCC to implement Local Government Reorganisation by 1st April 2023, the authority is prepared to continue to act as Host Authority on the clear understanding that the collective annual indemnity mechanism of £5k continues. This aligns with the legal duty of the constituent authorities to jointly decide how the costs of the Panel are met and insofar as provision is necessary, how funds paid to meet the costs of the Panel (by the Secretary of State or otherwise) are distributed between the relevant local authorities. Guidance also refers to the provision in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 for constituent local authorities to agree joint funding mechanisms to supplement this central resource with a joint pooled budget.

3. Panel Budget

Panel Members have requested sight of the current budget and projected spend for next year. The attention of members is drawn to the Panel's Appendices 1 and 2 to this report.

In our communications with the constituent authorities, it has been made clear that the grant funding from the Home Office does not cover the cost of running the Panel and the constituent authorities should continue to have regular feedback from the respective representatives on the work the Panel is undertaking.

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