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fighting crime

REGION'S POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS INVITE SCRUTINY OVER REGIONAL COLLABORATION ARRANGEMENTS

The five Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) from across the East Midlands have welcomed the findings of a review they jointly commissioned to assess the effectiveness of the region's collaboration arrangements.

Commissioners in Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire have been overseeing the current collaboration arrangements since being elected in November 2012, forming a Regional Collaboration Board chaired by Leicestershire Commissioner Sir Clive Loader for the purpose.

Collectively, they took the bold decision to invite Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) to review the current arrangements earlier this summer to seek assurances on quality and effectiveness. As well as seeking independent verification of the current system and identifying possible areas for improvement, the move was also aimed at delivering accountability and transparency to the public.

The PCCs also shared a desire to present the HMIC with the work they are undertaking to provide better value for money for local residents so their efforts could be assessed in comparison to other similar schemes nationally. In the East Midlands, collaborative policing is delivered by the East Midlands Police Collaboration Programme and the East Midlands Special Operations Unit (EMSOU).

The report (published 12 November 2013) said the five forces within the East Midlands had showed "great vision" as well as "strong and cohesive leadership" in establishing the collaboration programme, which was described as "ahead of its time". It added that the project continued to reap significant benefits in terms of resilience in some major operational areas such as serious and organised crime and major crime and that so far, joint working had produced an average cost saving of 20%.

In a series of recommendations aimed at strengthening the current work taking place, the HMIC said it was crucial that what had already been created by the programme was preserved and that Chief Constables continue to work collectively in the future to utilise all the opportunities available for joint-working.

The HMIC found the EMSOU had a number of strengths including its "efficient and effective structure" which provides greater resilience for dealing with serious and organised crime and its ability to manage operations well.

“The forces have a strong history of dealing with serious and organised crime groups. Collaboration in this area is effective,” the report added.

However, the HMIC said there was room to improve further and recommended the development of a clear programme of work which builds on the current success and sets out how forces can offer different levels of service to their communities within the arrangement. It also recommended the creation of a detailed business plan setting out costs and future benefits to the public.

The Commissioners point out that both areas are already being addressed with a strategy and vision for the future already in discussion.

Leicestershire’s Commissioner and Chair of the Regional Board, Sir Clive Loader, said: “This is a helpful piece of work and confirms that broadly speaking we’ve taken the right steps to deliver benefits to the public in terms of cost savings and protective capacity. One of the motivations for seeking independent evaluation was to help us recognise how we can move forward and I welcome the attention that has been brought to areas where we could accelerate the benefits we receive through collaboration and deepen our relationships.”

Alan Charles, Police and Crime Commissioner for Derbyshire added: “We are already looking to the future and how we might all help each other in order further to address mutual problems and protect our residents from risk and harm. But while we have shared aims and objectives, this doesn’t mean that one size fits all - we need to deliver the best possible service for each of our areas whilst also taking account of their differing needs. Collaboration needs to be of as much benefit locally as it is regionally or even nationally.”

The Commissioners are also in agreement that, while the report demonstrates the progress that has been made thus far, there is clearly more work to do, pointing out that they voluntarily invited the HIMC to undertake the project not only to gain quality assurance on the work taking place but to provide a platform for future improvements with the benefit of HMIC’s expertise.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

Since 2005, when HMIC published its ‘Closing the Gap’ report, police forces have been looking at ways they can work more closely together to best meet the protective services needs of the public. Rather than merge, forces were actively encouraged to expand their capacity and resilience by sharing resources and expertise.

Police forces in the East Midlands have been at the forefront of collaborative policing in the UK for more than a decade, since the establishment of the East Midlands Special Operations Unit (EMSOU) in 2002. This project, which had an initial focus on specialist areas of policing, has since expanded to cover all five of the East Midlands forces and the five main areas of policing: serious and organised crime; major crime; intelligence; forensics; and counter-terrorism.

The East Midlands Police Collaboration Programme (EMPCP) is based in Hucknall, Nottinghamshire, and is tasked with delivering changes aimed at improving many areas of operational and non-operational policing functions. The programme has four portfolio areas, each overseen by a Chief Constable from one of the East Midlands forces, with the fifth Chief Constable in the role as Programme Chair.

The portfolio areas comprise: Specialist crime, operational support, specialist operations and resources. The EMPCP is working on more than 40 projects from IT infrastructure, police legal services, training programmes, streamlining fraud and financial investigations as well as regionalising the management of HR data.

The East Midlands Special Operations Unit (EMSOU) operates from various locations around the region and is divided into a number of specialist policing units, many working with a range of other law enforcement partners at regional and national level.

EMSOU Major Crime (EMSOU-MC) - investigating homicides and kidnap with demands and extortion, and other serious cases, as well as managing issues of threat, risk and harm in all five force areas.

EMSOU Serious Organised Crime (EMSOU-SOC) - tackling organised crime groups involved in drugs supply, supply of firearms, cyber crime, armed robbery and money laundering across all five force areas.

EMSOU Forensic Services (EMSOU-FS) - undertaking forensic analysis, identification and crime scene investigation across three force areas - Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire.

EMSOU Special Branch (EMSOU-SB) - assessing and reducing the risk to the whole region from potential terrorist activity and domestic extremism.

EMSOU Regional Review Unit (RRU) - independently reviewing on behalf of all five forces undetected major crime investigations, as well as procedure and practice of critical incidents and missing persons inquiries, as well as analysing acquittals at court and successful appeals against conviction.

Regional Asset Recovery Team (RART) - using specialist financial investigation techniques to recover assets from criminals involved in money laundering and serious organised crime in the East Midlands.

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