

# Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel



Hosted by Somerset County Council Community Governance



## Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017

### Present:

#### Local Authority Representatives:

Nigel Ashton and Roz Willis (North Somerset Council), Asher Craig, Mark Weston and Afzal Shah (Bristol City Council), Neil Bloomfield (Somerset County Council), Jane Warmington (Taunton Deane Borough Council), Stuart Dowding (West Somerset District Council), Heather Goddard (South Gloucestershire Council), Dine Romero (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Ann Bown (Sedgemoor District Council).

#### Independent Members:

Joseph Mullis  
Andy Sharman

#### Apologies for Absence:

Cherry Beath and Mark Shelford (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Mike Drew (South Gloucestershire Council), John Parham (Mendip District Council), Martin Wale (South Somerset District Council) and Bryony Ball.

#### Police and Crime Commissioner and Supporting Staff:

Sue Mountstevens (Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner), John Smith (Chief Executive, OPCC), Julian Gale (Monitoring Officer, Somerset County Council), Mark Simmonds (Chief Financial Officer, OPCC), Joanna Coulon (Criminal Justice and Commissioning Officer, OPCC), Patricia Jones (Senior Democratic Services Officer, Somerset County Council), DS Ashley Jones and DI Dickon Turner (Avon and Somerset Police)

### 1. Public Question Time

None.

### 2. Declaration of Interest

None.

### 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2017



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**Resolved – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

#### **4. Chairman's Business**

There was none.

#### **5. Prevent Strategy – Presentation**

The Panel received a presentation on the national Prevent Strategy from Detective Inspector Dickon Turner.

The presentation provided an overview of the current terrorist threat picture and the duties placed on specified authorities to challenge radicalisation and prevent people being drawn into extremism. Attention was drawn to the safeguarding structures in place to support vulnerable people and the work delivered on the ground by Police and partner agencies to mitigate the risks in our communities.

Below is a summary of the observations and comments made by Panel Members:-

- The relationship between the Police and mosques in the south west was described as very good. However research by the Oasis Foundation suggested that 82% of radicalisation takes place in the most deprived areas and is more likely to affect individuals with no connection to mosques.
- A proportion of young Muslims believe Prevent is stigmatising the Muslim community and the Panel recommended that every opportunity is taken to work with these people. It was recognised that youth workers play a critical role in reaching vulnerable teenagers and that parents can often require support.
- There was discussion around the prevailing financial constraints and cut backs in services experienced by all partner agencies and the potential for this to result in a marked increase of people at risk - especially those from deprived backgrounds who are more likely to be targeted. It was acknowledged that partners are required to tackle a complex set of factors with limited resources but work would continue to focus on raising awareness of signs and indicators in schools, mosques and working groups.
- The push factors that exist in gang cultures and in prisons was discussed. It was noted that a multi-agency process is triggered on release into the community to assess behaviour, risk and vulnerability.
- It was reported that Building a Bridge was established in Bristol nine years ago in response to the Prevent Strategy and work was now underway to address the spike in right wing extremism in the south of the city. Unconscious racism and discrimination experienced by BAME residents in some communities could often be attributed to a lack social integration and the isolation of these communities.

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- Whilst the impact of social deprivation on the behaviour of certain individuals was accepted, the Panel drew attention to the link between radicalisation and wealthy highly educated individuals – also an established feature of extremism.
  - The Constabulary was alert to left wing extremism and associated anti-semitic rhetoric but had not yet received a referral relating to a specific incident.
  - The Panel discussed the importance of establishing links with pharmacies and chemical suppliers and sought reassurance that the work undertaken by Counter Terrorism Security Advisors and the associated Project Griffin remains a priority for the Constabulary. The Panel emphasised that both had been successful in providing relevant businesses with the appropriate security advice and engaging members of the community to work in partnership with the Police to detect terrorist activity. The Commissioner confirmed that mechanisms were in place to raise awareness with the chemical industry and agricultural suppliers and more information could be provided outside of the meeting.
  - It was reported that Schedule 7 detentions (enforced interviews) are used extensively at Bristol airport where officers are based on a rotated shift pattern. Flights are targeted based on intelligence and available resources, and behaviour/observation training is used as a basis for random and targeted checks on individuals. The Commissioner confirmed that she is kept informed of Schedule 7 numbers.
  - It was agreed that the headlines and often negative messaging of the mainstream media following a terrorist incident are divisive and potentially damaging to the efforts being made to curb extremism. Whilst the Freedom of the Press is a given, the public is at liberty to report issues of concern around the comments sections which are not actively monitored as part of the Prevent Strategy.

The Chairman reiterated the importance of creating a safe environment through a multi-agency commitment to community cohesion and tolerance.

## 7. Commissioner's Update

The Commissioner drew attention to the following key activities set out in detail in her report:-

- The Panel would be updated in the new year on the commissioning process for the **Sexual Assault Referral Centres**.
- **HMICFRS Inspections** – the Constabulary's overall rating on Legitimacy has been confirmed as 'good'. Areas for improvement will be monitored.
- **Criminal Justice Transformation Programme (CJTP)** – a Senior Responsible Officer will take up post in January 2018 to lead on a programme of work based on recommendations emerging from a whole system review of the service. Areas for immediate focus include issues emerging from the Lammy Review and the Bristol Manifesto Strategic Leaders Group.
- **Reducing Reoffending Board** – a range of workstreams are being taken forward by a range of agencies including Community Safety Partnerships. A report commissioned to build a picture

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of recalls to custody and identify recommendations to ensure that rehabilitation and support is provided, has also been presented to the Board.

- **Service Delivery Assurance – Vulnerability** – a multi-agency Inquiry Day would be held in March 2018 to ensure the best possible services are provided to vulnerable residents in the community and ensure these people do not fall between the gaps. This would be attended by Councillor Willis as part of her role as Link Member.
- **Multi-Agency Data Analytics Project** – following an award of £3.2m in funding from the Home Office, the project will be taken forward by Lee Howell who has been seconded from his role as Chief Fire Officer for Devon and Somerset to manage a step change in the way the Constabulary handles analytics. A further report will be provided in 6 months time.
- **Fire Authority Governance** – as previously reported the Commissioner will take up a place on the Devon and Somerset Fire Authority once legislation is enabled to secure voting rights. It was noted that the invitation has also been extended to Alison Hernandez, PCC for Devon and Cornwall.

Following the successful bid to the Home Office, a consultant has been appointed to consider options for joint working between the Constabulary and Fire Authority and to inform possible future business case development.

A summary of the discussion that followed is set out below:-

- Police vehicles fitted with 4G wifi hotspots will be piloted in areas of Somerset and South Gloucestershire and rolled out more widely next year.
- The Commissioner was asked if changes around commissioning for restorative justice services are likely to detrimentally affect Yeovil in terms of referrals. It was noted that services have been restructured to move to a force-wide service and increase referrals. All providers had been asked to commit to a more consolidated approach as part of the commissioning process. The successful bid came from a Bristol provider and the service was implemented in June. Councillor Bloomfield was asked to notify the Commissioner of any issues affecting Yeovil.
- The Commissioner confirmed there had been an overall reduction in Enquiry Offices following a review. This had affected Williton Police Station in West Somerset and it was presently unclear how the pause on the merge between West Somerset Council and Taunton Deane BC would impact on the proposed move of the Police into West Somerset Council Offices. Further debate was understood to be taking place imminently. It was recognised that the nearest Enquiry Office was located at Minehead, 7.9 miles away.
- The Panel thanked the Commissioner for taking a firm stance on gender hate crime and asked to be kept informed of progress in this area.
- The Commissioner stated that the issue of stress at work was at priority for the Chief Constable. However, within the confines of a reduced workforce and complex demands, policing remained a challenging and often stressful occupation.
- The Panel was advised that the Constabulary was alert to the increasing number of shop thefts in West Somerset.
- The Commissioner sought the assistance of the Panel in promoting the recruitment of volunteers to the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme currently taking place across all 3

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custody units (Keynsham, Bridgwater and Patchway). Further information about the scheme can be found at the following link: <http://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/Take-Part/Custody-Visiting.aspx>

## **8. Police and Crime Plan 2016/21 – Addendum**

The Panel considered an addendum to the Police and Crime Plan 2016/21.

The Commissioner reported that the addendum had been produced in response to a number of key events both locally and nationally which have impacted on the strategic direction of the Plan.

The Panel welcomed the development of a new Police and Crime Needs Assessment in 2018 which would provide a solid evidence base for a new Police and Crime Plan for 2019/21. It was anticipated that this would be presented to the Panel in early 2019 with a view to publication in April 2019.

## **9. Scrutiny of the Budget and Draft Medium Term Financial Plan**

The Panel considered a draft of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

The Chief Financial Officer reported as follows on the extent of the financial challenges predicted over the next five years:-

- It was emphasised that this report was based on the current known and assumed financial position at the time of writing and confirmation of the settlement and rules around the Precept cap was now expected on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2017.
- The ability to raise the precept by up to 5% would bring much needed flexibility (£9.00 on a Band D property would rise £5m)
- Details of a pay increase for officers is not known beyond this year and the unions have rejected a 2% staff increase. This was now the subject of a formal dispute.
- A cumulative and progressive deficit of £30m is predicted by 2023 before any savings are made. This includes cost increases resulting from the transition of services back from Southwest One.
- A £5m-£6m deficit is forecast next year - there are no plans to fund the budget deficit from reserves at this stage, the preference being to use reserves for transformation projects.
- £8m in savings are planned and work was underway with the Constabulary to achieve this.
- An ambitious recruitment programme will bring savings but the intake does not come cost free.
- Conscious decisions have been taken to employ comparatively higher number of PCSOs and call centre staff – access to the service is considered important as the estate continues to reduce.

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- Rationalisation across the estate and the fleet is in progress. Other planned savings include the transition of back office systems into the Multi-Force Shared Systems collaboration (MFSS), a reduction in the use of the force helicopter, a restructure of Enabling Services and a review of services for victims.
  - A forecast underspend in reserves of approximately £5m will provide an opportunity to manage change and risks emerging from the new Enabling Services in 2018/19 and the transition from Southwest One to MFSS.
  - Reports from partners on Council Tax predict a lower surplus growth and tax base. As a result, funding is predicted to increase by £17.7m over the next five years.
  - The planning assumption is to continue to raise the Precept by 1.99% (as set out in the table at page 38 of the report). However, in the event of more flexibility, a survey on the Precept indicates that 80% of people support an increase of 2% or more. This equates to £3.16 on a Band D property).
  - Fluctuations in inflation will be monitored and adjustments made accordingly. The operating model will continue to be refined but becomes increasingly difficult in the on-going drive for efficiencies. Mindful of the emerging picture, the Chief Constable feels a conversation with the public regarding the service is necessary.
  - Capital grant funding has reduced by 60% since 2010 resulting in the funding of capital programmes from reserves and receipts. The aim was to avoid borrowing and limit pressure on the revenue budget.
  - Enabling wifi on Constabulary mobile devices is on track with 1000 devices currently being used and the use of body-worn video cameras as a method of providing extra reassurance to the public is working well.
  - Risk of an increase in insurance premiums is being managed (predominantly civil claims). Reserves will continue to provide for self-insurance, making provision for the likely future cost of claims against the Commissioner and Chief Constable.
  - The Commissioner acknowledged the stark and worsening financial position of local authorities.

Below is a summary of the Panel's comments and observations:-

- It was clarified that income through the Apprenticeship Levy (£1m), had already been taken into account in budget planning.
- Additional counter-terrorism grant funding is restricted and passed directly to the Constabulary to use for related activities.
- The Panel sought clarification of the recruitment policy in the Neighbourhood Policing Teams – will an officer who retires be replaced? The Commissioner reported that the

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Constabulary is losing 120 officers on average annually and Local Authorities will be consulted as part of a review of Neighbourhood Policing. However the location of officers and PCSOs remains a decision for the Chief Constable. It was acknowledged that officers are retiring faster than they are being recruited and likely to take some time before retiring officers are replaced.

- Detrimental tax implications and the impact on pension benefits inevitably act as a deterrent to officers who consider returning to work part-time following retirement.
- There are no known plans for Local Authorities to introduce a Late Night Levy, however it is acknowledged that night time economy establishments do invariably put pressure on police resources. Conditions to their operation can be imposed as part of the licensing process and breaches have led to the closure of some nightclubs and bars.
- Sponsorship opportunities are taken up when appropriate but the Constabulary is mindful of reputational implications and the impact on operational activities.

In conclusion, it was confirmed that further adjustments would be made on receipt of the grant settlement on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2017 and the Panel provided with the relevant updates as soon as possible.

## **10. Scrutiny of Performance/delivery against the Police and Crime Plan – Link Member reports**

### **Andrew Sharman – Business Crime**

Andrew Shaarman reported on Business Crime and highlighted the following key points:-

- The Business Forum last met on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and continues to receive good support from the partners. Attention was drawn to the quarterly business crime statistics and local business crime meetings have commenced with positive feedback.
- Business crime trends and issues - recorded Business Crime rates are flat but there is a sharp increase in Somerset West. This is being investigated further by the Constabulary and local partners. There are some identified hot spots to tackle.
- Pioneering work by the Constabulary on CCTV upload for retailers and other businesses now enables them to upload their CCTV evidence directly to Force via an online portal form.
- The Constabulary continues to provide cybercrime briefings and updates on Operation Heron – a deter and disrupt plan for shoplifting that sets a higher criteria for police attendance. Some communication issues with businesses have been addressed and this has widely been accepted as a good initiative.
- Best practice has been shared around common issues such as homelessness, ASB, theft, persistent offenders and public space protection orders.
- The Constabulary has completed a review of their operating model and Local business crime issues will now be addressed through the Neighbourhood Policing and Partnerships Directorate. Cybercrime, major business crime, fraud and attacks on businesses by organised criminal gangs will be investigated via the Investigations Directorate and/or the Regional organised Crime Unit. Good progress has been made in assigning these

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responsibilities and the Neighbourhood Policing and Partnerships Directorate are supporting the Business Crime Forum.

- The Neighbourhood Policing and Partnerships Directorate has identified high demand hotspots for business crime and resources will be targeted to tackle this demand in an ongoing initiative.
- the emerging issue of GDPR will be discussed with the Constabulary and Business crime partners in the coming months.

### **Councillor Willis – Vulnerability**

Councillor Willis confirmed that she has met with Marc Hole, Commissioning Manager in the OPCC following her appointment as Link Member for Vulnerability at the last meeting. She will now participate and input as a member of the Victims Services Re-commissioning Governance Board established to coordinate and oversee the re-commissioning of Victim Services up until the contract award in April 2019.

### **Councillor Craig – Representative Workforce**

Referencing her full report to the last meeting, Councillor Craig reiterated her thanks to the Commissioner and the Chief Constable for their strategic and operational contributions to this work area.

## **11. Work Programme**

The Panel noted the following reports have been added to the Work Programme for consideration on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018. :-

1. Recall of offenders on Licence
2. Stop and Search – powers/responsibilities/rights

## **12. Standing complaints Report**

The Panel considered and a report of the Chief Executive (OPCC) providing an oversight of all complaints made against the Commissioner. It was noted there had been no further complaints since the last meeting.

It was noted that complaint case 24 remains open, as was the case in the last two reports to the Panel and is currently being reviewed by Bristol City Council who received the initial complaint.

The Panel also noted that Complaint case 26 is currently on hold at the request of the complainant who is awaiting progress on an associated complaint against Kent Police.

## **13. Date of next Meeting**

- 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018 at 10.30am (Weston Town Hall)



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(The meeting ended at 1.00pm)

Chairman -