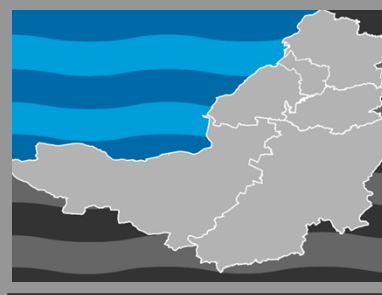


Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel



Hosted by Somerset County Council Community Governance



Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel

Thursday 15th March 2018

Present:

Local Authority Representatives:

Nigel Ashton and Roz Willis (North Somerset Council), Stuart Dowding (West Somerset District Council), Martin Wale (South Somerset District Council) Neil Bloomfield (Somerset County Council), Jane Warmington (Taunton Deane Borough Council), Ann Bown (Sedgemoor District Council), John Parham (Mendip District Council), Cherry Beath and Mark Shelford (Bath & North East Somerset Council) Mike Drew (South Gloucestershire Council) Afzal Shah (Bristol City Council).

Independent Members:

Andy Sharman

Apologies for Absence:

Heather Goddard (South Gloucestershire Council),
Joseph Mullis
Asher Craig and Mark Weston (Bristol City Council),

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 (Avon and Somerset Police).

1. Public Question Time

There was none.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes of the meeting held 1st February 2018

Resolved – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.



4. Chairman's Business

Police and Crime Panel Special Interest Group - it was agreed that the intended use of the proposed £500 contribution be established.

5. Commissioner's Update

The Commissioner updated the Panel on the following matters-

- FGM Trial – reference was made to the recent acquittal following a ruling by Bristol Crown Court. The Commissioner emphasised that the practice constitutes child abuse and cases would be investigated accordingly. The Commissioner and the Constabulary would continue to work with the local community and partner organisations to raise awareness.
- Consultation on the redevelopment of Trinity Road police station, to include a new police station, is underway. The relocation to Taunton Dean's offices of the Taunton team is progressing and will complete this year. A new 'police pod' has opened in ASDA, Bedminster in Bristol.
- It was confirmed that the Constabulary was exploring the possibility of relocating into Yeovil offices. Discussions with South Somerset Council had not yet reached an agreement stage.
- The Commissioner was asked how successful the Police had been at advertising their presence in Bath. The Commissioner advised that the Constabulary is working with the Planning Department to agree visible branding including installing a blue light. It was acknowledged that footfall had improved from the initial drop, however has not yet returned to previous levels.
- It was noted that the overall reduction in Enquiry Offices affecting Williton Police Station in West Somerset was still not resolved. The Commissioner stated that the Council had requested a renegotiation of heads of terms in relation to the prepared move to West Somerset Council Offices, causing delay. The Panel suggested the rent should reasonably reflect the space that would be lost by the council.
- The Commissioner reported on the launch of the Trusted Relationships Fund targeted at the police, youth workers, nurses and other professionals to help form close, protective relationships with vulnerable young people between the ages of 10-17 years old. It was noted that this is a £13million fund spread over a four year period (the final two years being subject to the next Spending Review). The Commissioner invited the Panel to take the opportunity back to the respective LAs to progress/assist with the local authority led applications which are being sought by the Home Office. Details would be circulated after the meeting.
- The Panel noted that a pilot tackling Child Sexual Exploitation in Bristol had proved successful. Operation Topaz would now be rolled out across the Force area. The importance of early intervention/partnership working was emphasised.
- The Commissioner reported on recent round table discussions with the Home Secretary and Policing Minister involving knife crime. The aim was to establish what could be done better by Police forces and how incidences of this offence could be reduced. It was noted that Lee Howell (seconded to the Constabulary from Devon and Somerset Fire Authority to lead the Data

Analytics Project) was looking at related pilots across the county. The Panel suggested the experience of street pastors could usefully inform a future strategy, referencing the initial activities of street pastors in Brixton which were focussed on confronting gang culture and the use of knives. The Panel was advised that the Home Office could be contacted directly.

The Commissioner was asked if knife crime would be looked at in the context of stop and search. She reported that research indicated there was no causal link but that further guidance from the Home Office was awaited on the back of more recent work around stop and search.

- The Panel was updated on the Multi-Agency Enquiry Day which took place on 9th March in Bristol. Councillor Willis reported that the event was well-attended by all relevant agencies, and had achieved its purpose of providing assurance that lessons had been learned and improvements made in relation to the support of vulnerable people following the death of Bijan Ebrahimi. It had also been recognised that further work was necessary in order to realise future opportunities for further improvement. The Panel noted that the Commissioner would share the emerging report in the near future and Councillor Willis would provide a more formal update at the AGM in June 2018.
- There was discussion in relation to the recent Gypsy and Travellers Unlawful Encampment Conference. The Commissioner noted the following comments/observations from individual Panel Members who attended the conference :-
 - The views expressed by the community representatives were polarised and indicative of a significant if not unsurmountable challenge in terms of compromise or useful -negotiation.
 - Operational decisions were being taken to contain the problem and mitigate the risks posed in circumstances when it would be more appropriate to use the legislative dispersal powers available. The resulting impact and over-reliance placed on local authorities and elected members to provide provision was unacceptable.
 - While the protected status of the community was accepted, the disruption caused to local residents should carry equal weight. Incidents of fly tipping, violence and anti-social behaviour were commonplace, causing unnecessary anxiety and angst. Efforts to negotiate or compromise were not well-received.
 - The conference was a missed opportunity to explicitly state how the agencies could work differently in the future to achieve better outcomes. The suggestion of using small pieces of underutilised or derelict land as a pop-up site on a temporary basis was welcomed until relationships with the community improve and a better long-term solution is found.

The Commissioner responded and stated it was important to listen to the Romany representatives and be mindful of their recognition as a 'protective group' under the Equality Act 2010. The provision of alternative transit facilities located within the local authority area remained the stumbling block and camps could not be evicted without this element of provision. It was also reported that enforcement practices differed significantly across the force area.

Panel Members suggested that an unwillingness on the part of the travelling community to make use of available transit facilities only served to complicate the issue further. It was acknowledged that better enforcement options are available to the Police where alternative transit facilities are available. The Commissioner's Staff Officer went on to outline when and how Section 61 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 are used by the Police. While in theory this enabled

the Police to evict, this was not a typical scenario because the Police sought to adopt a problem-solving approach as opposed to moving the problem along the road.

The Commissioner agreed to relay the Panel's comments back to the Constabulary.

- St Pauls Carnival was scheduled to take place on 7th July 2018 and the Panel was alerted to the associated £200k cost to the Constabulary. It was agreed that it would be reasonable to explore a contribution towards the cost of providing a "Special Policing Service" for the event.
- Following the recent nerve agent attack in Salisbury, the Panel sought reassurances that suitable contingency arrangements were in place to ensure the Constabulary responded effectively and first responders were not placed at unnecessary risk of harm. The Commissioner pointed out that a CBRN related incident was not always immediately identifiable but that a raft of guidance was expected to emerge imminently. In the meantime assurances were provided that both equipment and hazardous materials were stored in controlled and tested environments. The Commissioner agreed to reaffirm this with the Constabulary.
- CoPaCC's OPCC Transparency Quality Mark Award - the Commissioner was congratulated on being one of twenty five OPCCs recognised for meeting statutory requirements on openness and transparency. The Commissioner was also thanked for providing additional information around the Precept increase with council tax bills as recommended by the Panel.
- The Panel drew attention to the recent spike in residential car crime and commercial vehicle break-ins. The Commissioner was asked if efforts could be made to publicise that it was unlawful to possess the gadgets available on UK based websites which enabled a vehicle's locking system to be hacked. The Commissioner informed the Panel that there had been a sharp reduction in reports following the arrest of 3 individuals in North Somerset. It was suggested that local beat managers could provide more information if required.
- 4 Muslim MPs had recently been sent suspicious packages via their Westminster offices. It was understood that the matter was currently being investigated by the Police.

6. Stop and Search

The CEO (OPCC) introduced his report outlining the powers, rights and performance in relation to stop and search and arrangements for scrutinising the appropriate use of powers. This followed a review by the Constabulary to ensure a proportionate and intelligence-led use of the powers.

It was reported that the use of stop and search across the force area has fallen significantly from over 25,000 in 2012 to 5751 people over a 12 month period last year. The Panel noted that the Constabulary acknowledged stop and search as an effective Policing tool if used properly but work was needed to ensure a consistent and appropriate approach. Geographical hotspots had been identified and the underlying reason appeared to be drug-related rather than knife related issues. The latter was understood to be more prevalent in the Metropolitan area.

Discussion followed. It suggested that levels of crime/crime patterns in certain areas could be the reason for geographical hotspots. The CEO stated that the report was based on the Constabulary's organisational approach as opposed to intelligence.

The Commissioner stated that for the last two years positive outcomes were around 25%, with 98% of stops deemed lawful by HMICFRS - demonstrating that officers largely worked within the law and used the power effectively in a targeted and intelligence-led way. It was emphasised that the Chief Constable was working to eliminate the unlawful instances but that officer productivity was not a factor. The CEO stated that the culturally divisive nature of stop and search should be acknowledged. It was emphasised that the Home Secretary intended to withdraw the power if not used correctly.

The Panel acknowledged the Constabulary's responsibilities but stated that the wider demographic issues and the challenges faced by front line officers working in our communities should not be overlooked in working to address the issue. Attention was drawn to the following by Panel Members:-

- the data at page 23 of the report could usefully include a breakdown of positive outcomes by BME demographic to demonstrate where searches led to arrests, prosecutions, further searches or no further action, as an assurance for our communities.
- The possibility of extracting geographical data from an officer's GPS location to identify roads/areas should be explored, to mirror the approach in the West Midlands where an app has been developed for this purpose.
- Officers were to be credited for a 98% lawful stop average. It was noted that very few complaints were received.
- Raising the level of authorisation to above the rank of Chief Superintendent in order to reduce high level 'no-suspicion' stop and searches had potential to cause delay.

The Commissioner agreed to establish the availability/precision of the information requested.

It was clarified that the smell of cannabis alone was no longer a ground for a stop in and of itself. This had emerged from Home Office guidance. Referencing the Lammy report, the Commissioner reported that a proportion of the population are disproportionately affected by the criminal justice system and it was apparent that the relationship between the Police, courts and CPS was not always effective. A more holistic approach was being adopted as a result and a piece of work had been commissioned to look at this through the Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice Transformation Project.

In conclusion, it was noted that the Scrutiny of the Use of Police Powers Panel would receive a quarterly report/presentation from the Constabulary and this could be shared with the Panel.

10. Reducing Reoffending

The Panel considered a report setting out progress in relation to the Reducing Reoffending Strategy and discussing how Panel Members could support delivery of the strategy and workstreams in the coming year.

With reference to the presentation material circulated at the meeting, the CEO reported that the Constabulary's partnership approach to offender management was historically effective but there was now increased focus to co-commission integrated services to deliver the

outcomes needed. Based on analysis of data involving the release of 12,000 prisoners, it was apparent that 62% of the recalls could be attributed to 188 people over the period examined. In turn, this could be attributed to issues involving addiction, accommodation, employment opportunities and a general lack of support by the relevant agencies. The strategy proposed to work alongside the Ministry of Justice and local partners in targeting resources to address the issues holistically, and reduce the demand on the Police service.

It was put to the Commissioner that reoffending could be addressed by longer sentencing, allowing time for addiction to be treated in detention – potentially moving away from a revolving door approach encouraged by shorter sentencing. The Commissioner stated that the courts were an independent entity restricted by sentencing guidelines and prisons were so full that little emphasis was placed on rehabilitation. It was suggested that lost trust in community sentencing needed to be restored.

The Commissioner stated that she recognised the importance of data integrity - the Constabulary had been criticised in the past for poor figures and extra resources had been allocated to remedy this. The force now featured in the top 5 for accurate data.

Reference was also made to the increasing offences of theft and the impact on the business community. On the basis that Police response rates to reports of shoplifting had fallen, it was suggested that re-offending rates would go down as a result of offenders not being caught. This was described as disastrous for retailers and good for crime figures. The Panel urged the Business Crime Reduction Partnership to use the channels and intelligence available to feed intelligence and reduce reoffending.

There was general agreement that a different approach was needed to tackle the prevailing and widespread drug and alcohol addiction amongst prisoners. Assurances were provided that work was underway with health colleagues to provide treatment facilities and tackle underlying mental health issues. The OPCC welcomed the support of the new Panel Link Member role which would be undertaken by Joseph Mullis to support delivery of the Reducing Reoffending agenda over the coming year.

The Commissioner acknowledged the significant challenge faced by LAs to secure accommodation for a prisoner following release.

11. Scrutiny of Performance – Link Member Reports

Representative Workforce

With reference to the report provided in the papers, Councillor Shah provided the Panel with a detailed update. The following key points were noted:-

- Continuing efforts by the Constabulary both strategically and operationally showed a commitment to ensuring a diverse workforce
- Work was planned to attract female BME to the PCSO workforce. It was suggested this would require considerable work. 11% of PCSO applications came from the BME community and 8% passed shortlisting.

- Outreach work was going well and efforts being made to include the harder to reach communities.
- Staff support groups were on board to contribute to the strategy and reference was made to an event organised by the Black Police Association attended by Councillor Shah.
- The Ride Along Scheme provided an excellent opportunity for members of the local community to accompany police officers on patrol and increase the understanding of policing issues. This could be publicised more widely.
- Assessors for police officer assessment centres from under-represented groups have undergone training. Two assessor training courses included training people from BME backgrounds and other under-represented groups.

Vulnerability – Recommissioning of Victims Services

Councillor Willis provided a verbal update following her recent attendance at the Victims Recommissioning Board meeting.

The Panel noted that a data led/evidence-based approach to the needs assessment had identified some mixed provision and lack capacity in certain areas which would now be looked at as the current contracts were coming to the end of their duration. Councillor Willis stated that she was given the opportunity to inform the User Engagement Plan (running until 1st June 2018) and the final commissioning intentions document which outlined the OPCC's commissioning proposals based on the Needs Assessment recommendations.

Councillor Willis emphasised that parish councils would be a valuable source of information to the process. Given their close links and ties with community groups and organisations they were alert to the services which are vital to the area. It had also been recommended that the work undertaken by the NHS and LAs in the form of the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership could usefully assist the process. This had been progressed at the Enquiry Day on the 12th March 2018 which had been attended by Julia Ross, Chief Executive of the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Groups.

A series of board meetings in place across 2018 and early 2019 would take this work forward and would include Councillor Willis as the Panels Link Member for Vulnerability.

12. Work Programme

This was noted.

13. 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 that complaint Case 24 remained open and Bristol City Council was attempting to bring this matter to a satisfactory conclusion.

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

14. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED - that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information).

15. Complaint

The Complaints Sub-Group considered a complaint against the Commissioner.

16. Date of next Meeting

- 27th June 2018 at 10.30am (Venue TBC)

Chair -