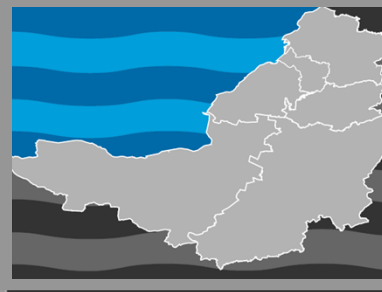


# Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel



Hosted by Somerset County Council Community Governance



## Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018

### Present:

#### Local Authority Representatives:

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

#### Independent Members:

Joseph Mullis, Andy Sharman

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

Sue Mountstevens (Police and Crime Commissioner), John Smith (Chief Executive OPCC), Julian Gale (Strategic Manager, SCC), Joanna Coulon (Criminal Justice and Commissioning Officer OPCC), Patricia Jones (Principal Democratic Services Officer, SCC), Helen Riddell (Staff Officer, OPCC).

### 1. Apologies for absence

None.

### 2. Appointment of Chair

One nomination was received in advance of the meeting and Councillor Wale was appointed Chair of the Panel for the 2018/19 Municipal Year. Councillor Wale stated that he hoped to continue the work and progress made by the Panel during the six years of Councillor Ashton's Chairmanship.

### 3. Appointment of Vice-Chair

One nomination was received in advance of the meeting and Councillor Weston was appointed Vice-Chair of the Panel for the 2018/19 Municipal Year.



#### **4. Panel Membership**

The Panel noted that the membership for 2018/19 remained unchanged from the 2017/18 Municipal Year.

#### **5. Public Question Time**

None.

#### **6. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Bown – Member of the Devon and Somerset Fire Authority

#### **7. Future Meeting Dates**

The following meeting dates for 2018/19 were confirmed:-

##### **Formal Panel Meetings (10.30am Weston Town Hall)**

9<sup>th</sup> October

13<sup>th</sup> December

5<sup>th</sup> February

20<sup>th</sup> March

##### **Training Development**

September – date TBC

##### **Budget Consultation/briefing (10.00am Police and Fire Headquarters)**

26<sup>th</sup> November 2018

#### **8. Minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

**Resolved – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

#### **9. Chair's Business**

None.

#### **10. Commissioner's Update**

The Commissioner welcomed Councillor Wale to the role of Chair and thanked Councillor Ashton for exercising the position with fairness and challenge over the last 6 years.

The Commissioner updated the Panel on the following matters-

- Travellers – following the last meeting, LAs had been contacted for the purpose of gathering evidence on the effectiveness of their enforcement powers. Five responses had been received to date. The Commissioner drew attention to the considerable costs incurred by their authorities

when a site is established and Panel Members were asked to help in securing feedback from their respective LAs.

The Commissioner drew attention to the recently concluded Government consultation which aimed to establish how public authorities could use the powers available to them more effectively and whether existing measures needed to be strengthened. The Commissioner was advised that the Panel were aware of the consultation process and a number of Panel Members had participated.

- Bijan Ebrahimi/Multi-Agency Inquiry Day – it was noted that the report remained in draft and had been shared with Mr Ebrahimi's family. It would be published along with their feedback in due course.
- Tri-Force Collaboration Arrangements - the original tri-force model was not working effectively and a Tri-Force Futures programme had been set up to optimise arrangements, build strength and reduce inefficiency. Avon and Somerset was currently the tri-force host for firearms provision. A business case from Wiltshire was likely making a bi-lateral agreement on firearms and dogs a possibility for the future. The Panel would be kept updated.
- Operational strain - a number of factors have contributed to this including St Paul's Carnival, officer aid to Salisbury and the anticipated demonstrations against Donald Trump's visit. All patrols and Neighbourhood Teams had received a 12 hour shift instruction and rest days had been cancelled.
- Fire Governance – the Commissioner reported that better governance for the region was possible and the option of putting forward a business case that would create coterminosity was available to her. However in doing so, Devon would be placed in a sub-optimal position and the resulting isolation was not in the public interest. Referring to the report she commissioned to look at the options available for joint working between Police and Fire (under the 2017 Police and Crime Act), the Commissioner informed the Panel that there were no plans to take on responsibility for governance of local fire and rescue services in the next 2 years.

Below is a summary of the questions/issues raised by Panel Members:-

- Fire Governance - Councillor Shelford suggested there was scope for improvement in both operational effectiveness and cost-efficiency following the co-location of Police and Fire. He proposed the formation of a Peel Braidwood Joint Committee at service officer level focussing on operational planning, maintenance and intelligence gathering for the purpose of delivering better quality services to residents.

The Commissioner stated that work focussed around collaboration was on-going and reference was made to the secondment of Lee Howell from Devon and Somerset Fire Authority to the Constabulary. However it was acknowledged that there was a conversation to be had which could feasibly include learning from other areas. The Commissioner highlighted Bedfordshire as an example where fire officers had been persuaded to carry out Burglary checks. Councillor Shelford maintained that the pace of change could be improved.

There was general agreement that however small the savings, collaboration should be at the forefront of decision making, with an emphasis on operational backroom services and asset sharing.

- Travellers – the Panel suggested the enormity of finding a satisfactory resolution to the issue should not be under-estimated given the polarised views of the parties, particularly in relation to transit sites. There was agreement that progress should be made where possible. The Panel drew attention to laws introduced in the Irish Republic that make trespass a criminal offence in certain circumstances. The Commissioner advised the Panel that this was not a viable option on the basis that sufficient powers already existed.
- Regional work – the Panel invited the Commissioner to comment on collaboration opportunities currently being explored. The Commissioner stated that partners needed to be willing and a decision on the proposed merger between Devon and Cornwall and Dorset was expected in the near future (as yet it was unclear if Parliamentary approval of the first business case would be given). The Commissioner confirmed that she had not considered a merger between Avon and Somerset and other areas, however this had not been ruled out in the future. The Commissioner added that the regional meetings of PCCs provided opportunity for discussion of a range of issues including collaboration.
- Independent Residents Panel – following his attendance as an observer at a recent meeting of the IRP, the Chair reported that his overall view of the process was positive. He recommended that providing the IRP with associated Body Worn Video footage would achieve a more balanced view of the complaint and the operational difficulties encountered by the officers concerned.

## **11. PCC Annual Report 2017/18**

The Commissioner introduced the report and highlighted the year as challenging. She thanked the Panel for its support of the Precept increase and letter to the Home Secretary expressing concern around current funding of the service.

Councillor Bloomfield expressed concern around local policing in Martock. He reported that this had led to a decision by Martock Parish Council to employ a private security firm to tackle anti-social behaviour and theft. He highlighted anecdotal reports of officers with a neighbourhood/rural remit being called upon to respond to incidents in other areas, with the effect of reducing their ability to be proactive and preventative in the community. Councillor Bloomfield drew attention to the latest Precept increase and emphasised the importance of a sustainable shift system for officers.

The Commissioner advised the Panel that the new policing model for neighbourhoods was being rolled out in September and as previously notified to the Panel, funding to maintain officer establishment in communities had been ringfenced. It was acknowledged that vacancies still existed and assurances were provided that these would be filled. The Panel was advised that grant funding was likely to be top sliced in the next round with inevitable repercussions for resourcing. The Commissioner made the point that the force was being required to make the same difficult decisions around resourcing as LAs. She confirmed that an adequate and efficient Police force was being maintained in accordance with the 1964 Police Act.

The Chair stated that the Panel hoped to provide some input into the reorganised Neighbourhood Policing model before its introduction.

As the key points of contact in cascading information between scheme members and partners, it was suggested that Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators should use text messaging where possible to avoid delays in email communication.

The Panel welcomed the funding support for Restorative Justice Services and requested further information on its impact and effectiveness in the future.

The Panel also welcomed the proactive work planned to increase the number of Special Constable roles within the organisation and requested an update at an appropriate time in the future.

The Panel invited the Commissioner to comment on the strategic approach to tackling drug related crime – the Policing of which some might regard as a specialist job requiring particular knowledge and expertise. The Commissioner stated that a dedicated drugs unit was not an effective way of tackling the substance misuse and drug related offences generic across Avon and Somerset. A decision had been taken that all officers needed to be alert to this as opposed to a dedicated squad. The Panel noted that the supply of drugs across “county lines” was a prevalent and serious issue and the Constabulary was looking at ways to tackle this.

The Panel expressed concern in relation to the increasing offences of shop theft and the impact on the business community. It was reported that businesses felt disheartened with the Police response to reports and the lack of feedback if an offender was prosecuted – indicative of existing problems in the neighbourhood teams and with potential to impact on the number of crimes being reported.

The Panel noted that any specific performance related issues relating to the 101 service should be provided to the Commissioner for further enquiry.

With reference to the “Stay Safe Online” advice contained in the report and the recognised increasing threats posed by this offence, the Panel recommended that the strategy to tackle this should be regarded as a priority. The Panel also suggested that there should be a specific reference to the elderly as victims in this context. The Commissioner was asked if she could provide the Panel with the latest reporting/crime figures.

As part of the policing review of the NPAS, the Panel recommended that the use of drones should be considered as a potential speedier and more cost-effective means of response to that of a centralised air support unit. It was agreed that there had been some success in Coventry and a drone has recently been used as part of murder investigation in Bristol. The Commissioner informed the Panel that the Police and Crime Board would be taking part in further discussions on the subject.

The Panel drew attention to increasing concern around gang-related violence and rivalries in the Bristol area. Councillor Craig highlighted the efforts being taken by Bristol City Council and relevant partners to tackle this.

The Commissioner advised the Panel that she was very supportive of the Panel's proposal to look at serious violence/knife crime as a topic in September.

Councillor Craig reported on the success of the Bristol event Love Saves the Day and the assistance provided by an on-site drug testing tent. The future provision of Heroin Assisted Treatment (HAT) in the South West was also discussed following the success of this approach in reducing drug related harm and marginalising organised criminals. The Commissioner emphasised that the viability of an HAT programme was contentious and categorically opposed by the Home Office. The associated costs were described as prohibitive. It was noted that Councillor Craig was scheduled to meet with Birmingham's PCC in the near future.

The Commissioner reported that the Constabulary was proactively tackling a spike in hate crime. A number of hate crime advocates were working across the force area to assist the Police.

Concerns around business crime were reiterated and the Commissioner was asked to consider reviewing the business crime strategy. The Commissioner was also asked how the profile of shop theft could usefully be raised by all organisations with a common interest. From a policing perspective, the Panel was advised that demand/reports of this crime were high. A system was in place to enable businesses to send in CCTV footage. Incidents involving under 18s or anyone considered vulnerable were prioritised and the Police always attended in these circumstances.

There was further discussion in relation to cyber-crime, and the public's ability to make a meaningful report to Action Fraud. The process was described as impenetrable and without result. The Commissioner emphasised the growth of cyber-enabled crime and stated that the public should be encouraged to contact Action Fraud.

Councillor Bown informed the Commissioner that the Precept increase had given rise to an expectation of change and sought clarification of officer numbers in the neighbourhood teams. The Commissioner stated that she had not committed to providing additional resources for local policing.

It was clarified that an award of £1000 to a town council for the purpose of funding CCTV came from the Commissioner's Community Action Fund to strengthen local policing.

Joseph Mullis asked how progress was tracked against the strategic priorities and if it was possible for the Panel to be provided with an action plan/outcome tracker for monitoring purposes against the Police and Crime Plan. Using mental health as an example, he reported that there had been no progress in his role since his initial involvement along with Councillor Willis in 2016/17. He stated that it was important for the Panel's contribution to be structured in order for the Link Member to produce a meaningful outcome.

The CEO stated that he would provide his initial comments (Link Member report to follow) and that a forward plan and action tracker was possible. There was also a performance tool that was currently used to assist outcome tracking in relation to the Police and Crime Plan. The CEO suggested that further officer discussions should take place outside of the meeting in order to progress.

The Panel made some final observations around the formatting and detail contained in the report and its audience. It was noted that relevant information would also be captured in a newsletter produced by the OPCC.

## **12. Link Member Report**

The Panel considered a report of John Smith, Chief Executive Officer, setting out the purpose of the Link Member role and the individual work areas assigned to Panel Members to support and influence the Commissioner in key areas of business.

Following a recent review of this work area, the CEO informed the Panel of the proposal to identify and develop a more systematic approach to the Link Member role in the 2018/19 year. He added that a more strategic approach would facilitate information being shared more easily and align the Link Members to the focal priorities in the Police and Crime Plan:-

- Protect the most vulnerable from harm;
- Strengthen and improve your local policing teams;
- Ensure that ASC has the right people, right equipment, right culture; and
- Work together effectively with other police forces and key partner agencies to provide better services to local people.

It was confirmed that roles previously identified would be progressed with better planning going forward. Assurance was provided that the OPCC welcomed a proactive approach to the Commissioner's priorities that made the best of Panel Member's local expertise.

Councillor Willis stated that mental health remained a high profile national priority for public sector organisations and it was important for the Panel to continue its scrutiny of this work area. Referencing the report on mental health produced in 2016/17, Joseph Mullis asked if the issues emerging from this were captured under the Vulnerability priority. The CEO confirmed that it did and the Panel Member input was valued.

Councillor Craig indicated that her involvement as the Representative Workforce Link Member had been ad hoc.

There was general agreement that an alignment of the roles to the Commissioner's 4 Strategic Priorities was a sensible approach and this should be duly progressed by officers.

## **13. Stop and Search Performance**

John Smith CEO introduced the report provided as an update following a request by the Panel for demographic information broken down by Local Authority and positive outcomes.

The Panel noted that the pattern of white persons searched was spread more proportionately across the policing areas, with the largest activity in Bristol East involving drug offences. The data reflected the vast majority of Black person searched took place in Bristol East, with a relatively much smaller percentage across Somerset. When broken down, it was explained that the make-up of searches reflected the demographic make-up.

The Panel was advised that the Constabulary had been requested to expand on the data provided in this report, which as it stood provided clarification in part. This would be provided to the Panel in due course and apologies were extended for the delay.

Below is a summary of the discussion that followed:-

- The average number of stops per month since April 2017 (between 450-500) were not targeted. Searches were based on either proactivity or intelligence-led.
- There was a 22% positive outcome rate for weapon-based stops.
- The significant drop in searches since 2012 was noted. The Panel suggested that the reasons behind this needed to be made clear to the public.
- The political steer from the Home Office ensured more training and specific grounds for stops.

The Chair thanked the OPCC for the oversight provided and confirmed the Panel looked forward to receiving the additional information.

#### **14. Scrutiny of the Commissioner's Partnership Arrangements and Commissioned Services**

##### **South Gloucestershire - Safer and Stronger Communities Strategic Partnership**

Councillor Goddard presented the performance headlines from the Partnership's 2017/18 report. It was noted that objectives had recently aligned with the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan for a more strategic approach.

Attention was drawn to gaps and highlights in performance set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

The Panel noted the report.

#### **15. Standing complaints Report**

The Panel considered and a report of the Chief Executive (OPCC) providing an oversight of all complaints made against the Commissioner.

The Panel agreed the following membership of the Complaints Sub-Committee for 2018/19:-

Councillor Shah, Joseph Mullis, Councillor Shelford, Councillor Bown and Councillor Bloomfield.

#### **16. Panel Annual Report**

The Panel considered a draft of the Panel's Annual Report for 2017/18.

The Clerk introduced the report and invited members to review the report and highlight any amendments or additions they wished to make to the content.

Councillor Bown drew attention to the reference to Sedgemoor District Council at page 15 of the report. It was suggested that this did not read well for the area and was contrary to her



understanding of the situation. Andrew Sharman recommended that further useful feedback could be provided by the traders in Bridgewater and Taunton who were dissatisfied with the service and increase in crime.

For the purpose of publicising the report locally and raising the Panel's profile, it was agreed that it should be sent to the individual LA Communication Departments, Avon Local Councillors Association and Town Parish Councils. It was also suggested that advice on best circulation practice could be taken from the LGA.

It was agreed that printed copies should not be commissioned.

## **17. Work Programme**

The Panel was invited to consider and approve the draft Work Programme for 2018/2019 taking into account:-

- the Panel's statutory functions and responsibilities
- the Commissioner's priorities as defined in her Police and Crime Plan
- the views and interests of Panel Members

The Panel was in general agreement with the steer and recommendations contained in the report endorsed by the Chair and Vice-Chair in advance of the meeting. Serious violence/knife crime was considered to be a suitable topic for the Panel's Development Day given its national prominence and the leading role Police and Crime Commissioners were expected to play in galvanising the local response to serious violence.

The Vice-Chair indicated that any further suggestions for topics should ideally fall within the Commissioner's broad portfolio areas. Councillor Craig recommended Modern Slavery as a topic for more detailed scrutiny at an appropriate time in the year.

The Panel noted that the Panel Arrangements document would be submitted to the Panel on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018 for adoption subject to the finalisation of some additional queries from South Gloucestershire Council.

## **16. Date of next Meeting**

- 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018 at 10.30am (Weston Town Hall)

(The meeting ended at 1.00pm)

Chairman -