



# Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel

Hosted by Somerset County Council Democratic Services



## Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018

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### **Present:**

#### **Local Authority Representatives:**

Nigel Ashton (North Somerset Council), Cherry Beath (Bath & North East Somerset), Ann Bown (Sedgemoor District Council), Asher Craig (Bristol City Council), Stuart Dowding (West Somerset District Council), Mike Drew (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), Josh Williams (Somerset County Council), and Roz Willis (North Somerset Council).

#### **Independent Members:**

Andy Sharman, Richard Brown and Clare Torrible

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

Sue Mountstevens (Police and Crime Commissioner), John Smith (Chief Executive), Joanna Coulon (Criminal Justice and Commissioning Officer), Patricia Jones (Principal Democratic Services Officer), Helen Riddell (PCC Staff Office).

### **1. Apologies for absence**

Councillor Heather Goddard, Joseph Mullis and Julian Gale.

### **2. Panel Membership**

The Panel noted the appointments of Councillor Josh Williams (SCC) and confirmed the appointments of the new Independent Members, Clare Torrible and Richard Brown. Clare and Richard provided a brief summary of their background and experience to date.

### **3. Public Question Time**

None.

#### **4. Declarations of Interest**

None.

#### **5. Minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

**Resolved – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

#### **6. Chair's Business**

##### **Recruitment of additional Independent Members for Police Misconduct Panels**

The Chair commented on the Stakeholder Panel Assessment that was held as part of the selection process. It was noted that the standard of candidates was extremely high.

##### **PCP Nation Conference – Warwick University 12<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

Andrew Sharman agreed to confirm his availability for the conference.

#### **7. Commissioner's Update**

The Chair advised the Panel that the report Appendix was a draft document and as such was still in development.

The Commissioner updated the Panel on the following matters-

- Serious Violence/Knife Crime – the Commissioner expressed concern about the increasing levels of violent crime, particularly knife crime which had significantly increased. To provide some understanding of the extent of the pressures faced by the Constabulary, the Panel was shown a number of uncommonly large and disturbing knives seized during a weapons sweep aimed at targeting and disrupting offenders (Operation Sceptre).
- County Lines/Child Sexual Exploitation – the Commissioner expressed her concern for the children being exploited as part of these criminal activities. The Panel was advised that the average age of victims of CSE is 13 ½. In Yeovil, the average age of drug offenders is 16 ½.
- The Panel was advised that Stop and Search activity would increase to tackle the recent spikes in crime.
- Collaboration - the Commissioner reported that the Devon and Cornwall and Dorset force merger had collapsed. Avon and Somerset continued to be involved in a number of 5 force collaborations (*Link Member Cllr Weston has recently been fully briefed*).
- Probation Service/Ministry of Justice Consultation – the Panel was advised that the MOJ was seeking feedback on proposed changes to the structure and content of probation services on behalf of the Reducing Reoffending Executive Board. The Commissioner stated that she had not supported the original decision to split the service in 2013 and there was now a window of

opportunity to influence the contracts before the current contract ended in 2020 and procurement commenced.

- Pension Increase – the Commissioner reported that a potential increase to pensions could cost between £4m and £8m. A Precept rise of 6 ½ % in 2019 would generate £6m.

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

- The Commissioner responded to concerns raised in relation to Police presence in Bath following the relocation of One Stop Shop services to the library. It was confirmed that the police Enquiry Office would remain at Manvers Street. The Commissioner confirmed the Chief Constable had provided assurances that officer numbers would not be cut and the existing establishment of 10 Police officers and 10 PCSOs would remain in place. It was noted that visibility would increase as the review was implemented and Bath officers would be first in line for the roll out of mobile technology. This would dispense with the need for officers to go back to base.
- The Panel noted there were no existing vacancies for neighbourhood Police officers across the force area and 26 PCSO vacancies would be filled. However, there were significant vacancies in Response and Investigations Teams and realistically this could result in officers being pulled from Neighbourhood Teams. It was anticipated that all vacancies would be filled by March/April 2019.
- Out of Court Disposals Scrutiny Panel – the Panel sought clarification of any action taken post review of the files, particularly in relation to the cases where the approach was considered to be inappropriate. The Commissioner confirmed that officers attended the Panel meetings and reported back to the Constabulary on findings and learning.
- The Commissioner confirmed that the allocation of bicycles to PCSOs in Sedgemoor would take place in November 2018. She added that Sedgemoor was a pilot area for work underway with the Home Office around serious violence and organised crime groups. This pilot was another early intervention workstream aimed at young people and schools.
- The Commissioner informed the Panel that plans for Yeovil to retain a Police station had not changed. The viability of demolishing or refurbishing the existing site was being considered and a public announcement would follow.
- The Panel commented on the success of the Open Day held at Police Headquarters.
- There was general agreement that there were lessons to be learnt from the failed merger between the 2 South West Constabularies. Delivery from the ground up was described as the key element of a business case and pivotal to Government approval.
- The inevitable increase of Stop and Search amid rising violence and gang activity was acknowledged. The Panel observed that local communities needed to be kept informed at this time, particularly those affected by the racial disparity in the use of this power. The Commissioner informed the Panel that the larger BME communities were found to be disproportionately less affected than was originally envisaged. The wider issue was to ensure

that knives such as those displayed earlier were off the street. Councillor Craig informed the Commissioner that BCC was taking supportive action where possible including the installation of CCTV in the Bear Pit – this had resulted in 5 arrests and the seizure of a Samurai sword.

- The Constabulary's response to a serious incident involving a knife attack at Tesco Eastville was reported as strong and proportionate. There was general agreement that the easy availability of knives sold by on-line retailers contrary to UK regulation was a major cause for concern. The Commissioner drew attention to the joint bid with BCC submitted to the Home Office Early Intervention Youth Fund. Linked to the Serious Violence Strategy, this funding was available to tackling violence among young people as part of a "public health" approach to combatting knife crime and other offences.
- It was clarified that only the selling (not the consumption) of nitrous oxide was illegal.
- The Commissioner was congratulated on the Mini Police volunteering scheme for children. This was regarded by the Panel as a positive early intervention opportunity. The Commissioner stated that other early intervention opportunities with schools and local authorities was taking place alongside the Constabulary's efforts to identify vulnerable victims and tackle crimes involving the exploitation of children (County lines/CSE).
- The Commissioner agreed to make enquiries with the Constabulary to ascertain if Street Pastors were involved in any awareness training relating to knife crime. The Panel also emphasised the importance of passing on intelligence to assist street pastors and security staff in making active risk assessments.
- The Commissioner was asked if the prosecution of theft cases was now dependent on the availability of associated CCTV evidence. The Commissioner confirmed that no policy decision had been taken to this effect.
- The Panel raised the issue of Police Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Following recent reporting at the Inquest of PC Keith Palmer, the Commissioner was asked if Police officers were appropriately equipped to carry out their duties in a climate of prevailing knife crime and if PPE should be worn at all times and by all officers, including Constabulary leaders.

The Commissioner stated that decisions around the use of equipment were made by the Chief Constable and it was not within her remit to decide if officers should wear PPE at all times. It was her view however, and evidence showed, that not all officers needed to be equipped with tasers. She added that good communication skills were often key to achieving the right outcome when dealing with an offender.

The Commissioner added that she welcomed Sir Craig Mackey's honesty at the inquest and felt he had demonstrated integrity.

## **8. Stop & Search Qlik App Demonstration**

The Panel received a presentation to demonstrate the Stop and Search Disproportionality App, as a follow up to Members' requests for further information in relation to demographics (*Link Member Mark Shelford has recently been briefed on Data Analytics generally*).

The presentation enabled the Panel to consider the specific demographics for each beat area across the Force based on 2011 census data and compare it to the demographics of stop and search in that area. When broken down, it was noted that the make-up of searches largely reflected the demographic make-up.

The Chair thanked the officers for the presentation and discussion followed. The Chair welcomed the offer to observe the operation of Qlik Sense in real time and confirmed he would attend.

It was recognised that the availability of data was subject to good record keeping and the correct completion of paperwork. However, it was emphasised that the use of body worn video (BWV) provided the Scrutiny of Police Powers Panel (SOPP) with a level of assurance about stops, in addition to securing evidence for legal proceedings. Any representations made by the SOPP were referred to the Constabulary for learning.

The CEO informed the Panel that dialogue around Stop and Search was on-going and similar requests for information had been made by the SOPP. The CEO offered to ask the Chair of the SOPP if a member of the PCP could attend a future meeting to learn more about their work.

## 9. Cyber-Crime Presentation

The Panel received a presentation from Cyber Protect Officer Joanne Bocko, a role specifically funded by the Commissioner. A copy of the presentation material was circulated in advance of the meeting and in summary covered:-

- The extent of the outreach work undertaken to educate and assist communities and businesses and offer advice on protection from cybercrime and fraud. 2323 contacts to date.
- Digital crime – dating scams, on-line shopping and auctions, ticket and computer software service fraud, hacking and computer virus.
- The low risk/high rewards associated with cybercrime
- Computer security – how to be safer, passwords and spam emails
- Telephone fraud - Microsoft, BT, HMRC, Law enforcement, Immigration, Telephone preference service, Talk Talk
- Warning signs - requests to access your computer, transfer money, poor grammar
- Not reacting – never disclose security details, never assume contact is genuine, don't be rushed and stay in control.
- Further advice:-

General advice on Cyber Security and Passwords: Cyber Aware [www.cyberaware.gov.uk](http://www.cyberaware.gov.uk)

Online safety on all areas for everyone : Get Safe Online [www.getsafeonline.org](http://www.getsafeonline.org)

Advice on spam emails, spam phonecalls and scams Take 5 to Stop Fraud

<https://takefive-stopfraud.org.uk/>

Report fraud and cybercrime Action Fraud 0300 123 2040 Report phishing emails

[NFIBPhishing@city-of-london.police.uk](mailto:NFIBPhishing@city-of-london.police.uk)

The Panel extended its thanks for the detail provided in the presentation and discussion followed.

Detective Sergeant Ross Flay based in the Constabulary's Digital Investigation Unit was introduced to the Panel. The Panel noted that his role involved leading investigations into offences of this

nature and assisting regional investigations with evidence to support prosecutions. DS Flay confirmed that he was in the process of collating other statistics that may be of interest to the Panel. It was emphasised that Action Fraud was not an Investigative body but acted as a vault in assessing the size of the problem and collating information on behalf of the National Fraud Investigations Bureau. Their ability to provide a substantive answer was limited and a report would be closed if for example a victim of fraud was repaid by the credit card company. Telephone scams could be reported to Action Fraud by way of an on-line form.

It was acknowledged that significant under-reporting existed - this could occur because the primary offence was not a cybercrime in itself, but might be cyber-enabled. Notwithstanding increased efforts around personal security, it was apparent and generally agreed that criminals were becoming more sophisticated. It was now possible to clone bank phone numbers and emails and hack social media accounts to cause reputational damage. The Panel recognised that the potential for educating residents in their respective wards. It was agreed that any booklets, on-line flyers or guides for securing accounts would be sent to the clerk for circulation.

The Panel recommended organisations such as Age UK, the Senior Citizen Liaison Teams, housing associations and charities as possible contacts for the Cyber Protect Officer. It was agreed that the drawbacks around contactless debit/credit cards could usefully form part of future education programmes.

To reduce the possibility of hacking or sextortion scams, the message to the Panel was to be rigorous about social media settings. Reports of hate crime on social media should be reported on 101 if not an emergency, 999 if a person felt threatened and to Sari. It was noted that The Lighthouse could provide support and all Police officers were trained to carry out small digital investigations.

## **10. Police and Crime Needs Assessment**

The Commissioner introduced the report and invited Panel Members to discuss the Draft Police and Crime Needs Assessment, produced to present a consolidated evidence-based picture of the most significant issues, risks and threats shared by partner agencies and stakeholders across Avon and Somerset.

It was noted that the consultation had included Councillor Craig, the Panel's Link Member for the Development of the Police and Crime Plan. Councillor Craig reported that this was a robust document and good piece of work, requiring a significant amount of data sets to be pulled together. Using Bristol as an example, Councillor Craig advised that the Commissioner had approached the assessment in a balanced way and had taken into account the different sources of crime across the city. The Commissioner confirmed that the document had been updated based on Councillor Craig's recommendations.

Discussion followed.

- The Panel suggested the document could potentially be strengthened (under Strategic Issues, Risks and Opportunities) by drawing on the significant Equalities Impact work that had taken place as part of the recommissioning process.
- Subject to the grant settlement, consultation and the Panel's support, consideration was being given to a possible 6 ½ % Precept increase.

- Attention was drawn to the significant under-reporting of crimes by the LGBT community. The Commissioner confirmed that the Constabulary had a strong LGBT Team and agreed to bring back more information at a future meeting.
- The Panel noted that signposting youth offending was a government priority (the Early Intervention Youth Fund would provide £22million over two years for PCCs and Community Safety Partnerships to provide early intervention and prevention support to Youth Groups and Communities). It was acknowledged that town and parish councils were picking up a lot of youth related work.
- The Commissioner agreed to report back on training opportunities for middle rank Police officers.
- The challenges around crime reporting were recognised and the Panel welcomed the Constabulary's action plan to monitor progress in improving crime data integrity.
- The Panel noted that people living in the Avon and Somerset Constabulary area were more likely to be a victim of Fraud than any other crime type. Based on this, the Commissioner was asked why tackling this type of crime was unlikely to be prioritised. The Commissioner explained that most incidents of fraud generally involved little or no harm to the victim. An intended victim may receive a fraudulent email but the intended fraud or hacking does not always take place. In accordance with the assessment used by the Constabulary (Threat, harm, risk), low level phishing emails would not be prioritised.

In conclusion, there was a brief discussion relating to the concept of vulnerability used by the Constabulary within their Vulnerability Strategy – *“a person is vulnerable if, as a result of their situation or circumstances, they are unable to take care of or protect themselves or others from harm or exploitation”*. It was explained that the definition was designed to provide a broad overview based on a realistic assessment of someone's *current* position. It was recognised that assessments presented a constant challenge and a person's situation could change overnight.

## **11. Work Programme Report**

The Panel noted the updated work programme.

Councillor Craig suggested setting aside some agenda time to discuss the Charter on Modern Slavery. It was noted that this committed the councils who had signed up to proactively vetting their own supply chain to ensure no instances of modern slavery are taking place.

Following the introduction of General Data Protection Regulation and resulting changes around data privacy, Councillor Parham suggested looking at this topic in more detail at some stage in the future.

It was agreed that further discussion would take place at the agenda briefing.

## **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 that one long-standing complaint had been finalised and the Complaints Sub-Group were on notice of another complaint recently submitted.

**13. Date of next Meeting**

- 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018 at 10.00am (Budget Briefing, Police Headquarters)
- 13<sup>th</sup> December 2018 at 10.30am (formal Panel Meeting, Weston Town Hall)

(The meeting ended at 1.05pm)

Chairman)