



# Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel

Hosted by Somerset County Council Democratic Services



## Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel

### Annual General Meeting - 26<sup>th</sup> June 2019

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#### **Present:**

##### **Local Authority and Independent Member Representatives:**

Neil Bloomfield (South Somerset Council), Chris Booth (Somerset West and Taunton Council), Richard Brown (Independent Member), Asher Craig (Bristol City Council), Janet Keen (Sedgemoor District Council), Franklin Owusu-Antwi (South Gloucestershire Council), Afzal Shah (Bristol City Council), Andrew Sharman (Independent Member), Heather Shearer (Mendip District Council), Clare Torrible (Independent Member), Mark Weston (Bristol City Council), Josh Williams (Somerset County Council).

#### **Observer:**

Peter Abraham (Bristol City Council)

#### **Host Authority Support Staff**

Scott Wooldridge – Monitoring Officer Somerset County Council

Patricia Jones – Lead Officer

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

Sue Mountstevens - Police and Crime Commissioner

John Smith - Chief Executive Officer

Joanna Coulon - Criminal Justice and Commissioning Officer

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

Roz Willis (North Somerset Council). Alastair Singleton (Bath and North East Somerset), Richard Westwood (North Somerset Council), Pat Trull (South Gloucestershire Council), Andy Wait (Bath and North East Somerset Council) and Joseph Mullis (Independent Member).

#### **2. Appointment of Chair**

One nomination was received in advance of the meeting and Richard Brown was appointed Chair of the Panel for the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

### **3. Appointment of Vice-Chair**

One nomination was received in advance of the meeting and Andrew Sharman was appointed Vice-Chair of the Panel for the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

### **4. Panel Membership**

The Panel noted the revised membership for 2019/20 as appointed by the constituent authorities.

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

None.

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

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

The following meeting dates for 2019/20 were agreed:-

#### *Formal Panel Meetings*

8th October

11th December

4th February

TBC March (Purdah conflict)

There was general agreement that The Deane House was a suitable venue for the remaining PCP meetings.

#### *Training Development for new members*

September – date and venue TBC

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

15th November 2019

### **8. Minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2019**

**Resolved – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to Councillor Williams being included in the attendance list and Nigel Ashton being removed from the attendance list.**

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

The Chair paid tribute to Councillor Weston and Councillor Wale for their commitment to the Panel over the last 6 years.

## 10. Commissioner's Update Report

The Commissioner extended her thanks to the former Chair Mark Weston and reported as follows:-

- **Force Management Statement** - the Panel was referred to the Chief Constable's self-assessment of the demand the Force expects to face in the next four years including how the Force will change and improve its workforce, efficiency and other assets to cope with the demand, and the resources required to do this.
- **Serious Violence Strategy** - the Commissioner highlighted a number of actions to support the delivery of the government's strategy. This included £100k in match funding to support local delivery across the five Community Safety Partnerships and a jointly hosted force wide summit on 8 May 2019 with partners to look at current good practice and opportunities to deliver the strategy in each Local Authority area. Work with the Constabulary continued to develop proposals for the allocation of Avon and Somerset's share of the £100m Home Office Serious Violence fund.

It was reported that 2 more funding pots had become available which included - £1.72m 'surge funding' for Police enforcement and a further £ 1.16m to work with LAs for the development of Violence Reduction Units, all of whom been contacted with details.

- **Drug Education Programme** - the DEP has been further developed and rolled out beyond its initial pilot in Bristol to cover the force area. It was noted that this was an evidence based intervention that provided a one-time opportunity for those found in possession of drug to prevent further use and avoid a criminal sanction. The Panel noted that the Commissioner attended a conference in London yesterday to discuss the deregulation and decriminalisation of cannabis and its implications. She highlighted the link between drugs and serious violence. It was noted that the Constabulary had allocated a beat officer and PCSO to schools to talk to pupils about knives, the impact of drugs and how to safeguard themselves from texting and images of an intimate nature.
- **Probation Service** - Work with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) continued and all offender management would be brought back into the National Probation Service. There was now a short timescale to get various providers included within the procurement framework. The Commissioner emphasised that PCCs across the south west had worked really hard with the MOJ and local charities across the region to establish a dynamic new framework.
- **Unauthorised Encampments** - the Commissioner reported that she valued the work carried out by South Somerset Council on gypsy and traveller sites which reflected their investment in vulnerable individuals. She emphasised that the availability of transit sites were of key importance.

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

- the Panel recognised that transit sites were critical to achieving a coordinated approach to unauthorised encampments, but questioned how this could be achieved if LAs were largely resistant to them. The Commissioner stated that enforcement of transit sites was not a Police matter and that sites were currently provided in Bristol and B&NES. Somerset had recently shown commitment to working more closely with the communities concerned and North Somerset's senior leaders were in talks to secure progress.

- The Commissioner was asked if an adequate Police Service was being provided and what steps were being taken to ensure that Bristol was not the only area that benefited from the increase in officer numbers following the Precept increase.

The Commissioner advised the Panel that the additional 100 officers would specifically tackle Burglary, drugs and knife related crimes as part of Operation Remedy. It had been recognised that the impact of County Lines on Somerset was significant and the Chief Constable had allocated resources accordingly. It was emphasised that the allocation of officers was specifically his remit.

- It was clarified that the last available report for the Out of Court Disposals Panel was September 2018 because the next report would not be published until approved at the next meeting. The nature of the cases looked at by the Panel invariably sat on the cusp and Panel recommendations would feed into interventions on Domestic Abuse and hate crime. The opportunity to observe a meeting remained available to individual members.
- The Panel invited the Commissioner to expand on the ongoing discussions between Avon Fire and Rescue Service (AFRS) and the Constabulary in relation to estates and fleet and that various estates opportunities that were being progressed with Devon and Somerset Fire Authority (DSFA)

The Commissioner reported that the Chief Constable would shortly meet with the Chair and Chief Fire Officer of AFRS when a number of plans would be discussed. The importance of aligning estates with the Constabulary's plans for Neighbourhood Policing was emphasised – currently some sites were not appropriate. However, there was now a joint site in Nailsea and collaboration in other areas was also being looked at.

The Commissioner informed the Panel that she had met with the Chair of DSFA and Alison Hernandez, PCC Devon and Cornwall. The boundary implications of DSFA which crossed both force areas meant that both PCCs planned to take up a seat on DSFA once the government had secured PCC voting rights.

- The Panel noted the rise in officer numbers from 2593.63 (April 18) to 2673.64 (April 19). It was recognised that the drop off in PCSO numbers from 331.44 to 310.02 was impacted by PCSOs who had become Police officers. The Panel asked if the glut of older officers who planned on retirement had been taken into account in the recruitment strategy. The Commissioner stated that the approach was based on what was expected in a year – an average of 17 per month. It was noted that a proportion also stayed on after 30 years and were not required to formally notify the organisation of their decision. Turnaround was often quick and this required management. Both Human Resources and the Chief Constable were looking to retain skills and experience without impacting on the pension pot. It was clarified that officers cannot partially retire and access their pensions.
- The Commissioner was asked if the recent discrimination finding against Cheshire Police who used positive action not to recruit a white heterosexual male, was likely to shape the Constabulary's ambitions to become a more diverse service. The Commissioner stated that Avon and Somerset was not vulnerable to the finding made against Cheshire Police and would continue to strive for better representation with outreach work. Recruitment was on track along with plans to increase PCSO numbers. A conversation about part time employment in

line with the approach adopted by the Metropolitan Police had taken place and the Commissioner indicated that she was happy to take discussions forward but there were already flexible working practices in place.

The point was made that whilst a tap cannot be turned on, 254 officers were recruited in the last year and it was a challenge to get tutors to work with these individuals. Investment in various processes might also be needed but the public was likely to be disappointed because the force would not be flooded with new officers overnight.

- The Commissioner was asked how she monitored the funding allocated to Community Safety Partnerships. The Panel was advised that the OPCC was part of the CSP membership and joint plans now existed to ensure that local priorities were linked to the Police and Crime Plan. It was emphasised that the OPCC has to account back to the Home Office on its funding arrangements.
- The Panel noted that Avon and Somerset was treating attacks based on misogyny or gender as a form of hate crime for recording purposes. It was agreed that an analysis of the new data/process would be provided for the next meeting.
- The Panel highlighted a misleading reference in the Force Management Statement relating to shop theft. The Commissioner was advised that “45% of *all* shop theft is reported online, including the ability to upload CCTV ...” was inaccurate because a significant amount of shop theft went unreported. The Panel emphasised the importance of business crime reporting and suggested proactive measures should be adopted to increase reporting. The Commissioner stated that she urged everyone to report and suggested there was a fundamental difficulty in measuring crime that goes unreported. However, the potential for misinterpretation as the sentence currently stood was accepted and the Commissioner agreed to draw the issue to the attention of the Constabulary.
- The Panel sought clarification of the assurance and oversight arrangements of the Custody Visiting Scheme where 38 volunteers carry out visits to ensure detainees in custody are held in safe and appropriate conditions in accordance with their rights and entitlements. It was noted that a visit might involve observing a detainee through a hatch if the person is asleep or under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- The Panel invited the Commissioner to comment on any difficulties she envisaged with the proposed changes to the Offender Management function of the Probation Service. The Commissioner reported that there were some obvious challenges and she was working closely with the MOJ and officials before procurement ended in August 2019. Services to encourage people to make wiser choices were vital and discussions about paid work and accredited courses were taking place.

The Commissioner stated that she hoped to have influence over these areas as the regional provider.

- The drawbacks to the services available to prisoners on completion of their sentences was discussed with many released into a vacuum to reoffend or left vulnerable to exploitation through lack of rehabilitation. It was reported that Avon and Somerset use Out of Court Disposals less than other forces and efforts to increase this were being made. Over the last

year, there had been a move away from simple cautions to conditional cautions with specific interventions like education or training programmes. The Panel was advised that more meaningful information on interventions was available and this could be picked up through the Strategic Priority 2 briefings. It was noted that the Constabulary had invested in 6 posts to work with offenders who were given an out of court disposal and to ensure appropriate interventions were put in place.

- Members were referred to the 2 documents appended to the Update Report which provided an overview of the work that is carried out internally by the OPCC and the Constabulary and the difference in responsibilities.

#### **Action:**

- 1) An analysis of the new data/process for reported attacks based on misogyny or gender to be provided to the next meeting.**
- 2) The Panel's comments/potential for misinterpretation relating to shop crime and the sentence at page 30 of the Force Management Statement to be referred to the Constabulary.**
- 3) Out of Court Disposals – progress and information on interventions to be picked up in the Strategic Priority 2 briefings.**

### **11. Annual Report of the Commissioner**

The Commissioner presented her statutory Annual Report detailing the exercise of her functions over the past year and reflecting on the progress of the 2016-19 Police and Crime Plan. It was emphasised that the plan was currently in draft form and the comments and recommendations of Panel Members would be taken into account in the final version as required.

Below is a summary of the Panel's views and recommendations provided in accordance with Section 28(4) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011:-

#### **• Performance**

The Panel noted that the Constabulary has made significant improvements in its accuracy of recording crimes in recent years, however the HMICFRS inspection rating remained 'requires improvement'. It was explained that until a reinspection is carried out, it would not be possible to assess the impact of the remedial action that has been taken to address this. There was general agreement that that crime should be recorded accurately and ethically. The Panel welcomed the work in progress with the Force Crime Incident Registrar and it was agreed that regular updates could be provided at intervals to Panel meetings.

The Commissioner stated that she recognised that there was work to be done in respect of the results from the annual staff survey. The Panel was advised that more recent data suggested that the results had improved and that work currently being undertaken by the Chief Constable and the Health and Wellbeing Board would continue. The Panel emphasised that leadership and staff feeling valued were key to the success of any large organisation and members indicated that they looked forward to the 2019 results and welcomed the updates offered. The Panel requested the 2017 results (in the knowledge that the questions asked in 2017 were different) and details of how the 'Aspire' Leadership Programme was making a difference.

Members recommended that where possible, the stated objectives in the plan around the wellbeing of staff should align with the Chief Constable's Force Management Statement.

The Panel also recommended the inclusion of a definition of a successful criminal outcome alongside the summary table of performance as residents were likely to find this useful. The Commissioner was asked to consider using the space on the following information page to signpost partners – for example Unseen who are undertaking relevant work in relation to CSE and Modern Slavery.

- **Strategic Priority 1 - Protecting the Most Vulnerable from Harm**

The Panel noted the step to commission Constabulary-led assurance reports that look at key successes and identify areas for improvement with associated recommendations and observed that there was a missed opportunity to share successes in the plan. The Panel welcomed the commitment to provide further assurance information as part of the quarterly briefings.

The Commissioner was invited to reconsider the order of text at page 14 of the report to reinforce the gravity of the offences of CSE and FGM and to ensure there can be no perception of mixed messages in respect of the case study around the treatment of offenders that immediately followed.

The Commissioner confirmed that the outcomes from projects and work around sexual violence would also be included in the priority briefings to assist in getting an overall picture of what is being delivered both through funding and commissioning.

The Panel welcomed information about the role of the Resolve board which pulled together a range of criminal justice partnership organisations to set priorities and strategic direction for the area. It was noted that this was chaired locally by John Smith CEO and ran parallel to the Commissioner's role as Chair of the South West Reducing Reoffending Board, providing a good degree of oversight and a solid framework within which relevant agencies could work together to meet the shared responsibility to reduce reoffending.

- **Strategic Priority 2 - Strengthen and improve your Local Policing Teams.**

The Panel noted that technological improvements and new equipment introduced to support officers and staff in their roles had been well received by staff and the investment would be instrumental in improving organisational performance. Specifically, the introduction of innovative data analytics software which aimed to mark a change in the way the Constabulary managed its data to draw conclusions, identify patterns and improve performance.

The Panel emphasised the importance of a Policing presence in both rural and urban communities that is capable of addressing local demand.

- **Burglary**

The Panel welcomed the Commissioner's assurance that improving performance in relation to Burglary was a key focus with assurance around levels of reporting being taken from the England and Wales Crime Survey. However, it was noted that whilst reports of burglary have

reduced, positive outcomes had declined to 6% in 2018/19. Updates on the progress of Operation Remedy and its role in combatting burglary would be provided to the Panel at key stages and the Panel recommended victim dissatisfaction with lack of follow-up should be given increased focus in the strategy in the interim.

For clarity, the Panel recommended that “satisfaction of victims” should be amended to “satisfaction with the Police” and suggested that some content about the support offered to vulnerable victims of Burglary could usefully be included. It was noted that details of the proposed involvement of Panel Members in local activities associated with Operation Remedy would be provided in due course.

- **Volunteers and Special Constables**

The Panel noted plans to increase community involvement to deliver the Police and Crime Plan and plans for further engagement to address a slight decline in citizenship activities and proposed work with large employers to increase the number of specials.

- **Independent Chair for the Lammy Review Group of the Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice Board**

The Panel noted the appointment of Desmond Brown and agreed to invite him to a formal Panel meeting to comment on his role in ensuring delivery of the Lammy Group’s key objectives. Subject to approval from the Constabulary, it was agreed that his attendance could sit alongside a presentation on the programme of work around recruitment. It was agreed that this should be taken forward outside of the meeting and built into the work programme at the appropriate time.

- **Business Crime** - the Panel advised the Commissioner concern remained about the increasing offences of theft and the impact on the business community. Whilst Operation Heron sets a higher criteria for Police attendance, it was pointed out that response rates were still leaving businesses disheartened with the service they receive. Reference was made to the recommendations set out in the Link Member report on 12th March 2019 which included the recommendation that progress against the joint OPCC/Chief Constable business crime strategy should be reflected in the annual report.

**Actions:**

- (1) Recording Crime - updates on improvements and progress of the work undertaken with the Force Crime Incident Registrar to be provided at intervals.**
- (2) Panel to be provided with the 2017 staff survey results and updated on the progress of work undertaken in response to the latest results at an appropriate time.**
- (3) Details of how the ‘Aspire’ Leadership Programme was making a difference to be provided.**
- (4) The Panel’s recommendation that the stated objectives in the plan around the wellbeing of staff should align where possible with the Chief Constable’s Force Management Statement to be considered by the Commissioner.**



- (5) The Panel's recommendation that the inclusion of a definition of a successful outcome should sit alongside the summary table of performance to be considered.
- (6) The Panel's recommendation to use the space on the information page to signpost partners – for example Unseen who are undertaking relevant work in relation to CSE and Modern Slavery, to be considered.
- (7) Existing Assurance Reports produced in relation to the relevant Strategic Priority to be provided at the quarterly briefings.
- (8) Outcomes from projects and work around sexual violence to be included in the priority briefings to assist in getting an overall picture of what is being delivered both through funding and commissioning.
- (9) The Commissioner to consider the order of text at page 14 of the report to reinforce the gravity of the offences of CSE and FGM and to ensure there can be no perception of mixed messages in respect of the case study around the treatment of offenders that immediately followed.
- (10) Updates on the progress of Operation Remedy and its role in combatting burglary to be provided to the Panel at key stages and the Panel's recommendation in relation to victim dissatisfaction on follow-up to be considered.
- (11) Consideration be given to amending "satisfaction of victims" to "satisfaction with the Police" and additional content about the support offered to vulnerable victims of Burglary.
- (12) Details of the proposed involvement of Panel Members in local activities associated with Operation Remedy to be provided in due course.
- (13) Desmond Brown to be invited to a suitable Panel meeting to comment on his role in ensuring delivery of the Lammy Group's key objectives. If possible, this item to alongside a presentation on the programme of work around recruitment. It was agreed that this should be taken forward outside of the meeting and built into the work programme at the appropriate time.
- (14) Consideration be given to the recommendations contained in the Link Member Business Crime report on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

## **12. Work Programme Report**

The Panel considered the covering report to the draft work programme for 2019/20 setting out:-

- The statutory duties and responsibilities of the Commissioner
- The monitoring arrangements for dealing with complaints against the Commissioner
- Other Panel responsibilities related to senior appointments (confirmation hearings) and matters such as the proposed removal of a Chief Constable, the suspension of a Commissioner or the appointment of an acting Commissioner

- Link Member roles
- The Chief Constable's annual presentation
- Training for new members
- Seeking views on the feasibility of an in-depth scrutiny topic

**Action – it was agreed that the work programme should be a live document, refreshed as appropriate following meetings and submitted to all agenda briefings to assist both the Panel and the OPCC with the information required.**

### **13. Standing Complaints Report**

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

The Panel noted Clare Torrible would undertake the role of Link Member for complaints for a limited period in the first instance.

Andrew Sharman confirmed that he would submit his next Business Crime report to the next meeting of the Panel.

**Action – Andrew Sharman to present Business Crime report to 8<sup>th</sup> October Panel meeting.**

### **14. Date of next Meeting**

- Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019 at The Deane House, Somerset West and Taunton Council (John Meikle Room)

(The meeting ended at 12.10pm)

Chair