

Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel

27th June 2024

Title: Work Programme Report

1. Purpose of Report

The Panel is invited to:-

- Agree a Work Programme for 2024/25 (discussed in the body of the report and attached as Appendix 1).
- Note the membership for of the Budget Task Group and Public Confidence Sub-Committee.
- Agree the membership of the Complaints Sub-Committee.
- Approve the Panel meeting dates circulated to members earlier in the year.

2. Summary

Every year, the Panel holds a planning meeting with the Commissioner and OPCC officers to discuss any learning from the previous year and to plan the work programme for the year ahead. It is a particularly helpful process which assists with the smooth running of business across the year.

The Work Programme is expected to take into account:-

- a) Panel statutory functions and responsibilities
- b) Commissioner's priorities as defined in her Police and Crime Plan
- c) Proactive scrutiny based on the views of Panel Members

It is essential that the work programme is proportionate to the resources available to support the Panel in its activities.

3. Panel Core Duties

- **Consideration of the Commissioner's Annual Report** - as soon as practicable following the conclusion of the relevant financial year that it covers – 27th June 2024.

- **Consideration of the Commissioner's Precept proposal** – 4th February 2025. The Panel is required to scrutinise the Commissioner's proposed Council Tax Precept (the money collected from council tax specifically for Policing). As part of this, the Panel has oversight of the overall draft Policing budget and its proposed allocation.

Schedule 5 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act sets out the process for issuing a Precept, the Panel's role in reviewing the proposal, the ability to veto the Precept and the steps to be taken if you do. The Panel is entitled to see evidence that backs up the proposed Precept and this requires the Commissioner to consult with the Panel at stages before the formal scrutiny meeting and provide transparent reasoning for the proposal, minimising the risk that a veto will be used.

- **Consideration of the Police and Crime Plan 24/29**

The annual planning meeting was held with the OPCC on 26th May 2024 and the Commissioner discussed clear outcomes and end goals to be achieved over the next 4 years. A new Police and Crime Plan will be developed in the coming months and will be brought to the Panel for consideration on 5th November 2024. The Commissioner is required to submit any later variations she wishes to make to the plan.

The involvement of 2 Panel Members in the development process has been agreed in principle and the Panel awaits further information.

- **Scrutiny and review of the Commissioner's decisions/actions**

Under Section 28(6) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Panel is obliged to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken by the Commissioner in connection with the discharge of her functions and, where necessary make reports or recommendations to the Commissioner with respect to the discharge of those functions. The Commissioner is under a statutory obligation to publish details of decisions of significant public interest. In more general terms, the Commissioner is obliged to ensure that the Panel is provided with any information that it might reasonably require.

The Panel has requested the OPCC to keep the Panel sighted across the year on key decisions and pieces of work the Commissioner will be addressing on

which it may be appropriate for the Panel to receive a report, be consulted on or hold a pre-decision scrutiny review.

- **Arrangements for dealing with complaints against the Commissioner**

The Panel is required to consider and resolve complaints that relate to the personal conduct of the Commissioner. In 2012, the Panel delegated the initial complaints handling function to the Chief Executive Officer in the OPCC. The final arbiter however is the Panel, and complainants are made aware that complaints can be escalated to the Panel if they are not satisfied with the OPCC initial attempt at resolution. There is day to day communication between the Panel's Lead Officer and the OPCC, the Panel receives a standing summary report on complaints to each meeting and the Panel's Complaints Sub-Committee has authority to consider individual complaints when they are escalated.

An individual Panel Member also leads and maintain an overview on complaints that are escalated to the Panel with advice, guidance and support provided by the Lead Officer. This provides a filter for the less serious complaints and ensures that meetings of the sub-committee are only held when absolutely necessary. The complaints handling process and information supplied by the OPCC has been aligned for this purpose. Gary Davies will continue to undertake the lead member role for complaints on the basis of his skills and experience in this area.

Three volunteers are requested for the Complaints Sub-Committee to support the Lead Member when necessary.

- **Confirmatory Hearings** - these responsibilities are ad-hoc in nature, occur as circumstances dictate and may necessitate an extraordinary meeting of the Panel. A hearing for a Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner may be required later in the year.

4. Proactive Scrutiny

This work has taken place in a variety of ways since 2012. It can take place outside of the core meeting cycle by an individual member or as a whole Panel function by dedicating a meeting to a particular topic. Proactive scrutiny provides opportunity for greater insight and can inform the broader role of a Panel Member. It can also enable members to draw on their knowledge and expertise and contribute to the work of the Commissioner in key areas of business.

Knife Crime

The Violence Reduction Partnership is an OPCC central co-ordination team dealing with violence and knife crime that helpfully links to LA and Home Office reporting structures. The Panel will take a proactive report on knife crime at the additional meeting fixed to consider the draft Police and Crime Plan – 5th November 2025.

Commissioning and Community Safety Funding Outcomes

It is important to remember that each authority has its own statutory crime and disorder function that scrutinises how Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) are discharging their functions. However, most Panels now recognise the need to communicate with CSPs as a means of plugging into local-level issues which are impacted by the Commissioner's decision-making and ensuring that resources are being prioritised correctly at local level.

As a first step and in the form of a training/development day on 24th September 2024, it is proposed that members receive a presentation from Marc Hole the OPCC Director of Policy and Partnerships.

Tackling Disproportionality

Whilst Disproportionality is specified in the Public Confidence Sub-Committee's Terms of Reference, it is considered appropriate to bring this important area of business to full Panel. The Panel therefore welcomes the offer from Asher Craig to discuss the work on Race which is gathering pace through the Constabulary's Race Matters programme and the Tackling Disproportionality Steering Committee, co-chaired by Asher Craig and Chief Constable Sarah Crew. This committee also includes chief officers from across the Avon and Somerset Local Authority landscape.

On 25th March 2025, Councillor Craig will update the Panel on the work of the Steering Committee with support from Chief Inspector Ayesha Giles.

Neighbourhood Policing

Sub-Committees and Task Groups

The Panel's Rules of Procedures provide for the formation of a sub-Committee or Task Group. The primary difference is that one may take delegated decisions on behalf of the wider Panel, for example the Complaints Sub-Committee, whereas the role of a task group is to undertake time-limited investigations into particular issues. They are informal working groups that report back upon the completion of their work with a report and recommendations to the wider Panel.

To ensure that the Panel makes a tangible and practical contribution to the budget and precept-setting process, it is proposed that the Budget Task Group remains in place and continues to review the budget outturn reports across the year. The group reports back to the wider Panel at the pre-meeting for the 4th February Precept meeting.

Councillor Shearer, Councillor Wait and Councillor Crew will continue as members. A **further volunteer is requested** to replace Councillor Hucker.

The task group will continue to receive the OPCC quarterly budget monitoring reports. The OPCC Chief Financial Officer, Paul Butler will be invited to the meetings to enable any queries emerging from the accounts to be discussed in person. This will dispense with the written question and answer process adopted last year.

Public Confidence Sub-Committee

Recent high profile cases affecting policing are an important contextual factor in declining public confidence, but do not provide an explanation for what can be viewed as a long-term decline. It is the Panel's view that the erosion in neighbourhood policing and the ability of the Police to deliver core services due to demand and financial constraints are contributory factors.

Following discussions at various stages across the last 2 years and following the last inspection report of Avon and Somerset by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies, the Panel and the former Commissioner were in agreement that public confidence is a key concern and poses a serious challenge in holding the Constabulary to account.

The Public Confidence Sub-Committee will continue to enable the Panel to support and challenge the Commissioner as she works with the Constabulary to tackle her strategy to improve trust and confidence and the areas highlighted for improvement in the inspection report. The sub-committee will

report in full in April 2025 and interim reports will be available across the year. A copy of the Terms of Reference are attached as Appendix 2 for the benefit of new Panel members.

The membership of the Public Confidence Sub-Committee will continue with Julie Knight, Gary Davies, Councillor Clark and Councillor Bolt.

Neighbourhood Policing

This will be picked up as part of the development of the Police and Crime Plan.

5. Chief Constable Presentation

The Chief Constable has operational independence and routinely reports to the Panel once a year. In previous years, this has taken place in December when the Panel considers the draft budget or alternatively in February when the Panel considers the final budget and Precept proposal. The year's presentation is scheduled for 4th February 2024.

The Panel should note that the Home Office protocol states that, "if the Panel seeks to scrutinise the PCC on an operational matter, the Chief Constable or other officers may need to attend alongside the PCC to offer factual accounts and clarity if needed for the actions and decisions of their officers and staff. The accountability of the Chief Constable remains firmly to the PCC and not to the Police and Crime Panel".

6. Work Programme 2024/25

Based on the above, a draft work programme has been drawn up which is attached at Appendix 1 to this report for discussion and your approval if appropriate.

The Committee on Standards in Public Life report "Tone from the Top", published in 2015, makes a recommendation in relation to Panel's work programmes that they should be both forward looking and clear about the information the Panel requires from the Commissioner to conduct its business and meet its statutory responsibilities. In this respect, it is proposed that the Work Programme be a live document containing relevant notes and commitments alongside an indication of the information that will be required in support of the items. It will be refreshed as appropriate following meetings and submitted to all agenda briefings to assist both the Panel and OPCC.

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Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel

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Date PCP Meeting	Business (does not include standing items, see end of document)	Notes
<p><u>Annual General Meeting</u></p> <p>27th June 10am</p> <p>Deane House</p>	<p>PCC Annual Report</p> <p>Panel Annual Report</p> <p>Host Authority/Membership Report</p> <p>Work Programme Report – for Panel discussion/approval.</p>	<p>Panel's governance documents are due for review in June 2025.</p>
<p>24th September 10.30am</p> <p>Deane House</p>	<p>Training Session to include presentation from OPCC on PCC role in Community Safety Partnerships and commissioning/partnership working.</p>	

<p>5th November 10.30am (TBC)</p>	<p>Draft Police and Crime Plan (including Panel's input on Neighbourhood Policing)</p> <p>Knife Crime - Presentation from Avon and Somerset Violence Reduction Partnership</p>	<p>The Panel will formally report on its recommendations and the PCC is required to take these into account</p>
<p>26th November at 12.30pm</p> <p>(Private briefing Deane House)</p>	<p>Consultation on the Budget led by the OPCC Chief Finance Officer, Paul Butler, in the form of a presentation followed by member questions.</p>	<p>The Budget briefing must be attended by all Panel Members. It provides opportunity for the Panel to consider the OPCC's planning assumptions and forecasts ahead of the draft Medium-Term Financial Plan which will be presented to the Panel on 10th December. Final report/Precept Proposal 4th February 25.</p>
<p>10th December 10.30am</p> <p>Deane House</p>	<p>Final Police and Crime Plan</p> <p>Scrutiny of the Budget/Draft Medium Term Financial Plan</p>	
<p>4th February 10.30am</p>		

<p>Deane House</p>	<p>Formal Review of the Budget and Precept Proposal and Chief Constable Presentation.</p>	
<p>21st February 10.30am (back-up Precept date) Deane House</p>		<p>If there is a veto, the Commissioner must respond to the Panel and publish her response, including the revised precept, by 15th February. The Panel must review the revised precept and make a second report to the Commissioner by 22nd February.</p>
<p>25th March Deane House</p>	<p>Tackling Disproportionality</p>	<p>Councillor Craig will update on the work of the Steering Committee (with support from Chief Inspector Ayesha Giles).</p> <p>Whilst the Disproportionality work is specified in the Public Confidence sub-committee's Terms of Reference, it is considered appropriate to bring this important area of business to full Panel following the presentation from Desmond Brown in 22/23.</p>

Standing reports to each meeting:-

- Commissioner's Update Report – report on PCC activities/key decisions. Standing updates on Estates, Recruitment/Retention including Staff wellbeing, and PCC statutory responses to inspections and notification of upcoming inspections.
- Work Programme – fluid and presented for noting or approval following amendment.
- Performance Monitoring Reports - the Specified Information Order places a duty on PCCs to publish certain information within specified timeframes, to ensure the public have the information they need to hold their PCC to account at the ballot box. The Home Office has amended the Specified Information Order to require PCCs to provide a narrative on force performance against the Government's crime measures and HMICFRS force performance reports. The Panel has been receiving reports since December 2021.
- Complaints Report – Monitoring arrangements for dealing with complaints against the Commissioner, complaint reviews and complaints against the Chief Constable.