

AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE REPORT

4 FEBRUARY 2020

The following briefing provides an update for Panel Members on key activities since the last Panel meeting on 11 December 2019. This report reflects the position at 22 January 2020.

Governance and Scrutiny

Appointment of OPCC Interim Chief Executive Officer

Following a selection process and a PCP Confirmation Hearing held on 8 January, Mark Simmonds has been appointed as Interim OPCC Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer. The appointment term will be part-time on a 9 month fixed-term contract in order to provide continuity of advice to the PCC and management of the OPCC team. The interim post will allow for appointment of a substantive Chief Executive Officer following the PCC elections in May 2020.

Police and Crime Needs Assessment

The PCNA has been finalised and published on the Avon & Somerset PCC election microsite, which hosts key information for candidates and members of the public. The microsite can found at the following link: <https://aspccelections.co.uk/>

Police and Crime Board

Agendas and minutes of the Police and Crime Board are published at the following link: <https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/Openness/Reports-and-meetings/Police-and-Crime-Board.aspx>

Key Decisions

No key decisions have been made since the last meeting. Decision notices and accompanying documents are published at the following link: <https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/Openness/Decisions.aspx>

OPCC Scrutiny Panels

- **Out of Court Disposals Scrutiny Panel** – the Panel will meet on 4 March to review cases resolved by Community Resolution and the use of Restorative Justice. The theme has been selected in order to scrutinise appropriate use of low-level disposals and explore and address issues identified around confusion in terminology. The Panel will also review Terms of Reference.
- **Scrutiny of the Use of Police Powers Panel** – at the last meeting on 28 November 2019, members continued their independent review of randomly selected Taser deployments, Spit & Bite Guard use and Stop Search incidents (within 3 themes of under 16s, BAME, and more than jacket, outer garment and gloves being removed). This meeting was observed by an HMICFRS Inspector, as occurred in November 2018. The Panel also

received a Constabulary report on policing mental ill health (2018 and 2019 documents) and an update on section 60 Stop Search policy, the net increase in Police Officer recruitment and increase in Taser trained Officers based on risk, harm and threat decision-making by the Chief Constable. Members' key points of continued review include encouraging an increase in the percentage of cases where Body Worn Video camera is switched on and recording the reason for no BWV; encouraging Police Officers to switch on their BWV early and data accuracy.

- **Independent Residents Panel** – The IRP last met on the 5th December 2019 with the session focusing on whether the force values of inclusive and caring were evident in the way complaints were handled. The feedback of the session is currently being analysed and will be published on the website once the report is complete. The quarterly reports as well as the 2019 annual report can be viewed here: <https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/Openness/Scrutiny>
The next meeting is scheduled for the 5th March 2020.

Independent Custody Visiting Scheme

The Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) continue with their unannounced visits to each of the 3 Custody Units (Bridgwater, Patchway and Keynsham) once every 4 days, to observe and check on the welfare, rights and entitlements of detainees. This includes the new detainee dignity aspects commencing from 21 August 2019 with new legislation in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) Code C. ICVs are seeking assurances that female detainees are offered sanitary towels (a 'female hygiene pack') and offered to talk with a female Officer. ICVs welcome the installation in Custody Units of talking software for speaking out Rights & Entitlements to detainees who are blind or partially sighted, or who cannot read printed documents. Further information about ICV role can be found on the PCC's website: <https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/Take-Part/ICVs/Apply-to-be-an-ICV.aspx>

Commissioning and Partnership Working

A&S Criminal Justice Transformation Programme

As Members will recall, the A&S Criminal Justice Transformation Programme was established to deliver recommendations of a Home Office-funded review of the local criminal justice system carried out by the Behavioural Insights Team in 2017. The term of appointment for the Senior Responsible Officer appointed to lead the programme came to an end in December 2019. However work to transform the criminal justice service continues through a number of key strands:

- Work with the Constabulary Data Science and Innovation Centre to enable multi-agency, real-time performance management information to manage demand across the criminal justice journey;
- A Criminal Justice Taskforce led by the Police and CPS to drive up performance in file quality with a focus on establishing 'what good looks like' and getting it right first time;
- Proposals to improve the criminal justice response to RASSO (Rape and Serious Sexual Offences) cases.

A review of governance arrangements is also underway following recommendations considered at the A&S Criminal Justice Board meeting in December.

Victims Governance

As Members will recall, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) wrote to PCCs on 8 May 2019 setting out requirements for PCC-led monitoring and reporting of local compliance with the Victims Code of Practice. The Victims Governance Group will meet on 29 January to carry out dip sampling to test compliance, looking at cases on the theme of burglary. The group will also discuss progress in addressing actions identified in the pilot dip sampling session, including work to improve the offer and use of Victim Personal Statements and to map the victim's journey through the criminal justice system to improve understanding of what to expect, roles and responsibilities.

Feedback is awaited from the Ministry of Justice in response to findings of the pilot dip sampling session which were submitted in November 2019. A MoJ will host a workshop in March 2020 to discuss their intentions with regard to future VCOP compliance monitoring. Following initial consultation in summer 2019, a second round of consultation on revisions to the Victims Code of Practice is expected in early 2020. Consultation is also expected on new legislation to enshrine victims' rights and entitlements in a 'Victims's Law'.

Lammy Review

Desmond Brown was appointed in May as Independent Chair of the Avon & Somerset Lammy Review Sub-Group, established to lead local implementation of the Lammy Review of BAME representation in the criminal justice system. The group is taking forward a programme of work based around the three pillars of fairness, trust and shared responsibility. Work is ongoing to take forward priority work in reviewing data collected by partners to build a clear picture of data currently available and taking forward work to challenge discrepancies, improve recording practice and ensure that local data is consistent and robust. A presentation on progress will be provided to the Panel at the March meeting.

Avon and Somerset Reducing Reoffending – Resolve

The redefined focus of the Resolve board has driven progress in a number of areas. A review of IOM in Avon and Somerset is currently being commissioned and work at a regional level has begun with the Data Science and Innovation centre to develop a new system of multi-agency data collection to better inform commissioning and better evaluate the impact on reoffending of different interventions.

Business cases for three projects are currently being evaluated for funding. 'Release Ready' will seek to improve the quality of engagement and preparation of men being released from HMP Bristol to reduce the amount being released without structured and supported plans and coordinated engagement from local authorities and support agencies in their home area. The PCC and Local Authorities are seeking to co fund a one to one voluntary intervention with perpetrators of domestic violence who are not currently being managed through IOM and this is being developed in partnership with the CRC. Women in the criminal justice system are a large focus of the board and an Avon and Somerset wide scoping exercise has been completed to identify where commissioning of new services could have the greatest and more systemic impact. In addition a pilot at Bristol magistrate's court will be seeking to work with the system to reduce the number of women being sent into prison in line with the MOJ Female Offenders strategy.

The Regional Reducing Reoffending Board, chaired by the Commissioner, continues to meet and a Regional SRO has been appointed and has commenced work in all areas of the boards three priority groups- women, short term sentences and youth to adult transition. As Members will recall, the South West was the first in the country to establish a Regional Reducing Reoffending Board, and progress in developing the regional approach has received strong support from the Ministry of Justice.

Serious Violence

The OPCC and partners continue to prioritise work to introduce Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) across the five local authority areas of Avon and Somerset. Work is progressing well with the focus being on the mobilisation of resources to deliver the year one priorities (the first two of which will be completed by the end of February 2020):

1. Problem Profile / Needs Assessment
2. Response Strategy
3. Interventions

This is alongside work being undertaken by the Constabulary including Op Remedy and the Home Office's Policing Surge funding.

The next meeting of the Strategic VRU chaired by the PCC, will be on the 7 January 2020 and includes Local Authority Leaders. This meeting's priorities are informed by a workplan based on the BIT report (now available [online](#)). Following the first meeting, membership has been expanded to include Probation and Immigration and the Terms of Reference updated for the group to meet quarterly. The group has already prioritised engagement with health on data sharing and work is progressing with a range of partners to make improvements in this important area. Within the OPCC the initial focus has been on establishing governance arrangements and meeting Home Office reporting and grant agreement requirements.

On 30 December 2019 the 18 forces currently delivering VRU work have been informed that funding will continue. A further £35million has been agreed for 2020/21. Avon and Somerset will receive the same funding amount as 2019/20 (£1,160,000). The OPCC have been told that there will be an application process, at this stage it is unknown what form this will take and whether there will be any Home Office direction as to how they wish the funding to be allocated or spent. The OPCC will work closely with VRU leads and wider partners to coordinate the 20/21 application.

It is unknown at this time whether the Police Serious Violence surge fund will continue post March 2020. Home Office officials have stated that until after the Police Settlement is agreed, can they then confirm any future funding.

Home Office funding for Child Criminal Exploitation

As Members will recall, funding was secured from the Home Office Early Intervention Youth Fund for the ROUTES project, tackling child criminal exploitation. The project is being delivered in two areas, with a focus on tackling gang affiliation in the Central and East District areas of Bristol, and county lines activity in Somerset. The project includes both 1:1 therapeutic work as well as preventative work with 5 secondary schools. In the last quarter,

the Bristol project had 27 open cases, with 10 referrals and 7 new cases opened. In Somerset there were 12 open cases (plus one consultation case), 10 referrals and 4 new cases opened.

The ROUTES service took part in a Home Office-hosted event on 5 December to showcase and share best practice. Work is ongoing to explore funding options beyond the current funding period in March 2020.

Mental Health

Work has continued to remodel the mental health control room triage service over recent months – led by the OPCC, working closely with the Constabulary and the provider Avon and Wiltshire Partnership (AWP). Members will recall that the provider struggled to staff the service and it became apparent it was delivering less over the phone advice to officers and staff than had originally been envisaged. Since the beginning of December a number of process changes have taken place, in particular streamlining the referral process so that referrals can only be made over the phone. Further work is ongoing to evaluate the impact of this change and consider the best physical location for the service moving forwards.

Safer Streets

In October the Home Office announced that there would be a new £25 million Safer Streets fund for new security measures in areas most disproportionately affected by acquisitive crime. However this was put on hold following the announcement of a General Election and has now been reinvigorated. The Home Office are making the funding available for PCCs to work with partners to deliver initiatives that will reduce volume crime and alongside that build up a better evidence base for what works in terms of both existing well tried activity and new innovative initiatives.

The proposal is that this will be a one year pilot that will target areas where there is a high level of acquisitive crime and where PCCs and partners have the data/evidence base to confirm that. PCCs and partners will have to bid for the funding and it may require an element of match funding. The process is likely to have two phases. The OPCC, Constabulary and a local authority representative are due to attend a workshop in London at the end of January to hear more about the fund and the next steps.

Police & Crime Grant

The three year allocation of the Police and Crime grant comes to an end in March 2020. The OPCC wrote to all Community Safety Partnership (CSPs) leads in November to confirm that the PCC had decided to extend the Police and Crime grant for one further year (2020/21). As previously CSPs will be required to complete a simple template setting out how they will use the funding ahead of April 2020 and to report against spend on a six monthly basis.

Independent Sexual Violence Advisor Service

The Independent Sexual Violence Advisor Service – provided by Safelink – have been awarded Lime Culture (nationally recognised body in sexual violence training and development) Accreditation and therefore Quality Mark. The Accreditation Programme includes a 7-stage process that incorporates a documentary evidence review, interviews and a site visit. Services assessed as meeting the Quality Standards achieve an independent

Quality Mark, services are then subject to on-going monitoring to ensure the quality of services is maintained.

Standing Updates:

Fire Governance: The OPCC continue to represent local blue light services on the West of England Combined Authority Joint Asset Board. Discussions also continue with our 2 local fire authorities about various potential joint estate projects.

Estates: An update will be circulated to Members in advance of the meeting.

Recruitment Update: At the request of Panel Members, an update on police officer and PCSO numbers will be provided as a standing item through the coming year, using 1 April 2018 as the baseline. The position as at 31 December 2019 is as follows:

Staff Group	FTE as at Apr-18	FTE as at end Dec 2019
Police Officers	2,593.63	2,641.65
PCSOs	331.44	319.90

PCC Election 2020: Preparatory work continues for the PCC Election in May 2020. Preparations are being overseen by the Election Planning Board, chaired by the OPCC Interim Chief Executive. An election microsite has gone live which will host information and resources for both candidates and those interested in the election. The OPCC is working closely with the Police Area Retuning Officer to ensure key information will be included on the website. This is still in development but can be accessed at the following link: <https://aspccelections.co.uk/> Introductory meetings will be arranged for candidates as they are announced. The pre-election period date has now been agreed, and will commence on 23 March 2020.

National Updates

Queen's Speech

The Government's legislative agenda includes the following policing and criminal justice measures:

- Counter Terrorism (Sentencing and Release) Bill – ensuring the most serious and dangerous terrorist offenders stay in prison for longer;
- Sentencing Bill – ensuring the most serious and violent offenders serve more of their sentences in custody;
- Serious Violence Bill – placing a duty on public bodies to work together to identify and tackle early factors that can lead to crime and strengthen police powers with respect to stop and search;
- Police Powers and Protection Bill – establishing a Police Covenant and providing additional support and protection to ensure that the police are able to conduct their duties;

- Prisoners (Disclosure of Information about Victims) Bill – requiring the Parole Board to take into account the impact on the victim and their families in cases where offenders refuse to disclose information about their crimes;
- Domestic Abuse Bill – to be reintroduced from the previous Parliamentary session, strengthening protections for victims and providing new enforcement mechanisms;
- Extradition (Provisional Arrest) Bill – powers to arrest an offender wanted for a serious crime committed in a trusted country, without having to apply to a court for a warrant first;
- Victims Law Reform – introduction of a Victim’s Law to guarantee victims’ rights and the level of support they can expect, together with consultation on a revised Victims Code of Practice with enhanced powers for the Victim’s Commissioner to better hold criminal justice agencies and the government to account;
- Proposals with regard to foreign national offenders, including increasing the maximum penalty for those who return to the UK in breach of a deportation order;
- For the Government to establish a Royal Commission to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice process.

Operation Uplift

As Members will recall, the Government announced its intention to provide funding in order to enable the recruitment of 20,000 additional police officers over the next 3 years. The specific allocation of officers to Avon and Somerset has been announced as 137 by the end of the next financial year (end March 2021). Funding has now been received from the Home Office, details are included in the budget report. Work continues to respond to the proposals.

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