

## **AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

### **COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE REPORT**

**11 MARCH 2020**

The following briefing provides an update for Panel Members on key activities since the last Panel meeting on 4 February 2020. This report reflects the position at 28 February 2020.

#### **Governance and Scrutiny**

##### **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 be 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>

##### **HMICFRS**

The Constabulary was inspected in May 2019 as part of the Integrated PEEL Assessment; the report from this inspection was published on 7<sup>th</sup> February. As a result of this the Constabulary's current grading is as follows:

- Effectiveness – Good
- Efficiency – Outstanding
- Legitimacy – Good

This is an improvement on the previous PEEL assessment which had all pillars as Good.

##### **OPCC Scrutiny Panels**

- **Out of Court Disposals Scrutiny Panel** – the Panel will meet on 4 March to review cases resolved by Community Resolution and involving 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 and consider themes for the coming year.
- **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.

At the next Panel meeting on 10 March members will be focussing on Stop and Search disproportionality and comparing two geographical regions for Stop Search (appropriate and fair grounds) and Use of Force/Taser use: Minehead, West Somerset versus the Central/East Bristol area. The Scrutiny Panel will be working with the IRP (see below).

- **Independent Residents Panel** – The IRP will meet on 5 March to review complaints in relation to Use of Force and Stop and Search.

The quarterly reports as well as the 2019 annual report can be viewed here: <https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/Openness/Scrutiny>

### **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 the 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 met on 29 January to carry out dip sampling to test compliance, looking at cases on the theme of burglary. The group also discussed 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. Findings and actions arising from the dip sampling session will be considered at the A&S Criminal Justice Board on 18 March.

The 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' Law'.

### **Avon and Somerset Reducing Reoffending – Resolve**

The redefined focus of the Resolve board has driven progress in a number of areas. A **review of Integrated Offender Management (IOM)** in Avon and Somerset has been commissioned and is expected to build on the report from HMIP into IOM and provide recommendations for future proofing IOM within Avon and Somerset.

**Ready 4 Release** has had the business case approved and is currently recruiting for a project manager to commence the 6 month set up and 18 month project. The project manager will be seconded to HMP Bristol and will lead a multi-agency team in a co-located model to improve and sequence the release of all offenders from HMP Bristol. It will also generate holistic release data to better inform the Local Authorities within Avon and Somerset on the needs and risks of the individuals returning to their areas. The governance will be held by a multi-agency steering group and overseen by the Resolve Board. HMP Bristol are co-funding a safety analyst post within the release hub and development of VCS and community links will be a priority task for the pilot.

There is ongoing work to explore the best Avon and Somerset response to the need for intervention with the **perpetrators of domestic violence** to stop asking #WhyDidn'tSheLeave and start asking #WhyDidn'tHeStop. 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 was being developed in partnership with the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC). Unfortunately due to recruitment challenges this is not something the CRC can offer currently so work is being done to build a specification which could go out to tender. In addition further scoping on the DRIVE project is being completed and consideration of whether Avon and Somerset might be a possible next test site for the third stage of the DRIVE programme is being explored.

Women in the criminal justice system remain a focus of the board and one of the priority areas for the South West Partnership. Work on the Bristol Magistrates Court Pilot '**Court Up**' was delayed due to personnel changes but it is anticipated recruitment for this pilot following approval of the business case could commence in March. In addition the Gender Responsive pathway will be making recommendations to the Resolve board in March around the value in scoping the possible operating models for '**Free Hand**'- a whole system mentoring service for women from the beginning to the end of the interaction with the criminal justice system.

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 Board's 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 continues to receive strong support from the Ministry of Justice. A workshop in February developing the concept of a **regional data collaboration** in reducing reoffending information has agreed the proof of concept will be developed within Avon and Somerset and requests for file sharing have been submitted to partner agencies. The intention of this innovation is to better inform commissioning and better evaluate the impact on reoffending of different interventions ultimately at a South West regional level.

### **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.

At the last Strategic VRU chaired by the PCC (07.01.20), Local Authority Leaders attended to hear the progress of their local VRU's. This meeting's priorities are informed by a workplan based on the BIT report (now available [online](#)). 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. In the January meeting it was agreed that Education engagement and exploration work around the link to exclusions and serious violence would be a key strategic theme. The OPCC will work with Education leads to establish a way to encourage consistent strategic engagement across the force area and also consider a way forward in moving consistent and robust Inclusion processes.

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 which is due to open w/c 17.02.20.

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. There has been no indication from the Home Office as to any continued funding, as such with support from the Police Surge fund and Bristol City Council, the project will be enabled to continue for one year more to continue building its evidence base and support vulnerable youths.

### **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 situational crime prevention in areas most disproportionately affected by acquisitive crime (hotspots). This was put on hold following the announcement of the General Election but was re-launched at the end of January. PCCs are able to bid for a number of hotspots and a successful bid could be awarded £550,000. Bids must be submitted by 20<sup>th</sup> March, successful bids will be announced in May and funding delivered from July 2020. Money awarded has to be spent in year (by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021) and this has to be planned for as one-off funding i.e. there is no certainty of additional funding after this. It was also made clear any ongoing cost e.g. maintenance must be funded by the local area.

The office is submitting two separate bids. In order to maintain a consistent strategic direction, the focus was on residential burglary when choosing the hotspots. This led to the primary bid being an area in North Bristol and the secondary bid being an area in central Weston-super-Mare. Although the bid is being co-ordinated in the OPCC they are effectively being led by the Community Safety Partnerships and colleagues from the Councils and the Constabulary have been engaged to this end.

### **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 two local Fire Authorities about various potential joint estate projects.

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.

**Contact Officer** – Mark Simmonds, Interim Chief Executive