

AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE REPORT

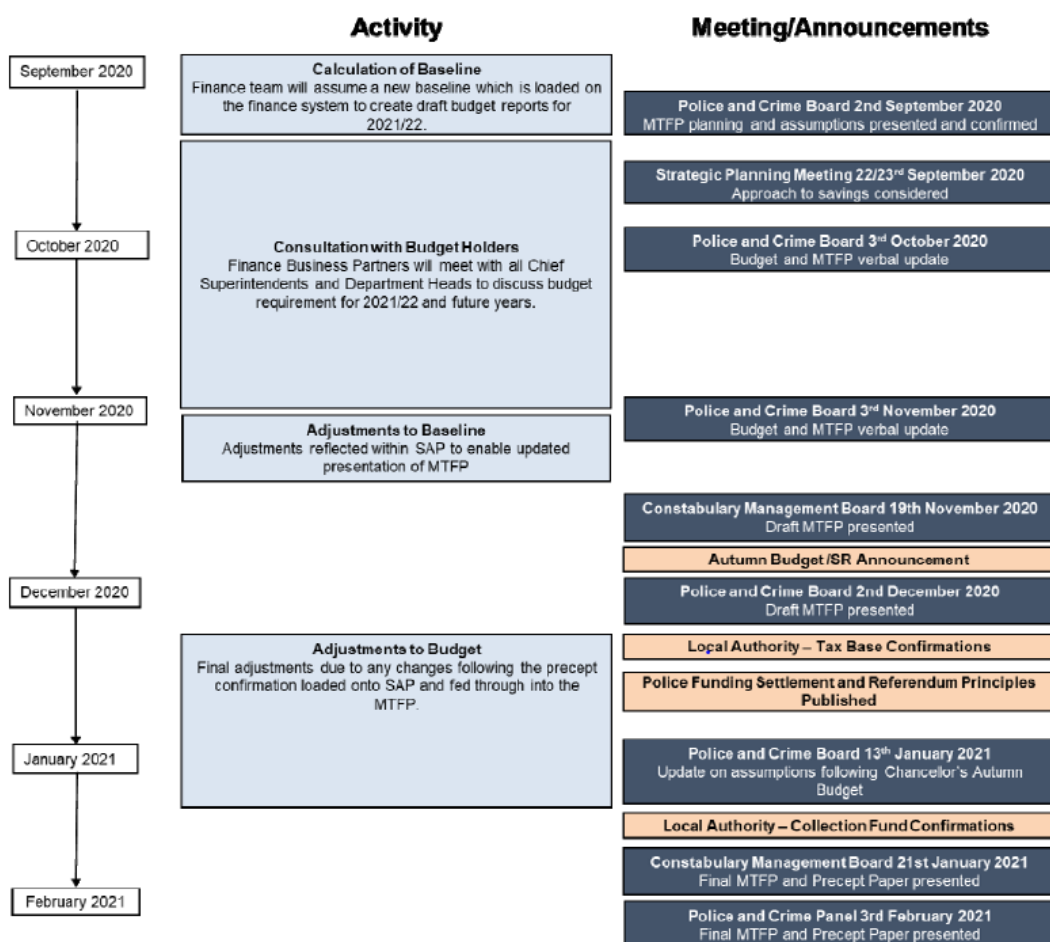
13 OCTOBER 2020

The following briefing provides an update for Panel Members on key activities since the last Panel meeting on 23 June 2020. This report reflects the position as at 29 September 2020.

Budget Timeline

OPCC and Constabulary colleagues have commenced work on the budget for 2021/22 and the refreshed Medium Term Financial Plan. The level of uncertainty created by the Covid pandemic, particularly in relation to its impact on local authority revenue, is probably unique, and especially challenging where we are committed to maintaining continued service improvements. This work will continue over the coming months, including a training session with Panel members on 16th October, culminating in the presentation of the final MTFP to the Police and Crime Panel on 4th February 2021:

Appendix A – MTFP Development Plan



Oversight of the Constabulary Response to COVID19

COVID 19 and related oversight, scrutiny, community engagement and reassurance and partnership work has remained a key focus of the PCC over the last few months. There have been a number of key issues, legislative and guidance changes and local partnership forums. In particular, the PCC and DPCC have continued to hold regular Facebook Live events with the Chief Constable to help explain the changes and to put local people's views to the police, carried out regular media interviews to explain the latest position, ensured that local people's views about the regulations, enforcement and particular issues are fed back to the Constabulary and attended high level internal and partner meetings including COVID 19 Local Engagement Boards.

The Constabulary conducted a 2nd pulse survey of wellbeing in July to follow up the May survey and some highlights from this include:

- The response rate was consistent at 54% between pulse surveys.
- Similar agreement in both surveys for the Constabulary cares about my Wellbeing at 77%.
- 41% felt that their quality of work had improved during a time of different ways of working through unprecedented times.
- 79% have been able to maintain good working relationship.
- The Positive sentiment for this survey was 45% which is a 10% increase on the last pulse survey of 35%.
- Verbatim comments themes have been around better work life balance with a flexibility in working that has worked well across the force. Increased productivity
- In the last survey our teams asked to be supported with more equipment and PPE, this have been improved and welcomed in the comments.

Demand Context

Overall demand on the police has returned to pre COVID levels and during August in particular in excess of those levels. In the month of August, the Control Room received 89,259 calls (24,979 were 999 calls). Although demand levels are similar the composition of that demand is different. Certain crime types, such as theft and burglary, remain at lower levels than before the pandemic whereas other types, such cyber-crime and hate crime, are higher than in previous years.

There have also been a large number of serious crimes to investigate which have taken a significant amount of investigators' time. As well as this work the police have been dealing with a number of issues such as raves, protests, car meets, quarantine and face mask reports in excess of normal workloads. This has put severe pressure on the police to respond over a prolonged period of time.

COVID19 Fines and enforcement (as of 29 September)

There have been a total of 365 FPNs issued for breach of Covid regulations. The breakdown by LA area is:

Somerset 135
Bristol 132
South Glos 54
North Som 22
BaNES 8

The majority of people have paid their fines but 150 cases have been referred to magistrates as they remain unpaid after 28 days of being issued. FPNs issued before 13th May were £60, but fell to £30 if paid within 14 days. Any fines issued after 13th May are £100, but fall to £50 if paid within 14 days. The fine increases significantly for repeat offenders, reaching up to £3,200.

Among those due to appear at court are a 29-year-old man issued with an FPN for travelling from Essex, a 34-year-old man issued with an FPN for travelling to and back from Torquay, a 30-year-old woman issued with an FPN for attending a house party and a 29-year-old man issued with an FPN for repeatedly visiting people in their homes where he did not live.

Local Resilience Forum

The LRF handover certificate to local authorities took effect at the end of August. Local authorities have put in place Local Outbreak Plans. The PCC or DPCC attends all of the relevant Local Engagement Boards apart from in Bath and North East Somerset where the local police commander attends. Under the nationally agreed arrangements, issues can be escalated to the Local Resilience Forum in the event of a local outbreak. The PCC monitors local infection rates closely via her bilateral meetings with local authority leaders and local engagement boards.

Unlicensed Music Events, Gatherings and Protests

There have been a spate of unlicensed music events in Avon and Somerset since the initial relaxations of the lockdown as there have been nationally. The Avon and Somerset response has been to set up a specialist Operation Hawthorn involving enhanced intelligence, revised call handling procedures and a dedicated team at the weekends to seek to disrupt these events. Police responded to over 100 reports of UME in August. ASC attended 89 of these (537 police hours at scenes) and although harm from crime is low there is a higher impact on nuisance and confidence.

The commanders of Op Hawthorn predict that an average of approximately five UMEs were disrupted on each weekend Op Hawthorn has been in operation. An example of this was an intervention on July 26/27th where a Rave in Pensford was disrupted by Op Hawthorn. The local MP Jacob Rees-Mogg was in close contact with the neighbourhood teams and appreciated the effort of police, later tweeting his support for Avon and Somerset. Similar reports from the commanders have been received anecdotally about incidents they have attended including Bathampton, Priddy, Bristol centre and suburbs throughout August. All believe that without the resource available to intervene, UMEs would have escalated causing disruption to the communities and creating far greater demand.

Of course, the police have not always been able to disrupt these events before they have become established. We are aware of significant events having occurred in Stokes Croft, Upper Swainswick and Easton for example and that these were very disruptive to local people. Local residents' views of these incidents are captured and fed back to the police commanders who consider this as part of the review of these incidents. Police have pursued criminal investigations where possible, for example in relation to the Upper Swainswick incident, and used other powers such as a sec 35 order under the ASB, Crime and Policing Act in Easton.

Another national trend which has also occurred in Avon and Somerset in the last few months is that for large scale car meets. These have occurred on the Downs in Bristol, in Mendip and most regularly in Cheddar Gorge in Somerset. The police have sought to address these issues through the enhanced enforcement capability of the Op Hawthorn team and other specialist resources. In Cheddar in particular, there have been a series of problem solving initiatives with partners including shutting

the gorge to vehicles when needed. Again we are aware that these events are disruptive and frightening to local residents and we ensure the police are made aware of their views and take account of them in their regular reviews of their approach.

The police have also been involved in some 600 reports around face covering legislation. These are generally addressed by enhanced call management procedures explaining the rules and giving words of advice around reporting to shop staff or management. Police have deployed to a small number of incidents where issues have escalated.

Op Bard investigation update – the Police investigation into the criminal damage caused to a statue of Edward Colston in Bristol has concluded. The statue was pulled from its plinth and rolled into Bristol harbour on Sunday, 7 June during a Black Lives Matter demonstration. It was later recovered from the water by Bristol City Council and assessed to have £3,750 worth of damage. A 25-year-old man was subsequently arrested while seven men and a woman were asked to attend a police station for a voluntary interview. Following a review of the evidence, detectives will now approach the Crown Prosecution Service for a charging decision against four people – three men, aged 32, 25 and 21, and a 29-year-old woman. The remaining five people – men aged 18, 20, 29, 33 and 47 – have been identified as suitable for an out of court disposal and we have written to them to offer a conditional caution for the offence of causing criminal damage to property valued under £5,000. Those offered the conditional caution have been given a week to decide whether they want to accept it. Should any of them choose not to accept, officers will approach the CPS to seek a charging decision to be made.

Governance and Scrutiny

Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner Update

The PCC specifically recruited a Deputy to support her and the team on community engagement activity and this has been a priority for the DPCC in the last few months. The DPCC has also continued to deputise for the PCC at key meetings and events when she has been unable to attend such as chairing the Local Criminal Justice board and attending other meetings such as local outbreak engagement meetings and the Commissioners Action Fund meetings. The DPCC also leads for the PCC on Violence Reduction work and Reducing Reoffending.

Engagement

The OPCC Engagement Strategy takes a three pronged approach to increase focus on and improve the way we do our stakeholder and community engagement across Avon and Somerset.

This involves:

- 1. Community and policy based direct engagement (face to face where possible and online)**
- 2. Continuous engagement and communications activity to mitigate our strategic risks.**
- 3. Creation of an online data visualisation app to record, map and strategically manage all the engagement we do with stakeholders, partners, community groups and people who live in Avon and Somerset.**

The aims of the new three pronged engagement strategy are:

1. To be responsive and agile to emerging policing-issue based concerns in our communities. This will allow the Commissioner and their supporting team to work in partnership to lead the best problem solving solutions. Also, to improve proactive engagement by making it better aligned to our policy based work.

2. To raise awareness of the role and function of the OPCC and how people can have a voice in policing.
3. To identify where we are good at engaging and where there are gaps and fill the gaps in a way that aligns with our policy based work.

UPDATES:

1. Community and policy based direct engagement:

Because of the recruitment of the new Deputy PCC role, we now have double the capacity to carry out community and policy based direct engagement and we have capitalised on this with a renewed focus on our engagement work.

There are five objectives of community and policy based direct engagement. They are:

- Identifying and contacting community groups and organisations we have not previously engaged.
- Maintaining and improving conversations, visits and meetings with key policy stakeholders and partners like commissioned service providers or those involved in multi-agency workstreams
- Talking to more and a wider range of local residents
- Raising awareness of our commissioned support services and grant giving and making them more accessible to people.
- Increasing our online engagement and numbers of followers on social media platforms

Some of the activity to meet these objectives have included visits by the DPCC to local community groups, police teams and key areas of PCC work such as Violence Reduction Units. As part of this programme the DPCC has been asked to carry out online public Q&A sessions through Facebook Live to promote the work of our partner organisations and raise the profile of local issues.

Visits have so far been carried out to:

- South Bristol including a Q&A with the Bristol South police commander.
- South Gloucestershire including a Q&A with Southern Brooks Community Partnership
- Shepton Mallet and West Somerset including an Q&A with Somerset police commander
- East Bristol including a visit and Q&A with the Bristol Violence Reduction Unit and the Somerset Violence Reduction Unit.

Each visit is debriefed with the team and action points and areas of concern from local residents which are then followed up with the relevant OPCC department or partner agency. A series of further events across the force area are now being planned up until the end of the calendar year. The Police Community Trust met in September and awarded nearly £120,000 of grants to local community organisations to assist in delivering the police and crime plan locally under the Commissioner's Community Action Fund at a time when local groups have been severely affected by Covid. The DPCC has been actively promoting an online consultation we have launched and Commissioner's Action Fund of which there will be 2 more rounds this year.

2. Continuous engagement and communications activity to mitigate our strategic risks.

The OPCC Strategic Risk Register contains two strategic risk areas that fall under Engagement.

They are strategic risks four and five – **failure to engage with the public and other stakeholders** and **lack of public confidence in or awareness of the OPCC.**

- A new and improved OPCC website was launched in August. This website is not only more user friendly, accessible and easier to navigate and make contact with the right departments in our organisation but also costs far less than the old one providing better value for public money. Stats show that during September the new website has had 5,148 page views compared to 1550 page views in September 2019 – an increase of more than 232%.
 - The PCC also launched an online consultation in September to identify priorities for local policing following the main lifting of Covid restrictions and also to collect views from local people about areas they would want prioritised as part of the recruitment of officers through Operation Uplift over the next few years. We are sharing this across a mix of traditional media, social media, hyperlocal media, paid advertising online and sharing with stakeholder contact lists in order to get as wide a range of views as we can and be as inclusive as possible. We have had a strong response with more than 1500 participants in the first two weeks.
 - This year we launched an advertising campaign, consisting of a one page advert in very hyper-local hard copy newsletter and publications put through people's doors across Avon and Somerset. These included Word Gets Around magazine in Taunton and Somerset and The Voice Series across Bristol and South Gloucestershire. The advert explained the role of a PCC and the OPCC, who the PCC is and how to get in touch if you have concerns about policing in your area. This is because earlier in the year, Covid regulations restricted our capacity for the PCC to go out on Community days or have and have drop-ins or forums. Our Facebook Lives partly mitigated this but we also wanted to reach out to people who might not traditionally go online but need to be aware of why we're here and how to get in touch.
3. **Creation of an online data visualisation app to record, map and strategically manage all the engagement we do with stakeholders, partners, community groups and people who live in Avon and Somerset.**
Update in next panel report

VRU

The Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) continue to deliver their core function of tackling serious violence and the contributing factors during this period. There will be some re-profiling required on the original delivery plan, due to delayed confirmation of funding and Covid-19 but all local VRUs have reported they are able to deliver to the full amount of the grant. There is a risk that B&NES in particular will have an underspend which will become more clear upon receipt of Q2 reports on 14th October.

The Police commitment to the VRUs is almost up to full complement, with an Inspector, 5 Sergeants and 13 out of the 15 PCSOs in post and linked to the 5 VRUs across the force area. Work is currently being done to fill the remaining 2 PCSO vacancies which are in South Gloucestershire.

All VRUs are now conducting virtual meetings to discuss individuals deemed at risk of serious violence. Police provide names of those identified through the VRU app and partners bring referrals from their agencies to be discussed.

Community Engagement is a force wide priority, including youth engagement and a hyperlocal focus. Detached youth work continues across the patch, with commissioned providers collaborating with Police to reach young people in hotspot areas.

In Bristol, the Safer Options (VRU) team have been offering a coordinated response to recent stabbings, including working with young people affected, community support and retaliation preventative measures.

Most local VRUs have been targeting work with young people to prepare for a return to school with a significant summer activities programme offered across the force area.

The OPCC secured additional funding of £98,101 distributed to 10 local micro-organisations who are working with vulnerable children at risk of serious violence. The grants ranging from £2500 to £22000 were awarded to frontline services experiencing immediate financial hardship, significantly increased demand, or an urgent need to adapt services due to COVID-19. Nine organisations were unsuccessful in their bids and were directed to possible alternative sources of funding.

Reducing Reoffending

The Resolve Board met virtually again in September. The Board received updates from partners outlining how they have adapted to the Covid situation, but spent the majority of the meeting focused on the various projects it has commissioned or is in the process of commissioning. These include a review of Integrated Offender Management within Avon and Somerset (due to report imminently); 'Ready for Release' a multi-agency release hub within HMP Bristol; "Court Up" an innovation to better support and work with women as they attend Bristol Magistrates Court; and exploring DRIVE which is a Domestic Abuse perpetrator scheme which has been trialled in South Wales and has reported significant results.

Zoe Short's secondment as Senior Responsible Officer for Resolve across Avon and Somerset came to an end in early September. The intention is to mainstream the Resolve work into the core OPCC team. A new Senior Commissioning and Policy Officer to lead this work has been appointed and will take up the role in December. In the interim period the OPCC team will seek to cover the priority areas of the Resolve work.

Lammy Review

The Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice Board set up a Lammy Sub Group just after David Lammy published his final report as the board knew that the issues he highlighted applied in Avon and Somerset and were keen to work together to address them. This was the first group set up to address the issues in the country and as far as we know outside London it is the only such group. The Chief Constable and PCC decided last year that the group needed an Independent Chair and allocated the funding and recruited Desmond Brown on a part time basis following an open process with Deputy Mayor of Bristol and the Chair of the Strategic Independent Advisory Group on the panel.

Desmond has set up a programme of work with 6 priority areas with leads set out below who will chair sub groups. Desmond is working with the Ministry of Justice and the Cabinet Office Disparity Unit also. He is on track to deliver a draft report by the end of this year and to have a finalised report with agreed recommendations by next May:

- **Stop and Search** – Area Leads are Chair of Strategic Independent Advisory Group and Police Lead Richard Corrigan – looking at disproportionality, outcomes, reasons and how stops are

carried out. Whilst this wasn't formally part of the Lammy Review as police work was out of scope the Avon and Somerset group wanted to include it.

- **Youth Justice** – a key theme of the Lammy Review. The Avon and Somerset Group is Chaired by a member of the Commission on Race Equality and will look particularly at the link between school exclusions and the CJS, weapons in schools, referral orders and Deferred Prosecution schemes.
- **Prisons** – led by regional HM Prisons Equalities lead and focusing particularly on disproportionality on use of force and privileges in prison.
- **Judiciary** – led by Judge Peter Blair and representative from the BAME lawyers group. They are working closely with MoJ and Cabinet Office on collection of data and are also commissioning some research looking at disproportionality in sentencing.
- **Out of Court Disposals** – led by police lead working closely with CPS and local magistrates and looking at disproportionality in use of OOC – another key theme of the Lammy review.
- **BAME Recruitment and Representation in Criminal Justice Agencies** – chaired by senior representative of HM Prison and Probation Service – it has recently been agreed to incorporate a specific workstream on recruitment for all CJ agencies. On this area and all others the group are linking in with the ongoing work in Bristol through CORE and the Bristol Race Senior Leaders Group.

PCC Election and Police and Crime Needs Assessment

As a consequence of the worldwide COVID19 pandemic, the May 2020 PCC elections were cancelled and moved to May 2021. The PCCs elected in 2021 will serve a three year term until May 2024.

Subsequently, the existing PCC has extended her term of office for one further year. The Police and Crime Plan (2019- 2021) will continue in existence for the extended term of office and will then be reviewed by the new PCC in 2021.

The OPCC has reinstated the PCC Election Governance Board (as of 12/08/20), chaired by the OPCC Chief Executive Officer. The Board has the following functions;

- Manage resourcing of preparations for the 2021 PCC election
- Consider risks and emerging issues
- Provide strategic direction and co-ordination
- Oversee the delivery against the following workstreams;
 1. Project Management
 2. Election, candidates and briefings
 3. OPCC team briefings and support
 4. Partner and stakeholder engagement
 5. Review and share Guidance and Publications

The OPCC election microsite has also been refreshed and live to use <https://aspcclections.co.uk/>, this is aimed at candidates and those interested in voting.

BaNES will again represent as Police Area Returning Officer (PARO) and the OPCC will meet with the PARO and re-establish roles. The Electoral Commission are yet to announce the election date, however it has been projected as the 6th May 2021.

In preparation for the election period and to help inform current and future candidates the OPCC will be producing a refreshed Needs Assessment which will reflect on the changes caused by the pandemic.

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HMICFRS

Since last reported the OPCC has published responses to the following reports:

- State Of Policing – The Annual Assessment Of Policing In England And Wales 2019
- A Call For Help – Police Contact Management Through Call Handling And Control Rooms In 2018/19
- Roads Policing: Not Optional – An Inspection Of Roads Policing In England And Wales
- Peel Spotlight Report: The Hard Yards, Police-To-Police Collaboration
- Avon and Somerset Constabulary Crime Data Integrity inspection, revisit

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/reports-publications/police-crime-board-reports/>

Key Decisions

There have been no formal decisions since the June Panel meeting.

Decision notices and accompanying documents are published at the following link:

<https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/reports-publications/decisions-log/>

MOJ funding: 'Covid-19 Extraordinary Ministry of Justice Funding for Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Support Service'

My commissioning team worked hard to ensure a comprehensive bid to the Ministry of Justice's extraordinary funding launched at the beginning of June and we were able to secure **£505,983** of additional funding for **17 local support charities** who help victims and survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

This extraordinary funding is designed to assist in covering losses and costs incurred through adaptations charities made to cope with the pandemic. Not only will the fund bolster charities it also aims to strengthen their response to any changes in demand during the recovery phase.

Successful grantees include domestic abuse and sexual violence support services already commissioned by my office, as well as charities we have not worked with before. I am delighted to have been able to widen the net to reach organisations beyond those we have previously commissioned, particularly at a time when victims are in need of intensive support.

The team ensured that charities for minority groups were of particular consideration. I am very pleased to have been able to award funding that will provide a tailored response to victims of DA in the Polish community (as provided through charity Opoka) and to Mankind who support male victims of domestic abuse. I am also enthused that domestic abuse charity Next-link have been able to support the appointment of a dedicated BAME independent domestic violence advisor with use of this funding.

Avon and Somerset organisations that have been awarded funding include:



The team will follow up with these organisations in the autumn to understand how the funding has made a difference to their service and crucially to victims of domestic and sexual abuse

Commissioner's Community Action Fund (CCAF) with recovery fund focus:

I made the decision to allocate a further **£200,000** through the CCAF with a focus on recovery so that more local charities, voluntary organisations and community groups are able to access funding to manage the consequences of the coronavirus. The CCAF will continue to be run in partnership with the Police Community Trust (PCT) and will welcome applications until 30 November 2020.

At the time of writing **over 50 organisations** have applied to access this funding; my office is currently reviewing these applications and I look forward to the outcome of these. I hope this additional funding will strengthen organisations who have been a lifeline to local people during these challenging times. I am committed to making sure that such organisations can continue their essential work so local people are supported as we emerge into the recovery phase of the pandemic.

ISVA EOI funding

The commissioning team were also integral in securing additional Ministry of Justice funding across 2 years for a specific Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) role. The OPCC will provide funding for 1 ISVA at a cost of £31,327 for 2020/21 (pro rata) and £41,769 for 21/22. The fund will provide an ISVA to focus on mental health.

We recognise that those with mental ill health are more likely to be victimised, their issues may be compounded by trauma and exacerbated by interactions with unfamiliar agencies such as the courts. Specialist support is typically required for a longer duration for those with mental ill health compared with those not suffering with mental health concerns. As a result of this funding, the ISVA service will offer additional face to face support at a time when many services are going virtual due to Covid-19. Victims will receive additional input around communication when required and all support will be at the pace of the individual, determined by their lived experience and personal situation.

Micro grants funding

Micro-grant funding for small organisations supporting vulnerable children during Covid-19 was launched by the Home Office. My team efficiently utilised the Violence Reduction Unit networks to connect with harder to reach, less visible organisations who are in need of immediate financial support in this unprecedented context.

We received 19 proposals, 10 of which were suitable; collectively they accounted for **£98,101**. This process further revealed to myself and my team the breadth of innovation that exists at the grassroots of our local communities and illustrated how vital this financial provision will be in maintaining these fantastic smaller-scale initiatives. Successful bids demonstrated projects that meet the needs of vulnerable children in light of Covid-19.

Safer Streets

My commissioning team have also secured **£400,000** additional funding from the Home Office Safer Streets Fund designed to build safer and stronger communities by preventing crime in localised hotspots.

A robust model (the SARA model) was used to determine local hotspots for burglary, to decipher the causes of residential burglary and provide evidence-based solutions. By listening to community feedback, police intelligence and 'What Works' research my team proposed an intensive strategy to deter burglary and prevent acquisitive crime. This one year grant will support residents in a Bristol area where data revealed a community who have been persistently and disproportionately targeted by residential burglary across the last three years.

This additional investment will be put towards measures proven to cut crimes that continue to blight communities, leave residents feeling unsafe and cause distress to victims.

We will continue to work with our partners to effectively cut crime - such as burglary and theft - in the areas that need it most. This extra funding will ensure that we can continue to support and strengthen our local communities to ensure everyone in Avon and Somerset is safe and feels safe. This data-led project also complements the continued work being undertaken through Op Remedy.

Oversight and monitoring the impact of Covid-19

In addition to regular reporting requirements my commissioning team has co-ordinated further data collection from victims' services to report into the MoJ during the pandemic. Fortnightly and monthly captures have focused on waiting list lengths, time spent supporting victims, referral levels and staffing capacity. This has allowed a more regular and clear view of the evolving impact of the pandemic on victims' services. This has also supported an open dialogue between partners and my office and has identified key areas relating to contingency planning and the covid-19 response, as they emerge. Across the broader portfolio of services my team have achieved consistent monitoring of the effects of coronavirus on both organisations and the individuals who they support.

I am pleased to report that victims' services show a high level of professionalism in the efficient creation of robust contingency plans. This necessary demand capture work has allowed this insight.

Increased understanding of the local response to domestic abuse was also achieved by greater representation across working groups in Avon and Somerset. My team have attended a fortnightly strategic working group to identify any emerging challenges in relation to DVA. I was also delighted to be invited to co-host a Mayoral Commission on domestic abuse this September where recovery will be a focus as we pool expertise and ideas to support the Bristol One City vision.

Weekly Victims Commissioner Call during the pandemic

Each Monday morning from March onward I or a member of my team have shared key detail regarding our local experience in Avon and Somerset with the Victims Commissioner Dame Vera Baird and PCCs nationwide. This forum for sharing evidence and ideas has allowed me to keep

abreast of the latest developments that might impact victims. It has also enabled me to raise the profile of the Avon and Somerset experience on a national platform.

I have welcomed this cross-national discussion for innovative solutions to emerging problems, something much needed in these unprecedented times.

Weekly calls with Dame Vera Baird and other PCCs have focused on identifying victim impact. Many things have been highlighted through this forum, including the pressing need to ensure local partners were securing alternative accommodation for domestic abuse victims seeking refuge, and the need for a strategic communications plan to reach victims of hidden crimes in the pandemic.

Contract review meetings

My commissioning and partnerships team have maintained contract review meetings with our services despite the co-ordination challenges posed during coronavirus. Quickly adapting to virtual platforms commissioning leads have been able to foster open and positive dialogue, evaluating performance against key performance indicators and risk assessments, and meeting to discuss the challenges and successes of the previous period.

As anticipated coronavirus was a key focus of services in contract meetings and the impact the pandemic has had on victims. Yet I have also continued to hear stories of real success. The team have also further developed relationships with all our providers with regular informal catch ups throughout the lockdown period, ensuring services are supported and the OPCC is aware of current enforced changes to service delivery.

I have also been encouraged to see how our new advocacy service provided by VOCAS has managed in their first year. I have seen positive outcomes and service-user feedback. I recognise the hard work these advocates are engaged in to assist those with enhanced needs.

Criminal Justice

I continue to chair fortnightly meetings of the Local Criminal Justice Board and recently visited Bristol Crown Court to see how the service is managing in the current climate. Despite the hard work of individuals across all criminal justice agencies progress has been slow in addressing the backlog of cases due to Covid. Whilst there is a gradual increase in volume of cases coming through the courts, many of the most complex cases and those with vulnerable victims are not. Technology is not being used to transform the system and the two remote evidence centres across Avon and Somerset are not being used. Plexiglass is due to be introduced into courts in Bristol by the end of September.

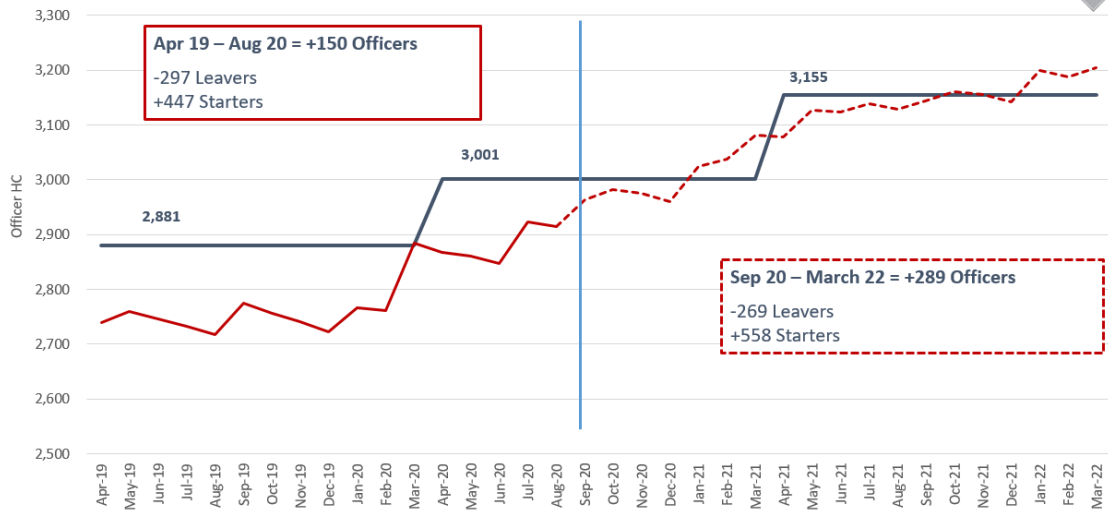
Both the Lighthouse Safeguarding Unit and a number of external victim services I commission are under severe pressure given few cases are going through the court process (and therefore need continuing support) and new cases continue to be referred in. Services also report that the complexity of cases and victim vulnerability is more significant, presenting another challenge.

I continue to highlight the challenges, risks and issues facing the criminal justice system through my national role and continue to advocate for more radical approaches to ensure justice is delivered in a timely manner.

Force Futures (Uplift)

I am pleased to be able to advise Panel Members that the excellent progress on recruitment reported last quarter has continued and there are planned intakes of officers that underpin the force's timeline to achieve our share of the planned 20,000 additional officers nationally.

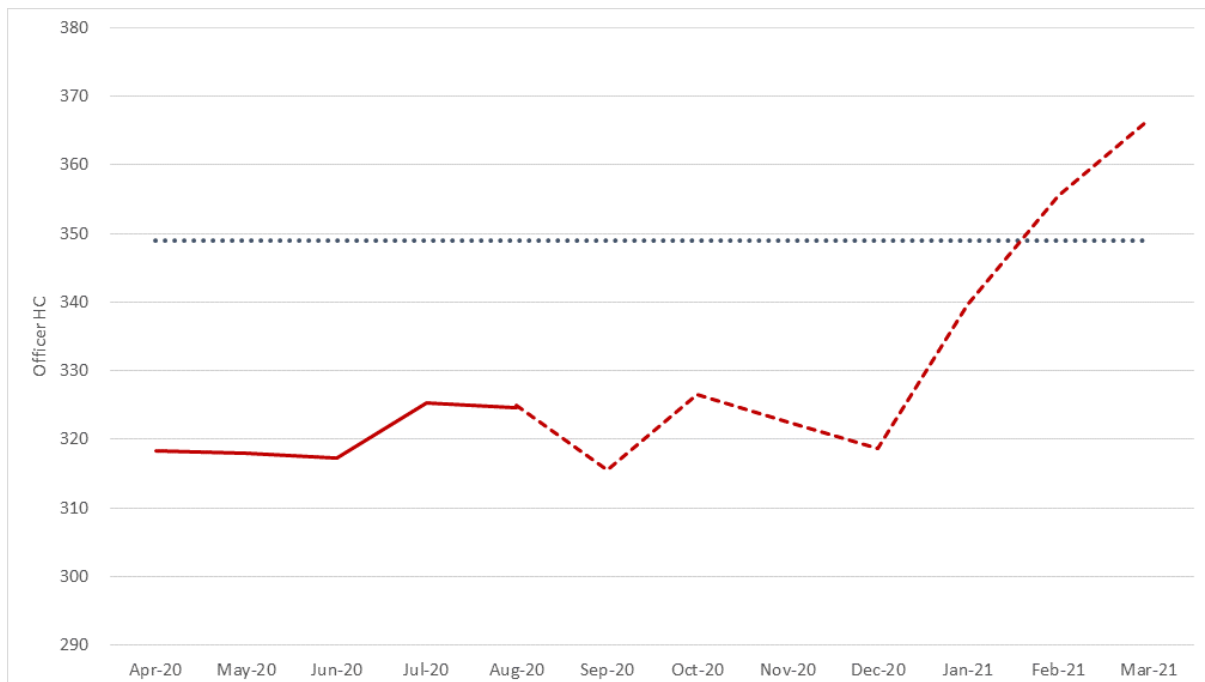
Uplift delivery planning



This trajectory will enable us to meet the final target of 3292 officers by March 2023:

Uplift model 3 – 20,000 officers	31/03/20	31/03/21	31/03/22	31/03/23
Targeted uplift to 'territorial policing'	2,000	6,000	14,000	20,000
A&S share of target @ 2.3%	+46	+137	+320	+457
<i>Officer HC as at 31st March</i>	2,881	3,000	3,155	3,292
<i>Officer FTE as at 31st March</i>	2,793	2,912	3,067	3,204

In respect of PCSOs, the current planned intakes will recover the shortfall in FTE numbers by the end of the next financial year:



This performance is a true credit to the constabulary recruitment team and I am grateful that the hard work has put us in a strong position at this time. I must emphasise however that whilst the additional recruitment is welcome, student officers are not fully qualified for 3 years from their date of recruitment. Indeed, initially additional recruits require tutoring by other officers which is an important but time consuming practice. It is fair to say that the real benefit of the additional Uplift recruitment is not yet being felt by Avon and Somerset and it will be 2026 before all the Uplift recruits are fully qualified officers. It is important that the Panel and local people understand this process to manage expectations.

Independent Residents' Panel

The Independent Residents' Panel (IRP) scrutinise completed cases of complaints made by members of the public against Avon and Somerset Police. The panel is chaired and run by volunteers and they meet on a quarterly basis. The last meeting was 4th June 2020. This session was held virtually as a result of lockdown measures. Using digital solutions the Panel were able to scrutinise and review complaints relating to COVID-19 enforcement. They reviewed 16 complaints in total. The report for this meeting is due to be published in over the coming weeks but high level feedback is that good practice was identified and correspondence with complainants was empathetic, explanatory and courteous. The Panel identified that some complaints at the early stages of lockdown related to confusion in the understanding the application of enforcement measures due to the new COVID-19 restrictions and legislation. It showed that despite errors, there was good intent. There was also consistent positive comment from the Panel about the timeliness of complaints.

The Police Integrity Reforms which saw significant change in the police conduct regulations from the 1st February 2020 and they are now live and embedding. The definition of a complaint is now considered 'any expression of dissatisfaction with a police officer or service'. It was anticipated that forces would see an increase in recorded complaints as a result of this. The total number of complaints recorded from 1 August 2019 to 31 August 2020 is 1490. This compares to 876 during the same time period the previous year.

The next meeting is scheduled for 3rd December 2020 and will focus on complaints relating to abuse of powers for personal gain.

The panel's findings are shared with Professional Standards for comment and published as a public report.

The Panel's reports are published on the PCC's website at:

<https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/reports-publications/independent-residents-panel-reports/>

NEW Reviews of complaints

The new complaints legislation went live on the 1st February 2020 and this increased the role of the PCC in that the PCC became the appropriate appeal body for the management of low level service complaints against the Constabulary. These appeals are known as Reviews.

To date the PCC has received a total of 66 reviews. 48 (71%) were not upheld and 6 (9%) were considered invalid. 13 (20%) were upheld. The percentages above are representative of similar forces (through comparison at regional forums).

To put review numbers into context, ASC have received 1246 complaints to date, but only 66 reviews have been requested. In the majority of cases, the PCC was satisfied that the complaint had been handled 'reasonably and proportionately'.

When mistakes were made they fell into recognisable categories. Most of the upheld appeals required more information to be given, or other matters to be investigated. Many complainants write long and detailed initial letters to the police which need to be distilled into numbered complaints. This was not always done accurately, so it is more a matter of communication than simple investigative errors. The Review Manager provides regular thematic feedback to the Head of PSD.

The new complaint regulations also create a potential conflict. They require the police to deal with complaints at the lowest level and as promptly as possible. Yet the legal measure of success is the same for every level of complaint, no matter whether it required a complex investigation or a simple response – this measure being '*Reasonable and Proportionate*'. It can be difficult for the police to prove 'reasonable and proportionate' when the circumstances suggest that a brief response will suffice. Many of these complaints may be minor in law – but to a complainant they are of primary importance and complainants often expect the same level of scrutiny as a criminal investigation. The review process is therefore also about explanation and managing expectations.

In the main, review outcomes have been well received by the public. Letters of thanks have been received, even when reviews have not been upheld. The Independent Residents Panel recently conducted an audit and described the content of the review (not upheld) letter as '*Excellent finalisation letter which explains the law, procedure and reasons very clearly*'

This is still a relatively new process and is being refined.

Scrutiny of the Use of Police Powers Panel

The Panel have entered their fourth year and members have completed a 3 year review of processes and procedures, including the Panel's Terms of Reference and undertaken the annual election of a Chair and Vice Chair. The 14th quarterly Scrutiny of Police Powers Panel meeting took place on 22 September 2020, again as an online meeting. In advance of the meeting, Panel members individually reviewed Body Worn Video (BWV) camera footage (using a secure database) of pre-selected Taser deployment incidents and Stop and Search incidents within the selected theme of Black, Asian and minority ethnicity (BME) subjects of Police Officer Taser deployment and Stop and Search in the Somerset geographical area. This area having the highest level of disproportionality which is the current theme for the Panel.

3 additional Panel reviews have taken place (in April, May and June) to review BWV of COVID-19 regulation breaches and the serving of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs). A 4th Panel review has been proposed by the Panel Chair for the latest CoVid 'Rule of 6' - Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) (Amendment) (No. 4) Regulations, members again wishing to seek assurances about Officers using the '4 Es' with members of the public, i.e. engagement, explanation and encouragement to comply with current COVID-19 Regulations, and also Enforcement. The online meeting included invited guests to observe from the Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC) – being the Regional Director and a colleague (a Stakeholder and Community Engagement Officer) – and other invited attendees including an Outreach worker in the Bristol area. This meeting Agenda included an update on the Lammy Review and group discussion took place on specifically highlighted cases, including BWV reviews during the meeting. A Constabulary Lead Officer provided background, context information from Police databases (STORM logs and Niche). Panel members

reviewed 53 cases and produced 152 feedback forms. Police Officers were commended when members viewed exemplary Officer behaviour and good practice, recommended for inclusion in future De-escalation training. Members also report positively about Officer courtesy, fairness, calmness, control and respect; good communication of Stop & Search grounds; and good Police Officer engagement with members of the public. Members' concerns and recommendations included: some elements of a Stop and Search not stated; and Taser being deployed earlier in the encounter than observed in previous Panel reviews.

Members have also received Constabulary briefings on Taser and Stop and Search disproportionality.

Panel reports are published on the PCC's website at:

<https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/reports-publications/scrutiny-police-powers-panel-reports/>

Independent Custody Visiting Scheme

Oversight and seeking assurances has continued since the initial Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020 with Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) reverting to remote ICV visits of the 3 Custody Units. ICVs have undertaken 3 visits per week, telephoning the Custody Units to speak to Detainees. Also reading and reviewing specific Custody Records during every remote (off site) ICV visit, using the secure ICV database. Visit reports have continued to be written up and submitted, with ICVs logging in remotely.

During April, May and June (Quarter 1), the total number of detained people through custody was 4277. At the time of the ICV remote visits there were a total of 298 detainees and ICVs visited (remotely) 102 detainees - checking each person's Rights, Entitlements and welfare - and reviewed 96 Custody Records.

ICVs are reporting positive findings including: Detainees commenting that they are being well treated, provided with nicotine lozenges, exercise yard use, reading material, additional meals and drinks, Interpreters provided for non-English speaking detainees; Health Care Practitioners being onsite and administering medication, The Advice and Support in Custody & Courts (ASCC) providing remote assessments via cell intercoms for vulnerable detainees. Most ICV visits report general comments continuing to give compliments to the Detention Officers assisting with the phone calls, either via the cell intercoms or using the cell corridor mobile phone (with better sound quality).

ICV findings of concern include: the large proportion of detainees with mental ill health; some Appropriate Adults (often relatives) taking time to attend custody; and most Solicitors remotely representing detainees, including virtual remand courts. Onsite ICV visits are due to re-start in the October rotas, with contingency plans in place and plans for remote visits.

OPCC Team and COVID19 impacts and new Interim CFO

Along with the constabulary, the OPCC team has continued to work primarily from home during the Covid19 crisis. Microsoft Teams has proved effective and reliable, and has been invaluable, whilst inevitably not being able to compensate for all aspects of face-to-face working. Staff continue to work extremely well, despite the impact of sickness, and the need to manage dependent care and home schooling. Nevertheless, the ongoing challenges continue to impact the capacity of the small OPCC team. We are carefully monitoring the situation, but have been able to allow some limited office working in line with best practice and this has proved beneficial for a number of staff.

Following the Panel's confirmation hearing, Paul Butler started in post as interim CFO on 29th June, which has enabled the Constabulary CFO and OPCC CEO to relinquish those duties which they were covering.

Standing Updates:

Contacts/Complaints Oversight

The OPCC Contacts Team receive a weekly average of 296 contacts (email and telephone calls) internally and externally per week. These contacts vary from members of the public seeking to invite the PCC to events, enquiries about funding and more complex matters such as complaints or community issues. Of this correspondence a proportion (approx. 50 – 17%) result in a case being created in the OPCC case management system and case work being required.

COVID-19 and other significant events in Avon and Somerset saw this demand increase significantly. Previously, the average case load per month fluctuated between 180-200 cases. The case load for the Contacts Team from June –August 2020 is detailed in the chart below:

Month	2020	2019	-/+
June	1395 cases	281 cases	+1114
July	1290 cases	238 cases	+1052
August	225 cases	233 cases	-8

This resulted in an increased turnaround in responses however the average handling time for this period was still only 4.5 day despite a KPI of 20 working days. This additional demand was absorbed by the Contacts Team and did not require any additional resource or expenditure.

The Colston Statue, various protests and unlicensed music events across the force area have continued to dominate the correspondence received during this period and divided public opinion, especially in light of the global pandemic COVID-19. The PCC has used various platforms to hold the Chief Constable to account on the Constabulary's delivery of the Police and Crime Plan, including their approach to these events. This is done both publicly and privately through regular meetings with the Chief Constable and other senior leads, as well as Facebook Live sessions to ensure public accountability and that questions from residents are posed to the Chief Constable. The PCC chairs a monthly Police & Crime Board meeting with the Chief Constable and senior police leaders and in addition these matters are considered in detail at Constabulary Management Board and additional Strategic Coordination Groups. A representative of the OPCC team is present at all of these meetings to ensure the police are held to account in their actions.

Data also includes monitoring of complaints which is a statutory function for the PCC. Since Sept 2019 (when records started), the PCC has monitored 149 complaints at the request of the public to ensure transparency, fairness and compliance with statutory guidance. The team continue to check complaints handling regularly to support timely resolution and compliance with the IOPC Statutory Guidance 2020.

Estates: An update report is attached.

Contact Officer – Mark Simmonds, Interim Chief Executive