



Development of Police and Crime Plan - Panel Members Report

Background

Two Police and Crime Panel members were invited to join the Police and Crime Plan Programme Board (PCP Board) to oversee and facilitate the creation of the 2021-2025 Police and Crime Plan. Julie Knight and Cllr Asher Craig volunteered and this report is intended to brief fellow members in respect of its development and our observations.

Governance

The PCP Board was launched in June. It was designed to provide assurance to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) that the plan is developing to the required standards in terms of quality, cost and to time. It's guided by an agreed Terms of Reference.

From the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), members included:

- Interim Chief of Staff: Sally Fox (Chair)
- Deputy Programme Lead: Marc Hole (Deputy Chair)
- Senior Leadership Team: Niamh Byrne and Paul Butler
- Strategic Planning and Performance Officer: Ben Valentine

From the Constabulary Chief Officer Group, members included:

- Temporary Deputy Chief Constable Nikki Watson
- Chief Officer Nick Adams

Three sub-groups of OPCC and relevant Constabulary staff were formed to support the development of the plan. These sub-groups focused on:

- Consultation
- Content
- Performance and Assurance

Their progress reported to the board and for ease, form the headings in this report.

Prerequisites around the plans development included:

- Observing the Association of Policing and Crime Chief Executives guidance
- Meeting legislative requirements set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011
- Taking information sources into account, including:
 - PCC's Election Manifesto
 - Police and Crime Needs Assessment
 - Strategic Threat Assessment
 - Strategic Policing Requirement
 - Force Management Statement
 - National Crime and Policing Measures
 - Existing national and local strategies related to policing, and current and future legislation.

Virtual Board meetings have been held monthly since June. These are scheduled until March 2022 to oversee the development of the Local plans following the launch of the main one.



Observations from Panel Members

- This Governance structure seems to work really well. It's well chaired with strong, supporting leadership.
- The Plan Development Timeline (Gantt chart) seems a simple and effective tool.
- Meaningful and collaborative engagement between the OPCC and the Constabulary through the Board and sub-group updates was evident.
- Risks and issues were freely raised, considered and recorded at each meeting.
- The Board eagerly welcomed our views and were evidently acted on or explored. For example, Asher signposted the OPCC to useful contacts within the Council (Bristol) who could offer expertise and advised on opportunities to engage more diverse communities.

Consultation

The PCC launched the Police and Crime Survey on the 28th June. This marked the start of a 12 week public consultation period that ended on the 20th September.

The survey was structured around the PCC's manifesto that duly shaped its format.

It was deployed online via the OPCC website and in hard copy format that was posted in areas of low engagement in the PCC elections and in areas that were considered to be an opportunity to hear from underrepresented communities.

Over 4,000 responses were received, being much greater than the outcome of their last survey that attracted around 2,200 responses.

Observations from Panel Members

- The structure of the survey posed leading questions with no open 'free-text' opportunities. The survey didn't get the desired reach in terms of young people and more diverse communities. This will be covered during the PCC's presentation on the 26th October.
- The postal survey was the primary means of trying to secure an adequate level of representation from under represented communities. It has been recognised that a more engaging face to face approach may be more productive and needs to be balanced by some creative means to generate the capacity to do so. They also required resources to input them that necessitated a team effort with support from Constabulary staff. A review of what worked well and why along with opportunities to improve and how - could help to inform future consultations.
- We welcome the OPCC's intent to introduce 'We asked. You said. We did.' framework for feedback as a two way engagement cycle so those who contributed may learn about the outcome.
- Survey responses from Constabulary staff was exceptionally low (10%) despite a range of efforts to raise this. Given that they are essential to the successful delivery of the plan, the reason for low engagement may be worthy of exploration.

Content

The Draft Police and Crime Plan Priorities are:

1. Preventing and fighting crime
2. Engaging, supporting and working with communities, victims and partner organisations
3. Leading the police to be efficient and effective



4. Increase the legitimacy of and public confidence in the police and Criminal Justice Service

There are six Objectives that sit under Priority numbers 1, 2 and 4 and seven that sit under Priority number 3. This makes 25 in all.

There was dialogue around the volume of the content as it will not be a slim document. As it's a public document, it was felt that that context was required to:

- Explain what each objective means
- Explain why each are important
- Some high level points of focus/improvement

It is intended to consider how it's published to various audiences by various means. For example, online versions could offer enough breadth for validity and the broader content may be accessed 'on a click' if required/desired.

The draft plan has been shared for early comment to more than 80 key delivery stakeholders, for example, Councils. It has received limited feedback (to date) but necessitated clarity being given about it being a strategic plan rather than a delivery plan.

Observations from Panel Members

- In the interests of providing outstanding policing for everyone, the draft Police and Crime Plan is ambitious, and rightly so. However, with so many objectives under each priority making the plan a seemingly 'mass collection of priorities' – we fear that this could confuse the delivery agents and the public around what, if any, the high level priorities truly are, especially given the volume of reported matters over the course of a year in the given data.

As an example,

- Priority 1, Objective 3 mentions
A&S Police need to ensure their workforce have the capability to respond . . . 22,000 cases of domestic abuse, 4260 recorded sexual offences of which 1650 being rape. . .
- Priority 1, Objective 4 mentions
Respond to important community issues including burglary 6180 cases, auto-crime 9262 cases, hate crime 3620 cases, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) 88,247 cases. . .
- Priority 2, Objective 2 mentions
Ensure all victims of crime and ASB are appropriately supported 91,000 victims of recorded crime and 88,247 ASB cases (we recognise that some may be recorded crimes already)

Conversely, the Panel has previously raised concerns about what seems to be regular and routine abstractions of specialist resources from their core functions. For example, Neighbourhood Policing and Remedy staff being called upon to help manage the high number of calls for service from the public and how this could impact their ability to support the preventative or enforcement elements of the plan.

The plan acknowledges that the full benefits from the uplift in staff will not be realised for some time given the need for training and development and it will take some time for the Detective vacancies to be filled.



The panel asks if the plan is focused enough to be challenging and achievable in respect of the Constabulary's capacity to deliver the ambitions from this ambitious plan over the coming years.

Performance and Assurance

Around 60 data sources were identified and worked through with subject matter experts in the Constabulary. The OPCC expressed that they are not performance targets but the means to monitor improvement across the areas of the plan.

Observations from Panel Members

- Panel members have yet to see the list of measures. We welcome assurance that care will be taken to ensure that they don't inadvertently drive unhelpful behaviours or harm interdependencies.
For example, Priority 3, Objective 1 talks about recruiting more Specials as a headline. From this panel member's experience, it's easy to focus on 'recruiting numbers' that then applies pressure on finite resources to focus on that entity to the detriment of interdependencies such as factors that could support retention that would ultimately keep the 'numbers healthy' to slow the 'revolving door.'

Next Steps and Key Dates

- As a part of the PCC's duty to consult the public on the content of the draft plan, it will be made available on the OPCC [website](#) from the 15th October. It will be in text format rather than being formatted by the design team to limit costs. An example of the design work will be shown to members.
- The draft plan will be presented to the Police and Crime Panel for consideration on the 26th October. The Panel can submit comments for consideration up until the 8th November.
- Consultation regarding its content (not the design) ends on 8th November in readiness for the final plan being refined and designed. This will be presented to the Panel on 9th December.

In closing

We would like to acknowledge that a vast amount of work has been undertaken in a very short period of time by the OPCC team under the seemingly calm and caring leadership of the Chief of Staff. We recognise that this has been achieved to time (to date) with the limited capacity within the OPCC. Furthermore, we acknowledge the support, obvious commitment to task and engagement by the Constabulary.

Furthermore, we are grateful for the opportunity to have been a part of the PCP Board.

Julie Knight (Independent Panel Member)

Councillor Asher Craig

13th October 2021