



Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel

9th December 2021

Present:

Local Authority and Independent Member Representatives:

Heather Shearer (Mendip Council, Chair) Richard Westwood (North Somerset Council, Vice Chair), Chris Booth (Somerset West and Taunton Council), Richard Brown (Independent Member), Asher Craig (Bristol City Council), Peter Crew (North Somerset Council), Gary Davies (Independent Member), Jonathan Hucker (Bristol City Council). Janet Keen (Sedgemoor District Council), Julie Knight (Independent Member), Franklin Owusu-Antwi (South Gloucestershire), Alastair Singleton (Bath and North East Somerset), Pat Trull (South Gloucestershire Council), Andy Wait (Bath and North East Somerset Council)

Host Authority Support Staff

Patricia Jones – Lead Officer

Terrie Brazier – Panel Clerk

Pippa Triffitt – Panel Administrative Support

Police and Crime Commissioner and Support Staff:

Mark Shelford - Police and Crime Commissioner

Sally Fox – Interim Chief Executive Officer

Paul Butler – OPCC Chief Financial Officer

Ben Valentine – Strategic Development and Performance Officer

Niamh Byrne – Head of Communications

Jon Riley – Asst. Chief Constable

James Raphael – Detective Superintendent

1. Apologies for absence

Nicola Clark (South Somerset District Council), Lisa Stone (Bristol City Council), Neil Bloomfield (Somerset County Council)

2. Public Question Time.

The Panel heard from Martin Cooke who attended the meeting to read the following statement, which had been circulated to members in advance:

“My question is: Why, since being elected to office in May I believe, has Mark Shelford not held a single public forum? We, the public, voted him in to be our voice and to hold the Chief Constable accountable for police operations. In my view, it is not acceptable. We, the public, have given Mark Shelford £41,500 of our money to serve us. Such dereliction of duty is unacceptable, in my view.”

The Commissioner thanked Mr Cooke for the question and provided a summary of his diary and activities. He explained that he had been conducting many engagements and took the matter very seriously. He had asked his office to arrange his schedule as follows: Monday-Wednesday in the office, Thursday visiting police stations, Friday visiting the 16 Avon and Somerset constituencies (2 per day). As far as MPs, Councillors, the public and charities, they were now entering into the second cycle of joint surgeries with MPs and meetings with targeted public groups in specific areas, such as the YMCA, schools, and rape and sexual abuse prevention organisations. He had made visits in the Taunton area on 10th and 18th June, 3rd September, and 5th November, and one was planned for 14 January 2022. Before the onset of covid, a Councillor Crime Forum had been in planning, but the focus had inevitably moved to other areas. He was happy to take the issue on board and determine how specific groups and community concerns could be targeted.

The Chair thanked Mr Cooke and the Commissioner, noting that one of the purposes of the Panel is to provide direct access for the public with respect to policing matters.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no new declarations.

4. Minutes of the meetings held on 26 October 2021

The minutes of the meetings held on 26 October 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

6. Chair's Business

The Chair congratulated Sally Fox on her appointment as Deputy Chief of Staff.

7. Presentation of the Police and Crime Plan 2021-25

The Commissioner introduced the report and provided assurances that the OPCC had responded to the comments and recommendations emerging from the consultation process before finalising the plan. It was emphasised that the plan was a living document, capable of developing over time.

Below is a summary of the primary points made during the officer presentations: Ben Valentine – Strategic Development and Performance Officer, presented the first part of the presentation, discussing the transformation from draft to final plan. Feedback from key partners, members, and the public was received, collated, and discussed and the plan amended accordingly. The version presented today will be signed off by the Commissioner and Chief Constable.

Niamh Byrne, Head of Communications, provided a summary of the four methods of engagements that will be utilised to connect with the Public to promote the local plans: face- to-face engagement, digital methods, social media, and media.

There will be internal scrutiny, with all facets of the plan being reviewed by the new Chief of Staff and quarterly performance reports being produced. Consultation with and scrutiny by the public will continue to be an important aspect. Sally Fox, Interim Chief Executive Officer, reported that there is a real appetite for local Police and Crime Plans and a resulting need to be joined up with partners and the PCP. They will now be looking at moving forward with a new structure and new programme board, with meetings commencing in early January.

The Panel was advised that there were three key questions to consider:

- How will local plans make communities safer?
- How will progress be tracked and performance monitored, utilising the 60 measures included in the plan and capitalising on data held?
- How will we and others be held accountable with respect to delivery of the plan?

It was agreed that a timeline for the development and production of the local plans would be provided to the Panel.

Below is a summary of the discussion that followed:

- With respect to local plans and working with community safety partnerships, it was recognised that there would be many stakeholders involved and that assessing individual requirements and showing tangible results without adding unnecessarily to the existing infrastructure would be a big task.
- Local plans must ensure that needs are addressed, and local authorities need to have a say; the current strategic groups could be retained and possibly task-and-finish groups added.

- The Commissioner commented that for the purposes of continuity, it would be helpful for the Panel's participation to continue on the programme board.
- In reply to the question of how many local plans exist, it was noted that Council and District areas have one as a minimum; and with the SCC transition to a unitary council in progress, there is a need to work carefully.
- Details were requested on how the OPCC arrived at the figure of 44% reduction in the carbon footprint mentioned in the Environmental Impact section of the plan.
- Thanks were expressed for allowing PCP members to contribute to the Programme Board. Julie Knight's offer to continue was accepted, and the Chair confirmed that she would follow up by writing to the Panel to ensure that the two places were filled.
- The Chair clarified that the legislation requires the Panel to remain sighted on any variation to the plan.

The Chair thanked everyone who had worked on the plan for the volume of work and care that went into it and thanked the presenters for the detailed presentation.

Action:

- 1. A timeline for the development and production of the local plans to be provided to the Panel.**
- 2. Details on the 44% reduction in the carbon footprint referred to in the Environmental Impact Assessment to be provided.**
- 3. The Panel's participation on the Programme Board and development of local plans to continue.**
- 4. Chair to write to the Panel to confirm the Panel's representation on the Programme Board.**
- 5. The Panel accepted endorsed the finalised Police and Crime Plan 2021/25**

8. Assurance Report and Presentation – Operation Remedy

Ben Valentine – Strategic Development and Performance Officer began the presentation and drew specific attention to the following:

- Operation Remedy began when PCCs were allowed an unprecedented precept increase of £24 for the 2019/20 year raising approximately £15 million; at the same time, Remedy was created as a targeted operation to address residential burglary, drugs, and knife crime.
- Remedy was designed to have 100 officers with funding to be used for recruiting an additional 100 officers; the target of the 100 original officers was not reached, but more than 100 additional officers were recruited, albeit they were not directly allocated to Remedy.
- There were 10 strategic aims/objectives, with the first five achievable with 100 officers (increasing the number of offenders brought to justice, solving more crimes, reducing the number of domestic burglaries, increasing the number of disruptions of organised crime/drugs, and increasing satisfaction levels for burglary victims). However, the other

five were not achievable or measurable, either because these objectives were the remit of other bodies like VRUs or because there was no baseline for comparison.

- The pandemic has affected the recording of data, the number of interventions, and the level of performance.

Asst Chief Constable John Riley and Detective Superintendent James Raphael then continued the presentation and responded to questions, as summarised below:

- When Remedy began after five years of austerity, the focus was on high-visibility policing and community engagement including face-to-face interaction. However, this was not attacking the root causes, so community focus teams and investigative/proactive units were formed.
- Recovery of assets has been a priority in rural crime work
- The pandemic has greatly pushed up demand for front-line policing, so Remedy has lost some personnel and performance has been affected.
- Remedy of the future would involve the realignment of resources in the neighbourhood teams to specifically link into the government's Beating Crime Plan. This aimed to combine prevention, deterrent and enforcement and includes measures aimed specifically at dealing with the problem of illegal drugs.
- There is collaborative work with other forces in London, the West Midlands, etc.
- The Panel noted that 130 arrests had been made in the last 12 months in respect of burglary offences. It was agreed that the total number of burglaries reported during the same period would be provided to the Panel.
- Whilst not a focus of Remedy, it was recognised that rural crime was a priority for communities. It was agreed that an update on rural crime would be provided to the Panel, including the range of crime types.
- The Panel requested clarification regarding the original 100 officers. It was noted that a shortage of trained detectives was the biggest challenge; 15 were needed, therefore 14 Investigators and 'free staff' had been brought in to offset this on a temporary basis.
- The Panel requested a further breakdown of knife crime classifications. It was agreed that the recently completed data set for serious violence offences would be provided to the Panel.
- There was general agreement that individually branded teams such as Remedy were not particularly helpful to the Public – communities should identify the Police as the Police.
- The Panel pointed out the trajectory of staffing in the Constabulary, where they will lose more experienced staff and gain younger staff. It was acknowledged that it takes time to train new officers and that uniformed officers do not like transferring to detective work, so there is a need to promote its value.
- The Panel pointed out that the new Police and Crime Plan focuses on prevention, so there will be a balancing act between this and traditional policing.
- The Panel invited the officers to comment on what the future of Remedy would look like with a Police service based on Peelian principles. The Panel was advised that the future would focus on the pursuit of high-harm offenders and complex neighbourhood crime. It was reported that policing in the future will include a force-wide uniform (with

plain clothes deployment where required), neighbourhood crime and tasking teams, investment in Violence Reduction Units (VRUs), integrated offender management including rehabilitation, and an increase in staffing.

- They will be using diversion, early intervention, prevention, and rehabilitation to tackle county lines and neighbourhood crime; uniformed teams will be embedded in all local areas.
- It was noted that 5% of offenders cause 50% of crime; that intelligence gathering is carried out by community police, local officers and beat managers and that the intelligence unit gathers information, monitors, and makes decisions. There will be an increase in the number of intelligence analysts.
- The Panel suggested that it was a good opportunity to revamp Operation Remedy, with the challenge being how information is benchmarked and measured. It was added that prevention is good, but detection and arrest is equally important.
- In response, it was noted that there will be a proactive uniformed uplift in neighbourhoods, there will be reactive/investigative teams of detectives (these need more resources), and that the Police and Crime Plan has 60 specific measures on what is needed and how Operation Remedy will deliver the plan.
- The Panel asked how this model helps communities and was advised that this will occur through early intervention in neighbourhoods, working with partners, and bringing the community together to work collectively.
- Other issues raised earlier by the Panel included why the reporting metrics of the Op Remedy system had not been changed in response to categorisation of results as "data not collected/no baseline for comparison", and why it was difficult to find detectives for Op Remedy; it was suggested that the role of CID offices used to be multifunctional whereas currently the teams for rape, murder, etc. are separate from the more low-level Op Remedy. The Commissioner is keen to regenerate the detective role to what it was.
- It was agreed that the second set of presentation slides would be provided to the Panel.

The Chair thanked the Officers for their presentation and responses.

Action:

- 1. The total number of burglaries reported during the last 12 months to be provided to the Panel.**
- 2. Update on rural crime to be provided to the Panel, including the range of crime types.**
- 3. Recently completed data set for serious violence offences to be provided to the Panel.**
- 4. The second set of presentation slides to be provided to the Panel.**

9. Scrutiny of the Budget / Draft Medium-Term Financial Plan

Paul Butler, OPCC Chief Financial Officer, presented the report which sets out planning assumptions and the process that will lead to the setting of the 2022/23 revenue budget, council tax precept, and capital programme in February 2022.

The following key points were reported:

Spending Review and Autumn Budget Headlines

The three-year grant settlement includes a £550m increase to grants for 2022/23, £650m for 2023/24, and £800m for 2024/25.

Funding – Key Assumptions

It was highlighted that the increase to the core grant will be distributed in line with current grant distribution, i.e., of the £550m for 2022/23, £12.9m is expected to be passed to A&S.

Special Branch will transfer to Counter Terrorism Policing from April 2022, reducing core funding by £1.3m.

Planning is required to take account of the delivery of an additional 450 officers by March 2023, increased national insurance costs, and the pay settlement for officers and staff. It was anticipated that savings of over £100m will be delivered through efficiencies.

There is potential to utilise the full flexibility of an average precept raise of £10.00 per annum for the next three years, thereby creating capacity to raise a further £774m by 2024/25.

Costs – Projections and Working Assumptions

It was emphasised that the vast majority of budget increases were related to staff costs. The cumulative effect was a requirement to build in this base increase for the terms of the MTFP.

The pay award had not been received yet, and the outcome may not be known before the MTFP is set.

A balanced budget is assumed over the next two years; revenue savings of £3m year on year will be required to balance the budget over five years; a significant amount of IT replacement (an investment of £10.4m) will be required to comply with new national standards; and by 2026, 20% of vehicles will be electric.

Attention was drawn to Page 66 of the report and the forecasted deficit of £0.8m in the revenue plan from 2024/25, rising to £5.7m by 2025/26 and to £9.4m by 2026/27.

Savings had been assumed over the life of the MTFP, but more were needed.

Attention was drawn to the development of Corporate Systems to improve corporate HR, finance, and operational capabilities, which will enable continued improvements in a number of key corporate processes.

Below is a summary of the ensuing discussion:

- The increase of approximately 10% for supplies and services (£32-36m) was questioned. The CFO explained that this is due to significant inflation and national IT projects, and it will be capitalised to the extent that it can be. The Panel requested a more detailed explanation of the reasons for the increased allocation. It was noted that there is a huge licensing component involved.
- A 20% electrification of the force fleet was regarded as a positive step that should be shared with the general public.
- It was asked if, due to the reorganisation of the councils, the financial requirements will change; it was responded that the challenge is to work in partnership or to ensure benefits from the way contracts are written.

The Chair thanked the CFO for his presentation and advised the Panel that if they had any further questions, these could be forwarded to the CFO after the meeting. The CFO asked that he be sent questions in advance of the next meeting in order that his report can address those questions.

Action:

The Panel requested a more detailed explanation of the reasons for the increased allocation of 10% for supplies and services.

10. Commissioner's Update Report

The Panel considered a report from the Commissioner. The Commissioner introduced his report and drew attention to the following key areas:

- In Section 3 - Response to Issues Raised by Panel Members, the measure of active citizenship was based on the point of view of specific groups; all watch groups are to be eligible for prizes to encourage their volunteers to assist Police.
- If any Panel members sees a volunteer from Community Speedwatch, please thank them; it boosts their morale.
- With respect to the recommendations around tackling disproportionality in Avon and Somerset (emerging from the Lammy Review), it was recognised that these needed to be handled sensitively. The Panel suggested it would be helpful to receive an assessment of the effectiveness of the recommendations and any resulting benefits. The OPCC confirmed that the recommendations were being progressed and the Panel would be updated in the near future. A presentation from the Chair of the Lammy Group leading on this work area would be incorporated into the Panel's work programme for next year.
- Regarding Section 4 – Education Inclusion Project, the Commissioner reported that there is a significant impact on children who are excluded; we need to know how to avoid it and recognise that it is very difficult in some situations and needs investment. He has worked with schools and organisations on instituting a "cooling off" period in lieu of exclusion.

- With respect to criminal justice and the prevention of a 'revolving door', he has visited Bristol Prison, where he spoke to the Governor, staff, and inmates. He asked Panel members to remind their MPs of this issue and noted the importance of finding accommodation for inmates when they are released. Next week he will be going to Gloucestershire to view pre-fabricated units built by prisoners for released prisoners, which are sponsored by the Bishop of Gloucester. He suggested asking MPs if there is land where these units could be located with planning permission.
- Regarding Section 6 – Contacts and Conducts, he has asked the Constabulary to look at alternative connections with an aim toward being more sophisticated in logging contacts and in offering better service to the public.

Below is a summary of the ensuing discussion:

- The Panel offered support regarding the release of prisoners, noting that in Bristol there are other initiatives, including housing providers being asked to help released prisoners. The Salvation Army has been given ten housing units, and car park sites may be used.
- The Panel expressed interest in the exclusion project at schools, noting that funding has a limited time for being spent. It was observed that it is not efficient or effective to have short-term funding, even allowing the need for agility, as it must be shown that action is being taken and there is a need to think strategically and in the long term.
- The Panel requested a progress update on the Integrated Offender Management review, which was completed 18 months ago. The Panel highlighted the links to Operation Remedy and sought to establish the timescales for developments. The Deputy Chief of Staff confirmed that she is aware of the review and made the point that today's report was an assurance report. It was recognised that the Panel would be undertaking a more thorough scrutiny of this work area at its meeting in March. The Panel confirmed that they hoped to explore the validity of appointing non-experienced graduate officers into the IOM as their first posting.
- The Panel expressed concern that 777 members of the police force were not vaccinated.
- The Panel was supportive of the work on reducing reoffending.
- The deferred presentation to the Panel by the Chair of the Lammy Group would be rescheduled into the work programme at the appropriate time.
- The Chair drew attention to the Safer Somerset Partnership and extended thanks for the funding which assisted local charities in supplying accommodation for ex-offenders. She highlighted the difficulties associated with temporary funding and the importance of sustained funding over a longer period.
- Very positive feedback was expressed by the Panel with respect to the executive summary in the report.

The Commissioner thanked his team for their work.

Action - A presentation from the Chair of the Lammy Group leading on this work area would be incorporated into the Panel's work programme for next year. OPCC to come back with an update on recommendations at an appropriate time.

Extension of Chief Financial Officer Contract

Further to the discussions which had taken place outside of the meeting and the Commissioner's confirmation that the post would not be extended beyond July 2022, a proposal to extend the contract was moved and seconded and on being put to the vote:-

Resolved - the Panel voted unanimously in favour of the extension.

Deferred items

Consideration of the Performance Summary-Specified Information Order, Work Programme, and Complaints Monitoring Report was deferred to the next meeting.

12. Date of Next Meeting

There was general agreement that the next meeting be moved from 3rd February 2022 to 1st February 2022 at 10:30am in order to hold it at Deane House.

(The meeting ended at 2:15pm)

Chair