



Minutes of the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel Tuesday 5th November at 10.30am John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton TA1 1HE

Present:

Local Authority and Independent Member Representatives:

Councillor Andy Wait (Bath and North-East Somerset), Councillor Ann Morgan (Bath and North-East Somerset), Councillor Lisa Durston (Bristol City Council), Councillor Cara Lavan (Bristol City Council), Councillor Sibusiso Tshabalala (Bristol City Council), Richard Brown (Independent Member), Julie Knight (Independent Member), Councillor Peter Crew (North Somerset Council), Councillor Brian Bolt (Somerset Council), Councillor Nicola Clark (Somerset Council, virtual), Councillor Heather Shearer (Somerset Council), Councillor Federica Smith-Robert (Somerset Council), Councillor Martin Wale (Somerset Council), Councillor Raj Sood (South Gloucestershire Council), Councillor John Bradbury (South Gloucestershire Council).

Host Authority Officers Present:

Patricia Jones	Panel Lead Officer
Pippa Triffitt	Clerk/Democratic Services Officer

Police and Crime Commissioner and Support Staff:

Clare Moody	Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
Alice Ripley	Chief of Staff
Sally Fox	Director of Performance and Accountability
Ben Valentine	Senior Performance and Governance Manager
Joanna Coulon	Scrutiny and Performance Manager (virtual)
Marc Hole	Director of Policy and Partnerships
Niamh Byrne	Head of Communications and Engagement
Lisa Vango	Senior Partnerships and Engagement Manager
Inspector Stuart King	PCC's Staff Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Stuart Davies and Independent Member Gary Davies.

2. Public Question Time

None.

3. Declarations of Interest

None.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting on 27th June 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record.

5. Matters Arising

The Chair invited the Panel members to comment on matters arising from the minutes and the action sheet that was circulated before the meeting. The following is a summary of the ensuing discussion:

- The Panel thanked the OPCC for providing the requested comparison in statistics between levels of crime and the number of Stop & Searches in the force area and was interested to see the correlation between the two. The Panel requested that updated figures were provided at a future meeting, to which the PCC agreed.
- The Panel requested sight of Stop & Search figures that would show the rate of stops that were ultimately warranted in comparison to ethnicity. The OPCC stated that this information could be retrieved and circulated, and the PCC assured the Panel that tackling disproportionality was a topic that she took very seriously.
- The Panel requested an update on the opportunity for Members to visit Force HQ in Portishead. The Chief of Staff confirmed that she and the Scrutiny and Performance Manager would follow up with the Lead Officer on this.
- The Chair asked for volunteers to join the PCP Complaints Sub-Committee. Cllrs Federica Smith-Roberts, Martin Wale, and Cara Lavan duly volunteered.

Actions:

- 1. OPCC to share with the Panel Stop & Search figures that would show the rate of stops that were ultimately warranted in comparison to ethnicity.**
- 2. OPCC to liaise with the Lead Officer regarding opportunities for Panel Members to visit Force HQ.**

6. Chair's Business

The Chair drew attention to correspondence sent by Mr Luke Pascual that required clarification from the OPCC to enable the Panel to respond to him. It was noted that the OPCC was in the process of establishing the background to this matter and would update the Lead Officer as soon as possible.

7. Panel questions to the PCC – Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) presentations to the Panel on 24th September

The Chair invited the Panel to present their questions on Community Safety Partnerships and the Violence Reduction Partnership to the PCC. The following is a summary of the ensuing discussion:

- The Panel highlighted that Avon and Somerset were one of only a few forces in the country to adopt the hub-and-spoke model for their VRP. A recent joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to serious youth violence in Somerset was critical of many aspects of the overall approach to youth violence. In respect of the VRP, it appeared that little funding was retained in the hub for a centralised coordinated response. The Panel asked whether there was evidence that the model was working effectively, or whether the force should adopt a new approach. The PCC advised the Panel that the current model was adopted in 2019 by the force and its partners. She clarified that an independent review was carried out in Summer 2023 by Crest Advisory which concluded that it was the appropriate model for Avon and Somerset to deliver on its duty to reduce serious violence, but that it had made recommendations which were considered by the partners. Many of these were adopted, such as introducing a Director in January 2024 to strengthen the hub and to create a new Executive Board chaired by the PCC. There was also a memorandum of understanding (MoU) agreed in February 2024 to clarify the roles of the hub and the partners. There were some recommendations that the partners chose not to adopt, including the centralising of commissioning. However, the Crest review had prompted the VRP to investigate whether more commissioning could take place at the force level. There was no evidence nationally that one model was more effective than another, and research continued within the team on best practice; a new Evaluation and Data Lead for this work would also be appointed.
- In terms of the recent Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI), the PCC acknowledged that the recent inspection had raised concerns and that many recommendations were proposed for individual organisations. The PCC highlighted that key elements of the model in the MoU were in progress at the time of the inspection, such as risk management, and emphasised that a partnership approach would be adopted to respond to the findings.

- The Panel asked the PCC how she viewed the OPCC's role in ensuring effective and collaborative support for the CSPs. The PCC advised the Panel that the OPCC had a duty to collaborate, but it was not one of the five statutory responsible authorities. However, the OPCC could bring methods of best practice to the collaboration with the CSPs. The PCC reminded the Panel that progress on the proposals resulting from the 2022 Government PCC Review was halted due to the General Election in July 2024, therefore the review of the approach of the partnership between the PCC and CSPs would continue once the national picture was clarified.
- The Panel requested examples of positive tangible outcomes from the CSPs and VRP. The PCC advised the Panel that it was difficult to measure the impact of multi-agency work in terms of which results could be attributed to which entity. However, the hub-and-spoke model of the VRP did help to delineate responsibilities, such as assessing local need and identifying significant individuals. Furthermore, the latest annual report published in September 2024 identified initiatives carried out in local VRPs, such as a mentoring scheme commissioned by four of the five local VRPs which matched young people to mentors to provide a role model and improve social skills; over 130 young people were due to receive mentoring this year. Research by the Youth Endowment Fund indicated a 21% reduction in violence through mentoring, with a reduction in all offending by 14% and of reoffending by 19%. Three of the five local VRPs commissioned social skills training programmes this year; the Youth Endowment Fund indicated that such programmes reduced the number of children involved in crime by 32%. There were also examples of parents and young people contacting the VRP directly to express their gratitude for their help, demonstrating the impact the partnership had.
- The Panel requested more information on the proposed Evaluation and Data Lead when available. The Panel also recalled that the current multi-year funding from the Home Office would end on 31st March 2025, and that the PCC had underwritten the following 12 months of funding for the hub if no further funding was provided. The Panel queried how this decision had been made and when the Home Office was expected to provide more information. The PCC advised the Panel that the decision was made at the VRP Executive Board meeting in September after consultation with the VRP partners. The recent government budget did not provide a granular level of detail in terms of funding. However, Diana Johnson, Minister of State for Crime, Policing, and Fire, attended the meeting of the Association of PCCs the previous week, where she acknowledged the request for certainty regarding funding and assured the PCC that further information would be provided as soon as possible. The PCC expected to receive this before the next Executive Board in December. The Chair added that the CSPs were given a three-year settlement from Avon & Somerset that ended in March 2025 and were therefore also waiting to hear whether their funding would be continued.

- The Panel informed the PCC that it was their understanding that a thematic report on knife crime would be submitted to the Panel, and requested assurance that the topic would remain a priority. The many instances of knife crime in Bristol and the Webber case in Nottingham that affected a Taunton-based family meant it was at the forefront of residents' minds in the force area. The Panel suggested that Avon and Somerset should be at the forefront of the national agenda to reduce knife crime by making sure their partnership approach was an example to the nation's forces. The PCC assured the Panel that tackling knife crime featured heavily in Priority 2 of the new Police and Crime Plan. Both the PCC and Chief Constable had been invited to join a new Home Office taskforce that met monthly to focus on knife-enabled robbery and the wider issue of knife crime. The prevention of knife crime was also a focus of the force's partnership work, and the PCC was keen to maintain attention on the subject matter. The Chair added that the recent JTAI highlighted the importance of implementing what had been learned and sharing data where appropriate.
- The Panel questioned how the Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) functioned as an indicator for tackling levels of deprivation and queried how commissioning utilised crime statistics to determine need. With the devolved nature of CSPs, there was a risk that accountability and transparency in this area of work was weakened. The PCC reiterated that she did not have a statutory role in terms of how CSPs operated, but that the OPCC were keen to collaborate, and follow-up from the 2022 Government PCC Review may increase the influence of PCCs in the future.
- The Panel queried the contribution of the force's partners and the capacity delivery models of those that had been commissioned, emphasising the importance of accountability and tangible outcomes. The PCC referenced the examples previously mentioned concerning commissioned mentoring and social skills training schemes that were producing positive results. The OPCC had a direct relationship with the VRPs and monitored the work conducted by the CSPs through the Police and Crime Grant. The OPCC added that, in terms of the SNA, local profiles were developed by analysts in all local areas, which together created an area SNA. In terms of evaluation, the focus of VRPs was prevention, which was a long-term process, and it was important to first identify factors to be tracked, such as the number of young people completing the mentoring and social skills training schemes. There was a significant amount of data that identified need but evaluating the subsequent impact of commissioned services was more difficult due to the devolved models, as their relatively small amount of funding was primarily focused on the issues of prevention and victim services. The Panel were advised to consult Avon & Somerset's commissioning rationale presented at the training session in September for further information on the OPCC's approach.
- The Panel referenced the links between the illicit drug trade and youth knife crime, with young people often being targeted by the drug trade.

The PCC acknowledged the links and emphasised the importance of focusing on this area to protect young people. The OPCC added that the work of the VRP focused heavily on risk factors in the criminal exploitation of young people and how those risks were identified.

The Chair thanked the PCC and OPCC for their responses and requested that the written answers to the questions be shared with the Panel. The PCC agreed and welcomed the focus on preventative and partnership working.

Actions:

- 1. OPCC to circulate the written answers to the questions provided by the Panel.**

8. Panel Feedback – Proactive Scrutiny

The Chair invited Julie Knight and Councillor John Bradbury to present the report.

Julie advised the Panel that she and Cllr Bradbury had been invited to sit on the Police and Crime Plan Advisory Board as representatives of the Panel. The report provided informed the Panel of the Advisory Board's progress and their observations regarding the process. The project was successfully led by the PCC and exceptionally well organised by Sally Fox, Director of Performance and Accountability. The Panel representatives expressed their gratitude to the OPCC for the opportunity to participate on behalf of the Panel and advised that the Advisory Board would continue to meet to oversee the implementation of the Final Police and Crime Plan.

9. Panel Review of the PCC's Draft Police and Crime Plan 2024-29

The Chair invited the PCC and OPCC to present the Draft Police and Crime Plan to the Panel. The following is a summary of the key points made:

- The PCC thanked the members of the OPCC for their support in the creation of the draft Plan, and extended her gratitude to Julie Knight and Cllr John Bradbury for representing the Panel on the Police and Crime Plan Advisory Board, and to the Panel Members for their consultation responses. The PCC advised that the Advisory Board also had representatives from the Constabulary and was joined by an internal steering group.
- The PCC reminded the Panel of the five priorities in the Plan that were outlined at the AGM:
 - Strengthening neighbourhood policing
 - Reducing violent crime (with a specific focus on male violence against women and girls, and serious youth violence)
 - Preventing crime
 - Supporting victims
 - Improving the standards of policing

- These priorities were influenced by the PCC's election manifesto, which correlated with feedback received from the electors. The vision was to have a targeted and focused Plan, with clear desirable outcomes, scope to measure progress, and the ownership of accountability.
- The PCC had placed an emphasis on consultation during the creation of the draft Plan and had used a survey, forums, and targeted channels to engage with as broad an audience as possible across the force area. It was recognised that the audience of the Plan also included Avon & Somerset's partners, its Constabulary, and the OPCC itself.
- This was the first time that a draft Plan was available for consultees to review, which provided clarity to the consultation process. Stakeholder mapping and targeted engagement provided valuable insights that had not previously been received. The governance framework provided clear direction on how the PCC's vision could be met.
- The next stage was to look at how the priorities would be delivered, which partners would be involved, and how progress would be measured. To that end, an Action Plan would be created to accompany the Police and Crime Plan.
- The creation of the previous Plan in 2021 had provided many lessons, including the importance of strong project management. A detailed timeline was therefore created with both static and self-imposed milestones; time for mitigation was also built in. There was a focus on pre-empting risk and problem-solving, and the outcomes of the Equality Analysis helped to steer the direction of the consultation process.
- The five stages in creating the Plan were initiation, planning, designing, implementation, and evaluation. The planning stage was short but thorough because the draft Plan was needed for the consultation process.
- The PCC was keen to use free text response boxes on the survey as opposed to tick boxes or multiple-choice boxes to encourage open dialogue and strengthen the engagement with the public. This was the result of feedback from the Advisory Board for the previous Plan. Ultimately, the survey had 1,111 respondents, which included 174 police employees and 4,987 free text response. All the feedback received was read and analysed in full.
- The chosen approach presented a challenge because it required more complex answers from the consultees, which then demanded more time and resources from the OPCC in order to review them. The survey asked residents for their tangible ideas on how they thought the Plan should be implemented, and not solely what they thought should be included. Furthermore, running the consultation on the Plan and the Precept at the same time added to the complexity of the process.

- The consultation process commenced on 12th August and ended on 21st October. Due to the riots that occurred during the summer, the Constabulary's input was delayed, and the length of the consultation was reduced slightly.
- Many press releases and media interviews took place during this time. There were 27 columns in different publications across the force area, 13 targeted adverts on social media, and 121 social media posts in total. Facebook and Instagram had the strongest engagement therefore there was a particular focus on communication via these platforms. There was a concerted effort to reach underrepresented groups via targeted channels.
- There was internal engagement with the Constabulary, including bulletins, force-wide emails, and intranet blogs. They provided feedback on the draft Plan to ensure it was aligned with their strategic priorities, outcomes, governance, and performance.
- The PCC was keen to reach out to different youth groups, community leaders, faith groups, and rural communities to ensure their voices were heard. Focus groups were held to hear from different voices. Feedback from stakeholders such as Local Authorities and Criminal Justice Agencies was also encouraged.
- The six public forums took place in central locations and at large accessible venues. Attendance at the public forums ranged between approximately 30-55 people. Press releases, posters, and local advertising were used to promote them, as were the social media channels of the venues themselves.
- Communication packs were created for each of the directorates to reach out to their networks and encourage participation in the consultation process. Meetings also took place with key partners such as VRP, CSP, and Public Health leads.
- An evaluation on the public forums would be conducted and the results would be shared with the members of the Advisory Board. Issues that had already been identified included the limited number of forums that took place due to time constraints, the short notice at which some were organised, and the open discussion format which meant some voices were heard more than others.
- The demographic questions in the survey were optional, therefore the data extracted pertained to those who did choose to answer them. All the respondents were over the age of 18, and young people were underrepresented as a whole; a large proportion of respondents were over the age of 45.
- In relation to the force area population, the ethnic group representation exceeded representation in most areas, with the exception of the

underrepresentation of those from mixed ethnic groups. Similarly, those adhering to the Islam faith were underrepresented. Representation was exceeded for those with disabilities.

- In terms of the unitary authority areas, Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire were comparably represented, but Bristol and Somerset were underrepresented, as were those with a Council Tax band of A or B.
- The proportion of those with confidence in the PCC was comparable to the last survey at 26%. The last survey found that 39% of the public had confidence in the police, but this had now declined to 33%.
- Aspects of the draft Plan that were altered as a result of the consultation included:
 - An explanation that male violence against women and girls was so worded because violence disproportionality affected women and girls. It was clarified that male victims would not receive a lesser standard of service.
 - A greater emphasis on primary-level prevention
 - The inclusion of robbery and other theft offences
 - The inclusion of rural crime and rural communities
 - The inclusion of tackling disproportionality in Priority 3
 - A stronger emphasis on serious and organised crime
- Examples of how consultees felt the priorities could be achieved included:
 - Having more police officers
 - Making officers more visible, particularly on foot patrols
 - More contact with and engagement from officers
 - More emphasis on education
 - Engagement with youth clubs
 - More emphasis on Neighbourhood Watch
 - Increased levels of CCTV
 - More thorough processes of police officer recruitment and training
- The next stage of implementation comprised the following:
 - Communications/engagement – addressing the feedback received from the consultation.
 - Action planning – dividing responsibilities and accountabilities between the OPCC, the Constabulary, and the partners, acknowledging that collaboration was essential and cross-over was inevitable. It was the PCC's responsibility that they worked together to ensure the Plan was delivered.
 - Performance monitoring – defining the metrics of success.

The Chair thanked the PCC and OPCC for the presentation and invited questions and comments from the Panel. The following is a summary of the ensuing discussion:

- Detection rates (now referred to as positive outcomes) are a critical factor in the delivery of high standards and a key measure of establishing if policing is being successfully delivered. With positive outcomes of crime low, both nationally and locally, the Panel suggested that improving the detection of crime should be a more prominent issue in the Plan. The OPCC assured the Panel that the detection of crime was woven into the Plan via Priorities 3 and 5.
- The Panel praised the breadth of the consultation and the brevity of the draft Plan. It was important to consider how the priorities would be delivered and the methods of measuring the success of this. The Panel questioned whether there were quantitative and qualitative criteria in place to accomplish this. The PCC acknowledged the importance of having benchmarks against which progress would be measured and assured the Panel that this was part of the next stage of implementation.
- The Panel queried how the number of survey responses compared to previous years, and asked how the number of responses from police officers could be improved. The PCC highlighted that the free text answer boxes in the survey demanded more time and effort from the consultees, therefore the number of respondents was much lower than in previous years. The OPCC stated that anecdotal evidence suggested that police officers were aware that their responses were valuable, but it was clear there needed to be a stronger internal focus to inform them of the role of the OPCC and the importance of responding to the survey.
- The Panel suggested it was important to educate the public on the role of the PCC to encourage them to take part in the consultation. The PCC was cognisant of the lack of public understanding around the role and recognised the importance of building awareness of the significant influence it can have.
- The Panel suggested that, because the public forums only took place in towns and cities in the force area, the rural communities continued to struggle to make their voices heard. Holding public forums online as well as in person could have helped to mitigate this issue. The OPCC acknowledged the on-going challenge of engaging with rural communities and advised the Panel that a public forum focused on rural areas had been planned but could not take place due to scheduling and resource constraints; direct email contact with stakeholders such as rural affairs forums was instead utilised.
- The Panel praised the professionalism of the OPCC at the public forums in the face of some challenging behaviour. The PCC agreed with the Panel and extended her gratitude to the OPCC for their conduct.
- The Panel informed the PCC that it had called for improvements to neighbourhood policing for many years, yet it had seen little tangible

progress. The Panel asked what would be done differently under the new Plan to ensure that positive outcome rates improved. The PCC informed the Panel that the Plan set out the priorities, and that the Action Plan would explain how the priorities would be achieved. Improving neighbourhood policing was a challenge but the need to have targets and measures of success was recognised.

- The Panel raised concerns that although the Neighbourhood Teams had been strengthened, they were still not fully staffed, despite assurances from the Chief Constable that this issue would be rectified. The PCC acknowledged the issue and reassured the Panel that the importance of neighbourhood policing to the local communities was recognised.
- The Panel raised concerns that a Service Level Agreement (SLA) had been signed stating that neighbourhood police officers were only obliged to attend one Local Community Network (LCN) meeting per year. The OPCC undertook to look into this issue. The PCC added that she had attended parish council meetings and listened to concerns regarding the lack of neighbourhood officer attendance. There were 278 parish councils in the Somerset Local Authority area alone, therefore full attendance was very difficult, but it was recognised that the force needed to communicate this. The Panel acknowledged the difficulty of attending all parish council meetings in the force area but advised that Somerset had introduced LCNs in order to bring the 278 parish councils together into 18 groups, making communication with stakeholders easier; the expectation, therefore, was that officers attended all meetings of the LCNs. The PCC agreed to feed this back to the relevant individuals.
- The Panel highlighted that stronger officer attendance at LCN meetings would help the force to engage with both urban and rural communities, enabling them to disseminate information and receive feedback from the residents they serve. The OPCC thanked the Panel for their feedback and advised that the visibility of the police was a dominant theme in the consultation feedback. This would help to influence the content of the Action Plan and the steps taken to overcome the challenges presented by the partnership landscape. The Panel added that Bristol similarly had neighbourhood forums which brought together many stakeholders, and that officer engagement would be beneficial to all involved.
- The Panel acknowledged that the commissioning of services was a key part of the role of PCC, and sought assurance that the services commissioned were done so to meet identified need across the force area, both achieving equality of provision and responding to area-specific requirements. Partners and stakeholders helped to shape what was presented as a need, therefore the influence they have should be monitored carefully. It was important that those in receipt of commissioning maintained a good level of engagement with the force, which could be shown using an area map showing engagement levels

against the needs identified. The PCC thanked the Panel for the suggestion and advised that there would be a review of the reach of the consultation. The team reached out to stakeholders directly and encouraged them to share information with their networks; the responses received were often rich in quality rather than quantity, but they would be invaluable in the creation of the Action Plan.

- The Panel commended the creation of a survey that requested feedback on how the priorities would be delivered and asked for assurance that the Action Plan would be maintained at the strategic level. The PCC advised the Panel that she and the OPCC had worked alongside the Chief Constable and the Constabulary from the beginning to create the Plan, and all were committed to its delivery. The division in responsibilities and what was operational and what was strategic would be determined during the next stage.
- The Panel highlighted the Plan's reliance on sufficient funding and resources to fulfil its objectives. The PCC acknowledged this and advised the Panel that the upcoming Precept process would look to address this. The OPCC added that the demand for resources frequently outstripped their availability. Delivery on the priorities in the Plan was important but was it also imperative to simultaneously respond to the national priorities and HMICFRS recommendations; the finite resources available therefore needed to be utilised in the most effective way possible.
- The Panel questioned whether the OPCC could have commenced the creation of the Plan earlier by starting the consultation process before the PCC was elected; the Plan could be implemented sooner if this had occurred. The PCC advised the Panel that all Commissioners were given the deadline of March 2025 to deliver their Police and Crime Plans. The PCC would be held to account on the content of the Plan; it was therefore important that she oversaw all aspects of its creation.
- The Panel suggested that the prominence of the Neighbourhood Watch in the survey feedback meant residents were keen to support the work of the police force. The PCC advised the Panel that she met regularly with the Chief Constable and there was the recognition that local communities were a crucial partner in the journey towards better policing.

The Chair thanked the PCC and OPCC for the presentation, and the Panel Members for their questions and comments. The Panel had a duty to respond to the draft Plan in the form of a report that would incorporate the feedback provided during the meeting.

10. Commissioner's Update Report

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

11. Performance Monitoring Report

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

12. Standing Complaints Report

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

13. Work Programme

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

14. Date of the Next Meeting

10th December 2024, 10:30am.