



Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel
29th March 2023 at 10.30am
The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton.

Present:

Local Authority and Independent Member Representatives:

Cllr Heather Shearer (Somerset County Council, Chair), Cllr Chris Booth (Somerset West and Taunton Council), Cllr Nicola Clark (South Somerset District Council), Cllr Asher Craig (Bristol City Council), Cllr Peter Crew (North Somerset Council), Gary Davies (Independent Panel Member), Cllr Jonathan Hucker (Bristol City Council), Cllr Janet Keen (Sedgemoor District Council), Julie Knight (Independent Member), Cllr Franklin Owusu-Antwi (South Gloucestershire Council), Cllr Pat Trull (South Gloucestershire Council)

Host Authority/Somerset Council Support Staff:

Patricia Jones – Lead Officer
Jonathan Hallows – Panel Administration Support
Joe Shaun - Council Project Officer

Police and Crime Commissioner and Support Staff:

Mark Shelford – Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
Alice Ripley – Chief of Staff
Joanna Coulon – Scrutiny and Performance Manager
Kirsty Stokes - Senior Policy and Partnerships Manager
T/Detective Chief Inspector Clem Goodwin – Head of Integrated Offender Management

1. Apologies for absence

None.

2. Public Question Time

None received.

3. Declarations of Interest

None Declared.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2023

The minutes were approved as a correct record.

5. Matters Arising

It was noted that a response to actions emerging from the meeting held on 1st February 2023 had been circulated to Panel Members in advance of the meeting.

Precept Report

The Panel drew attention to the Precept Report submitted following the Panel's approval of the Commissioner's Precept proposal on 1st February 2023.

The OPCC's recruitment of a Community Engagement and Stakeholder Manager role was welcomed. The Panel advised the Commissioner that it would be useful to get a level of understanding of the strategy behind the appointment and sought assurances that there was a definitive plan to improve public confidence.

The Commissioner advised that he was not in a position to provide further detail until the appointment was made and the plan was in development. In the meantime, his office would continue to survey and drive good news stories.

The Panel invited the Commissioner to comment on the suggestion that he was reluctant to promote positive Police activity on the basis that this was not the experience of the public. Bravery, successful investigations and long-term commitment in our communities – the promotion of this type of good work would surely resonate with the public?

The Commissioner explained that plans were in place to promote and re-energise the Gallantry Awards, which appeared to have been overlooked over time, and accepted that what happens at local level is not always good news. The Chief of Staff added that promotional work was not being set aside but there was a balance to be achieved. A key part of the role of the new Community Engagement and Manager would be to achieve that balance by way of a communications plan/strategy in engaging with local communities.

Action - a further update on OPCC plans to tackle community confidence to be provided to the Panel's AGM on 27th June 2023.

6. Chair's Business

Commissioning Inquiry Day

The Chair discussed the Commissioning Inquiry day scheduled for 20th April 2023 and confirmed that the OPCC draft Commissioning Strategy would be shared with members in advance of the meeting.

It was noted that the OPCC was happy to address any specific queries or areas of concern in advance of the meeting.

Membership

It was noted that Councillors Keen, Singleton and Booth would be standing down following the elections on 4th May 2023. They were thanked for their sterling contributions to the work of the Panel in recent years.

7. Presentation - Reducing Reoffending/Integrated Offender Management (IOM)

The Commissioner introduced the report which was a follow up to the IOM presentation received by the Panel on 17th March 2022. The Commissioner indicated that he was pleased with progress to date and that a focus on reoffending prevention was capable of driving down crime over time. He highlighted the success of local partnership working in Somerset and opportunities to make cost benefits by the use of technology. Future updates would be provided in the Commissioner's standing report to the Panel.

The Panel received a detailed presentation from Kirsty Stokes, T/Detective Chief Inspector Clem Goodwin and Joe Shaun. Below is a summary of the principal points made:-

- Since the last presentation, consultation around the FLEX cohort with the Local Authorities had continued and numbers were now at 43. Co-location was more efficient, with some issues to work through at Worle and the Bridewell work but otherwise working well. New Offender Managers had been trained and performance measures embedded into systems. Plans were in place to develop Pathways to support IOM managed offenders.

- A communication strategy had been developed to raise the profile of IOM both internally and externally so the right people were being referred into the scheme.
- Data focussing on 187 Fixed Priority Offenders across the Avon and Somerset IOM Scheme suggested that in the year before IOM, 1,439 offences were committed by these offenders, reducing to 524 offences in the year after IOM.
- The adoption of the Home Office performance measure tool Idiom gave the ability to assign a monetary value to an offence type. There was an 80.2% reduction in the cost of offending when offenders were removed from the Cohort, either due to robust policing (an offender returning to prison for a duration of longer than 2 years, so they are removed from the IOM Cohort), or because some individuals have been successfully rehabilitated and are no longer offending.
- Qlik Offender Management App gave the ability to analyse progress and generate a risk score for offenders by way of an algorithm.
- In-house training for IOM was described as excellent, a combination of mentorship, a training pack and competency checklist. The development of a national training package was now in a consultation phase and would provide a standardised national approach to training in future.
- DRIVE perpetrator programme had been successful in addressing domestic violence offenders with much success in South Gloucestershire. A bid had been submitted to the Home Office for funding to enable this to continue and to expand into Bristol and North Somerset.
- Challenges in 2023 included increasing demand on IOM and sex offender management, and responding to a range of recommendations from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). These included reducing the amount of overdue risk management visits and backlog of assessments, and ensuring appropriate enforcement is carried out in line with statutory requirements.
- HMICFRS's assessment of requiring improvement was not the whole picture – the force's use of technology had been commended.
- OPCC Involvement. Two reviews had been undertaken – a local review commissioned by the former PCC in September 2020 and a national review published in December 2020. Both reviews recommended an improvement in the monitoring of the performance of the IOM teams and this work was being supported by the OPCC.

- Also recommended was a greater role of governance over IOM performance.
- Efforts were being made to re-energise the Reducing Reoffending Board with the introduction of an IOM quarterly performance report using data from the Ministry of Justice, Probation, Prison, Youth Offending Service and Local Authorities. This would provide the OPCC and external colleagues with greater visibility of the good work taking place and provide opportunity to discuss challenges and share learning.
- It was reported that excellent work was taking place around IOM in Somerset. The Somerset IOM Project aimed to improve understanding and support for IOM, increase the range and accessibility of support options and identify and implement quick wins, whilst considering long-term development.
- Post Somerset Council's vesting day, an IOM directory specifically curated for the IOM cohort would be launched where key workers can easily access services for specific individuals. Eligibility criteria was clear making assessment easy.
- Using a case study, the Panel was able to see the supervision, victim safety arrangements, monitoring and control, and interventions and treatment applied to a specific offender. A questionnaire provided the ability to track progress and the model allowed assessment using evidence and intelligence, linking support need to services within the area. The Panel noted that delays in accessing support following release from prison was often detrimental and resulted in further offending and custodial sentences.

Below is a summary of the discussion that followed:-

- The Panel queried timescales for the implementation of the national training package, and it was agreed that this would be provided after the meeting.
- How would gaps be addressed in the meantime? It was reported that gaps were few and co-location and a good relationship with probation had helped enormously.
- Last year, the government announced millions in funding to assist offenders in getting drug-free prior to leaving prison. Is this in the pipeline? Members were advised that His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service was recruiting to these roles to work specifically with offenders and link with offender managers. Government funding is also available to strengthen support for women offenders. Kirsty Stokes is a member of the national women offenders working group.

- Is good support reliant on offenders having access to the internet? It was reported that this was no longer the case. Significant numbers were resistant to support and engagement and experience showed that a person face to face approach often worked better. Offender Managers were tasked in identifying what contributed to making an offender unstable.
- The Panel noted that the high harm and Domestic Violence cohorts sometimes overlapped and good communication ensured these links were made department-wise.
- From their own dealings with officers, the Panel felt there was sometimes a lack of understanding about the purpose and intricacies of IOM. Assurances were given that all ASC Offender Managers were suitably trained and issues were picked up through risk scores and awareness pieces. Managers were also being upskilled to plug demand.
- Members raised concern in respect of serious case reviews and the length of time it often took to bring a review to a conclusion. It was emphasised that the need for transparency and openness amongst agencies was paramount.
- The domestic arrangements of a cohort member were also very relevant in the event that children were involved. It was important that links were made with appropriate agencies to ensure safeguarding issues were monitored.
- The Panel enquired if the Idiom performance tool had the ability to aggregate data between male and female. It was agreed that this information would be provided to the Panel.
- Clarification was sought around the DRIVE perpetrator programme in tackling Domestic Violence and driving down reoffending statistics. Where was it being rolled out next and how is this decided? It was reported that DRIVE was a charitable organisation and South Gloucestershire had secured lottery funding to run a pilot. However, there was also the opportunity to submit a funding bid to the Home Office as part of their tackling Domestic Violence strategy. Somerset had just recently commissioned its Domestic Violence services and was committed to this. But Bristol and North Somerset were in the frame if the bid was successful.

In an effort not to lose people, the aim was to expand into Bristol because of its close proximity to South Gloucestershire and postcode implications. The service would be evaluated to ensure it remained effective and the hope was that in 2 years something firm would be in place and not a postcode lottery.

- It was recognised that most women had been offended against before they offend and frequently had no family support. The Panel invited the presenting officers to comment on the approach to convicted male and female offenders. How does this vary? It was agreed that this information would be provided in specific detail at a future meeting.

It was added that responding to women in the criminal justice system was a national issue. Reducing custodial sentences and providing a safe space when in custody to assist with rehabilitation and ensure they were prepared for release was the current focus and this had been highlighted as priority at the local Reducing Reoffending Board meeting.

A recent bid to the Ministry of Justice for a whole systems approach to female offenders in Avon and Somerset has been successful. The Nelsons Trust would be leading this work. A very low number of females were managed under IOM and a bespoke relationship is developed by the manager with the offender, taking into account her background. Eden House, a 26-bed resettlement home in Bristol is designed for women returning to the community after serving time in prison. Alternative provision is available on a demand basis.

- The Panel referred to the PEEL inspection report in the context of improvements and the references to lack of time and capacity. Were sufficient resources were being allocated and if yes, how long would it take to get to a satisfactory level?

It was indicated that vacancies existed but staffing levels were generally good. Multi-skilled managers would assist with increasing capacity to manage sexual offenders. Improvement was anticipated in the next 12 months when all managers would be trained.

The point was made that IOM had secured an injection of staff 12 months ago. The Panel was advised that these were Police Constable Degree Apprentices (PCDA) but more experienced staff were expected soon.

- In terms of cost savings and the overall reduction, this varied significantly percentage wise between the different command units. Was there a reason for this? The Panel was informed that this was due to the limited data set (for example there is a very small cohort in B&NES) and pending a second wave of reporting figures on the IDIOM tool, which over time will provide greater confidence in the data and enable comparison and assurance at a consistent approach across the Force.
- The attention of officers was drawn to page 35 of the report. Specifically, the report of 434 hits of GPS Serious Acquisitive Crime tagged offenders in close

proximity to Serious Acquisitive Crime offences since the start of the pilot in 2021. It was confirmed that this included robbery, burglary and auto crime. The Panel observed that this was a turnaround of 10 people (2.3%) and arguably a lot of work for little return. Was the process sophisticated enough and when would the pilot be evaluated? This could not be confirmed but the deterrent value of wearing a tag was emphasised. It was acknowledged that someone may be legitimately in the area but it was regarded as good corroboratory information nonetheless albeit with limitations.

- On a national basis, how do we know how ASC is doing comparatively in relation to IDIOM data? Officers reported that a national picture comparison was not available but that the Probation Service reported regionally. The revitalised Reducing Reoffending Board would be looking at this in the near future.
- The Panel welcomed the rise in prosecutions for breaches of sexual harm prevention orders (SHPO). Was this a good or bad indicator, was tracking better and what sanctions could be applied? Officers agreed to take this away as an action and provide the information after the meeting.
- The Panel sought further information on the 5 barriers to partnership working identified in the report, including co-location and how this would be mitigated. It was reported that the challenge to co-location was primarily related to vetting and appropriate software was being introduced. It was also noted that without an uplift, the Probation Service had capacity issues, but more statutory offenders were being managed without relying on Probation.
- The report suggested a detailed assessment of demand on IOM resources would be reported in February 2023. Officers confirmed that the analysis was expected imminently. Spreadsheet collation was in the region of 150 additional Police hours.
- The PCC informed the Panel that the Regional Reducing Reoffending Board was very successful and the feasibility of continuing without the local Board had been considered. After pausing the local Board, a decision was taken by partners to reinvigorate it.
- The PCC outlined the work of the Regional Reducing Reoffending Board and highlighted the Prisoner building homes initiative – work was on-going in Bristol around creating a home on church site to provide a wrap around service and divert women from reoffending. Planning permission had been given for the construction.

- Second hand clothes can be donated to prisons and used in the prisoner departure lounge. The PCC asked Panel Members for their support in encouraging donations.
- The Panel asked what plans were in place for improving awareness of the current challenges with the wider Constabulary and noted that an awareness campaign was underway including updates on the Force intranet and input at professional development days.

In conclusion, the Chair emphasised the importance of IOM in the context of improving the quality of life in communities, by both reducing the negative impact of crime and reoffending and reducing the number of people who become victims of crime. She thanked the officers for their time and the detail provided in the presentation.

Action:-

- (1) Timescales for national training package to be provided.**
- (2) Idiom performance tool - aggregated data between male and female to be provided.**
- (3) Difference in approach in dealing with convicted male and female offenders to be provided.**
- (4) Rise in prosecutions for breaches of sexual harm prevention orders (SHPO) – detail to be provided on whether this is a good or bad indicator, was tracking better and what sanctions could be applied.**

8. Commissioner’s Update Report

The Commissioner informed the Panel of the sad news that a longstanding member of the OPCC team had recently passed away following a short illness.

The Commissioner introduced the report, setting out key governance and scrutiny activities and OPCC/national business updates since the last meeting and drawing specific attention to:-

- The Casey Report – which made for difficult reading and had further shaken confidence and trust in the Police. The Panel was assured that the Commissioner and the Chief Constable would not shy away from hard truths.
- The Force was continuing to lead a transformative approach to rape and sexual assault investigations with Operation Bluestone. Tackling disproportionality and discrimination also remained an operational imperative but it was emphasised that culture change takes time.

- Robust oversight and a strong governance approach were key factors in holding the Chief Constable to account. The combined efforts of the Commissioner and the Panel around trust and confidence need to be driven forward.

PEEL report 17th March 2023

- The Panel noted that this was the first substantive HMICFRS inspection in 3 years, a hugely important tool in driving forward performance in the Police service. The Commissioner reported that he was delighted with the Constabulary's grading of "outstanding" for their work in engaging with and treating the public with fairness and respect. However hard work was required to tackle the areas highlighted for improvement - investigating crime, recording data about crime, responding to the public and managing offenders.

A short adjournment followed and the Chief of Staff continued the report as follows:-

- Plans to take forward improvement were underway and a mechanism for monitoring and reporting progress would be developed.
- Areas highlighted for improvement would be scrutinised especially in the broader context of trust and confidence.
- The Constabulary received an outstanding grading for 'engaging with and treating the public with fairness and respect'.
- Two areas graded as "Good" – use of resources, as well as supporting and protecting the workforce.
- Good progress was being made in recruitment through the Police uplift scheme.
- Two areas where ASC was just meeting the required standard – Preventing Crime and ASB and Protecting Vulnerable People.
- Areas Requiring Improvement – responding to the public, investigating crime, managing offenders and crime recording. These were inevitably of concern and will be a focus for ASC and the subject of an improvement plan.
- A Temporary Superintendent has been appointed to oversee the improvement work with oversight from the Chief Officers Group. Leads would be assigned to each strand of improvement.
- The first public update would be provided at the next Performance and Accountability Board meeting. The Panel was strongly encouraged to watch.
- The Commissioner was required to formally respond to the inspection within 8 weeks and this would be shared with the Panel.

Below is a summary of the ensuing discussion:-

- The Constabulary's grading of "outstanding" for its work in engaging with and treating the public with fairness and respect was unanimously welcomed.
- The Panel expressed concern in relation to crime recording which requires improvement to ensure victims receive an appropriate level of service in areas including rape, vulnerable victims and ASB. The Panel discussed the challenge this presented for the Commissioner from a public confidence perspective and in terms of crime data integrity. The Panel made reference to the many assurances from a number of former Chief Constables that an increased Precept would provide the step change needed to specifically drive up performance. Assurances were sought that the historic problem of under-recording would not feature in the future.
- The Commissioner agreed that this aspect of the assessment was disappointing. It was noted that frank discussions had already taken place and monthly updates from the Constabulary would commence.
- The Commissioner was asked if he intended to adopt a different approach/strategy to ensure results were different in the future. The Panel was advised that it was the Senior Leadership Team required reinforcement. An additional ACC has been appointed, allowing ACC Will White to focus on strategic and performance improvement. The PCC assured the Panel that robust conversations had taken place regarding areas for improvement.
- The Panel added that it would be clear to any senior leadership team that the findings of the inspections should be the starting point for moving forward and that the implementation of an action plan and review board mechanism should hold the Constabulary to account at key stages.
- The Panel advised the Commissioner that sound financial management should be the heartbeat of the organisation. The Commissioner stated that ASC had performed well comparatively in this respect.
- The Panel drew attention to the concerns previously relayed to the Commissioner and ASC around DASH reporting and the potential impact of poor reporting on victims. The effect of abstraction on Neighbourhood Policing had also been flagged as a concern. The Panel emphasised that next steps were important for this force.
- The Commissioner was asked how the inspection report stacked up generally against the national picture. It was reported that more forces had been placed in special measures following this round of inspections which essentially meant less

room to manoeuvre going forward. It was agreed that the HMICFRS comparison information would be circulated to the Panel.

- It was noted that two thirds of demand was non-crime related and best practice in other areas had been looked at – specifically the Right Person, Right Care approach led by Humberside. The Commissioner will ensure that learning from this approach is taken on board and the OPCC was reassured by the response that plans are already in place and there were no additional lessons to learn from other forces.
- The Panel emphasised the importance of the whole organisation being sighted on expectations and the extent of the work to be done. It was pointed out that some improvement did not require money but required staff to do what was expected of them. It was recognised that a conversation with staff that the force can be outstanding provided a better context for the improvements needed.
- The Panel requested formal updates on the Commissioner's improvement strategy and monthly meetings with ASC, and this was agreed.
- The Commissioner reported that the inspection lacked continuity and this had been fed this back to the Inspector Wendy Williams. Initially there had been no recognition of Bluestone.

Other Business

- Violence Reduction Units (VRU) – it was noted that recent serious violence guidance leaves much of the shaping and development of VRUs to local authority discretion, with governance and grant allocation sitting with the Commissioner PCCs. Some early scoping with key partners around the potential model for delivery of the duty, indicated that the proposed outputs are close to being met with the Hub and Spoke model already in place for the VRU grant.

Discussions are ongoing with Local Authority VRUs to agree the approach moving forward.

- Independent Custody Visiting Scheme – significant improvements have since been observed following new staff training and their successful integration into the 3 Custody Units. Interviews were underway to increase volunteer numbers.
- Economic and Cyber Crime – the detailed update and significant work around Action Fraud and new website were noted. The Commissioner reported that his work around prevention and local fraud and protect information had now achieved real success.

Below is a summary of the questions and issues raised by the Panel:-

- The Commissioner was asked for more information on the recruitment of Independent Custody Volunteers and if they represented the demographic of the areas they represented. It was noted that recruitment was proving challenging and initial local interest from diverse communities had waned, but the campaign was heading in the right direction.
- Trinity Road Police Station – the Panel noted that the decant process to the Bridewell and Fishponds had started supported by extensive community engagements. It was reported that the new arrangements would be formally in place by 31st August 2023.
- Councillor Forums – it was recommended that these take place as hybrid meetings to improve attendance.
- The Panel discussed public confidence again in the context of Bristol communities and its correlation with the disproportionate use of stop and search and use of force. Councillor Craig also drew attention to the attack on local resident in Horfield and the resulting discontent in Southmead following the death.

The Commissioner reported that Operation Scorpion, a co-ordinated regional effort to proactively disrupt county lines and drug supplies, was into its second day. The next phase would focus on modern slavery. The Panel was informed that instances of stop and search had decreased and the number of justified stops had improved.

- Following the Panel's request for an update on efforts to tackle court backlogs, disappointment was expressed that the numbers had seemingly increased. Details of the average wait time were sought.

Actions :-

- (1) Formal updates on the Commissioner's improvement strategy and monthly meetings with ASC to be provided to the Panel, mechanism to be agreed.**
- (2) Court Backlogs - details of the average wait time to be provided.**
- (3) HMICFRS comparison information to be circulated to the Panel.**

9. Performance Summary – National Police and Crime Measures

The Panel noted the narrative and data provided for Quarter ending December 2022 (Q3 2022/23) against the Government's crime measures and HMICFRS force performance reports.

The Panel drew attention to Bluestone (ASC's response to rape and serious sexual offences) and the length of time the project had been underway. The point was made that there had been a relatively small increase from 5% to 8% in the charging and summons volumes. The Commissioner was asked if Bluestone was proving to be as dynamic as the promises made by the Constabulary.

The Commissioner advised that the Constabulary was justly proud of the small improvement and emphasised the challenges faced in instilling women with the confidence to go through the process.

10. Standing Complaints Report

The Panel noted a report from the Chief of Staff, providing a rolling summary of complaints made against the Commissioner.

11. Date of Next Meeting

27th June 2023 at 10.30am (AGM) at the Deane House, Taunton.

(the meeting ended at 1.30pm)