

Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel

Friday 4 October 2024

PRESENT:

Councillor Haydon in the Chair.

Councillor Worth Vice Chair.

Councillors Alvey, Carson, Chopak, Croad, Hackett, Haydon, Loudoun, Penberthy, Renders, Toms, Tyerman, Worth and Wright.

Barry Jones (Independent Member for Devon).

Apologies for absence: Councillors Ewings, Goodman-Bradbury, Kennedy and Leaver, Thomas, Tilbey and Caroline Jones (Independent Member for Cornwall).

Also in attendance: Jim Colwell (Acting Chief Constable), Tim Evans (Chief Inspector), Alison Hernandez (Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Police and Crime Commissioner), Frances Hughes (Chief Executive of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner), Ross Jago (Head of Governance, Performance and Risk), Felicity Ridgeway (Director of Operations), Unity Stuart (Executive Officer Manager, Zoe Smith (Staff Officer) and, Rosie Brookshaw (Democratic Advisor).

The meeting started at 10.31 am and finished at 12.50 pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the Panel will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

9. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held 19 July 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

10. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

11. **Public Questions**

There were no questions from members of the public.

12. **Appointment of Independent Members for Devon and Cornwall**

Ross Jago (Head of Governance, Performance and Risk) introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) Following a recruitment exercise throughout 2024, Barry Jones and Caroline Jones had been recommended for appointment for the Devon and Cornwall

Police and Crime Panel as Independent Member for Devon and Independent Member for Cornwall respectively.

- b) Mr Jones had a background in accounting and a long career with the BBC. He had also served as a pension trustee.
- c) Mrs Jones was unable to attend the meeting due to being recruited later than Mr Jones. Mrs Jones resided in Hayle and chaired several committees for NHS England, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), the Nursing and Midwifery Council, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) amongst others.

The Panel voted unanimously in favour to appoint Mr Barry Jones as Independent Member for Devon.

The Panel voted unanimously in favour to appoint Mrs Caroline Jones as Independent Member for Cornwall.

13. **Six Month Interim Hotspot Policing Update**

Alison Hernandez (Police and Crime Commissioner) introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) Welcomed Barry Jones as the Independent Member for Devon;
- b) Introduced the Acting Chief Constable Jim Colwell and Chief Inspector Tim Evans;
- c) The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) had received £1 million from the previous Government to tackle anti-social behaviour, specifically through hotspot policing;
- d) The money received was used for overtime for Police Officers to do high visibility patrols;
- e) £200,000 had been added from OPCC reserves to enhance Local Authority support through Street Marshals;
- f) Hotspot policing was a programme of £1.2 million and the areas identified were done in consultation with the police based on statistics and knowledge of the specific areas;
- g) Tim Evans (Chief Inspector) was appointed to oversee the programme;
- h) The areas in receipt of the funding were listed in the report.

Jim Colwell (Acting Chief Constable) added:

- i) The impact of serious violence could have a large impact within communities in terms of sense of safety and people feeling safe in their own home,

workplaces and going about their business;

- j) The levels of serious violence in Devon and Cornwall were less than other forces throughout the country;
- k) Every incident of serious violence had a lasting impact on communities;
- l) Devon and Cornwall Police were often rightly challenged about how they were dealing with issues of anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Tim Evans (Chief Inspector) added:

- m) The grant funding from the Government and the funding from the Commissioner enabled the force to enhance a partnership offer across Devon and Cornwall;
- n) The project was delivered into 13 areas, which were split into two tiers. Tier One areas had gained police patrols and partnership patrols in the form of Street Marshals. Tier Two areas gained funding for Street Wardens only;
- o) The patrol methodology fit into a wider piece of work which aimed to tackle serious violence and ASB;
- p) Although a large part of the funding had gone towards delivering highly visible foot patrols, some of the funding had been channelled into enhancing the force's problem solving in selected areas;
- q) The patrol methodology was a tried and tested one and was based on national and international evidence;
- r) The evidence for the patrol methodology was largely based on university-led trials, led by Oxford University and other notable universities;
- s) Although in Devon and Cornwall the methodology was being used to drive down serious violence and ASB, it had been used in other areas to drive down drug dealing and other crime types;
- t) The methodology showed that a patrol was needed in an area once every three days for 15 minutes;
- u) Evidence suggested that 15 minutes was the amount of time police officers or Street Marshals needed to be present for most people within the geography to see them;
- v) Funding had allowed Devon and Cornwall Police to prime the methodology and create more visibility than the methodology suggested;
- w) Devon and Cornwall Police had the ability to deliver the methodology without the funding, however the funding had allowed them to deliver more

over the past six months;

- x) Although displacement could happen, it was evident that the methodology was proven to affect 'volume crime' and the public seeing police officers or Street Marshalls would deter them from committing crimes;
- y) A study in the US showed although the patrol was in the middle of the area, there was a net benefit to the areas surrounding the patrol;
- z) The ask from police officers and Street Marshalls was to engage with members of the public, businesses and vulnerable people and to gather intelligence;
- aa) The officers and Marshalls were not there to make arrests, however this was a by-product of the patrols and they were present when crimes were committed;
- bb) Officers and Marshalls needed to be visible to speak to people, to be the face of policing within the area and ensure that the public aware that there is a consistent police presence;
- cc) The 13 areas across Devon and Cornwall had been selected as the patrols needed to go where they would have the most benefit within communities which were suffering with the highest levels of crime, serious violence and ASB;
- dd) The legacy plan was to roll the methodology out force-wide in the coming year;
- ee) At the start of 2024, serious violence and ASB figures were combined and mapped to select the areas which needed support;
- ff) Further temporal analysis was undertaken to understand when offences were happening during times of the day, days of the week and months of the year;
- gg) The data was checked through the Cambridge Harm Index which was a nationally recognised system;
- hh) Police officers were tracked through their radio handsets for command and control purposes, and the patrol methodology aided in ensuring the patrols were precise;
- ii) The patrols had been put in place to show the Home Office that the methodology is being delivered as expected, and enabled the force to define the patrols and work with Street Marshalls and officers to improve the way that they patrol;

- jj) 25,000 members of the public had been engaged with during the patrols during August and September 2024;
- kk) There had been over 600 intelligence logs from Street Wardens and officers which included members of the public giving information around who was committing offences, where the offences were happening, where drugs were being dealt and, who was assaulting who;
- ll) Patrols included premises visits;
- mm) Over 100 arrests had been made alongside a significant number of stop searches;
- nn) Over 300 ASB incidents had been attended by officers and Street Marshalls;
- oo) Street Marshalls cost less than Police officer's, and members of the public, specifically vulnerable members of the public, would speak to Street Marshalls when they might not have spoken to a Police officer;
- pp) Work had gone into how the methodology was communicated to the public including utilising traditional media such as BCC News, and producing maps to inform the public where patrols had taken place;
- qq) Community feedback had been gathered through officers and DC Alert which was the community messaging system, allowing members of the public to rate the patrols and provide feedback;
- rr) Evidence from partnership patrols and police patrols was shared with local partnerships, the public and the Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel;
- ss) Problem solving plans had been developed within the 13 focus areas to resolve issues that were present;
- tt) Street Marshalls were using the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) which would give them the power to demand names of people causing ASB;
- uu) Within 12 months there would be a self-service tool which would enable the force to map local hotspot areas and direct officers, with accuracy, to patrol them.

In response to questions, it was explained:

- vv) Officers were aware they were tracked, and the information was used as a learning tool;
- ww) Street Marshalls were tracked with a physical box which was on their person, rather than the radios which were used for tracking Police officers;

- xx) Location data through radios had been used for a number of years in misconduct investigations;
- yy) Clear parameters were put in place regarding tracking of officers and Marshals;
- zz) There was a broader initiative for Devon and Cornwall Police to increase the number of arrests being made, an example was the arrest rate around domestic abuse which had increased from a percentage of mid-thirties to 51%;
- aaa) The Criminal Justice System was struggling with the demand, and had been struggling before the funding had been introduced for hotspot policing;
- bbb) The addition of hotspot policing only added minor pressure to the Criminal Justice System as the overall pressure was from the national policing push for more arrests;
- ccc) Funded Police patrols were introduced in Penzance over the Summer 2024, and due to the positive impact, the local sector Inspector was delivering the patrols as part of their business as usual;
- ddd) Hotspot policing would not negatively affect response times to incidents;
- eee) Police in the West Midlands had used the patrol methodology in 2008, showing its historical success. More recently, there was a trial across six forces in 2023, and the grant funding received from the Home Office was given to all forces across the UK, meaning Devon and Cornwall were part of a larger network rolling out this methodology;
- fff) Biddeford was classed as a Tier Two area, and so was entitled to partnership patrols only;
- ggg) The OPCC had sent an engagement van to hotspot areas to engage with the public on how to report ASB and other criminal activity to the police;
- hhh) The new Government was focussed on trying to improve public confidence in policing.

The Panel agreed to note the report.

14. **Public Engagement and Contact**

Alison Hernandez (Police and Crime Commissioner) introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- a) Acting Chief Constable Jim Colwell had been active in driving the improvement in public contact.

Jim Colwell (Acting Chief Constable) added:

- b) In 2022 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) labelled the 999 and 101 service as inadequate;
- c) In September 2024, HMICFRS discharged their concerns around the Devon and Cornwall 999 and 101 service;
- d) The improvement in the service had been delivered through a range of leadership and management interventions within the contact resolution centre;
- e) Although new technology had taken a long time to come online, when it was implemented it transformed the service that was offered to the public;
- f) The focus had been on process and stripping out less effective bureaucratic processes, leadership management and performance culture;
- g) There were control rooms and contact centres in Exeter and Plymouth, at which 999 and 101 call management was handled;
- h) 13 Police Enquiry Offices had opened since 2020, with four more due to open in 2024 in Ivybridge, Liskeard, Exeter and Tavistock;
- i) There was high digital demand being submitted through the online portal;
- j) At its worst, there were in excess of 3000 emails waiting to be responded to, and the average response time was 18 days;
- k) Devon and Cornwall Police had worked with the private sector on how they manage core handling challenges and well as alongside best performing forces nationally, including Humberside;
- l) The introduction of call-backs had been effective at reducing wait times for the 101 service;
- m) Other improvements included:
 - i) A new performance network for the command;
 - ii) Enhanced training for supervisors and staff;
 - iii) Different shift patterns to align resource to demand more effectively;
- n) There was a national endeavour to bring a consistent website offering to all 43 forces;
- o) The Police Enquiry Offices strengthened the connection to local communities and provided the space and time for face to face contact;

- p) Due to investment in digital demand resources, Police Enquiry Offices could now deal with online queries when not handling face to face enquiries;
- q) The HMICFRS published an assessment in January 2023, using rolling three month data from November 2021 to January 2022, showing Devon and Cornwall Police were only successfully answering 85% of 999 calls within ten seconds, with an average wait time of 13 seconds. The national service level agreement was for forces to hit 90% of 999 calls answered within 10 seconds;
- r) Current performance of Devon and Cornwall Police showed 93% of 999 calls were answered within 10 seconds, with an average wait time of 5 seconds;
- s) In the latest published data, Devon and Cornwall Police was ranked 16th nationally, with 30,000 999 calls answered in August 2024;
- t) Between November 2021 and January 2022, only 47% of 101 calls were being answered within the self-imposed target of 20 minutes, with seven out of ten calls being abandoned due to wait times;
- u) Current performance showed that over 90% of 101 calls were being answered within 20 minutes, with an average wait of seven minutes;
- v) Since the call-back function had been introduced there had been 26,000 requests, with a success rate of 98.1%;
- w) In August 2023, the average wait time for a 101 call was 40 minutes. This was now currently less than five minutes;
- x) In August 2023 the average wait time for a response to an email was 19 hours, this had now been reduced to less than 9 hours, with 93% of emails being answered within 24 hours.

In response to questions, it was explained:

- y) There were no concerns that the performance of 999 and 101 services could not be maintained;
- z) Although they were policed differently, rural communities were just as important to Devon and Cornwall Police as urban communities;
- aa) The data used in the HMICFRS PEEL Report from July 2024 dated back to the Summer of 2022, which was why it stated Devon and Cornwall Police were still in 'special measures'. This had been challenged and HMICFRS has completed another audit which had shown sustained and sustainable performance uplifts;
- bb) Positive communications had been released around the positive change in 101 service, which had seen an increase in calls to the 101 service;

- cc) Thanks were given to Assistant Chief Constable Nikki Leaper and Head of Contact Services Dan Thorogood for their support to the Acting Chief Constable in elevating the 999 and 101 performance;
- dd) The online contact function for Devon and Cornwall Police could be found on their digital contact portal;
- ee) There were 300 visits a day to Police Enquiry Offices throughout Devon and Cornwall.

The Panel agreed to note the report.

15. **Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025 Scorecard**

The Panel agreed to take the report as read.

In response to questions, it was explained:

- a) There had been positive feedback from elements of the community in Plymouth in terms of how the policing operation played out, and the subsequent partnership work with the Local Authority, in relation to the riots on 5 August 2024;
- b) Jim Colwell had held conversations with the Leader and the Chief Executive of Plymouth City Council around recovery and social resilience in light of the riots;
- c) The Police had a role to play in the safety in towns, cities, workplaces, homes and places of worship in partnership with other public sector organisations and agencies;
- d) Feedback had shown that people who reported hate crime specifically were satisfied with the level of service they received;
- e) The people convicted from the riots on 5 August 2024, were convicted of public disorder rather than hate crime;
- f) Thanks were given to Plymouth for their response to the riots, and had shown great examples of integration of communities;
- g) £1 million a year was used for the Serious Violence Prevention Partnership, however statistics had shown that even with the work around early prevention, something different needed to happen to promote positive change;
- h) The report in deaths due to road traffic collisions could be delayed due to how long after the collision the person passed away;

- i) Recent statistics had shown there was a reduction in deaths and serious injuries from road traffic collisions;
- j) A range of performance figures were reviewed by the OPCC quarterly.

The Panel agreed to note the report.

16. **Police and Crime Commissioners Update Report**

Alison Hernandez (Police and Crime Commissioner) introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- a) Operation Garcia had been undertaken and was composed of the arrests and conviction of the rapists of young girls in Plymouth;
- b) Operation Garcia started in 2017, and now in 2024 the young girls effected where getting justice;
- c) Thanks were given to the policing effort in believing the victims, the Rotherham documentary which helped young girls identify what had happened to them, and the victim support service at Barnardos who helped the victims throughout the years and enabled those women to get the justice they deserved;
- d) The online resource of Criminal Justice and You was available to help victims and members of the public understand the Criminal Justice System;
- e) The OPCC had commissioned a new contract for independent sexual violence advisors and domestic violence advisors;
- f) A joint piece of scrutiny between the Crown Prosecution Service and Devon and Cornwall Police identified challenges around reporting crime and a number of recommendations were made to the Acting Chief Constable and Crown Prosecution Service.

In response to questions, it was explained:

- g) The investigation into the Chief Constable was still being undertaken by the Public Prosecution Service in Northern Ireland.

The Panel agreed to note the report.

17. **Non-Criminal Complaints against the Commissioner**

There had been one complaint about the Police and Crime Commissioner during the period covered in the report, which had been escalated to the Chair of the Police and Crime Panel.

18. **Action Log**

The Panel agreed to note the action log.

19. **Work Programme**

The Panel agreed to note the report and the following additions were suggested for the work programme:

- I. Rural Affairs and Wildlife Crime.