

Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel

Friday 7 February 2020

PRESENT:

Councillor Batters (Cornwall Council), in the Chair.
Councillor Haydon (Plymouth City Council), Vice Chair.
Councillors Atherfold (Cornwall Council), Biederman, Croad (Devon County Council), Derrick (Plymouth City Council), Dewhirst (Teignbridge District Council), Fairman (Cornwall Council), Hackett (Torrige District Council), Hopwood (South Hams District Council), Howgate, Jarvis (East Devon District Council), Knowles (Mid Devon District Council), Samuel (West Devon Borough Council), Sutton (Exeter City Council) and Towill (Cornwall Council)

Apologies for absence: Councillors Macaulay (Independent Member), Nelhams (Isles of Scilly) and Rule (Cornwall Council)

Also in attendance: Also in attendance: Nicky Allen (Chief Finance Officer/Treasurer, OPCC), Fran Hughes (Chief Executive, OPCC), Alison Hernandez (Police and Crime Commissioner), Shaun Sawyer (Chief Constable), Claire Daniells (Senior Governance Advisor) and Jo Heather (Cornwall Council).

The meeting started at 10:30am and finished at 3pm.

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.

101. **Minutes**

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner proposed several amendments to the minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2019.

Following a discussion, Councillor Hackett proposed and Councillor Haydon seconded that these minutes be reviewed.

102. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Dewhirst declared a personal interest in relation to Kingskerswell Community Speedwatch.

103. **Public Questions**

There were no questions from members of the public.

104. **Proposed Precept, Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2020/21 - 2023/24**

The Police and Crime Commissioner, Alison Hernandez introduced the proposed Precept, Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2020/21-2023/24.

The report considered the future four-year financial position for the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable and presented the Commissioners Council Tax Precept recommendation for 2020/21.

The Commissioner highlighted:

- The continuing efforts to ensure grant allocation from government was maximised;
- That there is now greater political certainty following the recent General Election, which provides greater financial certainty as a Police Force;
- The changing dynamic to policing with more officers on the front line bringing new ways of thinking about being more digitally connected and mobile;
- The Chief Constables four-year strategy to change the mix of the skills within the force.

The commissioner presented a short video to the panel and highlighted the collaborative work that has been undertaken, including the opening of new office in Exeter and a transformation of the way people work and the culture within the Police force.

The Commissioner also highlighted:

- The recent award presented to Devon and Cornwall Police for its partnership with Operation Encompass, a scheme supporting children affected by Domestic Abuse – this award reflects that effective modern day policing requires partnership and collaboration. The Commissioner thanked members of the panel for their work with local schools;
- The high expectations amongst our communities in terms of how policing is delivered – an additional 126 officers will be in place by the end of March 2020;
- That if the full uplift is received from government then new recruits will make up a third of our police service – a recruitment of over 900 new officers over the past few years;
- The blue light responders introduced to increase visible presence in rural and coastal communities; this includes four Police Fire Community Support Officers in North Devon and seven Community Responders (Special Constables combined with Retained Fire Officers);
- The introduction of the Rural Crime Team to Devon and Cornwall;
- The cutting edge technology employed by the force, including drones and tasers, bodycams and the digital dogs;
- The enabling of over 250 new CCTV cameras in our towns;
- Current crime prevention initiatives including:
 - Pathfinder, a deferred caution scheme;

- Collaborations with criminal justice partners through supported accommodation and life skills for ex-offenders;
- Access to a network of organisations for victims, including services specifically for young victims of crime who often do not feel empowered to report their experiences;
- Specialist services for victims of criminal violence;
- Road safety and Operation Snap;
- The new Peninsula Road Safety Partnership, a collaborative approach to reducing deaths on our roads;
- The continuing work to tackle modern slavery and human trafficking
- Violent crime in the peninsula is on the increase, with 40% of recorded crimes including acts of violence – there is a need therefore to tailor the policing approach to the particular attributes of this part of the country. The challenges of the summer in particular were the basis for the application to the special grant bid to Government, a decision on this bid is pending;
- It is anticipated that Maritime Policing will be a focus going forward and has seen investment in blue light collaboration to protect our coastline;
- The proposal is to expand the blue light fund to a capacity of to 40 blue light officers in total;
- There has been a £200k investment in front offices to give residents the support they expect;
- £50k has been allocated to investigating the capacity in the two call centres as the number of calls from the public is increasing;
- The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner had over 10,000 conversations with the public last summer, the top ask was for crime prevention, both tackling crime and preventing crime;
- It is proposed to develop a crime prevention centre which will bring together a broad range of people, building on police experience of neighbourhood policing and taking an approach that will have a whole population focus. This will build on the key successes of the turning corners project;
- £1m of investment is also proposed to address serious violence prevention, focussing on root causes and tackling adverse childhood experiences.

Nicola Allen, Treasurer and Chief Finance Officer of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner then provided a presentation to the Panel.

This highlighted:

- Headline figures of an increase of £1.1 billion funding into policing;
- £750m for the recruitment of officers
- £248m council tax flexibility
- £90m increase in the Counter Terrorism Grant
- The budget requirement for 2020/21 is £332.3m;
- Staffing is the main area of expenditure – 82% of the overall budget;
- Pay & inflation pressure of £9.5m;
- £9.36 increase (Band D) equates to 4.41%;
- Reserves set to decrease by £12.6m over the MTFS to fund the Capital Programme;

- The Capital Strategy will be made available on the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioners website;
- The Section 151 Officer confirmed that this was a robust and sustainable budget.

The Police and Crime Panel discussed:

- That there was much to commend in the budget, recognising some of the ground breaking achievements in Devon and Cornwall Police and welcomed the public health approach in particular;
- The additional 141 officers from the uplift were welcomed but the gap between services delivered in Devon and Cornwall were still widening compared to more metropolitan areas of the country;
- Why the proposed precept was not at the maximum allowable and whether this might undermine the summer policing bid;
- The panel highlighted that the commissioning budget for drug and alcohol abuse and sexual violence had flatlined and that increasing the precept could have a positive impact on the ability to provide the public health approach;
- The increase in instances of violent crime and that whilst overall crime rates in the region are the third lowest overall in the country, incidents with violence and injury are above national average;

The Police and Crime Commissioner highlighted:

- That raising the precept to the maximum allowable would seem an easy option but the potential impact of this increase on communities would be of concern;
- That the Community Safety Partnership has been maintained but there are ways that this could be done differently and the £1m aforementioned investment would be of help – it is about spending well rather than asking for maximum rise possible;
- In respect of the Summer Policing Bid, it is unlikely that any additional funds would be available soon, there is therefore a need to be innovative in what we do;

The Panel discussed:

- The net gain in terms of officers which was cited as 76;
- That the South Hams and West Devon Council Tax figures include the Devon County funding and that this should be separate;
- Concerns over the continuing reduction in the number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) and the importance of this role as a vital link, especially in rural communities. The panel felt that they are a visible and reassuring presence that increases public confidence in the police and increases engagement with local communities. The panel questioned whether a higher precept could be used to fund additional PCSO's

The Commissioner responded:

- That there is an issue overall in terms of levelling up funding for the whole of the South West;
- That Plymouth has the highest crime rate across Devon and Cornwall and this is why the proposal to bring the knife angel sculpture to the city was made, but that this was declined by the City Council;
- That the budget on taking up the post as Police and Crime Commissioner was set from the previous year and involved reductions in police officer numbers which were overturned and therefore there are an additional 126 officers funded not 76.
-

The Police and Crime Panel highlighted:

- The excellent work of the police force in Plymouth and the low prevalence of knife crime in the City – it was felt the knife angel sculpture would not therefore be appropriate;
- The assumptions made in the budget on additional funding and what would happen if this did not materialise;
- That the accommodation strategy does not reference Plymouth despite previous assurances and the very tired facilities in the City.
- The perceived lack of consultation with the public on the proposed precept.

The Police and Crime Commissioner highlighted that:

- Police Community Support Officers are more expensive to fund than Police Officers;
- That the issues with the estate in Plymouth were recognised and discussions were underway with the Leader of the Council but funding will need to be sought;
- That workforce allocation is moved dynamically across the region according to a range of criteria.

The Chief Constable, Shaun Sawyer highlighted that:

- PCSO's are part of the operating model for the duration of his tenure and indeed, Police Officers have left the force in part to protect funding for PCSO's;
- The initial reductions of PCSO's were financially driven – funding from central government to increase police officer numbers via Operation Uplift cannot be used for PCSO's;
- The need to operate within the financial plan whilst it is important to keep the effect of PCSO's, this needs to be flexible – it is about commitment to the role and the value this can bring, not to the term 'PCSO.'

The Panel took a vote to exercise its power of veto on the proposed Precept, Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

For (12)

Against (2)
Abstain (1)

The Panel therefore did not exercise its power of veto as the threshold of two thirds of the total membership of the panel required to exercise a veto was not reached.

105. **Police and Crime Commissioner's Update Report**

The Panel noted the Police and Crime Commissioner's Update Report.

106. **Devon and Cornwall Police's Approach to Rural Crime**

The Panel noted the report on the Devon and Cornwall Police approach to Rural Crime.

107. **Delivery of the Road Safety Strategy and National Update**

The Panel noted the report on the Delivery of the Road Safety Strategy and National Update.

108. **Office of The Police and Crime Commissioner's Performance Report**

The Panel noted the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Performance Report.

109. **Complaints Against the Police and Crime Commissioner Received Under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act**

The Police and Crime Panel noted the report on Complaints against the Police and Crime Commissioner.

110. **Future Work Programme (discussion)**

The Police and Crime Panel agreed to discuss the future Work Programme at a later date.

111. **Future meeting dates**

The Police and Crime Panel agreed the future meeting dates as follows:

- Friday 03 July 2020
- Friday 14 August 2020 (workshop/training day)
- Friday 25 September 2020
- Friday 20 November 2020
- Friday 29 Jan 2021
- Friday 12 Feb 2021