

Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel

Friday 28 January 2022

PRESENT:

Councillor Towill, in the Chair.

Councillor Salmon, Vice Chair.

Councillors Alvey, Atiya-Alla, Brown, Cheadle, Dewhurst, Fairman, Hackett, Knowles, Mrs Pengelly, Sellis, Tilbey.

Co-opted Representatives: Sharon Minty

Also in attendance: Alison Hernandez (Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner), Nicola Allen (Treasurer and Chief Finance Officer for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner), Frances Hughes (Chief Executive for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner), Felicity Ridgway (Director of Operations for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner), Ross Jago (Head of Governance, Performance and Risk) and Jake Metcalfe (Democratic Support Advisor).

The meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 13:07 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.

73. Minutes

The minutes from 12 November 2021 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

74. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

75. Public Questions

Q: “Given that D & C Police have spent a considerable amount in being an inclusive organisation can the PCC tell me what initiatives she has taken to ensure that her office reflects the communities she serves in, actual proof not straplines.”

Alison Hernandez, Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner gave the following response:

- Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly is an area of great diversity. The 2011 census numbers showed low numbers of non-white British residents (at 5%) but I know that this will have changed in recent years and I am awaiting the results of the 2021 census. But the diversity of our communities is not about ethnicity alone, we

also need to acknowledge the diversity in age, disability, sex, orientation, and lifestyles across such a large geographic area.

- My role is to represent the people that I serve, and I do this by ensuring that my office reflects our communities in everything we do. I work closely with the Chief Constable and on this, and my Police and Crime Plan includes specific commitments to ensure that we reflect our communities needs in the way we work and thrive in diversity, and to champion community cohesion and tackle hate crime.

Policy and Commissioning

- My team uses a range of tools to ensure evidence-based policy making that reflects the needs of our communities.

This includes:

- Demographic data about our communities
 - Qualitative feedback through surveys and focus groups
 - Feedback from your correspondence
 - Engagement with representatives of specific communities such as business networks, farming networks, faith groups, as well as groups representing those with protected characteristics.
- I ensure that, where appropriate, I include representatives from different diverse groups and communities on decision making and policy development boards and groups to inform my work and that of my team.
 - In addition we also have a lived experience advisor scheme where community members can use their experience of the criminal justice system to effect change and work with us to co-design new service responses.
 - I use this data and evidence to develop plans, policies and inform our commissioning, and specific impacts on those with protected characteristics are carefully analysed through Equality Impact Assessments.
 - In my Commissioning it is essential that I reflect and meet the needs of our communities. This is done through commissioning needs assessments, equality impact assessments and engagement and consultation with people who will use our service. Currently, our victim care provision provides specialist support for all protected characteristics, including age, ethnic background, sexuality, gender and disability.
 - Through our new victim care contract with Victim Support we have just established two new victim care services for people with disabilities and those from a minority ethnic background which were two known gaps in local provision in Cornwall.

Public engagement

- In addition to using data and listening to our communities in policy making and planning, my team undertakes significant work to ensure that we keep our diverse communities up to date on what we are doing, and that they know how to contact

me if they need to. This includes ensuring that hard to hear communities are notified of opportunities to engage in community engagement exercises.

- The office has a strong social media presence, and we have significantly increased our reach and numbers of followers in recent years, with a total of 16,064 followers (January 20, 2022)
- In 2019 my communications and engagement team attended a significant number of diverse community events and funded Torbay's first Into the Mix diverse community festival. Covid-19 severely limited the number of these types of event that were held in Devon and Cornwall, although we remained committed to supporting, and in some cases funding, diverse communities events when they did take place or took place virtually. These included Cornwall Pride, Crediton Diversity Festival, Plymouth Pride and the Plymouth Respect Picnic In the Park.
- Of particular concern is the challenge facing policing organisations in relation to engaging younger age groups. My team have been working with the force on a youth engagement strategy which will assist me in ensuring the views of young people are better taken into account.
- I also am extremely grateful to my 371 Councillor Advocates who represent the people of their communities, and help my office reach a greater number of people and once again would like to encourage all Panel members to join us as an Advocate and encourage their colleagues to do the same.

Recruitment

- Representation in recruitment is also an important part of reflecting our communities. As part of the uplift programme we have seen an increase in under-represented groups joining as police officers since the introduction of the Positive Action Strategy. However, the number of police officers from minority ethnic backgrounds is not yet reflective of our diverse communities.
- Devon and Cornwall Police is one of the largest employers in the area and has clear and transparent recruitment processes. My office shares the recruitment process with the force. My office employs around 30 full time equivalent members of staff, who are mostly Devon or Cornwall residents. My team come from a variety of backgrounds, including from across the UK and international citizens.
- I will not be commenting on individual protected characteristics of my staff, but am pleased that my team reflect diversity of sex and age. However, I recognise that more can be done to increase representation of colleagues from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- I have recently introduced two new apprentice posts which have been filled by local people from the 18-24 age range. I have also recently welcomed two new graduates from the local area into my Policy team. I am also proud to currently have in place an all-female executive management team.

- My office offers a range of flexible working policies to increase inclusivity, and we promote new opportunities across a range of channels to attract the widest range of applicants, including targeting representative bodies of underrepresented and harder to reach communities.

Question 2

Q: Can the panel seek assurances to the question I asked on 9 July 2021 that an update will be provided and if not be directed to where those updates can be found? Will the items raised be featured on the work programme and would the panel give some notification?

A:

- On 9th July 2021 Cllr Singh raised his concern that as a British Sikh who is proud of his identity he was not able to record his ethnicity as Sikh when recording a hate crime, rather than as a religion, which is an option within current national reporting frameworks.
- I answered this question in full in July and since then there have been no changes to national systems and therefore my response remains as given at that time.

76. **Precept Proposal for 2022/23, Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan Update**

Alison Hernandez, Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner introduced the item and made the following key points:

- a) The Force hosted an outstanding Policing and security operation at the G7 Summit in Cornwall;
- b) Had operated during the busiest point in the summer due an increase in the number of staycation holidays;
- c) Provided immediate response and support following the tragic events in Keyham in August 2021;
- d) The Police force had dealt with 956,306 requests for help and 20,023 victims of crime that required extra support. 18,668 detainees within the Police force's care;
- e) There had been an increased recruitment drive within the service;
- f) The Commissioners priorities included drugs, anti-social behaviour, serious violence and road safety;
- g) Vision zero has been implemented in the region with the aim of reducing road deaths on the roads of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly to zero within twenty years. £2.5 million had been ring-fenced to spend on safety initiatives;

- h) Since the Police and Crime Commissioner, Alison Hernandez started her role in 2016, this would be the first time in which the Police received a three year settlement, enabling the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to plan more effectively and allow for a more strategic and sustainable approach in managing the overall budget;
- i) The commissioner advised the Panel, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner would be seeking the maximum precept due to the increased volatility and economic hardship. This increased volatility would see greater levels of domestic violence and acquisitive crime. The Commissioner requested the Panel to accept the full precept of 4.23% which would equate to £1 per month on a Band D property when paid over 10 months. This would strengthen, stabilise and sustain the Force for the future;
- j) The Commissioner expressed her desire to keep Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly as one of the lowest crime rate areas in the country, whilst ensuring that Police officers are visible and accessible to communities in the region;
- k) The Precept would bring the total number of officers from 1.8 officers per 1,000 population in 2016 to 2.2 per 1,000 population in 2022. The Force would have 3,610 officers which was recognised to be more than pre-austerity numbers and more than at any point in the Force's history;
- l) Less than half of respondents to the budget had confidence in policing, however 85% expressed a desire for an increase in the number of police stations open to the public. Women felt under served by policing due to the low conviction rate of rape and sexual offences.

Nicola Allen, Treasurer and Chief Finance Officer presented a presentation to the Panel and highlighted the following key points:

- a) Should the full £10 increase be taken in 2023/24 this would represent an increase of 4.06% on the Council Tax with a 3.9% increase on Council Tax for 2024/25 which would be subject to agreement at future Police and Crime Panels;
- b) Following 2022/23 there would be a significant decrease in the level of grant funding, this indicated a combination of Council Tax and Grant funding would be required in order to fully fund the budget in future years;
- c) Within the provisional settlement for 2022/23, £550 million would be provided for policing with £135 million ring-fenced and subject to the achievement in the national uplift in Officers. 188 officers would be recruited in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly as part of the national uplift. Within the £550 million was a £80 million efficiency built into the budget. The Provisional settlement assumed £244 million from

the precept. Overall the settlement would provide an increase of 5.3% in funding.

- d) Pay awards would resume for the force following a pay freeze and this would take effect from 1 September 2022;
- e) Continuation of the pension funding had been agreed in 2019/20 which equated to £153 million nationally and £3.3 million for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.
- f) Capital Grant funding would cease, national funding of £12.3 million was allocated to capital grant, for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly this had meant a reduction in funding of just under £300,000;
- g) There would be a budget requirement for 2022/23 of £371.6 million; a Capital Programme of £70 million over four years; increased funding of £21.9 million or 6.3%; Funding provided for the final phase of the national officer uplift; staffing equated to 84% of the overall budget; there would be pay and inflation pressure of £10.1 million and a £10 or 4.23% in the proposed council tax increase for Band D properties in the region;
- h) There would be a further deficit to be paid for 2022/23 of £863,000; there had been a net surplus of £1 million due to the increased Council Tax base which had been up by 2.34%;
- i) The Reserves Strategy had set the framework and outlines risks. This was reviewed by the independent audit committee who recommended approval for the commissioner which had been done;
- j) Financial risks for the budget included inflation, the resumption of pay awards, COVID-19 pandemic, review of the funding formula and centrally driven ICT programmes;
- k) Inflation continued to be a significant risk for the budget, CPI rates for November were recorded at 5.1% which was compared with 0.3% for November 2020. Electricity had been forecast to see an increase of 31% equivalent to £500,000; gas increase of 95% or £400,000; Fuel 28.5% or £500,000; construction workers availability had been at an all-time high across the construction field coupled with a shortage in construction materials. There had been an increase of 17.5% on construction materials which was causing complications for the Force in terms of planned maintenance and elements of the capital programme;

Members discussed and debated the precept.

Councillor Towill proposed to agree the precept with the following recommendations, this was seconded by Councillor Salmon:

- a) Requested that the Commissioner adopt any recommendations from

Plymouth's commission to tackle violence against women and girls within the Commissioner's control;

- b) That the Commissioner set targets for future scorecards to measure whether receiving the maximum precept delivers results;
- c) That the Commissioner continues efforts to request from central government extra funding to subsidise the increase in visitor numbers from other parts of the country due to the region being the number one domestic tourism region for holidays. It was hoped that if successful would release the burden on local taxpayers;
- d) For the Commissioner to continue her efforts to bring down the median wait time for callers to the 101 service and whilst doing so, alleviate the pressures on the 999 call line;
- e) For the Commissioner to endeavour to increase confidence in Devon and Cornwall's Police and to work to ensure that women and girls needs are met;
- f) That the Commissioner allocates Torbay Council with a fair share of uplifted officer numbers to reflect the increase in crime for the area;

For: Councillors Towill, Salmon, Hackett, Knowles, Attiya-Alla, Sellis, Fairman, Mrs Pengelly, Brown, Dewhurst, Tilbey, Sharon Minty(independent member), Alvey (13)

Against: None (0)

Abstentions: Councillor Cheadle (1)

Absent or did not

vote:

The Panel **AGREED** to accept the precept with recommendations.

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

Felicity Ridgway, Director of Operations for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner presented an outline of the report to the Panel and advised that the Scorecard would provide a baseline from November 2021.

Members discussed:

- a) Community Speedwatch schemes which had shown a drop in numbers over a short period of time. It was clarified that the number of active schemes had decreased and not the number of schemes in existence, this could've been due to the winter hours and that not all volunteers wanting to be active during cold and adverse weather conditions. Data would be refined for future scorecards to enable accurate scrutiny.
- b) The Police and Crime Joint Executive met routinely to analyse key performance indicators which directed police resources as an internal process. For the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Peninsular Strategic assessment which had been produced by all community safety partnerships as a collective needs assessment would direct resources. The Scorecard was being used to check nothing had gone amiss and to ensure that enough was being done.
- c) For future meetings where reporting of the Scorecard is used, statistics for where the region ranks in safety would be reported;
- d) The number of recorded hate crimes had increased. Councillor Mrs Pengelly advised that she had been really impressed by Devon and Cornwall police's response to her own report of a hate crime which had encouraged others to report. Alison Hernandez, advised that there had been a stronger conviction rate should people report this. Hate crimes had increased in line with significant national events;
- e) There had been a number of changes to the 101 service which had impacted performance such as the introduction of new IT systems. HMIC inspections had impacted performance for the service which had been due to HMIC conducting interviews with staff from the service. The service had seen a 25% increase in the number of 999 calls, however the number of Police responses to incidents had not increased. Staff turnover continued to be a challenge for the service due to the nature of calls. It was acknowledged that the average waiting time figure had not been an accurate or good way to measure the service.

The Panel noted the report.

78. **Police and Crime Commissioners Update**

Alison Hernandez, Police and Crime Commissioner introduced the report to the Panel and highlighted the following key points:

- a) The Serious Violence programme had commissioned a homicide prevention officer/lessons learned post within the Police which would deliver Homicide Perpetrator Reviews to learn lessons about the life history of a perpetrator. The Commissioner commented that this would be a first nationally and would look at the perpetrator rather than the victim which had been the norm.
- b) The Police and Crime Commissioner, Alison Hernandez, attended the memorial plaque unveiling to PC Dennis Smith QPM.

Members discussed:

- a) Community impact assessment would be revisited 6 months on from Keyham and would be looking at how the community had dealt with the impact of the tragic events and what the current challenges were.

79. **Domestic Abuse Act**

Alison Hernandez, Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner presented this item to the Panel and highlighted the following key point:

The report outlined changes that would be implemented for Domestic Violence Protections Orders. As a police force, Devon and Cornwall had focussed on improving the use of Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPO); vulnerability lawyers are employed within the force to help secure those DVPO's against people.

The Panel noted the report.

80. **Safer Streets Fund**

Alison Hernandez, Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner presented this item to the Panel and made the following key points:

- a) Although Torbay had not received funding from the Safer Streets fund, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner would be allocating £200,000 from its reserves to fund a programme of support using the same principles of Safer Streets. The Police and Crime Commissioner thanked the people of Stonehouse who had led and supported the process and also to Plymouth City Council who had delivered the programme on time, on budget and at pace in order to get the infrastructure in place. The Commissioner also thanked Exeter City Council in helping to implement successfully Safer Streets for Exeter.
- b) Safer Streets 3 focussed on violence against women and girls and secured funding which would be used in Plymouth and Falmouth.

The Panel *noted* the report.

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

Frances Hughes, Chief Executive for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner advised the Panel that there had been one complaint which had been dealt with by the Chair of the Panel and had been resolved by local resolution with the Chair's consent.

The Panel *noted* the report.

82. **Work Programme**

Members requested the following to be treated as a priority for the next municipal year:

- Public Contact; 101 and reopening of front desks
- Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill update with the inclusion of legislation for the Traveller community
- Firearms licensing