

Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel

Friday 25 September 2020

PRESENT:

Councillor Batters, in the Chair.

Councillor Haydon, Vice Chair.

Councillors Atherfold, Biederman, Croad, Derrick, Dewhirst, Fairman, Hackett, Hopwood, Howgate, Loudoun, Nelhams, Rule, Samuel and Sutton.

Emily Macualay (Co-Optee),

Also in attendance: Nicky Allen (Chief Finance Officer/ Treasurer, OPCC), Fran Hughes (Chief Executive, OPCC), Alison Hernandez (Police and Crime Commissioner), Andrew Loton (Head of Governance, Performance and Risk), Jamie Sheldon (Senior Governance Advisor), Joanne Heather (Cornwall Council).
Chief Superintendent Daniel Evans, Chief Constable Shaun Sawyer.

The meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 1.22 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.

12. **Minutes**

The Chair proposed the minutes of 3 July 2020 to the panel for approval; this was seconded by Councillor Haydon.

Councillor Beiderman requested that the minutes reflect his attendance at the meeting of 3 July 2020 and Councillor Croad requested that his apologies were recorded in the minutes as they were submitted.

Under this item Councillor Derrick raised that suggestions at the previous meeting regarding the draft annual report had not been included, specifically regarding Police Community Support Officer numbers and data on violent crime in the form of a graph/ trends.

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

13. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made by members.

14. **Public Questions**

The Chair advised the Panel that no public questions had been received.

15. **101 Deep Dive**

Alison Hernandez, Police and Crime Commissioner, introduced the report on the 101 Deep Dive scrutiny.

Members were advised that the review would commence in October. It would be reported in December 2020 and would focus on the following three key areas: defining and setting customer service standards; understanding and assessing the delivery services to the public; and continuous learning and development within the contact service. The OPCC would convene a bespoke OPCC Panel which would include existing scrutiny panel volunteers and councillor advocates, supported by task and finish activity led by the OPCC. The OPCC Panel's work would be informed by focus groups, analysis of complaints and correspondence into OPCC and Force and public surveys.

The Police and Crime Commissioner highlighted the following key points:

- the risk that police officers were taking to protect the public; this was in response to two serious assaults to police staff in Devon and Cornwall and London;
- £1.3 million had been invested to support the highly vulnerable to access help via phone or online opportunities;
- there was a 93.4% increase in calls – an increase in crime reported both on the telephone and online;
- increased growth in contact methods, more help to access policing.

The Panel discussed:

- the Police Officer injured in Cornwall and offered their condolences;
- the positive move towards the digital age with Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) and questioned if the reopening of front desks was realistic?
- if Verint was helping to support staffing levels and what could be done to reduce call wait times?
- that the 10% increase in calls was substantial and questioned what could be done to reduce the number of calls? Could the calls be diverted to a pre-dialling system or answer machine for non-emergency cases?
- why the numbers of calls were increasing when crime figures were on a slow decline? Was the increased demand on resources during the summer when tourists were in the area taken into account?
- the reduced visible presence of Officers in communities, calling 101

could be seen as the only way to speak to a police officer or representative. In Kingskerswell a survey was undertaken asking the public 'when they last saw an officer?' The response was that it had been years; there was a request for more information on why this was happening and why Officers were no longer a visible presence;

- key issues to address included the number of staff on duty, the quality of services and on-call waiting times. It was questioned if call wait times were good enough? 4 to 5 minutes was a long time to wait. Did the information take into account abandoned calls and what was the abandon rate of calls?

How was the length of wait time measured?

Could social media channels be used to reduce the number of calls?

Could a call back system be employed for low risk calls?

The Police and Crime Commissioner clarified that –

- the implementation of Verint, a system which predicted staffing levels required from previous call data, had a positive impact but it needed to have enough staff to follow the guide. Unfortunately the calls were not always that predictable and there needed to be reaching out into communities, asking the question do call handlers need to be in Plymouth and Exeter to make the service work? There was a high staff turnover in call centres;
- to reduce the number of calls people needed to be directed where to go. Not all calls received were all police related as 101 was one of the only 24/7 contact lines. Most agencies direct to 101 as it was a 24/7 out of hours contact service. During lockdown when public announcements were broadcast there were a surge of calls to 101 to clarify guideline information. Devon and Cornwall was the number 1 domestic tourist destination and they were prepared for an increase in calls during the high season however needed to work better collaboratively to manage the increase in calls;
- the reopening of front desks to support communities: Truro front desk was closed as the council offices were closed - this was on pause until out of Covid;
- agencies were leaning on policing teams – during Covid Police teams had not stopped supporting communities. The most vulnerable and at risk people were able to contact the service. For example 22,088 missing people were reported using 101; efforts needed to be focused on working more alongside our partners to reduce the number of calls and referring people correctly;

- there were no clear figures for abandoned calls as some people hang up when they hear the automated message directing callers to go online. Double the number of people were now logging issues online.
- the challenge to manage wait times was complicated. Balancing priority 999 calls and 101 calls, and managing capacity to deal with a surge in calls or response to emergency situations within the call room. There was a 10 second threshold for answering 999 calls. The complexity and logistics of both calls being received into the call room needed to be managed effectively;
- high risk victims get through quickly and were supported. A million calls a year was not simple to process. More direction to the online service was offered, with a possibility to create a campaign highlighting the issue, to support policing by reporting issues directly online and reduce number of non-emergency calls and waiting times;
- during busy times call handlers do prompt people they will be called back but currently this was an ad-hoc system;
- the new European legislation requiring police social media accounts to be manned 24/7 would put additional strain on the system. Teams would be required to be available to respond to queries any time of the day. The ruling would be implemented by December.

Police Chief Superintendent Evans additionally added he was thankful for the additional feedback from the panel to help to improve the service. The deep dive would focus on improving access for the vulnerable, risk management of calls, prevention and signposting to online services. Control room assessments were measured by outcomes and referrals, the number of independent referrals had dropped. The control room may spend longer on calls to ensure that the team were happy the risk had been managed. There was focus on training call handlers to access individual risk, this may impact the quality of service overall. Complaints received were on the length of call waiting and not on the quality of the service. Implementing a system where people were able to leave a message would still need to be monitored and would need to have more investment. This would be after the scrutiny meeting, with the introduction of the second phase of IVR. The number of abandonment calls were recorded however some could be positive abandonment as people may be going online to use web chat or ring other agencies directly.

The Recommendations from the panel proposed by Councillor Gareth Derrick and seconded by Councillor Allister Dewhirst was as follows:

1. The Panel recommends that the Police and Crime Commissioner changes the strategic performance indicator on the 101 Call System from AMBER to RED, indicating the severity of our concerns over its performance and the need for focused action in addition to scrutiny.
2. The Panel support early initiation of the planned OPCC Thematic Scrutiny, and request an additional key line of enquiry as follows. "What additional

measures and/or investment is necessary to restore the effectiveness of the 101 system to acceptable levels?"

3. Consider the viability of non-emergency calls being transferred to an answering machine or call back service.

The Panel agreed the recommendations

16. **Commissioner's Update Report**

Alison Hernandez, Police and Crime Commissioner, introduced the Commissioner's Update report 'as read' and highlighted:

- the Road Safety National Survey, encouraged this survey be promoted and completed: 46,000 had completed the survey to date. It could be found on the home page OPPC Devon and Cornwall:
<https://www.devonandcornwall-pcc.gov.uk/>
- the level of resource required to set up and establish the Virtual Remand Courts, the lack of priority given to this by the Government and the backlog of cases. Devon and Cornwall Police lobbying challenges faced in MP Service and the limited number of people allowed in the chamber.

The Panel discussed:

- reference to page 32 (1.11) the road safety community speed watches. The board meeting businesses drivers and how they would feel to know company workers endangering lives of customers and children area which needed to be looked at in October. Noted the lack of visible information regarding project EDWARD;
- Virtual Courts: why were the police managing this and not contractors? Was it sustainable for 6 officers to manage the process 5 days a week?
- why was 'Clean Devon' not listed? Highlighting the Devon and Cornwall police program 'Clean Devon' Multi- agency group focusing on the huge problem with littering and fly tipping. The Panel highlighted their appreciation to the team creating the website as well as the need for pressure to be put on organisations regarding litter;
- concerns as the Autumn Budget scrapped at multiyear spend review. What funding was left? There was a huge increase towards violent crime and it was important to ensure this aspect was highlighted. Investing to make 'safe places safer' also needed to be highlighted;
- would the army support be required to support the police force? What roles and powers would the army have and what accountability would there be? Could any thoughts be brought back to the panel to scrutinise?

The Police and Crime Chief Commissioner clarified:

- Vison 0 was a multi-national road traffic safety project which aims achieve a highway system with no fatalities or serious injuries involving road traffic. Zero deaths on roads. The commitment to make all roads safer, not just major roads but aiming to make rural roads safer too;
- 'Edward' has been launched – (Every Day Without Road Death); this was now being implemented so would hear more about this going forward;
- the virtual remand court was currently being run by police team not the escort service contracted by government. It was currently not legally possible for contractors to complete/manage virtual meetings. Police teams were currently managing due to risk in court space, lobbying by MP's by October but legislation was not due to early next year. Looking to withdraw police resources by December as it currently required 6 police officers 5 days a week: this was not sustainable;
- Clean Devon was not listed in the Commissioners Update Report as the OPCC were not directly involved. Heart-warming to hear support, nice to know we're on the right track with issues peninsular Devon and Cornwall, Torquay and Plymouth, thank rural crime. Originally a team of 2 now team of 4, required more resources. The website was created by a police volunteer;
- budget information was received late last year, don't want to be in the same situation current situation due to conflicting announcements. CSR looks to be within existing budget envelope. Promised uplift want to hear as early as possible. Not an area in receipt of a violence deduction unit from government, why additional council tax has been requested to invest in violence protection work. Keep moving forward to get government to recognise some of the struggles here. Have received 'Turning Corners' funding of around half a million pounds to tackle gang related issues in South Devon and Safer Streets for North Stone House to tackle burglary. Struggle to fight of allocations but in close contact with ministers and MPs;
- the armed forces were used for logistics during the last lock down; a major crisis meant the army could be used. During the lockdown Covid marshals were used however it was not known if the army or street marshals would be used again. Waiting for clarity from the government as don't know what will need to be required.

It was proposed by Councillor Howgate and seconded by Councillor Hackett to note the report.

17. **Continuing to Deliver an Effective Policing and Crime Service to the Public Throughout Covid 19**

Alison Hernandez, Police and Crime Commissioner, introduced the report on Continuing to Deliver an Effective Policing and Crime Service to the Public Throughout Covid 19.

The following key points were highlighted:

- there was no additional financial support or 'COVID' money to give to the community since August 2020;
- on the 25 September 2020 the Estates and Police team in Barnstaple moved the enquiry office to open in new location in Seven Brethren;
- Safe Summer Scheme – there were discussions around extending the current Marshalls Scheme but in different locations, taking wardens from beauty hotspots and bringing them into towns and cities, to support businesses. Money was going directly to local authorities, requests support to help from funding given to local councils;
- ACS Glen Mayhew who led the local resilience forum, had organised an Award Ceremony to recognise members for support and efforts during Covid. Hannah Hart with others awarded for the virtual remand court implementation, Dr Davina Cull was a new member of staff awarded for supporting victim care service and facilitating funding from Government. Additional thank you to Andrew Kirchin in Communications and Emily Owen in Commissioning who were nominated for working alongside the Police force.

The Panel discussed –

- deep dive requested in increased reports of use of crack cocaine and street drink during lock down. This needs to be a priority focus towards drug and alcohol.
- offered congratulations on the relocation in Barnstaple and questioned where the new custody was moving, what would the local impact be when officers removed from the area, would the front desk be in Roundswell or Seven Brethren and what was the safety of the old building?
- deep dive requested in Domestic Abuse figures, was there any evidence it had increased? Other areas are a concern such as Drug Abuse, fraud with elderly people and vulnerable people;
- more additional focus needed over PPE for officers and staff, looking forward would be critical with the second wave and future supplies. Was the supply adequate?
- with the announcement stating an audit on the impact of the ethnic minority communities across the area and how they are being disproportionately impacted upon was to be completed. The commissioner's report highlighted the outcomes, impact and victims. What was the Commissioners teams' role within communities where initial evidence

showed the communities were being disproportionately treated within Devon and Cornwall?

The Police and Crime Chief Commissioner clarified:

- there was an increase in reported issues such as violence since Covid; the team were focusing on prevention. Last year a drug Seminar called Frank Conversation was held. Consider a scrutiny within the local authority on drug and alcohol services to support the endeavour against drug use;
- the new front desk would be at Seven Brethren, creating a temporary custody unit. Help from North Devon at the length of time they can stay in the area. Introduction of temporary custody unit, were hoping to be moved over to new station by October. New custody unit would be a higher expenditure. No requirement to go to Exeter at this stage and the custody suite was currently situated at the old police station. Roof concerns were being taken into account and a risk assessment was being completed every week to assess whether there was a need to be moved out to the new location. There was no deadline to move given by surveyor, ongoing inspection was being taken into account;
- there had recently been a Domestic Abuse Joint Leadership Board, data had maintained a steady state. The biggest concern was lack of referrals from third parties as they were not interacting as much. Less referrals received, working assumption that true figures could be higher. There was more work to be done after home office deep dive. The review was a welcome opportunity to drill into data intensely. This was one of only four areas having the deep dive;
- fraud in elderly: this was an opportunity to campaign for prevention within local councillors. Scam ambassadors were promoting all the time. The right message needed to be communicated regarding prevention as well as campaigning to highlight concerns over fraud to the elderly;
- PPE: the commissioner had not been alerted to any challenges for sustainable supply with PPE through the supply chain. Face masks with medical grade were originally required however there was inconsistency in messages received from government as to what needed to be worn;
- the review towards 'stop and search powers' including members of the public. ACC Jim Colwell was working directly with diverse communities. The Commissioners office in Plymouth was working with diverse communities and Cornwall Leadership Board were a fantastic example of supporting the voice for Black, Asian, Minority and Ethnic groups in Cornwall. Running a round table and leaders to sign up to particular principles, discuss issues and accepting racisms exist in the community and challenging what happens next to stop it.

It was proposed by the Chair and seconded by Councillor Atherfold to note report.

18. **Impact of Covid on Criminal Justice Processes (verbal)**

Alison Hernandez, Police and Crime Commissioner, introduced the Impact of Covid on Criminal Justice Processes update.

It was highlighted that the Criminal Justice Board had no powers as it was a group of people trying improve locally, the Criminal Justice system. As it was not a statutory partnership the government did not recognise the Criminal Justice Board as an emergency response provider during the Covid crisis. Therefore the Local Criminal Justice Board did not have any say in what could be done to help.

The Government have been trying to improve this and PCC's have been having weekly and fortnightly meetings with Ministers. Issues were experienced with the lack of access to information which should be transparent. In terms of probation, the organisation had been working from home, when prisoners were released on license they were not having face to face meetings. Work was ongoing to try to help partners improve the service. The Commissioner had gone to the Judiciary to help establish identified locations for Nightingale courts and two locations had been found in Cornwall. Nightingales court were created so other civil business can be moved out and criminal cases could be dealt with more securely.

The Panel discussed:

- that the community payback in Teignbridge area had not been in operation since lockdown, at least 9 months;
- that there was a degree of crisis in the justice system which needed to be fixed rapidly. It was considered that the investment in police numbers could go into the system. With regards to the level of prosecution, outcomes had fallen from previous years however it was questioned what was currently being achieved?
- request to see additional data information and report regarding RUI;
- responsibility to Dorset, Devon and Cornwall probation service, what was the Commissioner's responsibility and was it possible to have figures of completion as well as data regarding Community Payback?

The Police and Crime Chief Commissioner clarified:

- that the Minister for Justice had announced that the PCC would be consulted on community payback programs regarding more visibility and transparency at local levels;
- Released Under Investigation, defence lawyer based in Cornwall part of the Criminal Justice Board who has produced a paper about RUI;
- 5 PCC's have formed the Regional Reducing Reoffending Board.

Councillor Biederman proposed and Councillor Atherfold seconded to note the report.

19. **Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Performance Report**

Alison Hernandez, Police and Crime Commissioner, introduced the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Performance report and highlighted that the data was correct up to March 2020.

The Panel discussed:

- why calls to the 999 number had increased?
- the performance summary and failure to give adequate priority to the rise in violent crime;
- Public Confidence in Policing: for the 12 months prior to 1 April 2016 this was 72%, compared to the 56% reported today - that was a fall of 16%, and yet the PCC rating remained GREEN;
- that there was no strategic indicator and focus on crime prevention and crime types in the report;
- Violent Crime Trends: there was an absence of a strategic indicator relating to any crime type, but in the 2015-16 report violent crime was rated RED (for the 12 months prior to April 2016) as follows:
(a) Violence with Injury 4.6 cases/1000 population. This compared with 8.9/1000 in today's report (+93%)
(b) Violence without injury 4.7 cases/1000 population. This compared with 8.8/1000 in today's report (+87%).

The Police and Crime Commissioner clarified:

- policing responded to what was happening in the communities right now; it was highlighted that there was an increase in domestic abuse reports involving knives in the home, that organised crime groups were not as high as in other areas and there was an increase in robbery and levels of theft/ shoplifting had been going down due to the shops being shut;
- new figures would have been provided had the election for a Police and Crime Commissioner happened; it was questioned if the Panel would be happy to consider a new report which could be reviewed and to help whether to support the budget? The information provided was reporting on the previous Commissioner's plan.

It was proposed by Councillor Atherfold and seconded by Councillor Hackett to note the report.

20. **Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel - Complaints against the PCC**

Fran Hughes (Chief Executive) advised the Panel that the IOPC had reviewed the complaint and it was decided that there was nothing unlawful in the Commissioner's conduct and that the Chair and her would have a discussion about the next steps to be taken prior to the next meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor Biederman and seconded by Councillor Atherfold to note the update.

21. **Work Programme (to follow)**

Panel Members discussed the draft work programme and raised the following items for inclusion:

- update on the recruitment plan;
- an update on drugs on county lines; was this disturbed with Covid and what is the current state of play/ challenges and next steps?
- an update on 101 calls;
- Culture of Policing – motivated arrests.

Members were asked to contact Jamie Sheldon to prioritise items with a deadline of 2 October 2020.