

Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel

Friday 20 November 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, Sutton and Towill.

Apologies for absence: Councillor Knowles and Emily Macaulay (Independent Member)

Also in attendance: Fran Hughes (Chief Executive, OPCC), Alison Hernandez (Police & Crime Commissioner), Nicola Allen (Chief Finance Officer/ Treasurer, OPCC), Detective Chief Superintendent Steve Parker, Jamie Sheldon (Senior Governance Advisor), Andrew Loton (Head of Performance, Governance and Risk)

The meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 12.55 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.

22. **Minutes**

The Chair proposed the minutes of 25 September 2020 to the panel for approval. Councillor Towill asked that the minutes reflect his attendance at the meeting of 25 September 2020.

Under this item Councillor Sutton asked if there had been any progress on appointing an Independent Representative for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly. Jamie Sheldon (Senior Governance Advisor) advised that an advert for the post was live and that the closing date for applications was 16 December 2020.

Councillor Sutton proposed the minutes again of 25 September 2020; this was seconded by Councillor Derrick and the minutes were agreed.

23. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made by members.

24. **Public Questions**

The Chair advised the panel that one question had been received by Ms Errington as follows:

I have dual heritage grandchildren living in Devon, and I'm really concerned by the Devon & Cornwall Police Reports about the disproportionate application of police sanctions against BAME people and the lack of diversity within the Police force. I'm worried for my grandchildren's future in Devon where there appears to be institutional racism and outright discrimination. In the PCC plan, I've found diversity is mentioned only once and no clear plan to address racial profiling, stop and search or other issues of concern to BAME communities.

My question is: What is your strategy to tackle these issues, reconciling the need for a more diverse police force against the use of racial profiling which alienates potential recruits?

The response was provided by Alison Hernandez as follows:

We want to build safe, resilient, connected communities.

- this was tackled by concentrating on these five areas as a strategy:
- scrutinise police forces use of their powers, particularly stop and search;
- organise engagement events that promote interaction between different communities;
- commission services directly for victims of crime, and work with specialist organisations;
- challenge the National Recruitment Processes;
- promote hate crime reporting, how to do it, where to go, convictions that have been achieved against people who have been victims of hate crime and campaigns with others across the criminal justice system.

Alison Hernandez agreed to send the full written response directly to Ms Errington.

25. **County Lines**

Fran Hughes, Chief Executive – Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, introduced this item by highlighting key issues and was joined by Detective Chief Superintendent Steve Parker, Head of Crime for Devon and Cornwall Police.

The following key points were highlighted:

- the report looks at how the Police intervene and reduce harm in the community;
- County Lines crossed a number of crime types, serious violence, modern slavery, human trafficking. This crime had criminal elements, there was a need to safeguard vulnerable members of the community;
- the end of the report showed useful indicators and signs which may be useful to feed back to Local Authorities and communities to raise awareness of what to look out for with County Lines crime;
- the report showed how best crime could be reported, online, 101, or

anonymously via Crime Stoppers.

The Panel discussed:

- how the panel could be involved and give the Police and Crime Commissioner more support?
- how the Covid pandemic had impacted County Lines?
- that that one of the signs to look out for was more people calling at neighbours' homes; how could neighbours differentiate between gifts being delivered or drug deliveries?
- was there a knife crime epidemic and a surge in County Lines gang related violence, or was it just good aggressive policing to disrupt the villains?
- there had been a 13% increase in weapons offences in the last year. What has made us better at that? Was there an uptake in gang related, drug related activity that may be coming from up country; are we uncovering what's always been there or was there a significant increase in threat?
- was the Public Health budget a constraint on the impact that police could make on this issue?
- with regards to item 4.13 on page 21 – an awareness workshop took place for agencies and organisations who engage with homeless individuals; when did they take place, who attended, were district council officers attending and were county council children services officers also attending?
- p19 of the report showed figures for 16/17 going into 18/19 drug trafficking offences went from 656 to 1027, this was a massive increase. Was this because more drugs traffic was being picked up due to less traffic to hide in? Is this graph going to go up in a similar fashion and were we prepared for it?
- would the Police and Commissioner be able to develop a strategy that the panel could understand, with clear indicators of progress going forward?
- that a previous recommendation for 101 RAG ratings to go from amber to red was ignored and it was queried how seriously the panel's recommendations were taken by the Police and Crime Commissioner;
- how did the Commissioner see her role in supporting the panel with the ongoing scrutiny function, which would be clear, continuous and effective?

The Police and Crime Commissioner responded to all questions and clarified that no recommendations from the panel were ignored, and that they were considered and dealt with appropriately. The issue of 101 would be discussed under a separate agenda item. It was stated that minutes, actions and requests for information needed

to be sent to the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner in a timely manner in order to provide a written response.

It was challenged by Councillor Haydon that actions from the previous meeting held on 25 September 2020, had been emailed to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner on 9 October 2020 therefore adequate time had been provided for a response for the November meeting.

Councillor Derrick proposed and Councillor Haydon seconded that in light of the serious nature of the County Lines Challenges to policing and crime prevention the panel recommends that PCC publishes a clear strategy to set out the key objectives in addressing county lines to include key indicators to be reported to the panel as necessary. These indicators are to be aimed at allowing panel members to assess critical emerging trends including rising weapons related crime. This was agreed by Members.

Recommendation –

1. In light of the serious nature of the County Lines challenge to policing and crime prevention, the Panel recommends:
 - That the PCC publishes a clear strategy highlighting the principal objectives in addressing County Lines, to include key indicators to be reported to the Panel as necessary. These indicators are to be aimed at allowing Panel members to assess critical emerging trends such as rising weapon related crime and gang violence.

This was proposed by Councillor Derrick and Seconded by Councillor Haydon. This was voted on and agreed by the Panel.

2. Councillor Hackett's proposed that a tracking resolutions and recommendations item be added to each agenda in order to record and monitor progress which the panel wish to be kept in the public domain. This was agreed by Members.

26. **Update on Prevention of Serious Violence Programme**

Alison Hernandez, Police and Crime Commissioner, presented the update on the Prevention of Serious Violence Programme. Key points highlighted to Members included the following:

- a director had been appointed for the programme on serious violence who would be starting in January 2021;
- Crest Advisory had been procured to assist with the data collection exercise;
- statistical reports would be available in the next couple of months to assist with who and where attention would be focused;
- a number of projects had been commissioned including Turning Corners, a

gang related project for Teignbridge and South Hams;

- a project had been commissioned for the young people in and near the Falmouth area, as a test bed, for 6 months to look at how better young people could be supported through a community response;
- a meeting took place with the Minister for Vulnerability, Victoria Atkins (she worked with the Police on Operation Encompass). We were presenting the successes, we won the world class policing award for this work. We have a unique opportunity to work alongside partners in our communities to drive this work forward;
- when the Domestic Abuse Bill comes in work would be undertaken to identify and recognise individuals as victims in their own right. That would be a major shift in how services are delivered and would mean challenges.

The Panel discussed:

- their concerns with the increase in figures;
- that abuse would likely affect victims from conviction through to later in life when the defendant was released from prison. These victims had massive scarring and required a lot of support. *(Councillor Haydon requested that the Commissioner looked into this from a Police perspective and would provide examples to the Commissioner outside of this meeting);*
- that the report highlighted the partnership practice and Public Health approach, and questioned if the budget that the Government gave Local Authorities for Public Health were a constraint on the partnership being effective?
- how partnership funding was divided and requested that data was provided to the panel as well as the partnerships' effectiveness;
- why was any tracking of violent crime and other crime trends removed from the Police and Crime Plan first brought forward in June 2017?
- why in the report in May 2018 was there no mention of violent crime?
- the number of PCSO's and how they have been re-absorbed in the police force.

The Police and Crime Commissioner clarified that the Panel needed to consider their role, as it was not for them to hold the Commissioner to account; the panel's role was to scrutinise and support the Commissioners actions and decisions. The ballot box held the Commissioner to account. It was highlighted that the first few years of office had been about prioritising recruitment of Police Officers, as there was flexibility from the Government to uplift council tax, initially supported by the public, this waned with increases in council tax bills. The priority had been increasing force officer numbers. There was a fund in place this year to assist with

serious violence with a programme of doing things differently than we normally do. The commissioning budget report would show a lot of budget will be around focus and preventing violence.

The Panel noted the update.

27. **Update on recommendations from I01 deep dive**

Alison Hernandez, Police and Crime Commissioner, presented the update on recommendations from the I01 deep dive.

Key points highlighted to Members included the following:

- that the panel's recommendations had been taken to the Scrutiny panel and these would be answered as part of the scrutiny process. The first scrutiny panel took place on 11 November 2020; there were lay scrutiny members that work with us on stop and search and 2 Councillor advocates that had also joined the panel;
- two more meetings were yet to take place to explore the scrutiny, one on 24 November 2020 and the last one on 3 December 2020, a report would be ready early in the New Year before the next panel;
- the panel recommendation regarding the RAG rating change to red from amber was not put in place because of the following reasons:
 - There was an annual action plan that the I01 team always worked to in terms of improvement. There was a range of activity and actions already underway;
 - The Commissioner felt that no more actions should be undertaken when I01 was in the process of being scrutinised, until the problems were known, and needed to wait until the scrutiny process was complete;
 - This may well come out at the end of the process as a red RAG rating after the scrutiny, but until the next 2 phases had been completed this would will be paused until the whole process had been through the scrutiny panel.

The panel discussed:

- why a representative from the Police and Crime panel wasn't on the scrutiny panel to put reasons and cases forward?
- when the scrutiny process would be completed?
- if the Commissioner felt that the investment of £1.3 million had been value for money to achieve these results?
- if the Police communications team could send an update via email of how to report something to the Police? This could be communicated via Members' own social media channels;

- that the 101 calls had dropped from 86% to 65% and maintained the same RAG rating and that it would be beneficial to split down the number of issues within 101 and give them a separate RAG rating;
- the usefulness of the RAG ratings and how they could give the panel or the general public any sense of confidence that things were going well?
 - There was a repeat victimisation RAG rating, which was green, despite the fact it hasn't improved, 26% static, not changed, so why was it green?
 - Attendance time was green, but was worse than the national baseline; should it be amber?
 - Email and text response time was nowhere near base line, 71% response in 24 hours compared to 98%, but this was green.

The Commissioner advised that she was nervous of changing the 101 RAG rating to red and making an action happen as 4 years had been spent completing lots of actions and these were currently being scrutinised. Panel members were encouraged to contact the Commissioner's office with specific examples of people having to wait for the 101 call in order for it to be investigated – it was highlighted that a web chat function was also available. The RAG rating detailed how the Police and Crime Commissioner was holding the police force to account and their performance and what could be done if performance wasn't satisfactory.

It was agreed that the Police and Crime Commissioner would send the link to Councillor Rule regarding live waiting times so that these could be passed on to community groups.

The Panel noted the update.

28. **Commissioner's Update Report**

Alison Hernandez, Police and Crime Commissioner, presented the Commissioner's Update report.

Key points highlighted to Members included the following:

- the Police and Crime Commissioner offered her thanks to the services she worked with or commissioned for that had all won awards or national awards: Howard Leagues of Penal Reform; Circle South West; Trevi House; Restorative Justice Services;
- that the main subject of contact from local communities linked to speeding and more enforcement in their area;
- a lot of effort had been made to maintain business as usual during Covid; the Commissioner wanted to pass on a huge thank you to her team who have been incredible holding things together, both as part of the crisis response and delivering business as usual. She also thanked panel members who have continued to run meetings during this process which

demonstrated good governance.

Panel Members discussed:

- how the survey results would affect the budget?
- requested an update on estates and investments in relation to the facilities in Plymouth;
- how the report highlighted that we had only been reimbursed for half the PPE of £1.5 million (received £700k of the national £30 million) and that this wasn't fair funding for Devon and Cornwall disregarding the summer policing challenges. Did the Police and Crime Commissioner agree that this fell far short of the Government promise around Covid?
- that two years ago it was mentioned publically that a £13 million building in Bodmin would be built, where was that included in the schedule?
- how the Police and Crime Commissioner worked with the camera safety partnership on priority of areas and if she had any influence in where they work in local communities?
- her response to the review of the highway code in particular regard to support for horse riders in rural roads;
- the Police and Crime Commissioner's stance on pavement parking;
- if the Commissioner would commit to a detailed review of the Plymouth command estates and infrastructure requirements with a view to making a clear report regarding the future prospects for upgraded infrastructure in Plymouth?

It was agreed that the Police and Crime Commissioner would provide Members with responses upon information requested upon the Highway Code and pavement parking.

Members noted the update report.

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

Alison Hernandez, Police and Crime Commissioner, presented the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Performance report and highlighted that the report was the same as that provided to Members at the previous meeting.

The Panel discussed the tracking of indicators at future meetings, and the green rating in the report linked to the public confidence in the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Alison Hernandez, Police and Crime Commissioner, clarified that the responsibility of monitoring performance was that of the Chief Constable. With regards to public

confidence, the police force did a survey during the Covid pandemic and 91.2% of the public that took part showed their support of the approach taken by the Police in dealing with Covid 19. Public confidence had increased due to the visibility and leadership shown from the police force.

Recommendation -

- I. In light of the dissatisfaction of Panel members over the accuracy and utility of the Police and Crime Plan performance measures and their grading, the Panel recommends:
 - That the future Police and Crime Plan takes a new approach to performance criteria and associated grading to ensure that they are useful to Panel members and the public, by providing meaningful feedback on key performance criteria as they change over time.

This was proposed by Councillor Derrick and Seconded by Councillor Haydon, This was voted on and agreed by the Panel.

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

Fran Hughes, Chief Executive of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, advised the Panel that there were no new complaints about the Commissioner for this report. In terms of the one discussed previously, there had been no unlawful activity from the Commissioner and the matter had been dealt with and was now closed.

The Panel noted the report.

31. **Work Programme**

Jamie Sheldon (Senior Governance Advisor) presented the Work Programme to members of the Panel –

It was agreed that the next meeting would focus on the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposed precept and the scrutiny of the I01 report. Members were asked to contact the Chair or Jamie Sheldon (Senior Governance Advisor) with any suggestions to be included on the Work Programme.