

## **Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel**

**Friday 9 July 2021**

### **PRESENT:**

Councillor Croad, in the Chair.  
Councillor Towill, Vice Chair.  
Councillors Alvey, Cheadle, Chopak, Ellery (substitute), Guest (substitute), Hackett, Knowles, MacGregor (substitute), Mrs Pengelly, Salmon (substitute), Wright,

Co-opted Representative: Sharon Minty (Independent Member for Cornwall)

Apologies for absence: Councillors Hopwood, Rodger, Biederman, Tilbey, Dewhirst, Atiya-Alla and Shayer.

Also in attendance: Alison Hernandez (Police and Crime Commissioner), Frances Hughes (Chief Executive OPCC), Felicity Ridgway (Director of Operations), Andrew Loton (Head of Governance Performance and Risk, Plymouth City Council), Jamie Sheldon (Senior Governance Advisor, Plymouth City Council)

The meeting started at 10:30 and finished at 11:59.

*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.*

#### **43. Appointment of the Chair for the municipal year 2021 - 22**

The Panel received a nomination from Councillor Pengelly for Councillor Rodger Croad to stand as Chair. This was seconded by Councillor Salmon.

The Panel received a second nomination from Councillor MacGregor for Councillor Hackett to stand as Chair. This was seconded by Councillor Knowles.

The Panel voted in favour of Councillor Rodger Croad taking the position as Chair for the next municipal year with eight votes. Councillor Hackett received four votes.

#### **44. Appointment of Vice Chair for the municipal year 2021 - 22**

The Panel received a nomination from Councillor Alvey for Councillor Towill to stand as Vice Chair.

There were no other nominations. The Panel voted in favour of Councillor Towill taking the position as Vice Chair for the next municipal year.

45. **Minutes**

The Chair proposed the minutes of 5 February 2021 to the panel for approval; this was seconded by Councillor Towill.

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

46. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

47. **Public Questions**

Mr Chaz Singh asked a question which was answered the Alison Hernandez, the Police and Crime Commissioner.

**Question** - As a British Sikh who is proud of his identity I would like to raise my concerns about not being able to record my ethnicity when recording a hate crime

When I have reported a hate crime and it asks me what my ethnicity is it doesn't allow me the option.

If in 12 months' time I want to know the number of hate crimes against the Sikh community the Police couldn't tell me.

What is the PCC doing about this issue as I do not feel confident in reporting or encouraging reporting hate crime if specific communities can't self-identify?

**Answer**

I know this is a particular area of concern to a number of British Sikhs who share your view that Sikhism should be recognised as an ethnic identity for demographic recording purposes.

The recording systems in place in Devon and Cornwall Police are in line with those mandated by the home office for all Police Forces and Criminal Justice Departments in the Country.

The standardisation of recording categories allows Devon and Cornwall Police to report to the Home Office on the statutory requirements obligated to them and reported to the Home Secretary. Any deviation from this mean that the Force are unable to report on these statutory obligations in line with the Government Statistical Services (GSS) – see the Gov.uk website for this.

I am aware that on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2020, the Sikh Federation UK brought a second judicial review challenge against the Cabinet Office over government plans for the 2021 Census. The case was heard by the Judge, Mr Justice Choudhury who dismissed the legal challenge on this issue on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

I recognise your frustration but ask that you and members of all diverse communities work with is to not see this as a barrier to reporting, and use the free text boxes in the forms to provide all relevant information including self-identification of any form that sits outside the Home Office reporting mechanisms we need to comply with.

I have liaised with the Force Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion on this matter and will also raise your concerns with the Chief Constable in order to understand how the Police are using the free text boxes to build a good understanding of hate crimes against the Sikh community and inform their work.

48. **Appointment of Independent Member (Cornwall) of Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel**

Following a recruitment exercise in February, Sharon Minty had been recommended for appointment to the Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel as an independent member for Cornwall.

Ms Minty had extensive knowledge and experience and had volunteered, worked and studied within probation, Housing (supporting young offenders) and Victim Support since 1984.

Members voted unanimously in favour to appointment Ms Minty to the Panel.

The Panel thanked Emily Macaulay for her service to the Panel and wished her well for the future. The Panel would be recruiting for a Devon based Independent Member.

Ms Minty declared a private interest in relation Item 8 on the agenda. Ms Minty had been a member of an organisation that provided victim support services.

49. **Police and Crime 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 congratulated Chief Constable Shaun Sawyer for the operational success of G7. Cornwall had seen a large increase in Police officer numbers, residents had given a flurry of compliments for their handling of the operation. During the G7 Conference there had been a number of triage centres setup to handle multiple arrests before going to a formal custody unit. Independent Custody visitors completed quality assurance of these centres throughout the G7 conference.
- In June the OPCC were successful in the governments second round of Safer Streets funding. Exeter had been awarded £432,000 to tackle crime and make streets safer in the city centre and surrounding area's. Combined with match funding the total bid value had been in excess of

£500,000. A third round of Safer Streets funding had been launched by the Home Office, focussing on protecting people in public spaces, with a focus on the safety of women and girls. The funding round would close on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021. The Police and Crime Commissioner had been working with local authorities to prepare bids for submission.

- In March 2021 partnership funding of £350,000 had been allocated to support Community Safety Partnerships in order to keep people safe over Summer 2021 and in the latter stages of unlock following COVID-19 restrictions.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner encouraged all members of the Panel to join the Councillor Advocate scheme as a way of connecting with their local policing team. The scheme gives Councillors access to their local policing inspector to discuss crime in their area, to provide intelligence and to attend seminars.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner advised that she had been committed to tri service officers and wanted to see the scheme expanded. Tri Service officers were employed by Cornwall Council and were fully trained firefighters, have some policing powers and a co-responding paramedic all within one Frontline worker. There had been a Blue Light fund within the budget with a focus on Marine and Coastal services. If there would be more political pressure this may help expand the scheme further.

Panel Members discussed:

- For Torbay Council to have a vessel that could deal with both Policing and Fire due to the high concentration of vessel movement in the area;
- Stronger North Stonehouse Project and how does the OPCC monitor whether things have improved for the area. Alison Hernandez advised that a Stronger North Stonehouse network needed to be established. There had been a serious violence programme overseen by both the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable to evaluate the project;
- Community speed watch and how 'Operation Snap' would be utilised to address traffic offences to raise the standards of driving in the area and to reduce the number of serious traffic incidents. Councillor Hackett requested more publicity for Operation Snap to encourage members of the public to report when a traffic offence has occurred;
- The Panel noted and welcomed organisational changes within the OPCC.

The Panel noted the report.

50. **Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Draft Annual Report**

Alison Hernandez (The Police and Crime Commissioner) advised that the report was in draft, it's an unformatted report that would be published.

Members of the Panel discussed the following:

- The number of PSCO's would not decrease and would remain at 150, if this figure does decrease they will be recruited. The 150 PCSO's have been allocated within the budget.
- Two Councillors were involved in the scrutiny of the 101 service amongst other items. From the scrutiny there had been a number of recommendations. The Police and Crime Commissioner has fortnightly catch ups with the control officers as well as daily updates. The Commissioner was looking at how the Police could implement the recommendations.

The Commissioner would like to triage all calls first as opposed to having to press a number for particular requests. The Commissioner would like the reasonable time to wait to remain at 10 minutes for 101 calls whereas the Chief Constable believed 20 minutes would be reasonable. The Commissioner and Chief Constable remain in dialogue to work through what was affordable, reasonable and deliverable.

The Commissioner advised that there was a link on the website which will show the current waiting times for the 101 service. It was highlighted that when there was a surge in 999 calls the 101 call handlers would be diverted to address the 999 calls which in turn had increased the waiting times. The Police do not have a consistent demand on the service and trying to resource had been a challenge.

- North Devon do not have a Place of Safety for those in Mental Health Crisis. When Exeter's Place of Safety had been unavailable two police officers are then required to travel to Torbay for, potentially their entire shift. The Police and Crime Commissioner advised that the NHS decide where they have their Places of Safety, however Places of Safety can be within a family members home. Devon County Council would be hosting their Health and Wellbeing Board and would discuss the issue of Places of Safety.
- The retiring of experienced Police officers and how their experience would be retained by the service.
- The Chair advised that on page 40 it stipulated '*The Panel is administered by officers from both the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and the Police and Crime Panel, working together to support the work of panel and ensure meetings are planned and co-ordinated effectively*'. The Chair requested that this wording was amended. The Chair also advised that on page 40 there was a spelling error and asked for this to be rectified.

The Panel noted the report.

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

The Police and Crime Commissioner asked for questions in relation to this item, members did not have any.

The Panel noted the report.

52. **Government Review of the Role of Police and Crime Commissioners**

Chief Executive Frances Hughes presented this item to the Panel.

Police and Crime commissioners as well as the respective Panel had been in place since 2012. The Home Secretary announced a review of Police and Crime Commissioners last summer in terms of the scope and breadth of their role. Due to the election the review had been split into two parts. Part 1 took place in Autumn 2020, the Panel had been a consultee to part of that review.

Part 2 had been expected to start imminently and was anticipated to review the criminal justice space and understanding what the future roles and responsibilities would be for the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Frances Hughes (Chief Executive) took Panel members through particular area's to note;

- The Specified Information Order had been a requirement in which the Police and Crime Commissioner would be required to deliver a narrative assessment of how the Police force had been performing. For areas that had already published the Police and Crime Plan they would have to publish that narrative report right away. For other areas it would be a requirement to publish that narrative in the autumn concurrently with the Police and Crime plan.
- Good practice sharing would be co-ordinated by the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners.
- To enhance resilience and capacity of Police and Crime Commissioners and the intention to expand the role into fire, the Home Office would bring forward legislation to mandate that each Police and Crime Commissioner must appoint a deputy (of the same political party where the Police and Crime Commissioner represents a political party). In the interim, the Home Office would issue guidance to PCCs' offices requesting that a formal succession plan is put into place to deal with vacancy and incapacitation, involving the Police and Crime Panel in discussions as necessary. It was forecasted that a deputy Police and Crime Commissioner would be in place in 2024.
- The Home Office would work with the Local Government Association to develop a good governance training package for Police and Crime Panels.

- The review concluded that there would be further steps undertaken to sharpen local accountability and ensure the framework guiding the Police and Crime Commissioners relationship with the Chief Constables had been clarified.
- One of the potentially big changes for the Police and Crime Commissioner would be to potentially take on the role of Fire governance, this would be reflected within the Police and Crime Panel which would become the Police, Crime and Fire Panel. The OPCC had been waiting for a white paper to the government which would outline what the proposals would look like.

Members discussed:

- How the Commissioner would control Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime as well as Devon and Somerset Fire. It had been recognised that the South West had a unique position which had been recognised within the detailed review which would need special consideration.
- How an additional member to the senior team would be financed. Frances Hughes advised that this would be considered as part of any budget proposal and details would be brought back to the Panel for any further discussions.

The Panel noted the report.

53. **Complaints against The Police and Crime Commissioner received under The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act**

Frances Hughes (Chief Executive) advised the Panel there had been one complaint however this was received just prior to the recent election and had therefore not been progressed as complaints are delegated to the Chief Executive by the Chair before coming back to the Chair in the second instance.

Councillor Cheadle requested an output for future meetings to be included to understand how many complaints have been dealt with satisfactorily.

Frances Hughes (Chief Executive) advised that all complaints have been dealt with satisfactorily.

The Panel noted the report.

54. **Work Programme**

Members requested the following items to be input onto the work programme.

- On-going work programme to review past deep dives

- Safer Streets funding and how the money was being spent and how closely do we work with other local authorities and partners
- Public contact; 101; reopening of front desks; PCSO's; Councillor Advocate Scheme; Community youth projects