



Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel

17th September 2021

SUMMARY OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S RESPONSE TO THE MASS SHOOTINGS IN KEYHAM, PLYMOUTH

Purpose

- To enable the Panel to scrutinise the Commissioner's response so far to the horrific murders of Maxine Davison, Sophie Martyn, Lee Martyn, Stephen Washington and Kate Shepherd and the subsequent death of the offender in Keyham, Plymouth on Thursday 12th August 2021.
- To provide a high-level summary of the types of activities that the Commissioner has been involved with in supporting the community and the police in responding to and now taking steps to help the recovery from a devastating set of events in Keyham, Plymouth on 12th August 2021.

It should be recognised that Plymouth is still in the early weeks of recovery following the incident and therefore this document should only be considered as a high-level summary of activity to date.

Background

The tragedy and trauma of the events in Keyham, Plymouth on Thursday 12th August 2021 have widespread impacts for the families involved, for policing, the city of Plymouth and the UK as a whole.

On Thursday 12th August 2021 at around 6pm, a critical incident unfolded in the Keyham, Ford and North Prospect area of Plymouth, resulting in the murders of five people and the suicide of the perpetrator. Due to the nature of the crime, the time of day and the location, there were a significant number of adults and children who witnessed the events.

It is clear that these events have already had a profound effect on a large number of people. A police command structure was set up immediately and thereafter a comprehensive multi-agency emergency response was established, and that is continuing to provide visible and accessible support for the families and residents affected.

Evidence from other parts of the UK and around the world where similar events have occurred show that these types of traumatic event can have a significant detrimental

impact on people over many years, but this can be mitigated with the right support early on.

The Police are focused on the investigation of the crimes and the support to the coronial process and immediate support to the families of the victims, via the Family Liaison Officers. Neighbourhood Police and mutual aid officers from across the country have been visible in terms of scene guarding and community reassurance and police officers have been actively engaging with the Keyham community.

Partners from across all agencies have come together with Plymouth City Council, the OPCC and the Police to support the community at this time. It is essential that all partners rebuild the confidence of the community in terms of their perceptions around crime and safety, and giving them an opportunity to move on from this tragedy.

Police and Crime Commissioner's objectives

The Commissioner's focus has been on supporting the local community and ensuring that policing and partners have been able to maximise services and opportunities for the Keyham community and victims' families to recover from the violence and tragedy. The Commissioner has had oversight of the policing response to ensure that it has been appropriate and sustained by ensuring:

1. The Chief Constable has sufficient resources to respond to the emergency.
2. The Chief Constable works in partnership to protect the public locally, regionally and nationally.
3. On behalf of the public, that the police respond in ways that are necessary, sufficient, proportionate and ethical (holding to account).
4. Participation in effective partnership working among agencies and groups working in community safety, violence reduction and criminal justice.
5. Timely support for victims of crime in conjunction with our strategic partner Victim Support.
6. The organisational health of Devon and Cornwall Police, so that it not only responds to the emergency effectively, but recovers and returns to normality as quickly as possible.
7. That the wider public receive a proportionate response to business as usual crimes and requests for service throughout the current emergency.

In the medium and longer term these will:

- **Restore feelings of safety** through a range of initiatives (target hardening, hot spot policing, multi-agency visibility and restorative circles).
- **Mitigate existing and future adverse individual impact** through a range of universal and targeted interventions.
- **Advance community action** through investment in skills, community grants and positive engagement opportunities to create sustainable community led change.

This type of street-based incident in Devon and Cornwall is without precedent, and any loss of life has far reaching consequences for families and communities alike. The services that Commissioners are responsible for have been a vital component in the

support available to those affected, alongside the invaluable work of many other partners, volunteers and community groups.

Direct activity by the Police and Crime Commissioner

On the night of the incident the Commissioner was present at Middlemoor (Police Headquarters) with the Chief Constable and facilitated liaison with Plymouth MPs, Cllrs, Victim Support and the media in the immediate aftermath of the events. The Commissioner was briefed on the support provided for the families of victims and the subsequent investigative processes.

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) staff were quickly deployed to support victims and the community in Plymouth, with the OPCC vehicle in Keyham from the morning of Friday 13th to provide a base for staff from the OPCC, Victim Support and the Victim Care Unit within the police. Our vehicle remained in place within the community until Thursday 20th August. The Commissioner has expressed her thanks to the local Co-op and Lidl for allowing the OPCC vehicle to be sited for these days in their car parks, and to Councillor Advocate Cllr Maddi Bridgman and I for the voluntary assistance she provided by while our teams were in the area.

A leaflet was produced overnight by a local company in order to have specific information for help and support for the people of Keyham and beyond. I wish to express my thanks to Maverrick Printing in Plymouth for doing this overnight, at cost only, as a gesture of their support.

On the morning of Friday 13th the Commissioner received a phone call from the Chairman of Devon and Cornwall Community Watch Association Julie Dowton who facilitated contact with the local Keyham Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) Scheme led by Kevin Sproston. Kevin led the NHW scheme to mobilise immediately, and with £5,000 funding provided from the Commissioner, set up a 'Feel Safe' scheme which has currently assisted at least 40 households with basic security measures including people who have been directly affected by this atrocity. The Commissioner has subsequently given an extra £4,000 to continue this work to help even more members of the community.

The Commissioner was in Keyham within the community all day on Friday 13th August and attended the crime scene area with the Chief Constable to understand the scale and impact on the community and local Police. In addition she carried out multiple national and local media interviews to promote the opportunity of the victim care services that were available.

The Commissioner returned to Plymouth on Saturday 14th August when she also met with the Home Secretary the Rt Hon Priti Patel MP, Luke Pollard MP and the Leader of the Council Cllr Nick Kelly. She returned to Plymouth on Monday 16th August to participate in the minute's silence at the Guildhall and again on Wednesday 18th August for the memorial service. The Commissioner visited Police officers in Plymouth on Friday 20th August, and was accompanied on a visit to the Keyham community by Chief Superintendent Matthew Longman and Kevin Sproston from NHW to better understand the community impact.

On Sunday 29th August the Commissioner visited Keyham again, when she participated in the Co-Op fundraising day and again engaged with local residents.

Plymouth City Council has been leading the recovery phase and has set up a range of multi-agency fora to coordinate resources for those affected, identify short, medium and long terms community needs and make significant funding requests to the Government to ensure that the city wide response can be sustained over time. The Commissioner and resources from the OPCC, including the Director of Serious Violence, have been an integral part of this process.

Representatives from the OPCC have also attended the briefings with Plymouth City Council elected members and MPs, and the PCC has supported policing and the city of Plymouth in meetings with the Home Secretary, Policing Minister and other central government departments to help facilitate a conversation about additional resources to support the community in Plymouth.

In addition, the fortnightly meeting with MPs across Devon and Cornwall have continued and the PCC has been in regular contact with the Leader of Plymouth City Council, Nick Kelly and been supported by the wider councillors.

Direct action to support victims

The Commissioner has a statutory responsibility to support victims of crime and commissions a range of services to deliver this. The Commissioner has a strategic partnership with Victim Support and anyone affected by what has occurred can make contact with them. Their services are available 24 hours a day on freephone 0808 1689 111 or via live WebChat on victimsupport.org.uk. The promotion of their services was triggered within a few hours of the incident occurring via social media.

In addition, further leaflets were printed specifically for Keyham residents by Maverrick Printing, who dropped everything to help. The leaflets gave details of how those traumatised and affected could get expert practical and emotional support, 24 hours a day. These were delivered door to door by Victim Support workers and council representatives.

Victim Support and the OPCC have subsequently developed a strategic funding proposal for victims from the Ministry of Justice and had detailed discussions about the scale and impact of the trauma to inform future decision-making processes.

In addition the services of the Programme Director for Serious Violence have been made available to work directly with Plymouth City Council to support their emergency response and help to write the strategic bid to central government. This shared post between the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable is part of the infrastructure supporting the prevention of serious violence approach which was set up in 2020.

As Strategic Partner to the OPCC, Victim Support is co-ordinating the response to victims, witnesses and those directly affected. A triage meeting has taken place three times a week to coordinate the Victim Care Unit (VCU), VS National Contact Centre (NCC) and the members of the Victim Care Network (VCN) including VS Local and Young Devon. This triage process is the mechanism by which the effective co-

ordination and tracking route for all one-to-one support being offered to those directly affected.

About Victim Support

The PCC has a strategic partnership with Victim Support for the next 10 years. Victim Support is an independent charity providing free and confidential support to anyone affected by crime and traumatic events. Their services are trauma-informed and victim-centred, including immediate and ongoing emotional and practical support, information and advocacy, peer support and group work and support to navigate the criminal justice and coroner's systems.

Victim Support provides help 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year through its Supportline and live chat services as well as providing long-term support for as long as it is needed to help people move beyond crime. It has teams of highly-trained staff and volunteers who provide a wide range of specialist services that help people affected by all types of crime.

Victim Support also runs the National Homicide service providing a dedicated, comprehensive wraparound service and vital independent voice for those bereaved by murder and manslaughter in England and Wales.

Victim Support has significant experience of responding to major incidents including providing support to those impacted by tragedies such as the Croydon tram crash (2016) and Grenfell Tower fire (2017) as well as responding to the terror attacks in 2017 including Westminster and Manchester Arena.

Existing service provision in Plymouth

The Commissioner already commissions a range of service in Plymouth, and providers already working with the OPCC team have been very supportive in offering their services to contribute to the overall recovery plans for the areas. Street Games is one such commissioned service and the Commissioner has extended its contract to ensure that services are available for young people in the coming months.

Scrutiny

Owing to the nature of the incident and perpetrator having a firearms certificate, the Chief Constable made an immediate referral to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) for them to investigate the circumstances of the licence held and events surrounding it. The IOPC has met the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable as part of this review. The final report from this investigation is expected in December 2021.

Also, the Police and Crime Commissioner has commissioned a peer review of firearms licensing processes, which is supported by Chief Constable. This is being conducted by the National Police Chief Council (NPCC) Lead for Firearms.

On 18th August 2021 the Government announced a national review of firearms licensing processes. By 1st September all police forces in England, Wales and Scotland were requested to review their current firearms licensing processes set against the current Home Office guidance and legislation.

Throughout and despite media speculation it is important not jump to conclusions about the reasons for these heinous crimes but await the Independent Office of Police Conduct's investigation, an NPCC led review into the police's procedures and the coroner's report as we seek to fully understand what, if any, changes may need to be made into firearms licensing procedures.

The **Commissioner** is also working with Police and Crime Commissioners from around the country to ensure that if there are lessons to be learned licensing procedures in England and Wales these will be shared with colleagues.

Community Resilience

Throughout the days and weeks following the tragedy the community has been incredibly supportive of each other. The Commissioner wishes to express her thanks to the numerous businesses, community leaders and members of the public who have directly engaged with the OPCC with offers of support to help their community. She would also like to recognise and comment the multi-agency and community focused approach taken by all our partners.

Next Steps

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner remains actively engaged with supporting the recovery plans for Keyham and for wider Plymouth and is seeking opportunities to maximise the funding envelope available to achieve this, including exploring funding for recovery support from the government. Support services remain in place and can be accessed by anyone who feels that they are victim, directly or indirectly from these tragic events.

Over the coming weeks and months the Police and Crime Commissioner will provide continuity for services and ensure that the Chief Constable and his team are supported to achieve appropriate neighbourhood policing and visible reassurance to enable the families affected and community to start to recover.

Frances Hughes, September 2021