

Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel

Friday 25 November 2022

PRESENT:

Councillor Croad, in the Chair.

Councillor Towill, Vice Chair.

Councillors Alvey, Atiya-Alla, Biederman, Chopak, Dewhirst, Hackett, Hopwood, Knowles, Loudoun, Penberthy, Sellis (Substituting for Councillor Samuel), Tilbey and Wright.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Fitter, Mrs Pengelly, Rodgers and Sharon Minty (Independent Member for Cornwall).

Also in attendance: Alison Hernandez (Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner), Frances Hughes (Chief Executive for OPCC), Nicola Allen (Treasurer) Felicity Ridgway (Director of Operations for OPCC), David Ford (IOPC), Jamie Sheldon (Senior Governance Advisor) and Jake Metcalfe (Democratic Support Advisor)

The meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 12.35 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.

102. **Minutes**

The minutes from 21 September 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

103. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

104. **Public Questions**

There were no public questions submitted for the Panel.

105. **Involvement of the IOPC in Police Legitimacy**

Alison Hernandez, Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner introduced David Ford, Regional Director for the South West IOPC who delivered the item to the Panel and highlighted the following key points:

- a) The IOPC came into existence in 2013 and aimed to provide public reassurance in Policing in ensuring that the Police were accountable for their actions and lessons were learned when things went wrong;

- b) Hundreds of investigations were carried out every year by the IOPC;
- c) Work had been carried out by the IOPC with police forces nationally to improve complaint handling;
- d) Stakeholder teams built positive relationships with diverse communities, organisations and groups;
- e) The Policy team helped to shape legislation both internally and within the wider policing landscape;
- f) Police forces by law must report incidences of complaints of serious allegations or serious assault, Police misconduct, or where the public have had a serious injury or death as a result of police intervention to the IOPC for investigation;
- g) If the IOPC agreed to undertake an investigation there would be three main phases to the investigation and included; initial notification and setting up of the case; phase 2, the IOPC would conduct the investigation those investigators would have the powers of a Police constable during the investigations; phase 3 would see a lead investigator producing a report summarising the evidence and handed over to IOPC decision maker to determine additional matters which could include CPS referral, misconduct referral and best practice. The IOPC would continue to support the investigations at trial, at misconduct hearings or at inquests where there had been a death;
- h) The IOPC would deal with 5,000 referrals every year and would independently investigate between 4-500 of those referrals. The casework teams reviewed 2-3000 cases each year ensuring outcomes were reasonable and proportionate;
- i) The IOPC, as a result of investigations would embed a learning culture to enable best practice across police forces;
- j) The IOPC had been trying to reach those communities that were harder to engage to make them aware of the IOPC and its aims to instil public confidence in the police force;
- k) When high profile and serious incidents took place, the IOPC would engage communities at the earliest points to explain the process of an investigation. This had been done within the Keyham tragedy, the community were engaged early and their voice was heard and reflected in the press release;
- l) Police legitimacy had been affected greatly due to national, high profile incidences which did not reflect what the vast majority of police officers. To respond to the concerns of the public the IOPC had been developing a sector wide programme to restore public confidence in policing;

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- a) The IOPC broke down national statistics, regionally, on a quarterly basis and reported them on their website. The IOPC published the number of complaints received, categories of complaints and would also report on the IOPC's performance in the region;
- b) The IOPC kept track of the public's opinion and ran 6 monthly public perception reports;
- c) David Ford would meet with all Police and Crime Commissioners in the South West region on a quarterly basis as well as Chief Constable's. Investigations of Police and Crime Commissioners would be handled outside of the region to provide public confidence that the investigation was wholly independent.

106. **Contact Services Within Devon and Cornwall Police**

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

- a) Devon and Cornwall Police have gone into engage mode with HMICFRS with issues around public contact amongst two other issues;
- b) Increase in the need for 999 calls and how that increase had provided challenges in the contact centre;
- c) The introduction of 'voice recognition' in July 2019 had improved call centre performance for one year but had declined since;
- d) The Police and Crime Commissioner conducted a public scrutiny review of 101 in 2020/21 which resulted in 12 recommendation made to the Chief Constable and had been rejected;

In response to questions raised it was reported:

- a) Jim Colwille (Temporary Chief Constable) had been holding corporate responsibility which had previously been delegated down. This had in a short space of time had a positive impact in attempting to tackle the issues that had been common for the contact centre over a number of years. Jim had brought in Humberside Police who had scored outstanding on inspections and had the best contact centre in the country to assist Devon and Cornwall Police in bringing about positive change. Jim had also brought in a consultancy firm to map processes of the contact centre which were found to be cumbersome;
- b) Technology had negatively impacted the contact centre and it was acknowledged to be far behind local authorities and their systems;

- c) The Police contact service had been dealing in greater numbers with calls that were non-crime related however wouldn't be picked up by other agencies. The Police had also been dealing with incidences of mental health in greater numbers which should be handled by health services;
- d) The removal of an email address for contacting the police had been due to many submissions being too vague resulting in extra work trying to clarify the requests. The web form had aimed to rectify the issue in getting the member of the public to produce detail in their submissions;
- e) The force had begun to implement a new system called NICHE which would enable better integration. The Commissioner highlighted to the Panel that performance could dip when reporting at the next Police and Crime Panel due to the implementation of the software;
- f) The Commissioner requested a 10 second reduction in call wait time for 999 calls by the end of the calendar year. The Commissioner had also pushed for p2 calls to be triaged by the end of the calendar year which was accepted by the temporary Chief Constable;
- g) There had been an improvement plan developed for the contact centre and on receipt of the HMICFRS report, the Commissioner would share the improvement plan with the Panel;
- h) On receipt of the HMICFRS report the Commissioner would circulate this to the Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel members for their consideration of an Extraordinary General Meeting;
- i) The Contact centre would remain a standing item on the agenda for the Panel until call centre inefficiencies were nullified;
- j) Following the Commissioners scrutiny on the Contact Centre, recommendations were not implemented by the Chief Constable. The Panel were advised that there had been significant distractions in the year but with the arrival of the new Chief Constable it was hoped the recommendations on improving performance were picked up;
- k) The Commissioner expressed frustration to the Panel at a systemic policing problem that had been occurring nationally but was a particular problem in Devon and Cornwall Police force in 'career policing' which had caused real issues in terms of leadership within the force;
- l) The Bude Enquiry office would be opening in January 2023;

- m) Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Contact Centre had come 33rd out of 43 forces in terms of performance. The Panel were advised that 999 calls could trip through to other forces in the country but 101 calls would not;

107. **Commissioners Update Report**

Nicola Allen, Treasurer provided an update to the Panel on the Autumn statement and highlighted the following key points:

- a) The Chancellor confirmed commitment to the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) published in 2021 which covered; Increase in police office uplift programme, with a £10 council tax cap;
- b) The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner had been expecting the provisional settlement on 12 September. There were existing concerns of inflation and base rate and there would be a need to 'consume' inflation.

In response to questions it was reported that:

- a) The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner would have discussions with Torridge Council in respect of bidding for CSP funding;

The Panel agreed to note the report.

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

This item was taken as read and in response to questions raised it was reported:

- a) The Commissioner would be undertaking scrutiny of hate crime which would be brought back to the Panel. The scrutiny would focus on serious hate involving violence instead of online hate in order to understand what the force had been doing to respond. The Commissioner would work with Councillors Atiya-Alla and Penberthy and involve them in the scrutiny process;
- b) The Commissioner would be involved in Plymouth City Council's Performance, Customer Focus and Finance Overview Scrutiny Committee where they would be scrutinising hate crime;
- c) Future violent crime profile reports would include data that could break down the statistics by gender;
- d) Members of the Panel commended Operation Scorpion and the forces involvement in disrupting the drug supply in the region;

The Panel agreed to note the report.

109. **Police and Crime Plan Violence Profile**

The Panel agreed to note the report.

110. **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 no new complaints to report.

The Panel agreed to note the report.

111. **Work Programme**

Members agreed to add the following to the work programme:

- Contact Centre (Standing item)
- Vision zero (How its funded)
- Commissioners Hate Crime Scrutiny and the Chief Constable's response
- Recruitment and Retention of staff