

Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel

Friday 15 September 2023

PRESENT:

Councillor Towill, in the Chair.

Councillors Alvey, Coker, Croad, Ewings, Hackett, Leaver, Penberthy, Thomas, Toms, Towill, Tyerman and Wright.

Also in attendance: Alison Hernandez (Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Police and Crime Commissioner), Nicola Allen (Treasurer), Felicity Ridgway (Assistant Chief Executive), Ross Jago (Head of Governance, Performance and Risk, Plymouth City Council), Hannah Whiting (Democratic Advisor), Jake Metcalfe (Democratic Advisor), Pierre Doutreligne (Policy and Projects Officer) and Emma Butler-Jones (Devon and Cornwall Police).

The meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 1.39 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.

13. Minutes

Councillor Penberthy raised the following points from Section 6 of the minutes on Devon and Cornwall Firearms Licensing;

- a) 6q was regarding the processing applications against the income received and it was explicitly asked and agreed by the commissioner that she would see if that could be provided to us so we could lobby on behalf of the police;
- b) 6p was regarding being sent the Commissioners draft response to the consultation, which did not occur;
- c) In the previous report, the Commissioner talked about Devon and Cornwall issuing more temporary licenses than any other area, the agreement is that the Commissioner would speak to the Chief Constable about whether that practice could be stopped and if people were late in applying for temporary licenses, their guns could be surrendered until a license can be issued.

Councillor Penberthy asked for:

- a) Minute 6i to include a suggestion from the panel that people should surrender their firearms whilst waiting for a new licence, to try and limit the number of temporary licences;

b) Minute 6q to be more explicit as the Panel had requested data from the Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner on the cost of possession firearms applications compared to income received.

It was later explained that the request relating to information to be included in 6q, was already contained within the minutes in point 6h.

Councillor Towill proposed the following:

d) The previous meeting was an emergency meeting due to a cancelled meeting in early July; it was important to have substitutes available when you cannot attend a meeting and due to this, it had been suggested that the Chair, Vice Chair and some of the officers were given delegated authority to communicate with the Councillors or Councils which made up the committee.

The Committee agreed to give delegated authority to the Chair, Vice Chair and some of the officers to communicate with the Councillors or Councils that made up this committee.

The minutes from the meeting held on 28 July 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

14. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

15. **Public Questions**

There were no questions from members of the public.

16. **Anti-Social Behaviour Policing and Operation Loki**

Alison Hernandez (Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner) introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) Anti-social behaviour had come out at a top issue in public surveys;
- b) The report by the Local Government Ombudsman, 'Out of Order', discussed how many Councils had failed in their duty regarding anti-social behaviour and the responsibility that Councils had in addressing such behaviour in their communities, even when another agency needed to be referred to for handling it; the oversight must have come from the Local Authority;
- c) Operation Loki is a 4 week sustained campaign aimed at addressing anti-social behaviour in the Safer Streets areas (Exeter, Plymouth, Barnstaple, Truro, Falmouth and Torquay) to enhance existing environmental improvements, including the installation of CCTV and street lighting.

Superintendent Emma Butler-Jones (Head of Prevention Department and Lead for Neighbourhood Policing) added:

- d) In July 2023, the Chief Constable committed a further Police Sergeant and five Police Officers to each basic command unit within Devon and Cornwall which totalled an additional 24 officers to support neighbourhood policing;
- e) PCSO numbers had been maintained with the understanding of the integral role they play in engaging with communities;
- f) A recruitment exercise had recently concluded with 19 PCSOs having graduated, and another phase of recruitment having commenced;
- g) In March and April 2023, Operation Loki, a targeted neighbourhood policing operation, was led in partnership with the Safer Streets areas, focusing on strategic objectives that involved proactive engagement with partners and key stakeholders, visible and proactive policing that utilized intelligence and information to influence policing tactics, with an emphasis on directed action related to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and anti-social behaviour, whilst also providing an opportunity to engage and connect with local communities to improve public confidence;
- h) Anti-social behaviour had decreased in the target areas but was accompanied by some displacement to surrounding areas;
- i) Acquisitive crime decreased in the target areas without causing displacement to surrounding areas;
- j) In a public survey, 40% of the public had noticed the increase in policing presence on the streets;
- k) Engagement was a fundamental part of the operation with 27,000 members of the public estimated to have been engaged with, not including 1.5 million people reached on Facebook and 400,000 reached on Twitter;
- l) Operation Loki had been adopted as an operation as the response to anti-social behaviour throughout the force;
- m) An OPCC commissioned van has been used to hold pop up police stations in key areas, this was a valuable asset and tactic in terms of getting to the hearts of the towns and cities and would be a tactic to be deployed in rural communities also;
- n) A bid has been submitted through OPCC's office to secure funding for two more pop up police stations;

- o) The Community Alert 4 app has given an improved understanding of what is occurring in local areas;
- p) Anti-social behaviour training occurred for both police and partners, with an emphasis on internal training, and the Chief Constable authorised two trainer posts dedicated to neighbourhood training to reinforce this effect.

Alison Hernandez (Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner) added:

- q) Drug seizures reported during the duration of Operation Loki showed cocaine and cannabis being identified of the highest value;
- r) Despite making 156 arrests, the priority was not to arrest but to prevent anti-social behaviour from happening or escalating; success was measured through safeguarding and the reduction of drugs on the street, rather than the number of arrests made;
- s) The plan was to explore how to sustain the Operation year-round, an idea was to identify a task force that could be deployed to areas where there had been a spike in anti-social behaviour;
- t) The implementation and enforcement of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) posed a challenge, as the relationship between the force and councils was undefined regarding responsibilities and whether collaboration would assist in further addressing this issue.

In response to questions, it was explained:

- u) Reporting anti-social behaviour has been challenging because responsibility for noise nuisance, dog fouling, and litter lies with the local authority, while vandalism, graffiti, and aggressive begging were under the jurisdiction of the police, leading to a lack of clarity about whom to report such incidents to;
- v) The Commissioner confirmed the best practice for reporting anti-social behaviour to the police would be to report it centrally and to let the PSCO know, if you could, that it had been reported centrally;
- w) Although 500 officers and PSCO's had been trained in tools to use for anti-social behaviour the Commissioner agreed that she would look at the Commissioning Attention Plan around what more needed to be done to help with reporting anti-social behaviour;
- x) Devon and Cornwall Police had been considering the investment in an anti-social behaviour lawyer to assist with handling cases and taking them to court, as well as obtaining banning orders;
- y) To encourage business engagement, there was an understanding that a single portal would be beneficial, and DISC proved to be a valuable asset, saving time and offering the capability to upload CCTV footage and

reports swiftly for businesses;

- z) Evidence from Operation Scorpion showed street drinkers played an active part in attracting young people into their drug and drinking culture;
- aa) To sustain Operation Loki, new officers would have to undergo training because recourse had been previously diverted from other areas during the four weeks that Operation Loki was in force, which was noticed by local residents;
- bb) The government had a strategy in place called 'Clear, Hold and Build' around drug use (clearing it, holding the line to prevent its return and building from that within the community) however this strategy had not yet made a significant impact;
- cc) Clear Hold Build national project was being piloted in Cornwall;
- dd) Local policing teams were often pulled into emergency responses, ensuring 999 responses, which meant they were not always available to stay on top of local community matters.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

17. **Police and Crime Plan 2021- 25 Scorecard**

In response to questions raised it was reported:

- a) There was a national issue with the way the police conducted their Drug Threat Assessments which were focused on drug-related deaths which linked to heroin, rather than addressing other drugs in the market where there was a lack of compliance with the law;
- b) The Commissioner had been unable to oversee the Combating Drugs Partnerships within Devon and Cornwall because there were four of them, so they were overseen by Local Authority Public Health Directors;
- c) The spread of drug use outlined in the report did not indicate an increase in drug use but rather an improved understanding of the drug trafficking taking place;
- d) The Commissioner recommended a presentation about the drugs challenges being faced as it would be a good way of pulling together the information from the Combating Drugs Partnerships, the Regional Organised Crime Unit and Operation Scorpion;
- e) Due to new guidance from the National Police Chiefs College non-crime hate incidents were no longer required to be recorded;

- f) A homicide review officer would be funded through the Serious Violence Programme to increase the speed of which the situation is reviewed;
- g) The ongoing issue with reporting domestic violence due to the new crime recording system in November 2022 was reported by the Commissioner to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, the National Police Chiefs Council and The Home Office;
- h) Crime Stoppers had been funded and promoted because anonymity aided in drug reporting, functioning effectively for that specific type of crime, also they had been responsive on the phone and had established strong relationships with each police force, reinforcing the police's commitment to this issue to the general public;
- i) Devon and Cornwall Police had reached number one in the country in August 2023 for the fastest answering of 999 calls;
- j) The abandonment rate for 101 was poor because it was difficult to articulate why the calls had been abandoned, given the myriad of possible reasons for this occurrence including going online or using the chat facility;
- k) The new control room system AACC7 had been implemented and had been stable and had helped with doing the call-backs for the people who could not get through, there had been a lot of positive feedback about this service;
- l) The Commissioner agreed to bring the information regarding call-backs and abandonment to the next meeting;
- m) Triage had been introduced 101 to reduce distress levels for the public on the phone by reassuring them they were through to the police;
- n) Priority One (P1) and Priority Two (P2) used voice recognition to funnel the caller into a particular queue to determine the urgency of the call, that system had been changed so everyone would speak to a human at the switchboard triage;
- o) Call-back function was introduced and given as an option rather than saying on the line;
- p) Analysis of waiting times for 101 would be brought to the next panel for discussion.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

18. **Police and Crime Plan Drugs Profile**

In response to questions raised it was reported:

- a) Drug deaths had risen for those in treatment higher than ever before signifying that older users of drugs lost their lives due to complications;
- b) The Commissioner agreed to find out where the information regarding drug deaths was sourced.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

19. **Police and Crime Plan ASB Profile**

The Committee agreed to note the report.

20. **Commissioner's Update Report**

In response to questions raised it was reported:

- a) The National Police Chiefs Council agreed to visit every burglary victim, Greater Manchester police accomplished this and the Chief Constable had been putting a plan together about how this would be implemented in Devon and Cornwall;
- b) The Commissioner agreed to bring back information regarding visiting every burglary victim and the recourse it would take to do this to the Commissioner's Update in the next meeting;
- c) Philip Wilkinson (Police and Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire) and Rob Hansen (Chief Constable for Gloucestershire) had put a proposal forward on how to fund the intelligence function that linked to rural crime and updates to this would be brought forward in the next Commissioner's Update;
- d) Devon and Cornwall, along with the help of Partners, submitted a report on rurality, sparsity and seasonality to the government which led to the Policing Minister stating in Parliament that tourism should be a factor in the funding formula;
- e) A review of police custody had taken place around where the Healthcare provision failed;
- f) The Prisoners Building Homes project had been introduced to build eco-homes to aid with the police, firefighters and NHS staff who had struggled to find housing appropriate for them in North Devon;
- g) The production of the LEPH Link had been created under the Serious Violence Programme and helped eradicate the challenge around police officers spending time signposting the public to the correct resource, including services for mental health and drug and alcohol use;
- h) The Commissioner advised for businesses and the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) to get into contact if there had been a

delay for a long period of time;

- i) The government had introduced a national scheme Right Care Right Person which would pinpoint the appropriate recourse for the individual and would not waste police time;
- j) The Commissioner agreed to take the issue around A Place of Safety (APOS) in North Devon back to Chief Constable Glenn Mayhew;
- k) In the 2018 budget, 27 neighbour police officers were added to every sector.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

21. **Hate Crime Scrutiny**

Alison Hernandez (Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner) introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) 73% satisfaction rate regarding the support victims of hate crime had received;
- b) Race and sexual orientation experienced the highest levels of hate crime in local communities with stalking and harassment being the predominant elements;
- c) People would not be more likely to have a violent attack on them because of who they were in Devon and Cornwall;
- d) The importance of community cohesion and ensure people could live their lives freely was outlined and an understanding of how this had occurred was provided in the report.

In response to questions, it was explained:

- e) Barriers to hate crime reporting included the public struggling to get through to 101, investigations taking a prolonged time causing frustration for victims, and a lack of empathy from police officers towards victims;
- f) The police and local councils have been working closely together regarding local tensions around housing asylum seekers or refugees;
- g) Respect was acknowledged in Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's thematic report on misogyny, sexism, and policing and it highlighted Devon and Cornwall conducting a cultural audit on how officers and staff related to people with protected characteristics;
- h) Training and workshops has been held for police officers and staff to understand the effect of language and the impact of attitude.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

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

The Committee agreed to note the report.

23. **Work Programme**

The following additions were suggested for the work programme:

1. Broader understanding of rural and urban anti-social behaviour;
2. Rural Crime;
3. Detailed understanding of current drug use.

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