

Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel

Friday 24 November 2023

PRESENT:

Councillor Towill in the Chair.

Councillor Haydon Vice Chair.

Councillors Alvey, Chopak, Croad, Ewings, Hackett, Leaver, Penberthy, Thomas, Tilbey, Tyerman, Worth (Substitute for Councillor Toms) 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), and Pierre Doutreligne (Policy and Projects Officer).

The meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 12.50 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.

24. Minutes

The Committee raised the following points from section J of the minutes on the Commissioners Update Report:

- a) Glenn Mayhew was Chief Superintendent and not Chief Constable.

The Committee agreed the minutes from the meeting held on 15 September were a correct record once the amendment had been made.

25. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

26. Public Questions

The following question was submitted by Sam Cripps

Question: In light of crime data in rural areas, how are the panel checking the efficacy of community policing strategies to address specific challenges unique to those regions.

Response: The Panel undertakes a regular review of the Police and Crime plan and receives regular reports from the Commissioner through the update report.

At the last Police and Crime Panel, Councillors agreed to add 'Rural Crime' to the work programme after discussions within the Commissioners Update report.

The following question as submitted by Sam Cripps	
<p>Question: Considering the alarming national data on public trust in law enforcement (April 2023: 62% agreed that the police treated everyone fairly regardless of who they are, compared to 70% in March 2021). Can the Panel elaborate on initiatives aimed at improving community relations and how the effectiveness of the Police and OPCC in this area will be measured and monitored</p>	<p>Response: Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly police continues its operational independence from the Commissioner and the Panel. Whilst operation initiatives can improve community relations, this would be a matter for the police.</p> <p>The Panel received a report on the Involvement of the Independent Office for Police Conduct in Police Legitimacy on 25 November 2022 to understand what was happening nationally, regionally and locally to restore public confidence in policing.</p> <p>The Panel receives a scorecard at every meeting which advises the Panel of key performance measures and includes overall victim satisfaction and levels of public confidence in the Police. The Panel would also discuss an item on Public Engagement at today's meeting.</p>

The following question was submitted by Chloe Ralph	
<p>Question: In relation to demographic data. How does the Panel ensure that the Police and OPCC are engaging young people and involving them in crime prevention and community safety initiatives?</p>	<p>Response: Members of the public are able to attend any meeting of the Panel and able to access livestreams via the Plymouth City Council YouTube page.</p> <p>The Panel acknowledges its limited scrutiny and would like to thank you for the question and would add an item to the work programme for future discussion which would hear updates from the Commissioner.</p>

The following question was submitted by Chloe Ralph	
<p>Question: How achievable does the Panel believe the 2021 – 2025 crime plan is within the current budget.</p>	<p>Response: The Panel reviews funding for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner at its precept meetings which occur annually. At the last precept meeting which took place on 27 January 2023, the Panel agreed to accept the Commissioners budget and council tax proposals (13 for, 1</p>

	<p>abstention, 0 did not agree). Under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, Part 1, Chapter 3, Information, Consultation etc, Annual reports, the Panel receives a report annually which reports on the progress that has been made in the financial year in meeting the police and crime objectives in the body's police and crime plan.</p>
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27. **Action Log**

In response to a concern raised Devon and Cornwall Firearm Licensing (Action 3) it was explained:

- a) The issuing of temporary firearms licenses had dramatically reduced to four a month.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

28. **Public Engagement: Improving police contact services**

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

- a) The implementation of the 'call-back' feature successfully decreased the abandonment rate to 36% for the 101 service; subsequently initiatives were undertaken to further diminish it to 25%;
- b) A triage function was instituted to guarantee that the public engaged with the relevant service;
- c) Several Police Enquiry Offices were reopened, offering an additional communication channel for the public;
- d) 999 calls increased, yet they were handled more promptly, with 90% of calls answered within ten seconds, averaging seven seconds.

In response to questions it was explained:

- e) The target for the phone duration with 101 stayed at 20 minutes, due to the priority placed on reducing the abandonment rate;
- f) Collectively, Police and Crime Commissioners lobbied the Treasury and the Home Office annually, advocating for the funding required to sustain their operations;

- g) There was no update from the government regarding the change in funding for summer, rural and coastal challenges faced in this part of the region;
- h) The objective for the triage service was to ensure a response within 30 seconds;
- i) A weekly activity of 1500-1700 people utilizing Police Enquiry Offices was recorded, with plans to incorporate footfall into future performance measures during meetings;
- j) Leaflets would be distributed to communities, providing pertinent information about Police Enquiry Offices in an effort to enhance footfall;
- k) The manual intervention IT issue with 999 would be fixed by December;
- l) Requests for locations for Police Enquiry Offices would be welcomed as there was budgetary allocation for an additional four;
- m) Devon and Cornwall were one of the few areas to have reopened public facing front desks.

The Committee agreed to note the report and to the following actions:

1. To request the Commissioner bring footfall vs 101 demand data to the next panel meeting;
2. To request that the information regarding Police Enquiry Offices to be included on the next published Council Tax leaflet;
3. To request the Commissioner bring a resolution to the manual intervention problem within 999 services to the next meeting.

29. **Operation Scorpion - Regional Drugs Policing**

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

- a) In October 2021, the five Police and Crime Commissioners collaborated to combat drug issues in the South West, emphasising a concerted effort to address cannabis as a gateway drug;
- b) In 2021 the Government published it's 'From Harm to Hope' plan as a ten year plan to cut crime and save lives, including a requirement for Combatting Drugs Partnerships to be formed, four of which had been established in the South West;
- c) In March 2022, during the first phase of Operation Scorpion the police seized £90,000 in cash, 33kg in drugs and two firearms, focusing solely on county lines; this was achieved using existing resources;

- d) The operation was not measured on arrests but on the safeguarding and protection of children;
- e) In July 2022, during the second phase of Operation Scorpion the police seized 613 cannabis plants, 10,401 ecstasy doses and £180,000 in cash;
- f) In December 2022, during the third phase of Operation Scorpion the police focused on the evening and night-time economy which led to 70 arrests, 12 children and 10 adults were safeguarded as well as the seizing of 5kg of drugs, one firearm and £51,000 in cash;
- g) In April 2023, during phase four of Operation Scorpion the police focused on drugs-related violence and 162 arrests were made as well as 11kg of drugs, 15 firearms and £514,065 in cash seized;
- h) In July 2023, during phase five of Operation Scorpion there were 58 raids on commercial cannabis growing operations which led to 67 arrests as well as the police seizing cannabis worth £6.5 million (164kg), a 9mm handgun and £73,000 in cash;
- i) Phase six of Operation Scorpion took place in October 2023 to coincide with the national County Lines Intensification Week and led to 94 arrests and the police seizing drugs worth £245,699, three luxury watches, £45,774 in cash, four cars, five laptops and 22 mobiles;
- j) Merseyside Police had created Operation Medusa which aided in the closure of a large drugs operation on the Lizard Peninsula, out of which 36 drug lines were identified and heroin and cocaine was seized with a street value of £1.36 million;
- k) Phase seven of Operation Scorpion would take place in spring 2024 and would be led by Dorset Police.

In response to questions, it was explained:

- l) The police were actively collaborating with councils to address the underage sale of vapes and the potential risk of drugs being introduced into vape products;
- m) Crimestoppers information would be added to the Council Tax leaflet to inform the public of their contact details;
- n) The establishment of additional residential drug treatment centres was deemed necessary to assist individuals requiring removal from their communities;
- o) Operation Scorpion aimed to instigate a cultural shift in policing regarding drugs and drug-use;

- p) The objective for the next phase of Operation Scorpion would be aligned with addressing serious and organised crime, employing the ‘Clear, Hold and Build’ approach;
- q) Enforcement of the laws pertaining to Class B and C drugs would serve as an educational exercise, highlighting the consequences of recreational drug-use;
- r) Operation Scorpion was implemented to impact communities by targeting localised drug-use, shifting the focus from the supply aspect;
- s) The wait list for therapeutic services for Young Victims of Crime service was 6 months;
- t) There was a new victim care website at www.victimcare-dc.org for Devon and Cornwall;

The Committee agreed to note the plan as set out and the following actions:

- 1. To request the Commissioner would investigate information about legal drug levels when driving under the influence to bring to the next panel;
- 2. To request Crimestoppers contact information to be included on the next published Council Tax leaflet;
- 3. To request Links to Young Person’s Victim Services and Victim Care for under 18s be sent to all panel members;
- 4. To request the Commissioner ask David Sidwick about work with the Local Government Association on vaping enforcement and drugs added to vapes.

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

In response to questions, it was reported:

- a) The Commissioner would request data from the implementation of the new crime recording system that was installed November 2022;
- b) Efforts were underway to investigate various crime types related to knife crime, intending to incorporate them into the Violent Crime Measure;
- c) Despite an increase in hate crimes, victim satisfaction with police response had increased to 73%;
- d) The police would enforce 20-mile-an-hour speed limits with red signage and give additional support through the implementation of a Community Speed Watch Scheme;
- e) The Commissioner was exploring avenues to assist councils in enhancing their legal capacity to address anti-social behaviour;

- f) Torbay Council were in the process of recruiting two Antisocial Behaviour Officers.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

31. **Commissioners Update Report**

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

- a) The Prisoners Building Homes Project was nominated by the cabinet office and won a national award and some of the homes were being built in mid-Devon;
- b) The Annual Survey had launched 24 November 2023.

In response to questions, it was explained:

- c) The Chief Constable would be invited to the budget meeting by the Commissioner.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

32. **Complaints Against the Commissioner**

There were no complaints against the Commissioner.

The Committee gave their best wishes to the Chief Executive to get well soon.

33. **Work Programme**

The following additions were suggested for the work programme:

- 1. Young People as Victims of Crime;
- 2. Young People Engagement.

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