



Police and Crime Panel Meeting
1 July 2016
Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE REPORT

Since taking up office on 12th May 2016 I have been working intensely with my team, the Chief Constable and wider partners to begin to shape my priorities and focus for my term of office. I have met with a wide range of stakeholders and partners (with more planned over the coming months) and held a number of public events to talk to the people of Devon and Cornwall about policing issues.

Work on the development of my Police and Crime Plan has been a major feature of our work over the past month – and I will shortly begin consulting on my initial thoughts for the Plan. I want to encourage members of the public and community groups to get involved in that consultation process, as well as partner organisations and statutory agencies. It is vital that we have a broad conversation about our work going forward.

I wanted to draw your attention to a number of matters, which I would be happy to expand upon if helpful to Panel members.

1. Policy developments

Collaboration with Fire- I intend to make a sustained effort over my term of office to work closer with local fire services to enable greater efficiency and effectiveness across all blue light services. I want to seek deep operational integration with both local fire and rescue services and will consider all integration proposals that will help to keep our communities safe and to promote efficiency in policing services. In particular, where pilots have been proven to be successful I will be looking to support a wider roll-out. I have already had a number of positive discussions with fire colleagues across the peninsula and we all intend to continue this positive dialogue over the coming weeks.

Volunteering – Like my predecessor I am wholly committed to finding ways to ensure that people play their part in helping to keep our communities safe. I am continuing the investment programme initiated by my predecessor and will be looking to work much more closely with local communities to understand their policing issues and needs through establishing a series of OPCC link officers. These additional responsibilities will be taken on by existing staff (not new posts).

Victims and witnesses – since taking office I have spent time with the Victim Care Unit staff and have met a number of the organisations providing support through the network to victims of crime. I am hugely impressed by what I have seen and I intend to work closely with the Chief Constable and wider partners to further enhance services as we move forward. I am particularly keen to ensure we provide good support to witnesses throughout the CJS.

ICT investment - I have approved a programme of work at the regional level to aid the development of our local requirements for the new Emergency Services Communications Programme, investing over £990,000 from Devon and Cornwall to support this work. This new initiative will nationally link up all blue light communications systems and has huge potential to improve service delivery at the local level. Our geography is challenging when it comes to mobile communications and it is important that we devote proper resources to helping to shape the products upon which we will all depend.

Child Sexual Abuse The Ministry of Justice's Victim Care Grant for 2016/17 included £139,000 to provide additional practical and emotional support for child sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse. On 24th May the OPCC launched a call for grant bids locally and we received 14 bids with a total value exceeding £555,000. Final decisions regarding the allocation of this grant are currently being made and successful applicants will be notified by the end of June 2016. I met with Children's Commissioner recently to discuss innovative ways of working nationally to support victims who are children and want to work actively with local and national partners to drive forward progress.

Single Remand Court Pilot Work to establish a Centralised Virtual Remand Court across Devon and Cornwall is well underway with an anticipated go-live date of 3 October 2016. Being developed by a multi-agency team and with the PCC as the Local Criminal Justice Board sponsor, the aim is to hold a single dedicated court sitting in a Magistrates Court in Devon & Cornwall hearing all remand hearings by video. This is part of our broader work to improve efficiency in the criminal justice system and access to justice. Defendants appearing by video will be held in police custody at a custody centre and will appear via video-link at the daily designated remand court. Following recent tests in Devon, the project is now in the final phase of development work.

2. Legislative developments

Policing and Crime Bill The Policing and Crime Bill has now progressed to the House of Lords. First Reading took place on 14 June. Second reading - the general debate on all aspects of the Bill – has not been scheduled. We are anticipating Royal Assent towards the end of 2016.

The Bill includes a number of key policy developments, including fire collaboration, police complaints reform and volunteering and wider use of police powers. The Opposition have been seeking amendments to the Bill in a range of areas – recently this includes changes regarding inquests following the Hillsborough inquest. Recent debates focused on hunt saboteurs may also feature more strongly in the Lords, as might opposition to fire proposals.

Investigatory Powers Bill The Investigatory Powers Bill has progressed to the House of Lords. First Reading took place on 8 June. The Second reading is scheduled for 27 June. The Bill remains contentious in terms of civil liberties issues.

Online Safety Bill This Bill, was introduced into the House of Lords, contains a number of provisions to promote online safety. The Bill includes powers to require information to be provided about online safety by internet service providers and mobile phone operators and requirements to make provision for parents to be educated about online safety. The Bill has received its First Reading.

3. National Police Reform Programme

A national programme of reform has been launched which will gather momentum over the coming months. This fundamental piece of work will shape policing structures

nationally, locally and regionally is being led jointly by PCCs and Chief Constables through a newly established Police Reform and Transformation Board. The Board has been tasked with building a clear vision for policing services and will be supported in its work through the administration of a significant investment pot from the Home Office (the Police Transformation Fund).

The two areas of work that are currently the focus of attention are a review of specialist capabilities in policing and enhancing digital policing services. The Specialist Capabilities Review will explore future national requirements across a range of specialist services, ranging from counter terrorism, serious and organised crime, dogs and roads policing. This work is at a relatively early stage but is expected to advance quite rapidly over the summer months. An update on national activity will be provided to PCCs in early July.

Contact for further information

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