

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL – 10 JUNE 2016

101 SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PANEL

REPORT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To update Members on the 2016 Manifesto commitment by the Police and Crime Commissioner to create a Service Improvement Panel to examine complaints about the Dorset Police 101 non-emergency telephone service.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The roll-out of the non-emergency police number 101 across English forces started in 2011, when it went live in Dorset. Calls cost 15p, no matter the time, nor duration. One of the benefits of this system is that members of the public could dial the same non-emergency number regardless of where they are in England and Wales.

2. 101 IN DORSET

2.1 Since its introduction in 2011, 101 call handling has been subject to public criticism around call response times and system failures. The service receives around 8,500 calls per week, or 1,200 calls per day.

2.2 Despite ongoing awareness raising campaigns both locally and nationally, the Force still encounters misuse of the service. Calls to 101 that are not related to police business prevent members of the public who have a legitimate reason for contacting the police doing so in a timely manner.

2.3 Following his election in 2012, the Police and Crime Commissioner pledged to improve the service by holding the Force to account.

2.4 The Chief Constable responded by establishing a triage system for calls, assessing them by risk. Call handler numbers have also been increased to deal with demand, as awareness of the single number has grown.

2.5 A large number of calls to 101 do not require a police response, but as services and, in particular out of hours services, have reduced in other public sector organisations, this unmet demand has fallen to the Police.

2.6 It is expected that the advent of the new Dorset Police website will reduce some of this pressure as online reporting can be used to redirect reports to the correct departments within the Force, or via web links to the relevant authorities. Currently the Force website's "Do It Online" page, which allows members of the public to carry out a range of activities without having to call 101, is in need of improvement. Once the new website launches in early June, an easy-to-use facility will enable

users to make a general enquiry, report lost property, request a call back, leave a message for an officer, make a complaint and submit a compliment or suggestion.

- 2.7 Whilst the majority of complaints are resolved by the Triage Supervisors, public perception of the service remains poor. Consultation over the summer of 2015 highlighted 101 as in need of improvement.

3. SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PANEL

- 3.1 Within the PCC's 2016 manifesto pledge he intends to introduce a panel, consisting of members of the public and elected representatives to work with the PCC and the Force on improving the 101 service. This panel will examine complaints about the service, and the members of the Panel will be invited to listen to calls in order to monitor the service. The primary purpose of this is to gauge and improve public satisfaction in the service.

- 3.2 It is envisaged that at each meeting of the Panel it will review a number of calls chosen at random (dip sampling). This will involve the Panel listening to the call, and determining if the response was appropriate. In addition they will review a sample of calls that have resulted in a quality of service complaint being made. This is to ensure that decisions being made are consistent and fair, and that the resolution is appropriate. In the case of any outstanding unresolved complaints, the Panel will review the case and, if required, may ask the member of public to address them directly.

- 3.3 Draft terms of reference for the Panel are attached at Appendix A for reference.

- 3.4 The Panel will be chaired by the Deputy PCC and include representatives from the Police and Crime Panel, voluntary sector organisations and members of the public (the successful completion of Force vetting notwithstanding).

- 3.5 Force Contact Management will be represented in an advisory capacity – they will not formally be members of the panel.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Members of public, members of the Dorset Police and Crime Panel, and representatives from voluntary sector organisations will be recruited to the panel as volunteers.

- During forthcoming PCC engagement activities, the OPCC will be consulting with members of the public about 101 and will invite members of the public to express their interest in volunteering for the Panel;
- Members of the Dorset Police and Crime Panel will be asked to express their interest in joining the panel;
- OPCC staff will seek expressions of interest from a selection of voluntary sector organisations.

- 4.2 Initially three members of the public will be appointed as permanent volunteer members of the Panel, additional members may be appointed that could be used on a rotating basis.

- 4.3 The complaints for the panel to consider will be chosen at random ahead of time, in order to allow the full records to be made available. As well as reviewing the call history the Panel may listen to the call. In the case of an unresolved complaint the Panel may invite the complainant to address them directly.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 Members are invited to note the update in relation to the proposed 101 Service Improvement Panel.
- 5.2 The PCC would welcome any thoughts or feedback on the proposal to help shape the implementation of the 101 Service Improvement Panel and its overall effectiveness.
- 5.3 Members are invited to express their interest in joining the 101 Service Improvement Panel.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Terms of Reference for the 101 Service Delivery Group