

DORSET
POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER

END OF TERM REPORT 2012 - 2016

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Working together for a safer Dorset



INTRODUCTION

As my term of office draws to a close, I felt it appropriate for me to take stock of my role as Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) since my election in November 2012.

This document provides a brief summary and overview of my work so far and outlines some of the anticipated challenges facing policing and PCCs in the future. More detailed annual and quarterly reports on performance and progress against my Police and Crime Plan are regularly submitted to the Police and Crime Panel.

At the beginning, there was no job description for new PCCs to follow, nor were there predecessors to learn from. The first group of PCCs had to learn quickly and shape the role on a day-to-day basis. I think we have made a solid start in establishing this role in its infancy.

The post of PCC replaced the Police Authority which preceded it and introduced a revolutionary change in policing governance. The Police Authority comprised a committee of elected and appointed individuals who met bi-monthly to hold the Chief Constable to account for the policing of the county. The role of PCC is much broader and wide ranging than the Police Authority. In addition to oversight of Force governance, the PCC can influence social change through crime prevention, diversion and restorative justice, thereby removing people from the criminal justice system. The third strand of the job concerns commissioning services, which enable social change. I am particularly proud of the work I have been able to progress on mental health and working with victims.

This first term has, of course, been significantly influenced by a prolonged and sustained period of austerity and unprecedented cuts to police budgets, which have brought with them considerable change and challenge for policing nationally. Almost simultaneously, the nature of crime has changed and evolved, presenting new and increasing demands on police resources. In particular, we have seen the exponential increase in cyber-crime, child abuse and child sexual exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery, all of which cross geographical policing boundaries.

We have seen the emergence of a National Crime Agency and National Police Air Service. Forces continue to work ever closer in their regions to pool resources and adopt consistent approaches to tackling cross-border issues. In the South West, we have an established Regional Organised Crime Unit and an advanced programme of collaborative projects, looking at areas such as forensics and ICT convergence. More locally, the Chief Constable and I formally entered into a strategic alliance with our colleagues in Devon & Cornwall. This ensures that both forces work together as partners to deliver policing services jointly across a number of key business areas, where this is the most effective and efficient means of utilising our combined resources.

This joint working approach adopted between Forces also applies to working with other partners. Never before has there been such an effective multi-agency approach to so many areas of criminal justice and social wellbeing.

POLICE

Working on behalf of the public to ensure that Dorset Police is as efficient and effective as possible.

Governance, scrutiny and oversight of the county's police force is at the heart of the Police and Crime Commissioner role. One of the first tasks that I had to undertake after my election and arguably the most important, was the appointment of a Chief Constable for Dorset Police. Debbie Simpson has provided excellent leadership through a rapidly changing landscape for policing. I thank her and her chief officer team for their professionalism and dedication in working to make operational policing as effective as possible for our county.

Dorset has developed a 'single governance structure' as a streamlined way for the Force to conduct its business in an open and transparent manner. This afforded me and staff from the OPCC an opportunity to monitor, scrutinise and challenge at a strategic level without interfering with operational discretion. This model has stood the test of time during my term of office without imposing an undue burden on the Force and provided opportunities for review, reflection, scrutiny, debate and challenge. This was important at a time of ever increasing governance challenges around Strategic Alliance and Regional Collaboration and the not insignificant resource impact of a busy HMIC inspection regime.

As PCC, I have focussed on certain specific areas of business, such as the independent reviews I have commissioned into the Dorset Police 'Use of Force' and their use of Out of Court Disposals respectively. I have listened to public concerns with the 101 telephone service and allocated resources to improve the service. In relation to front office counter closures, I commissioned a public consultation to seek the public view and saved six front counters. Whilst there always remains room to find more effective ways of working, there have been genuine improvements to policing locally arising from my identifying and articulating public concerns.

The opportunity I have to represent the public and understand their views on policing and crime is at the very core of PCC responsibilities. By adopting a programme of consultation and engagement through public events and shows, forums and surgeries, community days, social media and online surveys, I have been as accessible as possible to members of the local community. The police service today faces ever more complex demands but it still remains imperative to understand the issues and concerns of local people.

During my term, I have interacted with 250,000 people and met 35,000 people face to face.

More formally, I have engaged with external auditors and inspectors – particularly Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, where I discharged my statutory duty in responding to the Home Secretary to each report issued by the Inspectorate. Inspection reports add another layer to my scrutiny function, holding the Chief Constable to account for progress against suggested areas for improvement and the implementation of specific recommendations. In the interests of transparency, these reports and my responses are all published on the Dorset PCC website.

In addition to scrutiny, I have worked with the Chief Constable to identify those areas which would benefit from additional support and funding. These have included areas such as mobile policing solutions, body worn video cameras, the Paedophile Online Investigation Team, the CyberSafe awareness campaign and the provision of additional rural vehicles. Each of these has made a major contribution to supporting policing and enhancing community safety.

I am particularly proud that the Chief Constable and I enabled recruitment of officers again, after recruitment was stopped in 2009.

And finally, I leave my term of office with a police force that has discharged its pension liability, is debt free and has a sustainable budget for next year.

CRIME

Working in partnership to improve community safety and the criminal justice system.

Whereas the Police Authority was focussed solely on policing, the role of the PCC is much wider. As such, it has been possible to develop much more diverse partnerships with other agencies and to tackle shared issues and priorities.

Whilst it is true that silos still exist, these barriers have been continually challenged and broken down. The PCC can play a key role in facilitating and coordinating change amongst all relevant agencies, not just the police. All public sector partners have experienced downward financial pressure and it is essential to work more closely together to deliver greater efficiency.

I am particularly proud of the role I have been able to play with regard to the provision of services for those affected by mental health problems. Nationally, this has involved leading the PCCs' national working group and driving the delivery of the Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat. Locally, I have driven, supported and funded the street triage and liaison and diversion schemes. These have been instrumental in significantly reducing the instances of police custody cells being used as a place of safety for individuals in mental health crisis. Responding to incidents involving mental illness places significant demands on the police and, more importantly, police cells are not an appropriate place to house people who have not broken the law and are unwell. They need to be looked after in a healthcare setting and I am delighted that significant progress has been made here.

Victims of crime have also been at the forefront of my work. The Dorset Victims' Bureau, one of my key manifesto pledges, was launched in November 2013 providing information and updates to victims as investigations and cases progress. This has contributed to an increase in victim satisfaction about being kept informed of progress. The service continues to develop and evolve. In October 2014, I was one of the first PCCs nationally to commission local victim support services, awarding a three-year contract to Victim Support. These enhanced services now extend to businesses experiencing crime and victims of anti-social behaviour. I have also been able to continue to fund and support more specialist support services, such as The Shores (Dorset's Sexual Assault Referral Centre) and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors through my Safer Dorset Fund.

I have fully engaged in all of the key local partnerships such as Community Safety Partnerships and the Dorset Criminal Justice Board. These help to drive change and improvements in keeping people safe and enhancing criminal justice services locally. I have also worked closely with partners on key issues such as road safety, health and wellbeing and more specific projects such as a pan-Dorset CCTV initiative.

At a national level, I have played a leading role in the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners in lobbying ministers on key issues, including fairer funding for Dorset Police, concerns over port security and improvements to the Action Fraud service.

COMMISSIONER

Supporting services that contribute to addressing crime and community safety issues for the benefit of communities in Dorset.

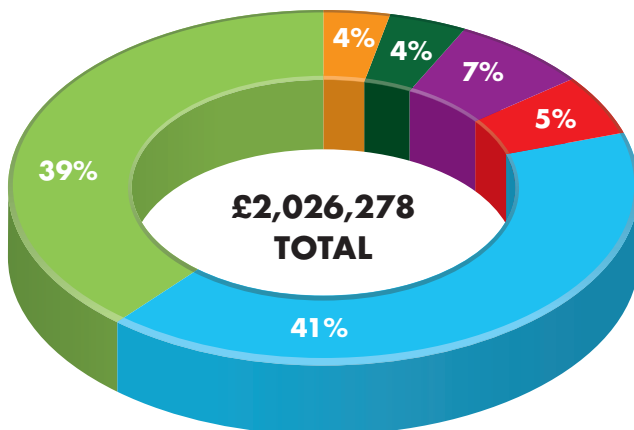
Commissioning services is a further role of the PCC, which formed no part of the responsibilities of the Police Authority.

Funding is provided to the PCC through the central government police grant and through the police precept element of the Council Tax. Other funding streams are also available and I have secured additional money through the Community Safety Fund and also through the

Police Innovation Fund and Competed Victim Fund, to which I have successfully bid for project funding.

Since 2014, all of the funding I receive has been encompassed in my Safer Dorset Fund, which I then use to set the annual Dorset Police budget, commission services and issue community grants for projects and initiatives that contribute towards my Police and Crime Plan priorities.

The chart below shows the total amount awarded in the 2015-16 financial year across the Safer Dorset Fund, for commissioned services and small community grants. This is split out into the six police and crime plan priorities.



● REDUCE NUMBER OF VICTIMS	£783,743
● REDUCE SERIOUSLY HARMED	£821,183
● HELP PROTECT FROM SERIOUS THREATS	£112,214
● REDUCE RE-OFFENDING	£145,353
● INCREASE SATISFACTION IN POLICING	£82,310
● SUPPORT NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING	£81,475

*Accurate at time of publication

Full details of all grants awarded are published on the Dorset PCC website, but the Safer Dorset Fund approach has enabled funding and support to be administered to a diverse range of initiatives across Dorset, including Home Watch and road safety schemes, ex-offender resettlement and mentoring services, young people's projects around personal safety and

anti-bullying and diversionary schemes, such as a Community Farm for troubled families and Horse Course for young people at risk of offending or re-offending.

It is particularly rewarding to see the genuine benefits that even relatively small amounts of funding can achieve at a very local level through supporting such projects.

CLOSING REMARKS



Some final thoughts and a look to the future.

It is impossible to cover all the aspects of my work during this first term of PCC in this short round-up summary document, but I hope that it gives a sense of the progress and achievement in a short period of time since 2012.

It is clear that PCCs play a key role, not only in holding the police to account, but also as commissioners of services and as facilitators. Whilst the police, local authorities, health agencies, criminal justice services and numerous other partners all have their own core functions and responsibilities, there are also numerous areas of overlap and shared priorities. As PCC, I have been instrumental in marshalling their various roles to deliver a shared agenda. The delivery of this agenda has been enhanced by the sharing of resources in the form of knowledge, experience and funding.

Recent announcements and developments at a national level suggest that the Government shares this approach. The PCC role is undoubtedly set to expand to include potential oversight of fire and rescue services, an enhanced role with regard to police complaints and misconduct and the possibility of greater oversight of the criminal justice system locally.

It has been a privilege to serve as the first Police and Crime Commissioner for Dorset. A lot of ground has been covered since I first took office

in November 2012 and some of that work will set the scene for years to come. I am confident that whoever takes up the mantle of PCC for Dorset in May 2016 will do so with a solid foundation on which to take forward the work in the next term of office.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to the officers and staff of Dorset Police. Much of their work is unheralded, dangerous and goes unseen by the public. The police service is also more open to scrutiny and criticism than ever before. The nature of my role means that I can be challenging and critical of the service on occasion. Yet I know that we have diligent, professional and dedicated officers and staff working on the public's behalf around the clock in times of unprecedented change, funding cuts, reducing numbers and diminishing resources while faced with ever more complex crimes and demands being placed upon them.

The Force continues to perform at an extremely high level and keeps Dorset an exceptionally safe place to live, work and visit. Our county is deeply indebted to these people for their service and I thank them all for their efforts and achievements.

MARTYN UNDERHILL

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