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POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 24 JULY 2025

Present: Cllrs Alasdair Keddie (Chair), Dr Elizabeth Mytton, Louise Bown, Simon Gibson, Louie O'Leary, Karen Rampton, Peter Sidaway, Tony Trent and Carl Woode

Present remotely: Cllrs Sarah Williams

Apologies: Cllrs B Sargeaunt and David Flagg

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Simon Bullock (Chief Executive, OPCC), Marc Eyre (Service Manager for Assurance), Adam Harrold (OPCC Director of Operations), Antony Nash (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Megan Rochester (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Julie Strange (OPCC Chief Finance Officer), David Sidwick (Police and Crime Commissioner) and Louis Wicks (Democratic Services Officer Apprentice).

46. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 5th February 2025 were confirmed and signed.

47. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting.

48. Public Participation

Questions had been received from Mr Joe Salmon and Ms Susan Stockwell.

In response to Mr Salmon, it was confirmed that the caravans were no longer present. The legislation surrounding this matter was noted as complex, although a robust policy was in place. It was explained that a misunderstanding of the policy by an officer new in post had resulted in a delay in action; the policy had since been re-communicated, and more regular reporting was now taking place. A further briefing for all relevant officers was scheduled for the start of the next year. The issue had been raised by a resident and confirmed with the local authority, after which a formal letter had been sent to the Chief Constable. The caravans were subsequently removed, and the press approached the force shortly afterwards. It was noted that, had the force been notified earlier, action would have been taken sooner, and the Chief Constable's assurance on the matter would be

relayed. The Panel also noted the difference in transit sites between Dorset and BCP.

In response to Ms Stockwell, it was confirmed that the licensing of venues was a matter for the local authority and not for the Police and Crime Panel. No further questions or petitions had been received.

49. Election for Chair/Vice Chair - 00:30:05 on the recording

The Panel formally thanked Dr Elizabeth Mytton for her contribution and service to the Panel as she stepped down from her role. Members acknowledged that Dr Mytton had been an asset to the Panel and extended their best wishes for her future endeavours.

It was proposed by Councillor Louise Bown and seconded by Councillor Louie O'Leary that Councillor Alasdair Keddie be appointed Chair of the Police and Crime Panel.

It was proposed by Councillor Trent and seconded by Councillor Louie O'Leary that Councillor Louise Bown be appointed Vice-Chair of the Police and Crime Panel.

Decision: that Cllr Alasdair Keddie and Cllr Louise Bown was appointed as chair and Vice Chair of the Police and Crime Panel.

50. Q4 Monitoring Report - 00:35:42 on the recording

The Panel received an update from the Police and Crime Commissioner on the HIMCFRS PEEL Report, which highlighted three key areas of improvement and reflected overall progress. It was acknowledged that Dorset Police understood the challenges they faced and had a clear vision for addressing them, with several elements considered good practice. A particularly high percentage of 999 calls were answered within ten seconds, consistently exceeding targets.

In relation to responding to the public, improvements to 999 answering times were noted, while the non-emergency response remained an area requiring further development. The Force was taking steps to optimise this service. In the area of investigating crime, there was a clear focus on victim outcomes, supported by the national investigative framework and continuous professional development for officers. Improvements had been made to digital capabilities, including enhanced mobile systems, and work was being aligned with strategic priorities and targeted governance. Victim engagement remained central to this work, and projections indicated that a fully trained and advanced cohort of officers was expected by March 2028.

Regarding stop and search, the Panel was informed that use of the power was now more effectively targeted, but that Dorset Police still needed to improve to no longer be an outlier at the national level. Disparities in stop and search continued to be reviewed on a quarterly basis, with strong scrutiny arrangements in place, including the Force's own scrutiny panel. The use of body-worn video was identified as an important tool in promoting organisational learning.

Questions from Panel Members – 00:52:08 on the recording

- Commented that the update was a positive sign.
- Queried whether the proposed Contact Management system improvements involved adding new systems or replacing existing ones, noting that the control room currently managed multiple systems, and asked whether the systems would run concurrently.
- requested whether a document outlining the structured system could be published to provide clarity on the plan and its impact and asked if there was a timeline for implementation.
- Asked whether, prior to going out to market, Dorset Police had reviewed systems used by other police forces nationally.
- Raised a query regarding video submissions and aspects of digital evidence management, noted for the forward plan, and requested figures on the current number of detectives compared to the projected number in March 2028.

Priority one - Cut Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour - 01:08:15 on the recording

The Panel was informed that total crime and antisocial behaviour continued to decline, with antisocial behaviour reducing by 12% over the past year. The Op Relentless Community Fund was highlighted as a success in supporting local initiatives, including funding for the DocBike motorcyclist safety project. Burglary rates remained stable, with preventative measures introduced through home safety leaflets distributed via estate agents. Figures for serious road injuries were also falling, though it was noted that stigma around drug driving had not yet matched that of drink driving. An improved online theft information pack and a quarterly fraud and cybercrime newsletter had been introduced to raise awareness, acknowledging that while such crimes were not often raised at public meetings, they remained prevalent in Dorset.

Questions from the Priority Leads and Panel members – 01:15:48 on the recording.

- A question was raised on the home security leaflet pilot, asking how success had been determined
- It was queried why business and retail crime remained rated as amber, acknowledging good work undertaken but seeking clarification on the difficulties in addressing these crimes.
- A point was raised regarding public opinion.
- An update was requested on the use of AI technology and the integration of different software systems.
- A question was asked about collaboration with the Highways Authority and whether a review of reporting systems would be undertaken to improve processes.
- Clarification was sought on what encouragement was being provided to members of the public to use the reporting system.

Priority two - Make Policing More Visible and Connected – 01:42:13 on the recording

The Panel welcomed the partnership work contributing to a safe summer. It was reported that in March the police force had hosted two events. Dorset was noted as a popular day-visit destination. While satisfaction levels had declined, they remained generally stable over time. A precept survey indicated that 76% of respondents supported additional funding for policing, with 55% willing to pay the minimum increase or more. However, there was a prevailing view that policing costs should be borne by the government rather than the people of Dorset. Attendance at the Neighbourhood Engagement Board was confirmed, ensuring that engagement and connectivity were effective. The Board was reported to be operating successfully and had scrutinised force plans. It was emphasised that the Force aimed to bring the police closer to the community, with over 600 community contact groups established.

Questions from the Priority Leads and Panel members – 01:50:15 on the recording.

- A question was raised regarding how response time figures were obtained.
- It was asked whether the 101 service was manned during the early hours of the morning.
- Clarification was sought on prioritisation levels for calls.
- An inquiry was made about response times to 101 online requests and the typical waiting period before a response is received.
- Clarification was requested concerning the term "online home" as referenced during the discussion.
- Questions were posed about the purpose of Neighbourhood Engagement Boards, including membership, meeting frequency, and whether findings were published publicly.

Priority three - Fight Violent Crime and High Harm – 02:33:35 on the recording

The Panel was informed that serious violence had decreased. Victim support and domestic abuse were discussed, with domestic abuse highlighted as a significant issue. Bystander awareness training was noted as part of ongoing efforts. Attention was drawn to addiction and substance use, with consideration given to both local and national approaches to addressing these challenges. The Dorset Criminal Justice Board was reviewed, alongside discussion of the reclassification of ketamine. Although knife crime remained among the lowest in the country, concern was expressed over the number of children carrying knives.

Questions from the Priority Leads and Panel members – 02:41:42 on the recording.

- A good assessment was made in relation to prevention.
- A query was raised regarding any findings related to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) week.

- Progress on the Violence Against Women and Girls workshop was requested

Priority four – Fight Rural Crime 02:49:01 on the recording.

The Panel was pleased to report that total crime and incident numbers had decreased, with resources increasing accordingly. The Dorset Partnership Against Rural Crime was discussed, alongside organised crime initiatives. Support had been given to a mobile operation targeting vehicles to address metal theft and waste-related offences. Heritage crime prevention was promoted through the release of short films aimed at raising awareness. A fly-tipping initiative had resulted in fines increasing by over 70%. Funding had also been provided for a rural crime pack focused on livery and stable theft.

Questions from the Priority Leads and Panel members 02:55:52 on the recording.

- Had Dorset seen an increase in heritage crime

In accordance with Procedural Rule 8.1 the committee voted to extend the duration of the meeting

Priority five - Put Victim and Communities First – 03:05:43 on the recording

The Panel was informed that victim satisfaction had increased, with a commitment to ensuring victims of crime had the best possible access to support. Hate crime levels remained stable. Victim support services in Dorset had been commissioned for an additional five years. Engagement with a working group was ongoing. Concern was expressed regarding the number of young people carrying knives, and pilot work had been undertaken to engage with young people to better understand their views on policing.

Questions from the Priority Leads and Panel members – 03:09:18 on the recording.

- Hate crime data had been split to provide more granulated differentiation.
- A survey was commissioned to examine variations in hate crime across the county.
- Analysis was being conducted to compare urban and rural experiences of hate crime.
- A question was raised regarding the commissioner's potential influence in addressing the propagation of hate crime and challenges posed by online influencers and media.
- Engagement with young people was ongoing.
- It was noted with approval that work was being undertaken with the Witness Profiler and People First Forum, with queries about whether these groups supported individuals with learning disabilities or dual diagnoses

Priority six - Make Every Penny Count – 03:37:17 on the recording

Questions from the Priority Leads and Panel members – 03:37:39 on the recording.

- A question was raised regarding what actions the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) was taking to ensure Dorset received a fair share of funding from central government.
- The efforts of the PCC and officers were commended

The Panel's ongoing support was warmly welcomed and greatly appreciated by the Police and Crime Commissioner. Gratitude was expressed for the opportunity to undertake this important work, with recognition given to the efforts made in engaging with the press and being vocal to central government. Continued support from local MPs was actively sought. The PCC highlighted recent successes in Dorset while also noting the significant cuts that Dorset Police had endured. Dorset was one of the lowest-funded forces in the country, and the PCC discussed the impacts of this. The current police funding formula was highlighted, with concerns raised about its inadequacy and the resulting financial burden placed unfairly on the people of Dorset. It was noted that a response from MPs and the Home Secretary was still pending. Early summer demand pressures were also discussed, confirming that the force was currently in the process of costing this demand. Once the data is available, it will be used to bring MPs together again to address the issue. This presents an opportunity to frame the challenge as both a practical and strategic concern. A strong emphasis was placed on the need to make a tangible difference for the people of Dorset.

51. PCC Annual Report - 03:50:37 on the recording

- Commended the quality of the report and acknowledged the significant work undertaken in its preparation.

NOTED.

52. Community Safety - 03:52:24 on the recording

Cllr A Keddle commended the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for producing an in-depth and well-referenced report. He raised concerns about the lack of clarity between recorded data and the lived experiences of women and girls, noting that the paper highlighted these challenges. He also queried whether there would be a new round of Safer Streets funding.

The Police and Crime Commissioner advised that, to his knowledge, the Home Office had not committed to the continuation of the Safer Streets initiative. At that point in time, it was not known whether the scheme would be replaced, and this was described as a significant concern. He confirmed that he would continue to press central government for additional funding.

Cllr A Keddie further observed that local authorities were also under significant financial pressure. The Panel expressed its support for the reinstatement of the Safer Streets initiative and disappointment that the scheme had not continued, agreeing to support calls for its return.

The Commissioner confirmed that work continued with partners to bring together different groups. He highlighted a recent conference for professionals where a wide range of topics had been discussed, with representation from various organisations. It was noted that a scrutiny panel was also in place to review public consultation. The Commissioner acknowledged the financial challenges faced by partners and emphasised the importance of maintaining pressure on government to prioritise public safety, stating that efforts were ongoing to ensure the safety of women and young girls

53. Staff Health and Wellbeing - 04:01:14 on the recording

It was noted that efforts were being made to remove barriers for the public when engaging with police services. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) emphasised the importance of going out into communities and spending time with the force. He highlighted the use of surveys and direct engagement with residents to gauge public sentiment, while also questioning whether the timing of surveys during periods of high summer demand provided a representative picture. He acknowledged that there were insufficient officers in the force and confirmed that performance was measured both through formal surveys and direct questioning.

The Panel welcomed the community engagement work but queried the visibility of the Chief Constable and how she was held accountable. The PCC confirmed that multiple scrutiny boards reviewed matters such as health and wellbeing and that he met with the Chief Constable on a weekly basis. He explained that leadership had been a key focus of discussions and that the Chief Constable was recognised for leading visibly from the front. He also highlighted ongoing work around officer wellbeing and trauma support, including occupational health provision, and stressed the need for NHS support for officers struggling with injuries or mental health issues, noting that these services were themselves underfunded.

The Panel noted that 211 officers in Dorset had been signed off due to stress and trauma and raised concerns about the disproportional impact of the working environment. It was suggested that these issues could not be fast-tracked through NHS services and that exposure to traumatic incidents was causing significant harm. The PCC referenced the TRIM trauma assessment process detailed in the report, noting improvements in identifying and supporting affected officers. He reiterated the importance of ensuring officers felt valued and acknowledged that significant savings had been required within Dorset Police, which continued to place pressure on wellbeing initiatives.

Concerns were raised about the national context, noting that Dorset's situation was only fractionally worse than the national average but that the average itself remained high. Questions were posed about the measures being taken at a national level to address these issues and the potential impact on recruitment and retention, including the risk of officers seeking employment elsewhere.

The PCC reflected that many forces across the country faced similar challenges and that negative media coverage frequently undermined policing efforts. He highlighted Operation Scorpion as an example of strong local support and emphasised that, despite being underfunded, Dorset Police continued to attract interest and commitment from staff. He stressed the importance of valuing officers who went above and beyond and called for greater appreciation from the press and central government.

NOTED.

54. Complaints Update - 04:21:23 on the recording

The Panel was informed of two complaints. The first complaint had been investigated, was not upheld, and no further action was required. A second complaint had only recently been received and had been passed to the Monitoring Officer for consideration.

It was noted that the composition of the Complaints Sub-Committee Panel would be determined outside of the formal meeting.

55. Forward Workplan - 04:22:16 on the recording

The next steps were identified, and it was agreed that these would be deliberated outside of the formal meeting.

56. Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

57. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Appendix 1

Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 2.17 pm

Chairman

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Police and Crime Panel PCC Responses

24 July 2025

Item 2 – Minutes and Actions

[N/A]

Item 5 – Public Participation

Question Two – Susan Stockwell

PCC Response: Chair, I will deal with this one swiftly if I may as we have answered this question at a previous Panel meeting and my Office has responded to various similar emails from Ms Stockwell over the past year. However, for the benefit of members of the public, the licensing of venues commonly referred to as strip clubs – but more correctly sexual entertainment venues – is a matter for local authorities, not PCCs.

The question in the long statement made is ‘*shouldn’t Dorset Police be objecting to annual licensing applications to clubs in Weymouth and Bournemouth?*’ That, as I have said previously, is an operational matter and therefore one for the Force.

Item 6 – Quarterly Monitoring Report (Q4)

Strategic Issues

Question: How is the PCC responding to the findings of the Peel report, and in particular the three areas where Dorset Police were found to require improvement: Responding to the public; Investigating Crime; and Police powers and treating the public fairly and respectfully

PCC Response: It is important to make clear that since the time of the inspection and this report being published, improvements have continued in many areas rendering some of the data from the inspection period obsolete.

It was pleasing to note that the PEEL report reflects the progress being made in areas including the Force’s Safeguarding Hubs; how the Force manages the most frequent crime types; tackling ASB; the Enhanced Video Response facility; and the strategic and financial planning conducted by Dorset Police.

The report notes the sustained improvements in call handling and response times, in investigations, and in addressing disproportionality in the use of police powers. It also recognises the clear vision of the Force which complements my Police and Crime Plan, which in turn reflects the priorities based on the feedback from the people of Dorset.

Some of the report’s findings mirror areas where I too have challenged the Force to improve, for example on call times. I am pleased that contact officers are now answering more than 94 per cent of 999 calls within 10 seconds, on top of a 20 per cent increase in online crime reports, with 101 calls being answered in just over a minute at triage. I know the Force remains rightly focused on further improving this vital service to the public and I will continue to scrutinise this work closely.

In terms of the three areas highlighted by HMICFRS, I'll just give a quick overview of each:

Responding to the public

Dorset Police Contact Management has shown significant improvements in the last 12 months, with 999 answering time now consistently above 90%. The Force received an area for improvement (AFI) action from HMICFRS regarding the answering times based on 12 months of data up to June 2024, and is anticipating that the current sustained performance will be accepted by HMICFRS and enable that AFI to be signed off in due course.

Non-emergency answering times remain a challenge as the Force will always prioritise emergency demand, however callers to 101 receive an average answering time of 60 seconds where 75% of calls are resolved at first point of contact. Challenges remain in the secondary call handling arena.

The Force consistently achieves over 80% for grade 1 emergency response within 20 minutes. Dorset Police is seeking to improve non-emergency response and has established enhanced video response to service more routine demand, averaging attendance at 75% within the 48 hours' time target, and are now leading a national roll out of this approach.

With that said, Chair, I will be clear that non-emergency call handling remains an area of improvement for the Force.

I am comfortable that Dorset Police is taking steps towards optimising its people and its processes. The Force has identified, for example, that replacing the ageing and patchwork control room systems with a single integrated software suite would bring significant dividends to more efficient delivery, and I am grateful for the work being done by both my and the Force's leadership teams to identify a solution which can be delivered within our limited systems replacement budget. I hope to report back at the next Panel that a decision on this has been made.

Investigating crime

Dorset Police is delivering an uplift in investigative standards through a clear focus on victim outcomes, capability growth, and innovation. The Force has embedded national frameworks such as the National Operating Model for Sexual Offences, strengthened investigative consistency through improved use of investigative toolkits, and prioritised continuous professional development in areas including digital evidence, trauma-informed practice, and vulnerability.

Key digital enablers, such as improved digital evidence management and mobile systems, are also driving efficiency and improving the management of evidence and safeguarding. Strategic priorities, including dwelling burglary, rape and serious sexual offences, and domestic abuse, are supported by targeted governance and operational arrangements, and innovative approaches such as Enhanced Video Response to enhance victim engagement and investigative outcomes are also helping delivery.

The number of specialist investigative staff remains a national challenge for policing, and Dorset has a dedicated board to address recruitment, retention and wellbeing of investigators,

which is informed by recommendations made at a national level. Currently, 95% of the Force's detective constable posts are occupied either by a fully qualified detective or an officer on the investigator development programme and in training. Based on projections, it is anticipated that the Force will reach a fully qualified cohort at its design level by March 2028.

The key measure that the HMICFRS look at is positive outcomes – we are currently at 13.9%. Their target is 15%.

Police powers and treating the public fairly and respectfully

I have issued a formal PCC challenge to the Force on the area of stop and search ethnic disproportionality and continue to monitor progress. When I came into office this figure stood at 20:1 – it now stands at 9:1. The progress in Dorset has kept pace with the national reduction – 7:1 in 2020/21, and 3.7:1 in 2023/24. However, that pace must improve for Dorset Police to move from its position at the national outlier, and to continue to ensure that stop and search is utilised in a fair and proportionate manner.

The Force's aim regarding stop and search, has been clearly set out in its Race Action Plan. The aims of said Plan are to improve Black people's experience of policing, eliminate racial disparities and to become an anti-racist and inclusive organisation.

Stop and search disparity is an element within that, but if it needs to happen it must be used. It is key area of focus and is overseen at Executive level through various boards, all of which are attended by members of my Senior Management Team. This topic is also reviewed at my Use of Police Powers and Standards Scrutiny Panel on a quarterly basis.

The Force has changed the way it delivers stop and search to focus on an intelligent-led priorities based system as well as enhancing training for officers in reducing unexplained disproportionality by building strong and objective grounds for search and considering the potential impact of bias.

Good community scrutiny processes are in place that review stop and search encounters, including officer Body Worn Video where feedback is given to individuals as well as identifying organisational learning. This has been highlighted by HMICFRS as good practice.

Priority One - Cut Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour - Cllrs Woode / Trent

Question: The Commissioner previously identified that AI technology may be used to maximise Op Snap performance. Is there any update on this?

PCC Response: Operation Snap is a police platform that allow members of the public to submit dashcam or helmet-cam footage of suspected driving infractions such as close passes, mobile phone use and other dangerous driving.

Whilst it is certainly possible that an AI model could be developed and trained to detect these infractions, for human review and decision – this technology does not yet exist.

At the moment, however, ten Forces are testing the use of AI-powered cameras which scan for mobile phone and seat belt violations, and flag incidents for human review and decision – as part of a National Highways trial. This is an area of emerging technology that my office and I are keeping a very close eye on.

Question: Collision statistics

PCC Response: Thank you for the question – I wholeheartedly agree that better collection and sharing of road traffic collision data can only help to drive down the number of deaths and serious injuries on our roads and the new data sharing initiative is a major step in the right direction.

Members will know that I attend the Dorset Road Safety Partnership meeting and my office also has a lead for this important area of business. I know that this issue is already being considered and the Force road safety team plan to lead on further conversations with the Partnership to assess the current public reporting arrangements and what options might be available.

While I am optimistic that improvements can be made – certainly with regards to communication about the existing processes – I must urge some caution. As Cllr Gibson has highlighted, the Force is part of the Single Online Home system and it may be a challenge to use that system for these purposes.

Priority Two - Make Policing More Visible and Connected - Cllrs Bown / Gibson

Question: How is the 19.5 mins response time arrived at for 101? This does not match with personal experience.

PCC Response: Of those circa 140,000 calls, 25% related to requesting updates from or passing updates on to a named officer, 20% were for other agencies, and 13% were directed to online policing services, amongst others.

74% of calls were dealt with at the first point of contact – and the average handling time for these calls is less than three minutes.

The delay occurs with the remaining 26% of calls which were transferred to what is called secondary call handling. Here, the average answer time across the year was 18 mins and the average speaking time was 12.5 mins – meaning that the overall call time was in excess of 30 mins.

There are few reasons why calls are transferred to secondary handling – including the caller themselves preferring to wait on the line for a call handler rather than using an online service – but the criteria is based on two things – the level of Threat, Harm, Risk and Vulnerability, and the incident type.

For example, a report of a theft of a mobile phone might be signposted to be completed online, however, if following intrusive questioning the victim advises their partner stole the phone, then triage would place the call through to secondary call handling. The triage operators have a full guide and are trained to undertake this process, which can take up to four minutes, as highlighted above.

It is well understood that we have had spikes of demand associated with good weather and school holidays. During these peak periods, it is not just the non-emergency call demand that increases, but also the emergency 999 line. The Chief Constable will always prioritise, and I will always support the prioritisation, of 999 calls during times of increased demand.

This prioritisation is followed by – in order: non-emergency call triage, then single online home (given the channel shift that has occurred in recent years*), and finally secondary call handling. The reality is that challenging decisions are needed.

Other relevant factors include:

- Resourcing – Over the last year, the vacancy rate within contact management has increased. The Force has taken steps to improve retention rates, but I am told that many of the leavers have joined as police officers or taken on other roles within Dorset Police.
- Training requirements – it can take up to 12 months to train someone to be proficient in role. With the turnover of staff and the delays in recruitment, contact reports that they have been operating without the multi skilled workforce. This prevents the department's ability to surge.
- Training moratorium – given we know that demand will peak during the summer months, typically the Force places a temporary halt on training and other abstractions during this time to best meet this demand. However, this will obviously increase abstractions across the remainder of the year.

Question: What is the scope of the Neighbourhood Engagement Boards, their proposed impact and membership?

PCC Response: The Neighbourhood Engagement Board is a Force board, chaired by a local policing Superintendent. Attendees include police leads for neighbourhood policing, Neighbourhood Engagement Officers – PCSOs with a specific focus on engagement activity – Force communications colleagues and volunteer team leads.

The focus of the meetings is to ensure that key engagement commitments – including attendance at public events; community contact point dates and locations; social media updates; and Dorset Alert use, for example – are maintained and that best practice is shared across the Force. Some of the requirements of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee – for example, that NPT pages are kept up-to-date and named officers are publicised – are also tracked via this Board.

The OPCC has a seat at the Board so that the views of the public can be fed into discussions and that performance against the Police and Crime Plan can be tracked.

Priority Three - Fight Violent Crime and High Harm - Cllr Rampton TBC / Dr Mytton

[N/A]

Priority Four - Fight Rural Crime – Cllr Williams TBC / Flagg

[N/A]

Priority Five - Put Victim and Communities First - Cllrs Keddie / Sidaway

Question: There are separate indicators for Hate Incidents and Hate Crimes. Can the commissioner clarify the difference? Can we provide data at a more granular basis, across different protected characteristics (LGBTQ; race; religion)?

PCC Response: The difference between a hate crime and a hate incident lies in whether a criminal offence has taken place. Common examples include physical assault, threats of violence, harassment or stalking, criminal damage such as vandalism or graffiti, and malicious communication whether on or offline.

The key point therefore is that a hate crime is recorded if the threshold for a criminal offence is reached, and the crime is motivated by – or perceived to be motivated by – hate or hostility.

In terms of the granularity of hate crime this is broken down by the following categories – racially motivated and religiously motivated (which are often interchangeable in the minds of many and so are typically combined), and then motivated by an individuals' disability, sexual orientation or gender identity.

In terms of the breakdown between those categories, the split is stable over time – and is around 75% religiously or racially motivated, around 14% motivated by an individual's sexual orientation, around 9% disability motivated, and around 3% motivated by gender identity.

Question: The report identifies 92% of people feel safe in Dorset. How has this figure been arrived at, as it doesn't reflect what we hear from constituents, particularly in some more urban areas.

PCC Response: Dorset Police has, for many years, commissioned an external Community Safety Survey (CSS). This survey is carried out on behalf of Dorset Police, by external company Social & Marketing Strategic Research (SMSR).

It is conducted on randomly selected residents of Dorset aged over 16, to find out their views to help inform Dorset Police's plans and priorities for the future. The aim being to contact approximately 1200 people by phone, in 4 waves of 300 up to the end of April each year.

Priority Six - Make Every Penny Count –

Question: At the budget panel at Feb this year the Chief Constable said in the region of an additional £12m would be needed to provide a good service. The current funding via the precept is disproportionate to Dorset residents than in most areas of the country. What action is the PCC taking to ensure that Dorset is getting its fair share of funding, reflecting seasonal and geographic factors? Will the PCC work with the panel to achieve a letter of joint endeavour from the panel, Council leaders, and MPs?

PCC Response: Thank you Chair, the Panel's ongoing support in this area is most welcome

As the public would expect, I continue to be vocal on this subject – using every opportunity that is afforded to me to raise this issue to Ministers both in person, and in writing. I have also continued to seek the support of our MPs.

I wrote to the Home Secretary at the end of April, highlighting the local successes of the hotspot policing initiative and the relentless tackling of ASB, helping move us from 10th to 8th safest place in the country.

However, despite those successes, Dorset has had to, and is planning to, achieve over £15m pounds in savings throughout 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 – including 78 members of police staff leaving through the Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme last year. This means that – despite the promise of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee – in Dorset we will only achieve the movement of 40 police officers moved back to the front line, as many are still undertaking roles previously filled by police staff.

I was very clear with the Home Secretary that this is due to the perverse and archaic National Funding Formula, that has been operating since 2013 and primarily favours large or urban forces. There are excluded factors that affect Dorset and these need to be addressed.

In terms of my action, Chair, my letter called on the Home Secretary to do the right thing. Specifically to:

1. Enact the new funding formula taking into account sparsity and seasonality.
2. Ensure VRUs are in each force area.
3. No longer use NFF to calculate other policing grants.

I recognised then, as I do now, that this will require political courage as large forces will not want such a change. I also made suggestions for how this could be ameliorated in a couple of ways. For example by: giving precept flexibility for those affected – currently Dorset residents pay 51% of their police force whereas the average is 34%, and some of those best-favoured pay 20%. That would be an elegant and fair solution.

To date Chair, I have yet to receive a reply.

Item 7 – Annual Report

[N/A]

Item 8 – VAWG

[N/A]

Item 9 – Health and Wellbeing

[N/A]

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