

## David Sidwick

- a. Regarding burglary, please can the PCC report on the number of burglaries reported to Dorset Police in the year to March 2020, the number investigated and the number solved split by council area. What specific burglary prevention programmes other than Neighbourhood Watch did the OPCC invest in during that year (March 2019 – 2020)?

Chair, I thank Mr Sidwick for his usual questions, but, I am slightly frustrated by this. Once again, his question is for the for the police force, rather than myself. The information requested is also partly available in regularly published ONS statistics.

The number of burglaries recorded by Dorset Police in the year to June 2020 <sup>1</sup> was 2,339 for the BCP Council area, and 1,198 for the Dorset Council area. These data represent a 14% reduction in volume from the year ending June 2019 for the BCP area, and a 19% reduction for the Dorset area.

With regards to the number investigated, again a somewhat odd question as, of course, all crimes are routinely investigated.

And with regards to the number solved, this is more complicated, as the correct terminology is the number of crimes that receive a positive outcome, for example a charge or summons. This is 9.6%, which Chair might sound low, but is actually the 8<sup>th</sup> best nationally at the time.

Finally, Chair on burglary prevention, I am slightly confused as the details are requested of initiatives undertaken during 2019/20, rather than this year. Nevertheless, I'll limit myself to three examples.

Most importantly, I gave Dorset Police the strongest possible support through precept increase, allowing the Chief Constable to maximise the numbers of officers within Neighbourhood Policing Teams. I also continue to support the work of the Integrated Offender Management programme, whose cohort includes recidivist prolific burglars, through funding the GPS tagging scheme. And finally, and perhaps most proudly the Chief Constable and I were able to launch the Dorset Bobby Van during this year, which focuses on reducing the level of domestic burglary and distraction burglary and supporting victims to feel safer in their homes.

- b. Regarding anti-social behaviour for the year to March 2020, during which Dorset had the second worst annual rate of ASB in the South of England (excluding London) – What specific programmes to cut ASB did the OPCC invest in during that year?

Chair, once again, I am dismayed that Mr Sidwick continues to ignore the detail, and incorrectly use statistics to make a political point. Despite having made this point to him on several occasions, I will reiterate the two key errors here.

Firstly, his 'soundbite' statistic is wrong. Secondly, antisocial behaviour has three components – which means you cannot make a sweeping statement without the context.

Chair, ASB has three components - environmental, nuisance and personal.

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/recordedcrimedatabycommunitysafetypartnershiparea>

- Personal ASB is when a person targets a specific individual or group.
- Nuisance ASB is when a person causes trouble, annoyance or suffering to a community.
- Environmental ASB is when a person's actions affect the wider environment, such as public spaces or buildings.

These national definitions show that some types of ASB are better actioned by police – for example personal ASB, whereas others – whilst policing will play a supportive role, in practice will be led by other responsible authorities – for example, environmental ASB, which in Dorset primarily rests with Local Authorities, Dorset Waste Partnership and others.

What this means is that several agencies are accountable for ASB as a whole, something the questioner consistently ignores.

As for the statistics, for the time period Mr Sidwick highlights, Dorset ranked 18<sup>th</sup> best out of the 43 forces for personal ASB rates. Of course, this is still lower than we would want, but I do need to make it clear that, for policing, the position is nowhere near as dire as he portrays.

(IF ASKED: Dorset ranked 33<sup>rd</sup> for environmental, and 35<sup>th</sup> for nuisance – meaning we were 32<sup>nd</sup> overall.)

Moving on then, there are a raft of initiatives that I have funded such as the Community Safety Accreditation Schemes and funding BIDS to work with local retailers to reduce the level of business and retail related crime and ASB, but again I will limit myself to three examples.

Firstly, as PCC, I listen to the public and act on what they tell me – therefore, in 2020 – admittedly just after the time period highlighted, I undertook an extensive public consultation on ASB, which received just shy of 4000 responses. This found, for example, that a large percentage of the public, were not aware of the correct responsible authorities for dealing with some types of ASB.

Secondly, I again gave Dorset Police the best support possible to tackle crime and ASB by increasing precept. Chair, I know I have already made this point, but I fear it needs to be made twice. PCCs are responsible for setting the police budget to allow Chief Constables the best opportunity to deliver against current and expected levels of demand. Whilst some PCCs prefer to retain higher proportions of the policing budget for themselves, and then use that to deliver projects and initiatives under their own banner, I do not, and am quite content to raise more funds to give the Chief Constable and his team the independence to deliver this operational activity free from political interference.

Thirdly and finally, Chair, I continue to link with CSPs to support their work. My office is closely linked into the wider partnership work, and of course, can influence and support. For example, my office led on establishing the Dorset Fly Tipping Group (DFTG), bringing together partners to ensure a coordinated and effective response to fly-tipping, which features in environmental ASB. Membership includes BCP and Dorset Councils, Dorset Waste Partnership (which delivers the waste collection services for Dorset Council), Dorset Police, Environment Agency, National Farmers Union, Country Landowners Association, National Trust and Dorset Wildlife Trust. A key deliverable has been the recruitment of a dedicated fly tipping co-ordinator post. Funded for one year by me, this post started in December 2019.

## Patrick Canavan

The Office of National Statistics indicated a 10.8% [increase] in domestic abuse crimes for the year ending March 2020. The Coronavirus pandemic has clearly had an impact. With restrictions possibly continuing for some time, what further steps can be taken to increase resources and practical support for victims of domestic abuse? Also, could you please outline the plan to improve the conviction rate for rape and sexual assault?

I thank Mr Canavan for his question, and agree that the pandemic has clearly had an impact, although as the moment we do not yet have the ability to fully quantify that across the country due to the way that national crime stats are collated and reported.

Chair, you will know that this issue worries me greatly, and I am also grateful for the support that members have given this issue over the past several meetings where I have provided a number of updates on this matter.

To recap those, at the beginning of the first lockdown, my team acted quickly to support a DA awareness raising campaign which including targeting advertising, and printing details of how to access DA services during the lockdown period on pharmacy bags. I have also funded CARA, the Cautions And Relationship Abuse programme which works with lower risk DA offenders earlier on to prevent escalation and continued cycles of abuse.

More recently, through the £90k of funding my office secured, I have funded the Drive Perpetrator programme which works with high risk DA offenders to help change their behaviours and offer support with issues like substance misuse and mental health. Also, both my office and the Force have supported the “Ask for ANI” codeword scheme from the Home Office that provides a discreet way for victims of DA to signal that they need emergency help whilst at their local pharmacy.

Finally, with regards to our plans to improve the conviction rate for Rape and Serious Sexual Offences, or RASSO, we are part of a Wessex CPS Tri-Force RASSO Gold Group, tasked with doing exactly this. This group meets monthly, led by the three ACCs for Dorset, Hampshire and Wiltshire, and governed jointly by the Tri-Force Chief Constables and PCCs, and the Chief Crown Prosecutor.

PCCs have funded an independent review of the Force’s approaches and I am well engaged in the tactical and operational governance. An expert will be reviewing case files to help identify areas for improvement and offer up best practice.

There is a shared ambition to narrow the disparity between the number of offences that are reported to the police and the cases going to court, as well as encouraging victims to come forward and report with confidence.

The plan addresses five themes:

- Supporting victims
- Casework quality and progression
- Digital capability and disclosure
- People and Expertise
- Effective governance

Chair, actions are progressing well, but it is acknowledged that there are national issues at play, and – bearing in mind the lengthy nature of investigations and court cases – significantly improved outcomes will take some time to be realised.

## **Norman Brennan**

- a. What effect has the pandemic had on your finances as a force and has the pandemic affected the Forces ability to continue the uplift?

I thank Mr Brennan for his questions. Chair, in highlighting the challenge of delivering the police uplift programme in the midst of a pandemic, and with limited resources, Mr Brennan makes a fair point.

The pandemic has significantly affected the Force's cashflow, and ability to plan and deliver growth that could provide new or enhanced services across the county.

Chair, you will recall that, very early on, concerns were raised about a national shortage of PPE. The issue of funding quickly arose, and as Government support was not immediately forthcoming, PCCs and Chiefs agreed to stand up a national consortium approach to procure PPE, jointly underwritten by all to a collective value of £5m. While Ministers said forces would be reimbursed for PPE, written confirmation was not received until September last year - some five months after the issue was first raised. Forces now complete monthly returns for every item of medical grade PPE used.

Similarly, as the pandemic took further hold, it was clear that policing was struggling. With significantly higher than normal levels of absences, our frontline was being asked to work harder and longer to provide cover, while also policing changeable rules and guidance.

Of course, there are no additional officers to cover emergencies, instead our dedicated officers work additional shifts. The cost of overtime was therefore accruing at significant levels, and so again PCCs and Chiefs asked the Government for help.

However, instead of a dedicated fund, Forces were permitted to use half of the £1.4m uplift grant to cover Covid-19 costs – but, at the same time, asked to keep up the pace of recruitment. This was disappointing, and meant that we had to choose between using dedicated funds to support uplift, or divert them to operational spend.

The Chief Constable and I agreed it best not to use the fund to pay for Covid-19 costs as our concern was how we would fund the uplift programme. Subsequently, some of the costs for Covid were later reimbursed <sup>2</sup>, but the Force will still have to foot the overtime bill, and some supplementary costs. Despite this challenge, Chair, Dorset's uplift programme remains fully on track, and indeed I anticipate us recruiting above the Govt figure this year and the next.

- b. With the pandemic issue prevailing, are you predicting a balanced Medium Term Financial Plan?

Chair, with regards to the Medium Term Financial Strategy, this is being covered in detail under the next agenda item. However, I am pleased to confirm that as part of the budget setting process the medium term financial strategy has been reviewed and updated, extending it until 2024/25.

Whilst, policing does not benefit from a multi-year finance settlement, and it is therefore difficult to accurately predict what our future funding position might be, our neutral position shows a balanced budget across the duration of the MTFs, the first time I can say that in nine years as a Commissioner.

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<sup>2</sup> medical PPE, a proportion of income that we were not able to generate and other aspects