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DORSET POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 9 DECEMBER 2021

[LINK TO RECORDING OF MEETING](#)

Present: Mr Mike Short (Chairman), Bobbie Dove (Vice-Chairman), Pete Barrow, George Farquhar, Les Fry, May Haines, Mark Howell, Sherry Jespersen, Toby Johnson and David Taylor

Apologies: Mr Iain McVie and Barry Goringe

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

Jim McManus (Corporate Director - Finance and Commercial), Simon Bullock (Chief Executive, OPCC), Marc Eyre (Service Manager for Assurance), Elaine Tibble (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Adam Harrold (OPCC Director of Operations), Julie Strange (OPCC Chief Finance Officer) and David Sidwick (Police and Crime Commissioner)

32. Declarations of Interest

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

33. Actions Update (00:05:50 on recording)

The Service Manager for Assurance updated the Panel on the actions following the previous meeting.

34. Public Participation (00:07:34 on recording)

There were two questions received from Dan Hardy, these are attached as an appendix to these minutes.

Responses from the PCC can be found at (00:08:00 and 00:10:10 on the recording).

35. Q2 Monitoring Report (00:10:50 on recording)

The Panel received an update of progress against the Police and Crime Plan from The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) who highlighted areas from each of his 6 Priorities which enabled the panel to scrutinise activity and assess the achievement of outcomes.

Priority 1 - Cut Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour: (00:12:40 on recording)
Leads - Cllr Pete Barrow; Cllr May Haines.

Anti-Social Behaviour had been a priority for the PCC, he had supported Dorset Police in launching Operation Relentless together with the Operation Relentless community fund.

The PCC had attended a proactive patrol as part of the Force's summer drink drive campaign and supported the action taken by Dorset Police against illegal and unsafe e-scooter use.

Dorset Police had put designated leads in place for each local policing area to enhance responses to pet theft.

Panel Members were invited to ask questions of the PCC (00:15:10 on recording)

These focused on the ASB trend going downwards which was welcome, however there were concerns that ASB problems were being moved around rather than being tackled at source.

The PCC was keen to implement an effective rehabilitation programme and as the National Lead for the Addiction and substance misuse portfolio was working hard towards effective solutions to tackle ASB

Road Safety improvements and how the PCC planned to maintain and motivate Special Constables in the quieter/rural areas was also discussed.

Priority 2 - Make Policing More Visible and Connected: (00:22:13 on recording)
Lead – Ian McVie.

Neighbourhood Engagement Commitments had been relaunched by Dorset Police, which had made use of a revised Key Community Contacts (KCC) database.

It had been agreed that Dorset Police will join the Single Online Home web platform, which had been adopted by the majority of forces in England and Wales.

Priority 3 - Fight Violent Crime and High Harm: (00:28:15 on recording)
Lead – Cllr May Haines.

The PCC having put himself forward for the APCC's Addiction and Substance Misuse portfolio had continued to drive national work with a focus on awareness of harmful gambling, effective rehabilitation and education on the harms of taking recreational drugs. Drug dealing had been agreed as a regional priority by all SW PCCs.

The PCC welcomed the HMICFRS child protection report, and would hold the Force to account for enacting the recommendations.

Operation Encompass, which had received OPCC funding, had facilitated the sharing of safeguarding information with more than 300 schools and the PCC was looking at rolling out to nurseries as well.

Panel Members were invited to ask questions of the PCC (00:32:23 on recording).

These focused around domestic abuse incidents having risen and the reasons behind those figures which was attributed to a better reporting strategy and delivery plan and a higher awareness.

There was still work being undertaken to reduce knife crime, however Dorset was still a relatively safe county.

Following the recently passed Nationality and Borders Bill which could increase the problem of modern slavery ongoing updates were requested by the PCP members.

The PCC outlined his plans to reduce violence against women and girls (VAWG). (00:38:55 on recording) copy attached as an appendix to these minutes.

ACTION: an item to be added to the forward workplan for a deep dive into the issue of VAWG.

Cllr Taylor left the meeting at 10.40

Priority 4 - Fight Rural Crime: (00:44:00 on recording)

Leads Cllr Les Fry; Cllr David Taylor.

Rural crime had been highlighted to the PCC during his election campaign and he had announced an ambition to initially double the size of the Rural Crime Team and to significantly increase this further in the coming months and years.

The PCC and his office were working on County Watch and had made preparations to hold a Rural Crime Roundtable, work was in progress with the force to obtain more key indicators. This was a new area and there was still a lot of work in progress.

Panel Members were invited to ask questions of the PCC (00:46:42 on recording).

These concerned the definitions of rural crime.

Priority 5 - Put Victim and Communities First: (00:48:42 on recording).

Lead - Cllr George Farquar.

The PCC wanted to look at the issue of hate crime – A Hate Crime Awareness course was being developed in conjunction with Prejudice Free Dorset –and plans for a Hate Crime Conference for 2022 were being discussed.

The PCC was keen to strengthen neighbourhood watches - In August, the PCC awarded a grant to the Association of Dorset Watches to help with the production and dissemination of a community safety booklet. He hoped to expand neighbourhood watch schemes.

The PCC and his office had made preparations to hold a Business Crime Roundtable, with attendees from a variety of business leads. In advance of this meeting, the PCC had met with Dorset Business Improvement Districts and various business and retail representatives to inform them of his Police and Crime Plan.

Panel Members were invited to ask questions of the PCC (00:51:08 on recording).

These focused on:

Communications with those people who were not connected to the digital world and how Neighbourhood Watch teams could help those without digital access.

How to address the spectrum of VAWG.

The risks in areas that did not have street lighting.

How the PCC would work to ensure Dorset received a fair share of the funding pot to tackle drug abuse and substance misuse.

Domestic Violence and causes.

The OPCC Director of Operations addressed the PCP members in relation to the PCC's commissioning budget. (01:11:08).

It was expected to take 6 months before feedback on the Operation Relentless Community Fund initiatives could be presented to the PCP members.

ACTION: Programme a deep dive into the whole spectrum of toxic masculinity and misogyny on the forward plan.

Priority 6 - Make Every Penny Count: (01:27:30 on recording)

Lead – Mike Short.

In August, Scott Chilton was confirmed as the Chief Constable of Dorset Police, following a meeting of the Police and Crime Panel.

The PCC had received a briefing on the next year's HMICFRS inspections activity which would give the Force a benchmark to work towards.

The PCC welcomed the government's Beating Crime Plan, which set out a strategic ambition for cutting crime across England and Wales. He observed that there was strong synergy between this document and his Police and Crime Plan for Dorset.

OPCC Chief Finance Officer presented the Q2 finance pages as at end sept, (01:31:09 on recording).

Overall, the OPCC Chief Finance Officer was comfortable with the finances, there had been extra costs due to the G7 summit and COP26 (the United Nations Climate Change Conference) event resources, together with some ongoing impacts around IT contracts, extra fuel and energy costs. Revenue General Reserves were still in the required 3-5% area.

The Chairman asked, following the plans for a new Police HQ having been announced for time-lines for the project and plans to "sell" the capital project to the tax paying public. The PCC's response is attached in the appendix to these minutes. (01:37:41 on recording).

ACTION: item to be put on forward workplan for a deep dive to ensure the Dorset tax payer gets value for money and research the suitability of having HQ at Winfrith.

11:33 Cllr Taylor re-joined the meeting

36. Precept Financial Year 21/22 (01:44:30 on recording)

The Chief Executive, OPCC presented a report which sought to endorse that the Precept was delivering the outcomes outlined by the PCP and summarised how the Precept had been used for 2021-22.

The Police Officer Uplift Programme entered its second year in 2021/22, with Dorset having been set the target to recruit an additional 49 officers. The joint decision was taken to frontload recruitment at the beginning of the year to maximise the impact of the new officers, and so the Force remained well on track to deliver the required officers by 31 March 2022.

The Chief Executive, OPCC continued to highlight the various areas of the paper and the PCP members were invited to ask questions.

The PCC responded to a question regarding improving positive outcomes (01:54:19 on recording) copy attached as an appendix to these minutes.

37. Stop and Search (01:59:19 on the recording)

The panel had conducted scrutiny on this area in Sep 2020 - the issue was disproportionality in the use of Stop and Search (SaS) in Dorset. This was the follow up in order to identify what action has been taken by the PCC/OPCC in order to improve the situation.

The PCC outlined the issue with disproportionate SaS figures in Dorset. He clarified SaS and when these powers could be used before providing a detailed summary of the points in the report.

Chief Executive, OPCC was also invited to put his views to the Panel members (02:09:34 on recording).

PCP members noted that the new statistics still made use of population data taken from the 2011 Census, and looked forward to the new Census data being made available in due course.

ACTION: To put an item on the forward work plan to have a discussion on the analysis at the back end of next year.

38. Complaints Update (02:16:22 on recording)

The Service Manager for Assurance advised there were no open complaints. A Police and Crime Panel Sub-Committee meeting had been scheduled for 6 January 2022 to review the current Complaints Policy.

39. Forward Workplan (02:17:00 on recording)

The Forward Workplan was noted and attention drawn to the number of items scheduled for June 2022.

It was suggested and agreed that the Panel members would look at the Workplan in more detail at their informal meeting with the support of a member of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner staff in attendance.

40. Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

41. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Appendices

Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 12.25 pm

Chairman

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Appendix

Question from Mr Dan Hardy

1). Based on just a three year term and considerate to the three years ready access provided to the now PCC by Dorset police and many others, why has it taken six months to deliver a crime plan, notwithstanding the PCC will have to start campaigning again in just two years time?

2). What are the tangible measures for success for the now issued crime plan? To be the safest county this will take not just year-on-year crime reductions across many crime types, but also an improvement the subjective feeling of public safety and his promised heightened visibility. These measures will need accounting for now and annually, with true performance publicly shared. This approach is simply linked to the PCCs promises made when a candidate. Considering his reduced term when will the PCC confirm these business like measures of success and defined tangible returns on investment to the Dorset public from his crime plan strategy?

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(00:38:55 on recording)

You are absolutely correct to say that I have been unequivocal about this. There is a deep attitudinal, behavioural, change that is required across our society. And, nationwide, we need to understand and then tackle the reasons behind why so many young men – and it is, typically, younger men – commit terrible crimes against women. I am told that across the UK, a woman is killed by a man every three days. It is a sobering statistic.

I have pledged to do all that I can, as Dorset's Police and Crime Commissioner, to ensure that this county is the safest in England and Wales – there is no doubt that this means that women and girls must be safe, and feel safe, whether on our streets or in their own homes.

In terms of strategy, the obvious starting point is my Police and Crime Plan. You can see that violence, domestic abuse, stalking and other high harm areas are clearly prioritised. There is also a dedicated section of the Plan that addresses Violence Against Women and Girls – this lists the following actions:

First, I will work with police and partners to counter violence against women and girls, by making our public spaces safer and by exploring behaviour changing courses to tackle hypermasculinity and misogyny.

Members will know that work has been ongoing with partners to introduce safer public spaces, particularly in areas with a vibrant night time economy. My office has submitted and supported various national bids and, as mentioned in the quarterly report, Dorset Council has just been awarded £380,000 for projects to help women and girls feel safer on our streets. The funding will pay for CCTV, and fund intervention workshops to help increase awareness, change societal attitudes and empower women and girls to feel safer. This follows a large funding award for the Bournemouth area.

Dorset Police's Operation Vigilant initiative has also been running in Weymouth and Bournemouth.

Second, I will continue to hold criminal justice agencies to account for investigative and charging decisions involving rape and serious sexual offences and to ensure that more offenders are brought to justice. I am now the Chair of the DCJB and, as part of the Wessex region, my office has co-funded an independent review of the local criminal justice agencies' response to rape and serious sexual offences. This review will be reporting to criminal justice agencies in the next month or so.

Third, I will ensure that victims of rape and serious sexual assaults are provided with the care and support that they need and that they have the confidence to report these crimes to the police.

Since taking up office, I have met with Women's Aid, You First, STARS, the Water Lilly Project, and the Chair of the Dorset Domestic Abuse Forum. At such meetings, I have been able to hear first-hand from victims about their experience,

as well as draw upon the considerable experience and insight that these organisations have offered on behalf of the victims and communities they represent

And finally, I will continue to raise awareness of honour-based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation, and work with agencies to tackle such crimes and support victims.

There is plenty more that myself and the Office could say on this topic, but hopefully that provides some reassurance of the action that we have taken and have planned. I will obviously also be holding the Chief Constable to account for ensuring that Dorset takes on board the national learning from a range of inquiries and reviews that are ongoing.

In short though, to make women and girls safer, all agencies, up and down the country, must work together to deliver the significant changes that are required. I will do all I can, alongside the Chief Constable, to make sure that Dorset Police plays its part.

(01:54:19 on recording)

First, it goes without saying that I would like to see more investigations result in positive outcomes. I am sure that all Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables would echo that sentiment.

Positive outcomes are not limited to charges and summons; there are indeed a range of other measures (cautions, fixed penalty notices and use restorative justice, for instance) that can be used to successfully and proportionately conclude an investigation. The latest figures for Dorset suggest a positive outcome rate of about 10.2%, compared to the national average of 10.7%. Whilst this is still not what the public would expect, it is, I am afraid, a national picture.

This national position is complicated and there are a wide range of factors at play, such as police resourcing (I believe that the Uplift programme will help forces to make head way here); the efficiency of the court system and the need to focus the most sophisticated forensic and investigative capability on those crimes that cause the most harm.

To the public I would say three things:

- I want this to improve. I will be holding the Chief Constable to account for the performance in this area and, as Chair of the Criminal Justice Board, I will be working to bring partners together so that we can secure more positive outcomes.
- That the positive outcome data does not capture, by any means, the full story. The huge efforts that the police put into safeguarding victims of crime are not reflected in these figures. So, while it may be the case that a crime has not been formally solved, that is not to say that there hasn't been vital work to protect victims from repeat incidents and provide crucial support services. In

other words, don't let figures such as these put you off from calling the police in a time of need – they are here to help.

- And, finally, let's not underestimate the benefit of good intelligence. Many, many crimes are committed by a small minority of offenders. It might be the case that the police can't solve, for example, every shed break or bike theft, but by building up that information, it all helps the police to catch burglars and thieves; put in place preventative patrols and action; and issue advice to our communities. So, again, my advice is always to come forward and report crimes to the police.

(01:37:41 on recording)

For the benefit of those who may not have seen our recent announcement, the Chief Constable and I have recently agreed a programme of investment in the police estate – so this covers both upgrades and improvements to local police stations as well as decision to replace the HQ itself.

The investments in local stations such as better technology, more lockers and flexible working spaces will help officers reduce their time in stations each shift, plus will provide respite areas to help them deal with the aftermath of traumatic incidents.

The current police buildings that are in operation beyond their planned lifespan will be disposed of and, in particular, the 60-year-old headquarters building at Winfrith that costs more to maintain than it would do to knock down and replace with a more energy efficient and sustainable building – will be replaced.

The timelines for this are that planning permission was formally sought last month, and we are hoping for a decision by February 2022. Should this be granted as hoped for, we expect to break ground around June 2022, and that the building will be completed by the end of 2023.

Members, like the Dorset public at large, will start to see a range of communications on this project in the new year, and I confirm that I am intending a high level of transparency around this project once the initial commercial arrangements have been confirmed, and so will say more in due course.

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