

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL – 14 DECEMBER 2022

USE OF THE 2022/23 POLICE PRECEPT

PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

To provide Members with a summary report on the how the Precept is being, and has been, used throughout 2022/23.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following the meeting in February 2022, the Police and Crime Panel provided formal notification of their decision to support the proposed increase in police precept equivalent to an additional £10 per annum on a Band D property.
- 1.2 Alongside this decision, the Panel set out their intention to seek assurance, through the forward work plan, that the PCC would implement the direction as set by the Minister for Policing and Fire Service and hold the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of several improvements. This covered both national and local priorities.
- 1.3 Members of the Panel receive reports at each meeting regarding the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan which utilises resources from both the Force and the commissioning budget to deliver the activities. This report will highlight some of the key activities that relate to the utilisation of the Precept in 2022/23, but it should be noted that considerably more information is contained within the quarterly monitoring reports.
- 1.4 Further information on how the Chief Constable has utilised the 2022/23 budget will be provided as part of the budget discussions in February.

2. NATIONAL PRIORITIES

Resources

- 2.1 The Police Officer Uplift Programme entered its third and final year in 2022/23, with Dorset set the target to recruit a total of 67 additional officers. As has previously been reported, the joint decision was taken to frontload recruitment at the beginning of the programme to maximise the impact of the new officers, and so the Force remains well on track to deliver the required officers by 31 March 2023, as shown on the relevant national monitoring dashboards, a quarterly summary of which are [published](#) by the Home Office.
- 2.2 For the second year running, the Police Uplift Programme required three officers of the 67 to be recruited for the Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU). Additional resources have been provided to the ROCU from across the region to ensure that it is able to counter the growth of serious and organised crime. The South West region's strong track record of collaboration has continued and Forces remain focussed on addressing matters such as county lines, fraud, rural crime and cyber-crime.

- 2.3 Not all forces are on track with their recruitment programmes, therefore the offer of an additional recruitment target, rewarded by a once off grant, was made to all forces in order to meet the national 20,000 target. Dorset bid for a number of additional officers and was successful in gaining grant funding for 15 extra officers. This has been built into the existing recruitment programme and remains on track.

Crime Reduction

- 2.4 To account for the impact of the pandemic, and as per the national crime and policing measures, the convention is to compare current crime levels against a baseline of 2019/20. These data continue to be provided in the regular quarterly monitoring report and the associated thematic reports.

Productivity, Efficiency and Effectiveness

- 2.5 The delivery of a framework – the Productivity Review – that is slated to eventually aid the comparison of productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness measures over time, and across other Force areas is being progressed nationally, led by Sir Stephen House.
- 2.6 In the absence of this framework, however, local work continues apace. For example, as regards to increasing productivity through the use of technology, the Panel has previously heard about the benefits of Pronto, the toolkit installed on officers' mobile devices that allows them to undertake a range of tasks that would have previously required to be carried out within the police station environment – including completing a range of forms (stop and search, missing people, witness statements, etc), accessing the Police National Computer, and saving crime scene photographs.
- 2.7 Dorset Police has also invested in Robotic Process Automation (RPA), which is the automation of business processes using a 'digital workforce' which when trained, mimics the activities of staff. RPA reduces the amount of time staff spend on repetitive and routine activities, allowing more time to be spent on interaction with the public and jobs requiring a greater degree of complex problem solving or human judgement. A current example of how this is used is the automation of keying in the same information to multiple databases to conduct person, suspect or address searches through crime and incident recording systems.

3. LOCAL ISSUES

Neighbourhood Enforcement Team (NET)

- 3.1 The NET has been developed to target those offenders who pose the most risk to communities based on an evidence based policing harm index. They manage and build local intelligence around community concerns and vulnerable people and enable proportionate targeted action to safeguard and deal with those concerns when necessary.
- 3.2 The team, which went live during this precept period, supports and contributes to the performance of the local policing area (LPA) and the work surrounding crimes and threats impacting communities. The primary focus of the NET is enforcement, creating a hostile environment for criminality and bringing offenders to justice.

Strengthening Neighbourhood Policing

- 3.3 The successful roll-out of the Force's ASB operation, Op Relentless, continues to make a difference for Dorset's communities, augmented by the additional officers recruited as part of the Police Uplift Programme.
- 3.4 Op Relentless continues to be a strong, well-recognised and understood brand which serves to set the tone and expectation for Dorset Police's commitment to tackling ASB. The branding

is also used externally to support visibility and communication to the public about the work being undertaken to address ASB and to ensure the Force continues to report on progress, engage and foster understanding of the issues impacting communities. The PCC has supported Op Relentless through his dedicated fund.

Customer Service

- 3.5 While additional resources were provided to the contact management department, there continue to be a range of challenges, including difficulties in recruitment and retention, the introduction of major new technology, and continued high levels of demand.
- 3.6 Performance continues to fall below the level that the public expects, particularly in relation to 101 call answer times. This performance is monitored closely monitored by the Force Strategic Performance Board, the PCC's Use of Police Powers and Standards (UPPS) Scrutiny Panel and is subject to a separate Gold Group. The Chief Constable has established a major change programme – the Contact Demand and Engagement Management (CDEM) programme – to ensure long-term improvements. A key aspect of this work is the adoption of Single Online Home, which is due to be complete by the end of this financial year.
- 3.7 The PCC's scrutiny of the Force's complaints handling is also undertaken through UPPS, attendance at the Standards and Ethics Board, and also through the OPCC's review work.

Fight Violent Crime and High Harm

- 3.8 In terms of County Lines, the work of Op Viper and Op Scorpion continue to tackle drug crime across the county. Op Viper launched in April 2022 and has already been incredibly successful in cracking down on illegal drugs and drug-related crime in Dorset. It brings together a county lines task force and our Neighbourhood Enforcement Teams to drive out drugs from our local communities. Op Scorpion, which launched in March of this year, has seen all five Police and Crime Commissioners and their respective police forces in the South West region (Avon and Somerset, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire), the British Transport Police, South West Regional Organised Crime Unit (SW ROCU) and the charity Crimestoppers come together again to make our region a hostile environment for illegal drug activity. This puts a ring of steel around the South West and complements our robust Dorset approach with Operation Viper.
- 3.9 Considerable activity has been undertaken to address Violence Against Women and Girls. Of particular note, the Force is one of the Op Soteria expansion forces, with the initial assessment phase being undertaken at the time of writing. Op Soteria is a collaboration between criminal justice practitioners and a coalition of the most qualified and talented academics in their fields. The overarching aim is to develop a new operating model for the investigation and prosecution of rape capable of national roll out. The programme operates through intensive work in a number of pathfinder areas and the sharing of learning gained through peer forces and through a National Learning Network.

Fight Rural Crime

- 3.10 Starting within the PCC's first 100 days, there has been a significant increase in the size of the Force's Rural Crime Team. The increase in dedicated resources has continued throughout 2022/23, with the new set-up unveiled earlier this summer, consisting of a dedicated inspector, a sergeant, five police constables, two PCSOs and a Neighbourhood Engagement Officer.
- 3.11 Alongside this increase in staffing, the Force has also launched a new rural engagement van and a new rural crime strategy. These developments will enable increased visibility, effectiveness and closer links to rural communities.

- 3.12 The PCC's Rural Crime Reduction Board continues to address issues affecting rural communities, by working alongside key partner agencies. Successes include the launch of Country Watch, a one stop shop for all rural, wildlife and heritage crime matters. Aside from useful information and prevention advice, it brings together the relevant reporting links into one place and also has simple signposting to the watch schemes. Further developments, will of course be provided as part of the Police and Crime Plan monitoring reports in future quarters.

Put Victims and Communities First

- 3.13 Several technology improvements have been delivered during the precept period, these cover a variety of areas including investing in digital evidence, crime investigation capability and victim care to bring more offenders to justice.
- 3.14 Dorset Police is currently implementing Single Online Home, the standardisation of websites used across policing. This is scheduled for completion in March 2023 and is on track. The new platform will provide standard reporting forms which will give a more consistent journey for digital customers.
- 3.15 As previously reported, the Sturminster Newton Victim Interview Suite has recently been refurbished, providing a modern, bright and calming environment for victims to provide statements. The suite is fitted with the latest in audio and video recording equipment.
- 3.16 An improvement in the way digital case information is transferred between the police and the wider criminal justice system will be transformed in January 2023, as the Two-Way Interface (TWIF) goes live, enabling speedier transfer of data and information between agencies, and providing better performance data.
- 3.17 An upgrade to the Dorset Police crime recording system, Niche, was delivered successfully in August 2022, bringing about a variety of process and data improvements, most notably delivering the opportunity for more accurate crime recording and better compliance with the code of practice for victims of crime.

4. POLICE FUNDING

- 4.1 The PCC continues to lobby for fair funding for Dorset, both in relation to general funding but also regarding specific funding pots such as Safer Streets Funding and Violence Reduction Units. The Home Office work on the Formula Funding Review is ongoing and both OPCC and the Force have contributed to those ongoing conversations – including a recent submission relating to the impact of seasonality and sparsity. The PCC and his office will continue to monitor this work with interest.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 Members are asked to note the report.

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