

PCC Question and Answers

Actions:

The Finance Officer for the OPCC to respond in writing to the question “The pay and employment costs include a £1.2M saving in order to meet the Forecast of Outturn. With the shortfall of £2.1M across the Financial Year and this £1.2M, how will the PCC ensure that services are not affected for the people of Dorset in order to meet these savings”.

The £1.2m savings form part of the overall forecast overspend of £2.1m, rather than in addition, but these are still large variances. The savings are being monitored and implemented through the Force Efficiency Board, which is attended by the Treasurer as an observer, to understand the implications of changes proposed.

Over £6m of savings built into the budget have been delivered and achieved through this process without a noticeable impact on services. Timescales for the delivery of the remaining savings have proved challenging but the Efficiency Board remain focused on delivering savings both for the current year and next year and have recently increased the frequency of meetings as we began work on the budget for 2024/25.

There is no doubt that the level of savings required is significant, but the PCC is assured that the Force is taking the necessary steps to ensure that these savings are achieved while remaining fully focussed on delivering the required operational outcomes.

The PCC would bring back figures for cases that had been dealt with through the Restorative Justice System (OPCC)

Our Restorative Justice Service is delivered by Restorative Solutions who also provide this service for six other PCCs. Restorative Justice is shown to improve victim satisfaction and reduce re-offending. Restorative Justice holds offenders, either young people or adults, directly accountable to their victims and can bring them together in a facilitated meeting. It can be an alternative way of dealing with a crime and/or anti-social behaviour rather than going through a more formal route using the courts. However, it can also operate alongside the criminal justice system, in response to a more serious crime.

Since the recommissioning of the adult restorative justice service in 2021 the number of referrals has doubled – with the average number per year going from 107 with the previous service, to 230 with the new service, as follows:

2021/22 – 280 (169 BCP / 106 Dorset / 5 out of county)

2022/23 – 245 (139 BCP / 98 Dorset / 8 out of county)

2023/24 YTD – 115 (230 estimated) (77 BCP / 36 Dorset / 2 out of county)

Members will note a reduction in referrals from the high point of 2021/22. It is believed this is due to managing the backlog of cases that took place during the Covid period.

In terms of victim satisfaction with the service this has remained at 100% throughout the course of the current contract. In addition to this, of the offenders who engage with the service, 77% do not reoffend (as monitored at both 6 and 12 months after the RJ intervention). Furthermore, a recent cost benefit analysis has been undertaken by the Police Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Team looking at crimes committed by three offenders both

before and after they intervention with the IOM Team and RJ process. The outcome of this analysis showed a total saving per year of over £27,300 over the 3 cases.

Strategic Questions

The PCC has recently issued a statement on “The devastating impact of knife crime”. The final paragraph states: *“Education and early intervention is key, but as I’ve said before, the police cannot do this alone. We all need to play part our part to ensure no other families are destroyed by the impact of this crime. I will be relentless in my efforts to make Dorset the safest county”*. For the benefit of the people of Dorset, can the PCC please outline how the public can play our part in driving down this crime?

We all want Dorset to be a place of safety and inclusion for all, a place where our children can thrive, where we share knowledge and resources, and where we support one another for the betterment of all.

If it takes a village to raise a child, then it follows that the wider community of Dorset must provide for, safeguard, and support our children to become productive members of society, and be resilient against future exploitation and the draw of criminality.

Criminals understand and exploit the risk factors for violence far better than we – as elected and non-elected members of the community working for the public good – understand and leverage the protective factors against violence to build resiliency within our communities.

Criminals exploit a consumer culture that leads our young people to believe that acceptance by their peers is dependent on what clothes they are wearing, or what phone they have. They exploit the inherent insecurity of our young people to normalise violence and make them feel special by offering a sense of belonging.

There are steps that all of us – whether parents, family members, neighbours, community members, educators, or policymakers – can take to make positive decisions that will affect the choices made by our young people. For me, as PCC, that might be to commission a service. For a family member who is worried about a relative, that might be to reach out to their parent or guardian, and if needs be to help them to have a conversation with their child, or to contact a service provider for advice.

A public health approach to violence reduction recognises the need to understand and address the underlying causes of violence and to focus on populations and communities rather than individuals.

As is the case with other complex issues that affect the health and wellbeing of our communities, an improvement cannot be achieved alone. It is only together that we can all understand and challenge the beliefs and attitudes that allow violence to take hold.

The new Victims and Prisoners Bill commits PCCs to a statutory duty to work with Health and Local Authorities in commissioning services for victims of domestic violence, sexual violence and other violence. What action has the PCC taken in order to meet this future statutory duty and how will he exercise having greater scrutiny powers overseeing local compliance monitoring of the Victims code?

Regardless of the progress of the Victims and Prisoners Bill, my office already undertakes this level of collaboration and consultation when commissioning services. A good example of this is in relation to the recommissioning of domestic abuse victim services in Dorset.

My Head of Policy and Commissioning chairs a multi-agency meeting that brings together Police, both Local Authorities, Health, and Probation to review, discuss and design the new services moving forward. This work has already brought about alignment of commissioning timelines and is just moving into the co-design of services. There is a long-term goal to have a co-commissioned all-risk service in Dorset, and these are the initial steps required to achieve just that.

Alongside this, partners have previously signed up to the 'Dorset Domestic Abuse Commissioning Charter', which sets out the commitment from each agency to consult and engage with one another then commissioning services.

With regards to sexual violence, we're currently two years into a long-term contract with the SARC and ISVA service providers. The current services are co-commissioned with NHS England and the Police, and we intend to extend this further in future processes to mirror the same approach as domestic abuse when re-commissioning.

In relation to the monitoring of the Victims Code of Practice (VCOP), a significant amount of work is well underway regarding the pending Victim and Prisoners Bill. The local compliance monitoring and scrutiny of VCOP, is driven and closely monitored by my office.

Over the last 18 months, my office has developed workstreams on Code compliance, which I have progressed through the DCJB Victims and Witness Strategic Group and subgroups.

The Bill comes with requirements for all PCC areas to provide compliance data metrics to the MOJ, which has been a significant piece of work which has required close liaison with the MOJ for the last 18 months. My office is fully engaged with this development work and attends two regular meetings specifically focused on measuring code compliance: the Analytical Working Group and the Niche Metrics Subgroup.

My office has also been working closely with Dorset Police given the ambition around improving compliance and public delivery through process automation which enables efficient retrieval of compliance data from the dedicated information management system.

When the Bill becomes Law, my office will continue to lead scrutiny and oversee local compliance monitoring of the Victims Code, through my role as the local Victims' Champion.

Quarterly Report

Priority One - Cut Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

Concerns have been raised about the consistency of action taken where footage is submitted to Op Snap, where motorists are passing dangerously close to cyclists. Some motorists have just received a talking to, others getting points on their licence. Other forces have taken a stronger enforcement, with drivers receiving fines, points and driver awareness courses. How is the PCC holding the Chief Constable to account for ensuring that action taken is proportionate and robust.

I can reassure members that Dorset Police do apply the law regarding Op Snap video submissions and that the Force does take action where there is clear evidence to support a traffic violation. All video footage submitted via Op Snap is reviewed by an Evidence Reviewer, an expert who reviews the video to determine whether any offences have been committed.

One key challenge with video footage submissions of this kind is often one of perspective. In other words, what looks close from one angle may look and be very different from another or if the video is zoomed in. The Evidence Reviewer does not have the luxury of multiple camera angles to determine whether an offence has been committed. The second challenge is one of measurement. With Op Snap video footage, it is frequently difficult to determine measurements: did that vehicle pass the cyclist in excess of 1.5m or was it only 1m?

If the Evidence Reviewer cannot say with certainty that something was too close or there is no way to ascertain a likely measurement between the passing vehicles, then a warning letter is sent. Receiving a warning letter from Dorset Police not only aims to make the driver think about the distance between them and other road users but also makes the driver aware that they have been reported for their driving behaviour. This of course has varying impact on different people.

In some Op Snap footage, it is very clear that a vehicle passed too close to a cyclist and this can clearly and unmistakably be seen from the footage. These offences are processed for prosecution. Again, no definitive measurements are available, but there is enough evidence within the footage to clearly show that it 1) was a close pass, 2) was dangerous driving behaviour 3) the cyclist was positioned correctly in the road and 4) the driver overtook the cyclist without due care to the cyclist.

I appreciate that cyclists submitting Op Snap footage – having not only captured it on video but having felt and seen the proximity – will find it disappointing, sometimes unfathomable, when cases are not prosecuted, but it is important to remember that the Evidence Reviewer wasn't there and only has the footage to go on.

Cycle Safety and work of Op Snap are a priority of the Dorset Road Safety Partnership. The Chair (ACC Steve Lyne) is aware of the recent concerns from Councillors regarding the processing and assessment of footage and as such, he invites them to meet the team to discuss their concerns and so that the team can better illustrate the differences between those examples that were prosecuted and those that were not. This will provide the opportunity to understand any gaps in the information provided and if required, enable Dorset Road Safe to review their communications and the website information for when people submit footage.

Can the OPCC say a little about the 'Town Team' campaign and how residents can be reassured about anti-social behaviour?

The Bournemouth Town Team was launched in August, strengthening the partnership working arrangement between Dorset Police and its partners in how the force prevent, detect, and

prosecute crime and ASB in Bournemouth town. The Team will ensure closer working arrangements between police officers, PCSOs, town rangers, CSAS officers, BID officers, parks team, seafront team and Local Authority ASB officers. On the police side, the team consists of 2 Sgts and 7 PCs, with one more to come in the new year.

I welcome the launch of this team; this type of joint working is exactly what is needed if we are to truly combat crime in Bournemouth. For example, Dorset Police and BCP council have been working closely together to undertake visible proactive patrols and enforce against unwanted behaviours and the police and the council parks team have also worked together to ensure foliage is cut back to make it more difficult for items, such as weapons and drugs, to be hidden.

Although the team will focus on ASB and so-called lower disorder, it is the presence of these sorts of problems that can lead to larger problems. It has been jointly agreed by Dorset Police and BCP Council that the top 3 priorities for the Town Team for the next 3 months are:

- Homelessness & Begging.
- Drugs & Drug Dealing
- Support to local businesses to tackle theft, violence towards staff & criminal exploitation

An update on the Team's performance was sent to Councillors in November, and is also available for the public to view on the [Bournemouth South NPT webpage](#). To date the Team has carried out 28 stop and searches, made 44 arrests, issued 51 dispersal notices (Section 35) and served 2 criminal behaviour orders, with a further 4 applications pending.

Furthermore, the targeting of top 3 prolific ASB nominals has resulted in them leaving the area, and Op Shopkeeper, which focuses on prolific shoplifters and premises involved in receiving stolen goods, has led to over 350 local stores and shops being visited.

Additionally, the BCP ASB and CSAS Team, has issued 16 community protection warning, and 7 community protection orders, closure orders and ASB injunctions.

I know that a climate that tolerates ASB is more likely to tolerate crime. Therefore, we must target crime and disorder at all levels and push for tough, effective enforcement measures to create a safer Dorset for all, which is what the Town Team is delivering.

Priority Three – Fight Violent Crime and High Harm

The OPCC, BCP and Dorset Council is to be congratulated on securing £964,055 to drive forward projects and initiatives which centre on the safety of women and girls within the night-time economy as well as tackling crime in Dorset's more rural areas.

Thank you. The Safer Streets funding was secured by my team following a series of multiagency meetings with key community safety partners, including Police, Local Authorities, Health, and Probation. These meetings were used to draw out the key issues and agree what initiatives would be most effective to achieve the required outcomes. The way the process worked, we had to bid for the initiatives we wished to be considered, and then funding was allocated for them.

There is a wide range of activities included in the fund, therefore; in the interests of brevity, I will keep to a few examples:

- A large portion of the bid (£357k) was for additional CCTV in Bournemouth - Horseshoe Common in particular - and key routes out of Weymouth town centre. This was highlighted

as a key issue in both Local Authority areas due to the high rate of VAWG offences in the town centres, and on key routes out of town following nights out.

- £298k will be spent on CCTV infrastructure in our market towns to link them into the main CCTV hub in Dorchester, allowing for proactive monitoring. The towns include; Blandford, Gillingham, Lyme Regis, Shaftesbury, Swanage, Sherborne, and Wimborne.
- In addition to this, £99k has been allocated for 'Alcohol and Consent Training', which will be delivered by STARS Dorset. This will provide guidance and education to 15 to 20-year-olds in college and university settings, regarding alcohol and consent, bystander training and respectful relationships. This will help young people better understand appropriate relationship behaviour and help call out poor behaviour.
- And finally, £65k will be spent on portable ID scanners for the use in the night-time economy, that will help identify fake ID's and assist with the identification of suspects when offences occur.

My office will act as the co-ordinator for the delivery of these funds and work with the respective partner agencies and providers to ensure the work is delivered. I hope that is sufficient, and I will of course be more widely communicating the use of this fund once the local activity is underway.

A Bournemouth Facebook Group reported on a Freedom of Information request that reported that rapes reported to Dorset Police during 2021 and 2022 surpassed those made in each of the three years previous. It noted that more than 100 rapes were reported in Bournemouth in the last two years. How does the PCC work with organisations that support women and girls that are victims of violence and how does the work with these organisations look to increase prosecutions and convictions?

How does the PCC use his commissioning powers to tackle education and prevention of sexual violence?

Firstly, I am grateful to be speaking with Members about this important issue just after the conclusion of the United Nations '16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence' campaign. The UN sets out that, for countries that can provide statistics, almost one in three women have been subjected to have been subjected to physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence, or both, at least once in their lives.

Alongside other PCCs and Chief Constables, Dorset Police increased its social media activity regarding VAWG from 25 November through to 10 December. Aligned to this a range of best practice material was shared within the Force covering a range of related subjects.

Of course, simply wearing a White Ribbon and talking in broad terms about the importance of protecting women and girls in Dorset from violence, is not enough, and so I firstly encourage you to read Superintendent Emma Sweetzer's excellent [quest blog](#) on my website – where she talks about the work she undertakes as the Force lead for VAWG.

This is managed through three pillars of work - Public Confidence and Trust, Relentless Pursuit of Perpetrators, and Safer Spaces. Each of these pillars has a lead officer and the Force has identified key areas of work to progress going forward. Some of the Force activity highlighted includes:

- Training to ensure officers are victim focused, and that the language used – particularly in evidence statements – is correct and does not victim-blame in any way.

- Cascading training on supporting victims of rape and serious sexual abuse to everyone involved, including control room staff and frontline officers, not just specialist staff.
- Improving the internal reporting mechanisms so police staff have the confidence to come forward and highlight concerns to the Professional Standards Department.
- Working with licensed premises on accreditation around vulnerability, improving the availability of safe spaces and providing support to victims.

Chair, before I get too carried away listing the good work being undertaken by Dorset Police, I am mindful of answering the Member's questions. And so, in terms of my own activity, my office and I work with key agencies that support victims of domestic abuse, sexual violence, and stalking. Some of these services support all victims – but given the majority of the users of these specialist support services are women, these are designed to help support them in the best way possible. Every service I commission works on the ethos that the support is victim led, based on their individual needs and availability.

To summarise what some of these services do, I'd firstly like to mention:

- The SARC, or Sexual Assault Referral Centre, which provides immediate crisis support to victims of rape and serious sexual assault. This is designed to be comfortable and multi-functional, providing private space for interviews and forensic examinations. Victims can have forensic evidence collected (if appropriate), and also have any immediate healthcare needs seen to, which can include emergency contraception, advice and onward referrals.
- Secondly, we have the ISVA, or Independent Sexual Violence Advisors, service, which provides medium to long term practical and emotional support and advice to victims of rape and sexual assault. This service will help victims through criminal justice proceedings if necessary, and working on a victim-led basis, ensuring that all services are delivered based upon the victim's needs.
- Thirdly, I also commission an ISAC, or Independent Stalking Advocate Caseworker, service. This works with victims of stalking offences, offering practical support to increase safety and reduce the associated risk of them falling victim to further offences.

With regards to education, I have mentioned the alcohol and consent training through the Safer Streets Fund, which will educate woman and girls about healthy relationships and harmful behaviours, as the most recent example.

And I have also recently launched a new VAWG improvement panel, which will be used to identify and capture feedback and a wide range of perspectives on victims' services and on engagement with the police in VAWG related incidents.

This information will drive improvements across practice and service delivery and, in turn, help police respond and ensure they deliver the most effective and compassionate service possible. It will also look to:

- Identify themes and best practice to strengthen the response to individuals who come in to contact with the Criminal Justice System as a victim/survivor.
- Promote collaboration to drive improvement in investigative standards to advance ways of delivering services to support victims and survivors.
- Share knowledge and expertise to influence and shape long lasting systems change for victims and survivors.

The panel is attended by key partner agencies, representatives from organisations who provide VAWG services, and independent members. As the panel is still in its infancy, we will continue to ensure it is developed further to improve the impact, outcomes, and learning.

Going forward, I am committed to continue to make a difference, recognising that it is only by working together, can we make progress towards the changes that are needed to ensure women and girls are free from fear from violence in Dorset.

Priority Five – Put Victims and Communities First

How does the PCC hold the Chief Constable accountable for monitoring and responding to any increases in hate crimes on the grounds of race or ethnicity (particularly at this time of increased community tension arising from global issues)?

Although the number of police recorded hate crimes has more than tripled in the last decade (41,294 offences in year ending March 2013, to 145,214 offences in the year ending March 2023), policing still considers increases to have been driven by improvements in crime recording by the police, better identification of what constitutes a hate crime, and better confidence in victims to make a report to the police.

Therefore, policing remains in a position of actively trying to increase the reporting of hate crime. This position is confirmed by the Home Office, with the latest statistical bulletin stating: *“Figures from the police should also not be seen as a measure of prevalence of hate crime.”*

That said, the oversight of hate crime within policing remains robust.

Aside from the Performance Board, which Members are familiar with and know is attended by my Chief Executive and receives monthly overviews of hate crime volume and outcomes, my Director of Operations attends the Force Standards and Ethics Board. This board provides oversight of misconduct, complaints, grievances, and HR information to ensure the Force acts with integrity and operates free from bias. Through this board we are able to challenge the Force on their approaches to cases relating to hate crimes.

My Chief Executive and Director of Operations also both attend the Legitimacy Board, which, as a Tier 1 board, has oversight of all Force processes and activity, and pays particular attention to issues of equality, diversity, and inclusion to support delivery of the Force’s public sector equality duty.

My office is also a member of Prejudice Free Dorset (PFD), which is a collective of organisations working together to tackle prejudice and hate crime in Dorset. This includes Dorset Race Equality Council, Kusti Bok, People First Forum, LGBT Voices Forum, and more. From a statutory perspective, partners include Police, Local Authorities, Health, and CPS. Amongst other objectives, this board works to inform and educate members of the public, businesses, and organisations of prejudice, encourage reporting of hate crimes and increase confidence to report – and encourages all partner organisations to sign up to the ‘Hate Crime Charter’ to ensure that prejudice and hate crime will never be tolerated and victims of hate incidents and crimes will be supported.

The Q2 report shows that hate crime has reduced by 12.6% for the year to date compared to the previous year. Given the wider global issues mentioned in the question, it might be reasonably suggested that we would likely see an increase in hate crime reporting.

Whilst this is unusual, it does mirror national trends in a reduction in hate crime reporting.

Currently, this trend is not widely understood, but some national agencies – for example Stop Hate and Restorative Justice – have highlighted that changes in hate crime recording and national policy might have led to a reduction in victim confidence.

FY 23/24 Q1 finance questions:

The net budget actual to date, at the half year point, is circa £80M. This would indicate that the budget is on schedule to meet the actual requirement of £163M - without requiring the transfer of funds from the reserve. Can the OPCC please comment on this assumption and summarise what the identified risks are?

Whilst the net expenditure at the half year point is just under half of the total budget for the year, not everything occurs equally throughout the year.

Some of our grants are received in full near the start of the year and some of our costs are higher in the second half of the year. The most notable of these costs is the impact of the pay award, which in policing is awarded from the 1st of September rather than 1 April.

However, the Force are working hard to counteract this, and we are already seeing an improving position in October and November. As this work continues, we do expect the Force to come in on budget by the year end, without the need to use reserves.

Can the OPCC please outline why the overtime budget is not under the same pressure as previous years, and what lessons for future years have been identified in meeting this downturn?

This is a positive news story from previous years where – as the question alludes to – OPCC has identified some concerns with the police use of overtime. Therefore, there has been a significant focus on overtime during 2022/23, which has continued into the current year.

This has included Commanders applying a much greater degree of scrutiny as well as delegating budgets to the most appropriate point and holding others to account for spend, clamping down on re-rostered rest days (so avoiding calling officers in unless absolutely necessary), and working with the Duties team to maximise plain time and keep overtime requirements to a minimum. It has also included the introduction of 'positive authorisation' for all overtime claims – needing to be signed off by a supervisor before payment.

This year Commanders have been called to account at the Resource Control Board, in instances of forecast overspends. Best practice has been shared between budget holders, and a series of financial training events took place during 2022/23. All of this has helped to improve the management of overtime and will, it is expected, continue into the future.

Use of Precept:

Para 2.2 - The additional uplift of 27 officers on top of those already allocated is welcomed. It is noted that these 27 positions were funded by “one off grants”. How does the PCC intend to offset the risk that if additional funding is not provided in FY 24/25 “this will create a budget pressure going forwards”?

The provisional police settlement has been published just ten minutes ago, so we are still working through the detail. The indications from the Home Office are that the funding to maintain the number of police officers through 2024/25, will be confirmed.

Irrespective of those arrangements, however, panel members will be well aware of the considerable and ongoing pressures on public sector budgets, with almost one in five council leaders and chief executives in England recently surveyed by the Local Government Association thinking that it is very or fairly likely that their chief finance officer will need to issue a Section 114 notice in the next year due to a lack of funding.

At the same time, the Chief Constable of Police Scotland has in the last fortnight asked for an additional £128m to prevent officer numbers dropping by ‘almost 1500’, which would precipitate the need to move to a ‘reduced attendance model’.

Whilst police funding in Scotland is a matter for the Scottish government, and without cutting across the English precepting process which will happen in February, it is very clear that Dorset Police is experiencing a funding crisis that will require difficult decisions to be made, and that the results may be – that whilst police officer numbers are protected, police staff numbers may be quite drastically reduced in order to ensure a balanced budget and MTFs.

Clearly, Chair, this is still a fluid position, and my team and I will be working very closely with the Chief Constable and her team over the next few weeks, ahead of my CFO providing a more detailed update to Members at the informal financial briefing in January.

Para 3.13 - What assurance has the PCC sought to ensure that the reconfiguration of Dorset Police will not affect public safety? During this reconfiguration process, what pressure has the PCC placed on the Chief Constable to provide a costed manpower establishment?

Whilst this is a valid concern, this reconfiguration is being undertaken precisely to improve public safety, given the concerns raised in the Safelives report. The OPCC is leading this work and will be further liaising with Safelives to understand the national benchmarking they have undertaken to ensure that a fully costed establishment model is produced.

Para 3.20 – The additional Detective numbers is to be congratulated. What timeline has the PCC placed on the Chief Constable to see improvements in detection rates?

Thank you, this is testament to the hard work of the Dorset Police recruitment and selection team, and I will be pleased to pass the panel’s congratulations onto the Chief Constable.

Performance goals for the 2023/24 performance year have already been set by the Deputy Chief Constable, as the force’s Chief Operating Officer and performance lead. These are a matter for the force, but I can share that both an overall target for positive outcome rates, and

individual targets for priority crimes have been set. I confirm these are ambitious, and are monitored monthly at the Performance Board, which is attended by my Chief Executive.