

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL – 9 October 2024

POLICE AND CRIME PLAN UPDATE

REPORT BY THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To present members with an update on the Police and Crime Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan, as well as to provide a formal response to the Panel's feedback and recommendations regarding said Plan.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) issued the 2021-29 Police and Crime Plan in October 2021, a few months after first becoming elected to the role. At the time of the Plan's publication, the PCC made it clear that it was his intention for this Plan to span two terms of office. This was due to the extent of the ambition contained within the document, alongside the fact that his first term was truncated because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.2 In accordance with the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (PRSRA) a Police and Crime Plan for Dorset must be published by 31 March 2025. The legislation also permits for an already published Plan to be revised or reissued at any time. As the PCC was re-elected to a second term in office earlier this year – and is consequently able to continue delivering the 2021-29 Plan – he opted to review and refresh the document ahead of re-publication.
- 1.3 The PCC was entirely clear that the vision and priorities of the Plan would not alter, but he was, of course, keen to assess the Plan to ensure that it reflected any necessary changes since its original publication.
- 1.4 Legislation sets out a range of areas that must be contained within the Police and Crime Plan – this includes, but is not limited to, the PCC's police and crime objectives; the policing that the Chief Constable is to provide; and the means by which the Chief Constable's performance in providing policing will be measured.
- 1.5 Despite the legal name of the document, the Plan, as can be seen by the mandated content listed above, is better considered as an outline of a PCC's strategic intent. In that sense, it has similarities to the Corporate Plans that are required of local authorities.
- 1.6 In developing the Police and Crime Plan, the PCC is required to consider the views of the local community and victims of crime, as well as have regard to the Strategic Policing Requirement. He is required to prepare a draft of the Plan and consult the Chief Constable in preparing this draft. The draft must be sent to the Police and Crime Panel, with the PCC having regard to reports or recommendations made by the Panel. He must provide the Panel with a response about any such report, or recommendations and this response must be published.

2. ANALYSIS AND PROGRESS

2.1 The PCC's vision is that Dorset should be the safest county in England and Wales. This vision was formulated and developed prior to taking up the role in 2021 and was informed through not only 18 months of 'seeing practice' with Dorset Police but also by speaking with hundreds of people and as a result of extensive personal research. Since taking up the role, the PCC has continued to receive thousands of items of correspondence from members of the public and has received regular and detailed briefings from the Force, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and partner agencies.

2.2 As stated, the PCC has made it clear throughout his tenure that the Plan was intended to span two terms of office. This has meant that no changes to the over-arching vision – to make Dorset the safest county – nor the six priorities have been made.

2.3 As members will be aware, these priorities, which were included in his election manifesto in both 2021 and 2024, are:

- **Cut Crime and ASB:** The police will robustly prevent and detect crime and tackle the constant grind of ASB – so people across Dorset see a clear difference and feel safer.
- **Make Policing More Visible and Connected:** To increase the visibility of police officers in our neighbourhood teams. Contact and connectivity between police and the public will be improved.
- **Fight Violent Crime and High Harm:** To tackle organised gangs, be tough on drugs and tackle high harm incidents such as child abuse, domestic abuse, hate crime and modern slavery.
- **Fight Rural Crime:** To maintain the size of the rural crime team and to have specific strategies for crimes and issues affecting the rural community.
- **Put Victims and Communities First:** Support all victims – particularly those most vulnerable – and build community strength by working together and addressing needs.
- **Make Every Penny Count:** By resourcing and transforming the frontline, so patrol and response teams can spend more time in communities and making residents feel safer.

2.4 Though the priorities have not changed, upon close examination the PCC determined that it would be prudent to make a small number of changes to the headline themes that underpin these priorities. This includes the headings of 'Violence Against Women and Girls' and 'Rape and Serious Sexual Offences' being split into discrete sections and, also to fold 'Pet Theft' and 'Burglary' into a single heading of 'Burglary and Acquisitive Crime'. 'Support for Young People' and 'Business and Retail Crime' have been retained, but now sit under different priority areas. Finally, 'Heritage Crime' has been added under the Fight Rural Crime priority.

2.5 Within these themes, the PCC has opted to make changes to the commitments that are contained within the Plan. As previously discussed with the Panel, these changes fell into one of three categories:

- for commitments that pledged to 'introduce' initiatives, these have been amended if this has now occurred – instead pledging to 'maintain' or 'enhance' such initiatives;

- For commitments that contained references to obsolete terminology or nomenclature, these too have been amended to reflect the current position; and
- Commitments which have been amended because of new ideas or initiatives that occurred since the original publication of the Plan.

2.6 The third category of change was outlined in more detail at the last meeting of the Police and Crime Panel. Of course, members have also now seen the full document, too. By way of quick summary, however, the most significant changes are in relation to Violence Against Women and Girls, and Rape and Serious Sexual Offences – both themes that have been expanded upon to better reflect the extensive work being undertaken locally, regionally, and nationally. There are also notable additional commitments relating to Violence Reduction under the heading of Vulnerability.

2.7 Draft versions of the refreshed Police and Crime Plan has been discussed with the Chief Constable and Chief Officers and shared with a wide range of key stakeholders for comment, including members of the county’s two Community Safety Partnerships and OPCC scrutiny panel members. Feedback from partners has proved valuable and has not only aided the development of the Plan, but also demonstrated ongoing synergy between the PCC’s ambitions and those of partner agencies. The same can be said for the local priorities identified by the PCC and national priorities, for instance the threats listed within the Strategic Policing Requirement.

2.8 Throughout the process of refreshing the Police and Crime Plan, the PCC and his office has strived to demonstrate that the delivery of important work, and beneficial change for the people of Dorset, has continued throughout. Regular updates about OPCC and Force activity have been provided to the public as has become the norm during the PCC’s time in office.

3. POLICE AND CRIME PANEL FEEDBACK ON THE POLICE AND CRIME PLAN

3.1. As requested, the Police and Crime Panel sent through their comments on the draft Police and Crime Plan on 14 August 2024. The PCC is grateful for the careful consideration of the Plan by the Panel – the thoughtful and forensic response is very welcome, and several amendments have been made to the document as a direct result of this feedback.

3.2. The PCC is especially pleased to note that the Panel Chair has commended the revisions to the Plan, in particular, the increased focus on drug related criminality, violent crime and high harm, and violence against women and girls. More specifically, the PCC has the following comments, laid out in the same order as raised in the Panel’s written response:

- **Execution or ‘Effect’ of the Plan:**

The Panel has requested further benchmarking information so that it is clear what success looks like. As outlined at Section 1.5, the Plan is an outline of a PCC’s strategic intent. The Plan meets the requirements of the legislation and contains a similar level of detail as Police and Crime Plans in other areas. The Police and Crime Plan is already supported by a detailed internal delivery plan, internal governance and monitoring processes. Progress against the Plan, and further insight into the Plan’s deliverables will be provided by the quarterly reports to the Police and Crime Panel, as has been customary since 2021.

- **Violence Reduction Funding**

The Panel has outlined its support for the PCC’s pledge to work to secure the funding necessary to implement a pan-Dorset approach to reducing violence. The PCC has opted not to specify the exact way in which this could be achieved within the Plan – there are numerous mechanisms, some existing and, no doubt, some that could be

newly created by central government. The point is clear, however, which is that Dorset requires additional funding and the PCC will lobby central government to this effect as set out under the Make Every Penny Count priority. The PCC is pleased to note that his Office and the Panel appear to be aligned on this issue.

- **Road Safety**

The Panel has suggested that the Police and Crime Plan might draw out distinct groups of road users – for instance, cyclists. To keep the Plan at a strategic level, the PCC has instead opted to make it clearer that the road safety commitments relate to the protection of *all* road users and so this has been amended accordingly in the final version of the Police and Crime Plan.

- **Supporting Young People**

The Panel raised the important work undertaken by the Combined Dorset Youth Justice Service (YJS), which was not included within the PCC's commitments. The OPCC provides funding to the YJS and works collaboratively with the YJS team. Therefore, the PCC agrees that this should be highlighted within the Plan and the relevant text has been amended to include this important work.

- **Neighbourhood Engagement**

The frequency with which Force neighbourhood teams meet with elected council members is an operational matter for the Chief Constable and, consequently, the PCC has not opted to include the timings of meetings within the Police and Crime Plan, as was suggested by the Panel.

However, the PCC has included pledges to not only build upon the Neighbourhood Engagement Commitment work, but also to improve the communication with elected representatives across Dorset. To that end, the PCC and Chief Officers have undertaken a review of the Force's critical incident briefing protocols to ensure they are fit for purpose and, also, the PCC has raised the frequency of NPT meetings with councillors directly with the Chief Constable – making clear his, and councillors', expectations.

- **Veteran Commitment:**

The Panel suggested that the Veterans in Custody Support Officers (ViCSO) role – which is currently only in operation in prisons – might be expanded to police custody and that a pledge along these lines should be included within the Plan. This has been explored by the OPCC – alongside several other schemes aimed at supporting veterans. To reflect this activity, the PCC has agreed to amend a commitment within his Plan to make clear his desire to assist veterans in Dorset.

- **Cost/Risk:**

The Panel has sought greater clarity and assurance in relation to the costs of the Plan and any risks associated with the Plan's implementation. The PCC believes that, based on current Force and OPCC assumptions, the Plan is affordable and achievable. As part of the budget setting and precept decision making processes, this will be articulated in further detail and, as the Panel has requested, the PCC will ensure that the question of affordability is addressed each year so that this can be seen and understood by the public. The Panel will of course be updated and involved in these processes.

All OPCC and Force risks are managed using established tools, systems and governance arrangements and confirmation of this has been added to the Plan, as

suggested. Throughout the delivery of the Plan, action will be taken to mitigate identified risks, and the Panel will be updated on risks and issues, as relevant, on a quarterly basis.

- **Additional Detail:**

The Panel has provided around half a dozen suggestions aimed at improving the overall quality and readability of the written document. These have been incorporated into the document and the PCC is grateful for the time that Members will have spent in considering the draft Plan in such detail.

3.3. The PCC has circulated the final version of the refreshed Police and Crime Plan to the Panel (Appendix A) and this document has now been published.

4. NEXT STEPS

4.1. The publication of the refreshed Police and Crime Plan will be accompanied by internal and external communications activity. As part of this communications work, the OPCC has been highlighting the achievements already secured by the PCC throughout his time in office – helping to demonstrate that the Commissioner has already been delivering against his Plan and will continue to do so.

4.2. The OPCC will continue to provide quarterly performance reports to the Panel so that progress against the Police and Crime Plan can be monitored and scrutinised.

5. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

5.1. The PCC has now published his refreshed Police and Crime Plan 2021-29. This is several months ahead of the statutory deadline.

5.2. The PCC has consulted and engaged with the public, Dorset Police, partner agencies and the Police and Crime Panel throughout the refresh process, having also consulted extensively on the original iteration throughout 2021 and via regular ongoing engagement since. He is grateful for the detailed views and recommendations that he has received and has carefully considered all feedback submitted, which has helped him to advance and refine his Plan.

5.3. The PCC looks forward to discussing his refreshed Plan with Dorset's communities and working tirelessly to achieve the vision that it sets out – to make Dorset the safest county.

5.4. Members are asked to note the report.

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