

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 2 JULY 2026

Present: Cllrs Alasdair Keddie (Chair), Louise Bown (Vice-Chair), Cameron Adams, Patrick Canavan, David Flagg, Simon Gibson, Peter Sidaway and Carl Woode

Apologies: Cllrs Louie O'Leary and Sarah Williams

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

Simon Bullock (Chief Executive, OPCC), Marc Eyre (Service Manager for Assurance), Adam Harrold (OPCC Director of Operations), Jonathan Mair (Director - Assurance (Monitoring Officer)), Megan Rochester (Senior Democratic & Governance Services Officer), David Sidwick (Police and Crime Commissioner), Julie Strange (OPCC Chief Finance Officer), Louis Wicks (Democratic Services Officer Apprentice) and Heather Williamson (HR Business Partner).

1. **Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Friday 6th February 2026 were confirmed as a correct record and signed.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting

3. **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

4. **Confirmation Hearing - Chief Constable Appointment (00:11:31 on the recording)**

Cllr Keddie welcomed Deputy Chief Constable Farrell (DCC Farrell), the preferred candidate for the position of Chief Constable and outlined the process of the confirmation hearing.

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) introduced DCC Farrell and advised that the Chief Constable role was integral to the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan and the priorities identified by the public. The PCC paid tribute to the previous Chief Constable, thanking her for her dedicated service and significant contribution to Dorset Police. Members were informed that a full recruitment process had been undertaken to identify a candidate capable of supporting the force in reducing crime and delivering the objectives of the Police and Crime Plan. The PCC noted that a recruitment video had been produced as part of the process and that

attracting candidates to Chief Constable roles remained an ongoing challenge. The PCC then outlined the recruitment process that had been followed in making the appointment.

DCC Farrell was invited to introduce herself to the Panel. She provided members with an overview of her background and outlined her reasons for seeking appointment as Chief Constable of Dorset Police (00:34:08 on recording). DCC Farrell stated that she cared deeply about public service and was proud of Dorset Police, highlighting the talent and dedication of its officers and staff in achieving strong outcomes for communities. She described Dorset Police as a “small but mighty” force and advised that, if appointed, her role would be to support and empower officers and staff to protect the communities they served. She also emphasised the importance of investing in people, strengthening trust and confidence within communities, maintaining a visible and connected presence across Dorset, and ensuring that Dorset Police continued to strive for improvement in its pursuit of keeping Dorset safe.

Panel Members were then given the opportunity to put forward questions to the PCC and DCC Farrell (00:38:09 on recording).

Cllr Keddie felt the process had been conducted well but would have welcomed more candidates. He noted wider national issues relating to the selection of Chief Constables, which were beyond the Panel’s remit but felt that it should be noted.

The Chief Executive (OPCC) confirmed that the candidate met the criteria for the post as set out in the role profile.

DCC Farrell responded to questions (01:02:56 on recording) and welcomed scrutiny, recognising the importance of accountability and confirming that she would work constructively with the Panel. She stated that governance arrangements enabled the force to monitor delivery effectively and provided clear expectations, adding that she welcomed discussions on where improvements were needed. DCC Farrell highlighted neighbourhood policing as a key strength and noted that neighbourhood engagement was subject to robust oversight arrangements.

Cllr Keddie thanked DCC Farrell for attending the meeting and for her detailed responses to Members’ questions. Thanks, were also extended to officers for their work in supporting the recruitment process.

5. **Exempt Part of Confirmation Hearing - Chief Constable Appointment**

Proposed by, Cllr David Flagg, seconded by Cllr Peter Sideaway

Decision: That the press and the public be excluded for the following item(s) in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 3 of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

The Panel members retired to make their decision.

Proposed by: Cllr Alasdair Keddie, seconded by Cllr Simon Gibson

Decision: That the appointment of Ms Rachell Farrell to the role of Chief Constable was approved.

6. **Election for Chair/Vice-Chair (02:16:09 on the recording)**

It was Proposed by Cllr David Flagg and seconded by Cllr Peter Sideaway that Cllr Alasdair Keddie be elected as Chair of the Police and Crime Panel.

It was proposed by Cllr Alasdair Keddie and seconded by Cllr Carl Woode that Cllr Louise Bown be appointed Vice-Chair of the Police and Crime Panel.

Decision: that Cllr Alasdair Keddie and Cllr Louise Bown was appointed as chair and Vice Chair of the Police and Crime Panel.

7. **Q4 Monitoring Report 2025/26 (02:20:20 on the recording)**

The Police and Crime Commissioner reported that total crime had fallen, with burglary and acquisitive crime significantly reduced. He noted that, despite the closure of the Hotspot Action Fund, Dorset Police remained accountable for delivery. Reference was also made to national data on vehicle crime.

The Panel heard that regular road safety enforcement campaigns had taken place, including a joint operation with the DVLA earlier in the year. The PCC also highlighted a recent blog on protecting Dorset businesses and ongoing work to improve outcomes in tackling shoplifting.

A review of mobile police stations had been completed, identifying areas for further consideration, with a further review requested following the busy summer period. Progress was also reported on the implementation of the High-Risk Victim Service, with future updates to be provided to the Panel.

The PCC outlined work to address substance misuse, including campaigns aimed at young people to raise awareness of the risks associated with ketamine, alongside continued lobbying for a change in its classification. Through Operation Scorpion, 92 arrests had been made and illegal drugs and weapons removed from the streets.

Members were also informed about support for domestic abuse victims through the provision of emergency “grab bags”, increased enforcement activity relating to waste crime and fly-tipping, and locally funded educational initiatives in schools to help prevent crime among young people. Reference was made to work supporting restrictions on smartphone use in schools, with 14 schools in Dorset having introduced a ban.

The PCC concluded by reiterating efforts to secure fairer funding for Dorset.

Questions from the Priority leads and Panel Members for Priority one – Cut Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (02:35:23 on the recording).

- Anticipated effect of hotspot action fund closure, future plans to sustain the positive effects that's had?
- How does Dorset track against the national data in relation to vehicle crime and theft offences?
- How does the prevention of escalating neighbourhood disputes feature within your Police and Crime Plan, and what strategic measures are you driving to address risks such as intimidation and criminal damage?
- Can the commissioner provide an overview of what level of funding is attributed to the community initiative Operation Relentless; how much has been spent and on what?
- With regards to scooters and bikes, the Force were considering trialling a scheme run in Manchester. Is there any progress to report? Also, how successful were the days of action at Kinson, and are the schemes going to be rolled out more widely?

Follow on panel questions and responses from PCC (02:56:50 on recording) and at appendix 1.

In accordance with Procedural Rule 8.1 the committee voted to extend the duration of the meeting.

Questions from the Priority leads and Panel Members for Priority two – Make Policing More Visible and Connected (03:14:44 on the recording).

- What action is the PCC taking to ensure that policing has a digital evidence management system that is fit for purpose based on current technology

Follow on panel questions and responses from PCC (03:16:45 on recording) and at appendix 1.

Questions from the Priority leads and Panel Members for Priority three – Fight Violent Crime and High Harm (03:06:43 on the recording).

- There have been a recent number of sexual assault incidents in Bournemouth, on the seafront and associated areas. What data does the Police have on these incidents? Do the stats follow a seasonal pattern with previous years or is there a spike in figures for this year? To what extent is resourcing on proactive visible policing subject to a strategic assessment based on seasonal trend information? Can the PCC expand on the role of the dedicated VAWG officer with his team on horizon scanning and proactive work on sexual assault prevention?

Follow on panel questions and responses from PCC (03:08:25 on recording) and at appendix 1.

Questions from the Priority leads and Panel Members for Priority four – Cut Fight Rural Crime (03:24:34) on the recording

- The performance report refers to educating dog owners in relation to disturbance of animal stock. Can the PCC provide us with further data on number of reports and response?

Follow on panel questions and responses from PCC (03:25:08 on recording) and at appendix 1.

Questions from the Priority leads and Panel Members for Priority five – Put Victim and Communities First (03:32:07 on the recording).

- The effects of seasonality are happening in real time, with neighbourhood policing seemingly abstracted. How is this being quantified so that impacts on neighbourhood policing can be assessed? The intention from central government was that extra funding in neighbourhood policing should provide a dedicated resource. However, in practice is this resource being abstracted to meet seasonal demands?
- Could details be given of data collected in relation to Op Ford? How many incidents have been logged in the last 12 months and is any action taken in relation to these cases other than recording the individual details?

Follow on panel questions and responses from PCC (03:34:32 on recording) and at appendix 1.

Questions from the Priority leads and Panel Members for Priority six – Make Every Penny Count (03:50:57 on the recording).

- Can the PCC provide an update on those grant funding issues that were unclear at the time of the precept meeting?
- The absence rates for officers was noted. Can the PCC provide detail of the impacts across the force and the extent that the impacts are on particular age profiles/ demographics/ roles? How closely are the drivers for absence being assessed and what prevention measures are taken to the key issues identified? As a point of clarity, do these absence rates include PCSOs?
- Could the OPCC consider providing clearer breakdown of this headline figure on a regular basis

Follow on panel questions and responses from PCC (03:52:01 on recording) and at appendix 1.

8. Police and Crime Commissioner's Annual Report (00:17:48 on the recording)

The Police and Crime Commissioner updated the Panel and reported that progress had been good. Members were informed that Dorset was now ranked as the fourth safest area, having previously been ranked tenth. It was also noted that levels of antisocial behaviour were at their lowest since 2008. The Commissioner commended the report and confirmed that performance would continue to be reviewed on a quarterly basis.

Cllr Keddie stated that he had read the report and commended the effort and level of detail contained within it. He noted the positive figures relating to antisocial behaviour and referenced the lived experiences of residents within communities. He emphasised the importance of continuing to highlight such issues and maintain appropriate scrutiny. Cllr Keddie thanked Dorset Police for their continued efforts.

9. **Complaints Update (04:10:47 on the recording)**

The Panel received an update on complaints since the last meeting. One complaint had been investigated by the Monitoring Officer and was not upheld, while a further complaint had recently been received and would be investigated.

The Complaints Sub-Committee had met following the Panel meeting on 6 February 2025 and concluded that a complaint had been managed in accordance with the Complaints Protocol, except in relation to timeliness. It also agreed that an explanatory letter should be issued to clarify the escalation process for an unresolved element of the complaint.

The Panel considered proposed amendments to the Complaints Protocol, aligned with Dorset Council's complaints policy, to improve the management of AI-generated complaints, including requiring submission via the existing e-form and allowing lengthy submissions to be summarised.

It was Proposed by Cllr Alasdair Keddie, and seconded by Cllr Cameron Adams, that the adoption of the proposed revisions be agreed.

Decision: The proposed revisions to the Complaints Protocol were agreed.

10. **Forward Workplan (04:14:32 on the recording)**

The forward workplan was noted and members agreed the focus for the next meeting.

11. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

12. **Exempt Business**

There was no additional exempt business.

Appendix 1

Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 2.10 pm

Chairman

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