

GLOUCESTERSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel held on Tuesday 23 March 2021 at the Virtual Meeting - Web ex meeting.

PRESENT:

William Alexander	Cllr Karen McKeown
Cllr Ray Brassington	David Norman MBE
Cllr Chris Brine	Loraine Patrick
Cllr Jonny Brownsteen	Steve Robinson (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Collette Finnegan	Martin Smith
Cllr David Gray	Brian Tipper
Colin Hay (Chairman)	

Officers in attendance: Martin Surl – Police and Crime Commissioner
Ruth Greenwood - Head of Policy, Performance and Strategy, and
Deputy Chief Executive OPCC
OPCC
Richard Bradley – Chief Executive OPCC
ACC Rhiannon Kirk
ACC Craig Holden

Apologies: Cllr Philip Burford

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting on Monday 8 February 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER - UPDATE

- 3.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) informed the Panel that he unreservedly condemned the violence in Bristol during the 'Kill the Bill' demonstrations. It would be important to look deeper to understand the reasons for how this came about. He confirmed that officers from Gloucestershire Constabulary had been sent to Bristol to support Avon and Somerset Police for mutual aid. The PCC was clear that there needed to be meaningful change with regard to violence against women, and racism.
- 3.2 Members questioned whether it was possible to prevent 'rent a mobs' from hijacking (peaceful) protests. The PCC informed the Panel that the Police were good at identifying and receiving intelligence; he discussed these matters with the Chief Constable. It was very complicated; current lockdown rules meant that it was illegal to protest.
- 3.3 With regard to young people gathering in town centres at weekends and whether the Police used social media to monitor this activity the Panel was informed that the Police do have ways to monitor this activity, and would do so within the law. People have a right to privacy. The PCC and the Chief Constable wanted to Police by consent.
- 3.4 The PCC informed the Panel that the OPCC was working on 3 bids to the Safer Streets funding programme; two in Gloucester and one in Cheltenham. In response to questions the PCC explained that these locations had been identified through an analysis of the data. The fund also had specific criteria which had also limited the locations identified. The

Community Safety Partnerships in all districts had been kept informed as the bids were developed. It was important to note that the fund allowed only 3 bids per PCC area. It was therefore important that the bids were targeted where they would be most effective.

- 3.5 It was stated that whilst Safer Streets was welcome a broader approach was required if the nation was to address the inherent misogyny in society, and violence against women. This would require better education on these matters and starting the conversations. Women did not feel safe whether it was a high crime area or not. It was commented that some constabularies had decided to see misogyny as a hate crime. The PCC agreed and informed the Panel that the Constabulary actually took the decision several years ago to include misogyny as a hate crime. The Panel was informed that Safer Gloucestershire had commissioned a piece of work looking at violence against women and girls.
- 3.6 In response to a question the PCC stated that there was no comparable data to support statement that Gloucestershire Police received more complaints than any other force. The complaints process was clear and the Police would look at the learning from complaints. It was agreed that this was an issue that the Panel might wish to look at in-depth in the new council.

4. REVISED OPERATING MODEL UPDATE

- 4.1 ACC Rhiannon Kirk gave a detailed presentation of the revised operating model that had come into operation in September 2020. (For information the presentation slides were uploaded to the council's website and included in the minute book.)
- 4.2 She stated that policing begins and ends in a neighbourhood. If the Police want to build intelligence and garner trust then people need proper policing in their neighbourhood. Problems were solved by working together with communities, getting to the root cause of issues, diverting young people away from criminality. Working with local communities would deliver local ownership of issues and better ways to respond to/manage them.
- 4.3 The Panel was informed that one of the factors identified through the Black Lives Matters protests was that the Police needed to strengthen how they worked with ethnic minority groups. In response a Panel has been established to ensure that these groups were listened to; this was built on the bedrock of neighbourhood policing.
- 4.4 This approach allowed the Police to not only be embedded within the locality but also better enable them to embed the safeguarding agenda, and take an ACEs trauma informed approach. Importantly this approach meant that there was more accountable leadership. ACC Kirk informed the Panel that the benefits of this approach were already being seen.
- 4.5 Members welcomed this approach. The PCC informed the Panel that this had been a manifesto commitment in 2016; it had been a long journey.
- 4.6 In response to a question it was explained that specialist services were still held centrally as it was important to maintain the required level of expertise. This support was available to the neighbourhood policing areas.
- 4.7 ACC Kirk informed the Panel that nationally the public had lost a degree of trust and confidence in the Police when neighbourhood policing had had to be withdrawn due to austerity. A lot of other Forces were now moving in the same direction as Gloucestershire.

5. POLICING IN THE 'NEW NORMAL' POST LOCKDOWN

- 5.1 ACC Craig Holden informed the Panel that he had been responsible for leading on the Constabulary's response to Covid-19 since the start of the pandemic. He was Chair of the Strategic Coordinating Group, and was Gold Commander on most protests that have taken place throughout this period.
- 5.2 Initially, following the first lockdown, there had been a 28% reduction in crime across the board. This figure has increased but there is still a substantial reduction in overall crime. As we emerged from lockdown it was anticipated that there would be an increase in the level of domestic abuse and safeguarding crimes being reported. Burglary in the home had reduced in the first few months of lockdown by about 60/70%. Anti social behaviour (ASB) had seemed to reduce, but Covid-19 breaches were categorised as ASB which had impacted on the numbers reported; Police systems were not sophisticated enough to enable these incidents to be logged as Covid-19 related. Fraud, cyber crime and courier fraud have gone up throughout the last twelve months; they were the only crime types where the Police have seen an increase. It had been important to learn how the pandemic had affected crime trends, and how to respond.
- 5.3 Since January 2021 Operation Surge had been in place which tried to take spare capacity in the system and direct into the areas where it was identified that there were increases, or where other departments in the Constabulary have needed support. This had included domestic abuse and child abuse teams, and into areas of the criminal justice system impacted by the pandemic. In April Operation Surge would be focusing on roads policing as it was expected that more people would be back on the roads in response to the gradual lifting of the lockdown. In May it would move into issues related to vulnerability as this was when it was expected that there would be an increase in child abuse referrals; this analysis is based on evidence from the lifting of the first lockdown where referrals did not start to come through until about two months later.
- 5.4 The Government has made available about £442,000 of funding for Gloucestershire, and the PCC has made all of this available to the operational side of the business to support the emergence from lockdown. Additional resources will be invested in child abuse investigation teams, criminal justice teams, and the Force contact centre. A plan is in place around the night time economy; good weather combined with bank holidays as the country emerges from lockdown, and with pubs opening, will present challenges. The CID teams have also been bolstered in order to better support investigations into a potential increase in serious sexual assault women and girls.
- 5.5 The Panel was informed that the G7 summit would be taking place in Cornwall between Friday 11 and Sunday 13 June 2021; Gloucestershire Constabulary would be involved in supporting this event. Euro2021 was taking place from 11 June 2021 to 11 July 2021, it was anticipated that this would bring its own challenges. Also, with the potential for more protests relating to violence against women and girls and against the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, it was clear that this would be a busy summer for the Constabulary.
- 5.6 A significant issue was how to balance all these demands with the health and wellbeing of staff. Police officers had not been able to take leave in the normal way over the last 12 months; it was important to be aware of the impact that might have on the wellbeing of officers. Measures have been put in place to manage this situation, including flexibility over how much leave could be carried forward into the next year, and into 2023 if necessary. It is important that people were able to rest and recuperate properly.

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

- 5.7 Gloucestershire Constabulary also liaise with colleagues in the South West, drawing on and sharing the wider Covid-19 experience across all Forces, to ensure that the Constabulary emerges from the lockdown in as strong a position as possible.
- 5.8 Members were concerned as to the delays in the criminal justice system; whether people felt that they were more likely to get away with crime because of the delay or indeed commit more crime. The meeting was informed that the data did not indicate that this was impacting on crime levels at present.
- 5.9 The impact on victims of crime from the delays in the criminal justice system was significant, particularly for those people who have experienced domestic abuse.
- 5.10 In response to questions the PCC was clear that the key was preparedness. As the country emerges from lockdown things get harder for the Police; there was the very real potential for this to be a very difficult summer for the Police.
- 5.11 In response to a question members were informed that following the end of the first lockdown there had been a slight increase in burglary. It was anticipated that this might be the same this year as people go on holiday. Crimes were still being committed by organised crime groups (OCGs) and Police activity was targeted accordingly.

(At this juncture the meeting paused for a minute silence as part of the national day of reflection.)

6. OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER - CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

- 6.1 Richard Bradley, Chief Executive Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, gave a detailed presentation of his report.
- 6.2 The Panel welcomed the report.

7. PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORT

- 7.1 Ruth Greenwood (Head of Policy, Performance & Strategy and Deputy Chief Executive OPCC) gave a detailed presentation. (For information the presentation slides were uploaded to the council's website and included in the minute book.)
- 7.2 The presentation reminded the Panel that in 2010 the then Home Secretary had removed performance indicators from policing. This position had been redressed although not to the number of the performance indicators as previously (which had been extensive). A performance framework has been developed to enable the Constabulary and OPCC to have a shared version of the health of the organisation and what poor, normal and good performance looks like across policing activity. A delivery plan sat alongside the performance framework.
- 7.3 It was also important to ask the 'so what?' question to understand whether the service being delivered to the people of Gloucestershire was targeted appropriately and made a difference to the quality of their lives. The Panel was informed that the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) was launching a community safety survey to gain a better understanding of the perception of crime at a community level.
- 7.4 Alongside the performance framework external agencies such as HMICFRS and the IOPC monitor Constabulary performance robustly. This enabled a fuller picture of what was happening in Gloucestershire.

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- 7.5 The Panel welcomed the presentation and looked forward to receiving regular monitoring reports in the future. Members enjoyed a detailed discussion on how the data could be used to identify crime hotspots, emerging issues and concerns where the reporting of particular types of crime might be felt to be lower than expected.

CHAIRMAN

Meeting concluded at 1.05 pm