

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
HELD ON 24TH OCTOBER 2013 AT 10.30 A.M.**

North Somerset Council

Councillor Nigel Ashton (Chairman),
Councillor Roz Willis

Mendip District Council

Councillor John Parham

Bristol City Council

Councillor Peter Hammond
Councillor Gary Hopkins

Sedgemoor District Council

Councillor John Swayne

South Somerset District Council

Councillor Tony Lock

Bath and North East Somerset Council

Councillor Francine Haeberling

Independent Members

Rosa Hui
Roger Kinsman

Officers Present:

Ian Pagan – Lead Officer Bristol CC
Jude Williams – Scrutiny Officer, Bristol CC
Patricia Jones – Clerk to the Panel, Bristol CC
Sue Mountstevens – Police and Crime Commissioner
Joanna Coulon – Victim Champion and Criminal Justice
Officer

PCP

**19.10/13 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR
ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brett, Drew,
Howells, Naysmith, Edwards, Dowding and Brown.

PCP

**20.10/13 MINUTES AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
– 5TH JUNE 2013**

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel held on 5th June 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

PCP

21.10/13 PUBLIC FORUM

The Panel noted the statement submitted by David Redgewell.

PCP

22.10/13 CONFIRMATION OF PANEL REPRESENTATIVE/LEAD ROLES AND ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

The Panel noted that work areas had been established over the summer and members were now picking up the following pieces of work:-

Lisa Brett - Victim Commissioning
John Swayne - Business Crime
Rosa Hui - Crime Needs Assessment
Roz Willis - Voluntary Sector Relations

Jude Williams agreed to clarify any links with the OPCC that still needed to be made. The Panel would assess the effectiveness of the roles at its AGM next year.

PCP

23.10/13 COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE

The Commissioner highlighted the following from the briefing note circulated in advance of the meeting:-

- Victims Commissioning – Councillor Brett had joined the Board in her capacity as Police and Crime Panel link member for this area of work. Consultation was on-going with a variety of statutory and non-statutory agencies. The start date for commissioned services would be October 2014 and indicative funding levels were expected in October 2013.
- Drug and Alcohol Arrest Referral Commissioning – the commissioning of a single Avon and Somerset-wide service from April 2014 would coincide with the rationalisation of the new-build custody suites.

- Partnership Working - the Commissioner had approved the formal merger of the Safer Somerset Partnership. There had been a positive response to a letter sent to the 5 local Clinical Commissioning Groups inviting them to work towards efforts to improve services for people detained under section 136 of the Mental Health Act. It was noted that a proposal for a 4/5 bed unit in Southmead was being progressed. The Commissioner emphasised that people should not be detained in Police cells. It was noted that Avon and Wiltshire Partnership was also applying pressure in this area.
- Independent Residents Panel – this had been set up to look at complaints. A review of its findings could be viewed at <http://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/Openness/Independent-Residents-Panel.aspx>
- Stage 2 Transfer of Police Staff – existing OPCC staff would remain in the legal employment of the Commissioner but otherwise all police staff would transfer to the Office of the Chief Constable.
- Constabulary Change Programme – consultation on ways of working and improving the constabulary's response to the Public was on-going. The Chief Constable could provide more information at a future meeting.
- Private Sector Partnering – this was being explored for custody services and a procurement process had commenced to assist with the decision. More information would be available in December.
- Tri Force Firearms Training Facility at Blackrock Quarry – reconstruction was in progress following the arson attack. Existing facilities would be used for the collaboration in the interim.
- Regional work - the 5 PCCs in the South West of England continue to meet monthly to develop and progress collaborative opportunities.
- National work – the Commissioner had given evidence to the Justice Select Committee. Topics included the success of Integrated Offender Management, changes to the probation service, Section 136 detections and levels of unrecorded crime. The Commissioner had also agreed to participate in two national reference groups looking at police integrity, the complaints system and how interaction with the IPCC could be improved.

Below is a summary of the discussion that followed:-

- There was a brief discussion around Trading Standards (TS) and their powers to address the on-going illegal trading of alcohol and tobacco. Notwithstanding close co-operation with the Police, it was recognised that their effectiveness was hampered by the lack of a power of arrest. The Commissioner agreed that effective collaborative working was key and would raise the issue at the Integrated Services Conference and report back to the Panel.
- The Panel acknowledged the impact of alcohol and drug use on crime. It was noted that the new Public Health role of local authorities included budgetary provision to address these issues at grass roots level. The Commissioner stated that close work with CSPs was important in tackling the problem – they had valuable information about what should be funded through them.
- Councillor Hopkins confirmed that discussions with George Ferguson were on-going in relation to the switching on of speed cameras.

RESOLVED - (1) that the report be noted.

(2) that the issue of Trading Standards and effective working with the Police be raised at the Integrated Services Conference.

PCP

24.10/13

CONSULTATION ON 2014/15 COUNCIL TAX LEVEL - OVERVIEW

The Panel considered a report (agenda item 6) setting out the strategy for dialogue with people living in Avon and Somerset regarding the amount of council tax they are willing to pay towards policing in 2014/15.

Below is a summary of the discussion that followed:-

- Members considered the options for increase set out in the report. It was noted that a 10% increase in the policing part of the council tax precept (Option F) would trigger a referendum with associated costs of £1 million. Turnout would be an important factor in order to avoid a skewed result.

- Based on the consultation results so far, over 50% of people were in favour of a 2% precept increase.
- The Commissioner confirmed that she continued to lobby ministers in relation to the current damping formula which operated to the detriment of the Avon and Somerset Force.
- The Lead Officer agreed to clarify the practical arrangements and timescales in the event of a referendum.
- The Commissioner responded to the suggestion that an increase in the precept could not be justified at a time of falling crime levels and increased satisfaction with local authority services. It was acknowledged that crime had fallen and pointed out that police officer posts reduced accordingly from 3,200 to 2,800. The force was anticipated to make £50 million in savings over the next 2 years. If the precept was frozen, a further 200 officers would be lost.
- A visible change around the senior leadership arrangements meant more officers were now on the streets.
- Language barriers in the consultation process were being addressed. Information was available in the top 8 languages both electronically and in hard copy. Rosa Hui urged officers to work with community leaders to facilitate this.
- It was agreed that supermarkets, GP surgeries, schools and libraries were ideal places to consult and capture people's opinions.
- The Panel was advised that the government had no plans to merge neighbouring police forces, but partnerships were recommended and a steady number of collaborative projects were in the pipeline which could result in savings. Details of the monthly regional meetings involving Commissioners, CEXs and Chief Constables were available on the website.

PCP

25.10/13 DRAFT POLICE AND CRIME NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Panel received an update report (agenda item 7) on the progress and development of the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Needs Assessment 2013.

- The Commissioner acknowledged the comments made in relation to Bristol's Community Speed Watch Scheme. It was noted that the most successful schemes were operating in South Somerset and the aim was to roll out this approach across the force area.
- The impact of drug and alcohol use on crime levels was reiterated. The Commissioner stated that working with the CSPs was key.
- It was accepted that women were disproportionately affected by domestic violence, but the importance of continuing with non-gender specific work was emphasised.
- Reports of human trafficking had increased as a result of increased awareness. Front line officers were now specifically trained in this area and the same was required in LAs. All agencies needed to be educated in recognising the signs and a hotline was available to report suspicions. Attention was drawn to the National Crime Agency website and the work being carried out in conjunction with www.unseenuk.org, a charity based in Bristol set up to disrupt trafficking activities.

RESOLVED - that the report be noted

PCP

26.10/13 POLICE AND CRIME PLAN - PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Panel considered an update on the progress made towards delivering the aspirations of the Police and Crime Plan between April and September 2013 (agenda item 8).

The Commissioner made the following key points:-

- Reports of domestic violence had dropped and the Constabulary had been tasked with addressing this as a priority. Reports of serious sexual assaults had increased, along with detections rates. Adopting a multi-agency strategic approach, pooling resources and avoiding duplication was fundamental to tackling these issues. Statistical information and conviction rates were regularly scrutinised by the Criminal Justice Board. It was agreed that this information would be circulated to the Panel.

Attention was drawn to the heavy caseloads of independent advocates who support victims through the judicial process. It

was recommended that this area would benefit from additional funding.

Operational officers needed to be aware of cultural differences.

Operation Bluestone, Bristol's dedicated rape and sexual assault investigation team, would be rolled out across the force in the future.

- The Chief Constable was still in discussion with LAs in relation to speed cameras.
- Despite a healthy drop in burglary offences in recent years, it was noted that detection rates fell last year with 1 in 7 offenders apprehended. It was accepted that this was disappointing but emphasised that performance was improving against national figures – the Constabulary was now in 15th position. There was more to do but this was an encouraging trajectory brought about by a wholesale review and reconfiguration of the way in which burglary offences are managed. Persistent offenders were being closely targeted.
- Only 40% of the 3000 daily calls to the call centre related to legitimate police business. Efforts were being made to address the resulting impact on resources. It was agreed that results of an exercise in which all contact with the Constabulary was monitored over a 24 hour period would be shared with the Panel when available.

RESOLVED - (1) that the report be noted.

(2) that statistical information and conviction rates in relation to domestic violence and serious sexual assaults would be circulated to the Panel.

(3) that the results of an exercise monitoring all contact with the Constabulary over a 24 hour period be shared with the Panel when available.

PCP

27.10/13 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE IN AVON AND SOMERSET

The Panel received a report (agenda item 9) providing a brief overview of the landscape with regard to domestic violence and abuse - a basis for a piece of work late spring or early summer.

RESOLVED – that the Scrutiny Officer liaises with the OPCC and drafts a scoping paper for the consideration of the Panel at the next meeting.

PCP

28.10/13 MEMBERSHIP OF PANEL AND INDEPENDENT MEMBER VACANCY

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Gary Hopkins to the meeting. The Panel placed on record its sincere appreciation of Councillor Levy's contributions over the past year.

It was noted that all the reserve list candidates for the Independent Member vacancy remained interested in the appointment.

RESOLVED – that a selection panel be arranged comprising Councillor Swayne, Councillor Parham and Roger Kinsman and the appointment to be ratified at the 11th December meeting.

PCP

29.10/13 WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIPS

The Panel considered a report of the Scrutiny Officer (agenda item 11) seeking agreement on a statement of working principles between the Panel and the Stronger and Safer Task Group of the Avon and the Somerset Criminal Justice Board, in order to:-

- Deliver its responsibility to work with CSPs without duplicating the Police Commissioner's activities; and
- Enable the Community Safety Partnerships and the Task Group to input to the Panel's scrutiny reviews and work programme.

Jude Williams recommended that Panel members and CSPs should aim to keep the other involved in their respective activities. A list of CSP contacts for the local areas would be circulated.

RESOLVED - (1) that the statement of working principles between the Panel and the

Stronger and Safer Task Group of the Avon and the Somerset Criminal Justice Board be approved.

(2) that list of Community Safety Partnership contacts for the local areas be circulated.

PCP

30.10/13 WORK PROGRAMME

The panel received an updated report Work Programme (agenda item 12).

RESOLVED - that the work programme be noted.

PCP

31.10/13 ISSUES RAISED BY PANEL MEMBERS

Councillor Parham asked the Commissioner to provide details of the number of Police officers involved in Police Federation work on a full time basis and to identify the resources made available to them.

PCP

32.10/13 COMPLAINTS REPORT

The panel considered a report of the Chief Executive, Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner's Office providing members with an oversight of all complaints made against the Commissioner, for scrutiny of the initial handling by the Chief Executive of Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner's Office.

RESOLVED - that the report be noted.

PCP

32.10/13 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED - that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the

grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

PCP

33.10/13 COMPLAINT

Panel Members considered a complaint escalated to the Panel for informal resolution in accordance with the Complaints Protocol.

(The meeting ended at 12.30pm)

CHAIR