

# GLOUCESTERSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

**MINUTES** of a meeting of the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel held on Friday 6 November 2020 at the Virtual Meeting - Web ex meeting.

**PRESENT:**

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

Others in attendance: Simon Harper – Democratic Services Manager  
Martin Surl – Police and Crime Commissioner  
Chris Brierley – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner  
Ruth Greenwood - Head of Policy, Performance and Strategy, OPCC  
Richard Bradley – Chief Executive OPCC

Apologies: Cllr Chris Brine

**1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting on Friday 18 September 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

**3. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER - UPDATE**

- Bamfurlong Operations Centre – The PCC explained that due to the highway improvement work in the vicinity, officers were not currently based at this site due to the impact that these works would have on response times. The planning application for the development to the site was with Tewkesbury Borough Council for consideration. Should the application be approved, it was anticipated that the construction works would commence in January 2021.
- Finance – The PCC closely scrutinised the financial position of the Constabulary on a regular basis, particularly monitoring the impact of Covid-19. As well as the additional investment by the PCC the Constabulary was due to receive some funds from Government. It was not clear however as to when the OPCC would receive the settlement from Government.
- Home Office review of the role of PCCs – The initial report from the Home Office was due to be published ahead of the elections in 2021. It was expected that this will include recommendations on the governance arrangements of Fire and Rescue Services, greater oversight of Criminal Justice as well as offender management services.
- Police Officer numbers – It was anticipated that there would be close to 1200 officers in place by the end of March 202. All new officers were now being trained at the Sabrina Centre. The PCC noted however that even when fully trained, the new officers would be inexperienced, and it would be some time before they would be able to work 'single crewed'. The Commissioner also noted that, due to the

pandemic, fewer than anticipated officers were currently retiring. The Panel agreed that it would be helpful to receive information on the experience profile of the Constabulary.

**ACTION: Ruth Greenwood**

- Rural Crime Week – The Panel was informed that this had gone ahead in Gloucestershire despite being cancelled nationally. This had been a success and well received by rural communities.

#### **4. COVID 19 ENFORCEMENT PLAN**

- 4.1 (NB. At the time of this meeting England had just entered its second lockdown.) The PCC explained that in October 2020 the Constabulary had been awarded £229k to support the enforcement of the lockdown. It was noted that the district councils had been awarded a similar amount to support the management of the lockdown, for example, to employ 'Covid Marshals'. It was noted that marshals could not enforce, this action remained with the Police, but they could engage and encourage people to abide by the lockdown rules.
- 4.2 The approach in Gloucestershire would continue to be Engage, Explain, Encourage, Enforce although it was expected that there would be more enforcement during this lockdown. The regulations were complex; a point of contact had been established in the Constabulary which officers could call on for advice.
- 4.3 It was questioned how the relationship between the Police and the Covid-19 Marshals would work. The PCC explained that he did not know how the Marshals were operating; they were coordinated through the district councils and involved the Environmental Health Officers. The strategic management of the response to the pandemic was undertaken by the Local Resilience Forum and the Gloucestershire Covid-19 Outbreak Engagement Board.
- 4.4 It was explained that Covid related reports to the police are recorded as 'anti-social behaviour' (ASB) and therefore Panel members should expect a rise in number of ASB cases this year. Enforcement notices were also recorded and monitored closely to identify where the main areas of reporting were and whether particular groups of people were involved Covid related breaches. The PCC informed the Panel that he had spoken with the Chief Constable who was clear that that the Constabulary would not hold back from issuing large fines when necessary.
- 4.5 It was acknowledged that Gloucestershire was in a difficult position with regard to the border with Wales, where different measures were in operation. The OPCC and Police were working with the NPCC (National Police Chief's Council), and Government, on this matter. Gloucestershire Constabulary would not be undertaking border checks, but would monitor activity.
- 4.6 In response to a question it was explained that where high levels of Covid-19 were reported the response was lead by Public Health. If the Police were needed to support activity this would be addressed through the appropriate strategic group.

#### **5. POLICE AND CRIME PLAN REFRESH**

- 5.1 The Deputy PCC informed the Panel that the refreshed Police and Crime Plan had been launched at the Sabrina Centre in October 2020. The delivery plans were in the process of being refreshed, and work was also underway on the performance framework; these would be submitted to the Panel in due course.

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

- 5.2 It was noted that the County Council Cabinet had had a Panel in place looking at road safety across the county. It was agreed that it would be helpful to hear from the Police and Crime Plan lead on this matter; perhaps, in January 2021.
- 5.3 There was some concern as to the number of young people going into custody in Gloucestershire. It was explained that the Gloucestershire Youth Offending Service: Response to Covid 19 - Recovery Plan 2020/21 was due to be received by the County Council Cabinet on 11 November 2020, and would also be received by the council's Children and Families Scrutiny Committee in January 2021. It was agreed that this report be shared with Panel members for their information.  
**ACTION: Andrea Clarke**
- 5.4 There was a shared view that the title 'Police and Crime Plan' did not really do justice to, or reflect the collaborative, and more community based, approach of the PCC. However, it was acknowledged that this was a statutory document and this was therefore something that could not be changed.
- 5.5 It was also stated that it was thought that the general public did want to see that the crime and punishment elements were addressed. The PCC assured the Panel that the Police would issue tickets during the lockdown, and would arrest and prosecute people. It was however important to remember that it was the criminal justice system that was responsible for the punishment aspect; this was not within the remit of the PCC.
- 5.6 The Panel's meeting on 18 September 2020 had not been in receipt of the full detail of the plan and had therefore not been able to fully endorse it at that time. Having now received the full detail the Panel agreed to support the (refreshed) Police and Crime Plan 2020/2022.

## **6. CRIMINAL JUSTICE UPDATE**

- 6.1 The PCC updated the Panel on negotiations with the Department of Justice with regard to Cirencester Court (currently closed) being utilised as a 'nightingale' court to enable the, ever increasing, backlog of cases in the county to be reduced.
- 6.2 It was agreed that the impact of Covid-19 on the court system was causing people to lose confidence in the Criminal Justice system, including the Police; the delay in cases reaching court, for both victim and defendant, was making people feel that they had been let down.
- 6.3 Mindful that the Criminal Justice System was not within its remit, the Panel had previously written to Alex Chalk MP (Cheltenham) as a Minister at the Department of Justice. A reply had been received and it was agreed that this should be followed up. (Post meeting note: The OPCC asked for the letter not to be sent at this time as negotiations were now in a more positive position. The Cirencester 'Nightingale' Court was expected to begin hearing cases in the New Year.)

## **7. OPENING OF THE SABRINA CENTRE**

Panel members welcomed the update and hoped that they would be able to visit the Sabrina Centre and observe the facilities for themselves in due course and allowing for Covid-19 guidelines.

## **8. OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER - CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

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The Chief Executive, OPCC, presented the report. It was highlighted that a fewer number of people than usual had put in a bid to the Commissioners Fund. It was thought that this related to the Covid-19 pandemic and its potential long term impact.

**CHAIRMAN**

Meeting concluded at 12.15 pm