

# GLOUCESTERSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

**MINUTES** of a meeting of the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel held on Friday 13 September 2019 at the Cabinet Suite - Shire Hall, Gloucester.

**PRESENT:**

William Alexander	Cllr Colin Hay (Chairman)
Jonny Brownsteen	Cllr Loraine Patrick
Cllr Collette Finnegan	Cllr Brian Tipper
Cllr David Gray	

**Substitutes:** Cllr Jenny Forde (In place of Cllr Ray Brassington)  
Cllr David Norman MBE (In place of Cllr Will Windsor-Clive)  
Cllr Rachel Smith (In place of Cllr Karen McKeown)  
Cllr Lesley Williams MBE (In place of Cllr Steve Robinson)

**Apologies:** Cllr Mattie Ross, Martin Smith and Cllr David Wheeler

**In attendance:** Martin Surl – Police and Crime Commissioner  
Chris Brierley – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner  
Rod Hansen – Chief Constable  
Richard Cooper - Detective Chief Superintendent  
Ruth Greenwood - Head of Policy, Performance and Strategy, OPCC  
Richard Bradley – Chief Executive OPCC

## **23. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 19 July 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

## **25. OPCC - INTERIM APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

25.1 Martin Surl, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), informed the Panel that he had felt it prudent given the Police and Crime Commissioner elections scheduled for 2020 not to undertake a formal recruitment exercise at this time. In his opinion Richard Bradley, who had fulfilled the role of Deputy Chief Executive of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), had all the necessary experience and qualities to fulfil this role.

25.2 The committee had been apprised of this situation via an email on Wednesday 31 July 2019. The feedback from Panel members to this email was in support of this proposal. This was reiterated at the Panel meeting.

25.3 It was agreed that the Panel would be updated on this position following the PCC election next year.

## **26. HOW THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER HOLDS THE CHIEF CONSTABLE TO ACCOUNT**

26.1 Richard Bradley, Chief Executive OPCC, presented the report to the Panel. He explained that the aim of this proposal was to create a coherent and consistent approach to holding the Chief Constable to account. He hoped that this would make the process more

transparent. Six holding to account sessions had already been conducted. He was happy to update the Panel on the holding to account sessions on a regular basis.

- 26.2 Members noted the proposal and welcomed the inclusion of the register which would enable the Panel to have a clearer picture of this activity.

## **27. GLOUCESTERSHIRE CONSTABULARY CRIME DATA INTEGRITY INSPECTION 2019**

- 27.1 The Panel was joined by Rod Hansen, Chief Constable, and Detective Chief Superintendent Richard Cooper for this item.
- 27.2 The Chair invited Martin Surl, Police and Commissioner, to set the context to and comment on the recommendations of the HMICFRS Crime Data Inspection (CDI) Report. The PCC informed the Panel that data integrity was important to him. The report from the 2014 CDI inspection had raised some concerns with regard to compliance. Towards the end of 2018 he had become concerned with regard to the level of compliance and had formally written to the Chief Constable asking for an assessment of this area and for him to also give an indication of what rating the constabulary could expect at a future inspection. At that time the Chief Constable anticipated that there was the potential for the constabulary to receive a good rating, at the very least it would receive 'requires improvement'. The PCC requested that the Chief Constable put in place an action plan to get the constabulary on the right footing. Unfortunately this work was still in progress at the time of inspection. The outcome of the inspection was an 'inadequate' rating.
- 27.3 The PCC informed the Panel that he was unhappy with the 'inadequate' rating. A recovery plan was in place to take forward the recommendations in the report. He thought it important that the Panel place this inspection report within the wider context of the positive PEEL: Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy 2018/19 inspection report published in May 2019 which reported that the Constabulary was 'good' across the board including for vulnerability, safeguarding and investigation.
- 27.4 The Chief Constable was invited to speak to the inspection report. He informed members that it was important to note that this inspection report was not discussing service failure but about recording of data. He was clear that his intention was not to make excuses for this rating; the constabulary had let itself down, but had understood the issues and had already recovered the position. He informed Panel members that at the time of the inspection the constabulary was 82% compliant, but that in response to the recovery plan the constabulary was now at over 90% compliance. He had asked HMICFRS to return sooner rather than later as he wanted to receive their endorsement of the work undertaken by the constabulary to address this position.
- 27.5 The Chief Constable explained the crime data recording process to the Panel highlighting the particular recording aspects, in essence a shift in practice required by the Home Office, that had had a significant impact on the outcome of the inspection, including that the timeline for recording crimes was now 24 hours as opposed to 72 hours previously.
- 27.6 With regard to the recommendations in the report relating to sexual offences the Chief Constable reassured the Panel that the constabulary took these offences seriously, this was reflected in the PEEL Report (May 2019). These were complex cases – sometimes the report could come from a third party and yet the alleged victim disagreed that any crime had occurred (and therefore did not support an investigation).

- 27.7 The Chief Constable assured the Panel that the constabulary also took domestic abuse, mental health and violence seriously. He explained that 100 of the domestic abuse cases identified by the inspectors had been examined by officers, and they were of the view that the right actions had been taken in each case. Safeguarding was put in place in most cases, and a pragmatic outcome was achieved based on the needs of the victims.
- 27.8 The Chief Constable discussed some (anonymised) cases which demonstrated the complexity of the issues. The Panel found these to be very helpful in their understanding of the factors faced by officers when they are dealing with incidents and how these could present challenges around crime data recording.
- 27.9 The Panel was informed that the crime recording rules were very precise. It was important to note that these rules related to approximately 24% of the calls received by the Police; 76% of incidents responded to by the Police were non-crime related eg. missing people, road accidents and mental health.
- 27.10 The Chief Constable was clear that officers tried to strike a balance in responding to calls and would also aim to be compassionate. With regard to the data/questions relating to diversity he explained that when, for example, a person was traumatised it was important to pick your moment to ask them what religion they were. If not done at the time though the inspectorate team classed the incident as a data recording failure
- 27.11 There were challenges relating to the technology used by the constabulary. These were legacy systems and required double entry of data as they did not 'talk to' each other. This also meant that the constabulary was not yet able to consistently hit the 24hour rule. The Panel was informed that one of the Assistant Chief Constables was leading the project looking at improving the IT systems. This did have cost implications and within a tight budget situation this would mean that there would be difficult decisions to be made in future.
- 27.12 The Panel questioned whether the resources invested in this area to recover the situation meant that other areas were now at risk? It was also questioned whether the Home Office was, through the crime recording structure, forcing the Police to change its values? If when reviewing the individual cases the outcome was that the right actions had been taken why was the constabulary not able to defend its position with HMICFRS?
- 27.13 The Chief Constable explained that whilst there was additional funding available to recruit a deputy Force Crime Registrar (FCR), existing resources had been used to recover this position. He explained that four experienced sergeants had been selected to support the FCR in this work, whilst investigators worked the case(s); sustaining this would be a challenge. He acknowledged that Panel members were right to be concerned as to the potential impact on other areas. He was, however, clear that the Constabulary would not be changing or compromising its values in order to be able to meet these rules, it would still aim to do what was right in the circumstances
- 27.14 The PCC informed the Panel that neither he nor the Constabulary have any opportunity to comment on these rules. He commented that other PCCs across the country have commented on the potential impact of these rules on the front line. He was clear that within a challenging funding situation decisions as to where to direct resources would always be difficult; he stated that it would have been remiss of him to invest in this area earlier given the impact that this would have had on the frontline, which was suffering from the impact of austerity with the loss of 250 officers since 2010; as it was resources to redress this situation had had to be drawn from the frontline. He informed the Panel that the Chief Constable had his full support. He was of the view that other constabularies were in a

similar position to Gloucestershire, the majority receiving an 'inadequate' grading on first inspection (and some on second inspection).

- 27.15 In response to a question the PCC informed members that in retrospect he should perhaps have raised his concerns with the Chief Constable earlier. However, the Chief Constable explained that HMICFRS had sent in twelve inspectors for fourteen days; it would have taken the constabulary at least six months to be able to deliver the same level of detail.
- 27.16 The PCC was clear that in terms of resources there was 'no fat left on the bone'. The additional officers that were coming through were as a result of the increase in the Police precept. Although the government had made an announcement with regard to additional funding for the Police the actual detail and what this would mean in terms of additional officers for Gloucestershire was not yet known.
- 27.17 The Panel was informed that HMICFRS would no longer be undertaking thematic inspections on CDI; these issues would be addressed within the PEEL inspection process in future.
- 27.18 Members of the Panel reiterated their concerns that there was the potential for the ethos of the constabulary to be affected by these recording requirements. There was also the potential for this approach to give a false impression to the public as to the level of crime in the county, particularly with regard to violent crime.
- 27.19 In response to a question the Chief Constable explained that the constabulary hosted a number of support networks, eg for female officers, and also had champions across the service for specific issues, eg. Autism, dyslexia and careers. Some training would be bespoke to specific areas, eg those officers dealing directly with sex crimes would be trauma informed. The Force Crime Registrar now also visited teams to offer advice and guidance.
- 27.20 The Chief Constable also explained that the service did try to understand the demand profiles and in recognition of the number of calls relating to mental health there was now a mental health practitioner onsite in the force control room. Officers would also triage calls with the help of appropriately skilled mental health practitioners. He informed members that he also had regular meetings with the lead HMICFRS Inspector for Gloucestershire to raise and discuss issues.
- 27.21 The report had referred to the role of the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) and in response to a question the Chief Constable informed the Panel that the DCC had felt that he was doing the right thing in focusing on the overall delivery of the service, but that he acknowledged and accepted the findings of the inspection. Following an internal review the DCC had accepted that there was some personal learning that he needed to undertake and this has been completed. The Chief Constable stated that the DCC was leading on the recovery plan.
- 27.22 In response to questions the Panel was assured that the safeguarding and domestic abuse issues raised in the report had been followed up and no one had suffered as a result of the data recording errors. He reiterated that all the cases identified by the inspectors had been reviewed by experienced officers, including listening to the original calls, and the victim contacted directly where appropriately. There were a small number of cases where perhaps more could have been done.
- 27.23 Members of the Panel reiterated their concerns with regard to the public perception of the level of crime in Gloucestershire. They agreed that it was important to be clear that much of

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

the issues identified in the inspection report could be attributed to technical factors. They also agreed that it was important that the Panel was clear that it accepted the explanation put forward by the PCC and Chief Constable, and that it was not possible to draw any conclusions in the three month period of recovery post inspection as to whether there were any trends around specific groups that had previously been missed due to recording errors. The Panel did expect to be kept up to date with progress in order that it could be assured that the underreporting had not been masking potential areas of concern.

**28. POLICE AND CRIME PLAN REFRESH**

- 28.1 Martin Surl, Police and Crime Commissioner, presented the refresh of his Police and Crime Plan 2017-2021. He informed the Panel that the refresh had been developed in conjunction with the Home Office which therefore meant that the plan was in line with government thinking. It was also explained that there was a transformation programme in place which included a significant focus on IT; a digital strategy would follow in due course.
- 28.2 The Panel questioned elements of the refresh but overall accepted the refreshed Police and Crime Plan 2017-2021.
- 28.3 In response to questions raised the Panel agreed that it would be good to have a briefing ahead of the budget setting meeting in February 2020 to enable members to fully explore the funding picture for the Police.

**29. POLICE AND CRIME PLAN HIGHLIGHT REPORT**

- 29.1 Richard Bradley, Chief Executive Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, gave a detailed presentation of the report.
- 29.2 The Panel welcomed and noted the report.

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

- 30.1 Richard Bradley, Chief Executive Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, gave a detailed presentation of the report.
- 30.2 The Panel noted the report.

**CHAIRMAN**

Meeting concluded at 12.26 pm