

GLoucestershire Police and Crime Panel

MINUTES of a meeting of the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel held on Tuesday 28 September 2021 at the Virtual Meeting - Web ex meeting.

PRESENT:

Cllr Ray Brassington	Cllr Dawn Melvin
Cllr Jonny Brownsteen (Chairman)	Cllr Sajid Patel
Cllr Philip Burford	Cllr Martin Pearcy
Cllr David Gray	Cllr Steve Robinson (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Joe Harris	Martin Smith

Others in attendance: Chris Nelson – Police and Crime Commissioner
Nick Evans – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
Richard Bradley – Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Ruth Greenwood – Deputy Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Apologies: William Alexander and Cllr Brian Tipper

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meetings on 7 July 2021 at 10.00am and 12.37pm were agreed as a correct record subject to the following amendment:-
Martin Smith, Independent Member, was present at the 10.00am meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3. UPDATE ON RECENT ACTIVITY - OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

3.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) updated the Panel on the activity related to the roadshows, and also informed members that much of his time presently is spent looking at the internal structure of the Police, in particular the Force Control Room (FCR).

3.2 The Panel were informed that HMICFRS was due to publish its report of their recent inspection of the Constabulary. Members were informed that it was expected that the report would be hard hitting particularly with regard to the FCR.

3.3 The Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC) informed the Panel that the meetings of Safer Gloucestershire had resumed. The membership was being reviewed and had so far been extended to include the Chairs of the Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs). The DPCC was clear that he wanted Safer Gloucestershire to deliver not to just be a talking shop. It was agreed that the terms of reference for this group would be shared with the Panel.

ACTION: Nick Evans

3.4 The Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), was pleased to inform the Panel that the Sabrina Centre had recently been awarded silver in the regeneration category of the iESE Public Sector Transformation awards. With regard to the recently enacted Domestic Abuse Act (2021) the OPCC would be advertising for a

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Officer to support the partnership boards when engaging with communities. The OPCC in conjunction with the other 4 OPCCs in the South West Region were also advertising for a Regional Strategic Policy and Research Officer.

- 3.5 The PCC informed members that he would welcome the Panel establishing a Budget Task Group to meet ahead of and post the public consultation period. The Panel agreed to commission a task group on this matter; the task group would report in to the precept meeting on 4 February 2022.

ACTION: Andrea Clarke/Ruth Greenwood

- 3.6 In response to a question the PCC informed the Panel that it was expected that the 300 additional officers would be recruited over a three year period.
- 3.7 With regard to rural crime the PCC explained that the Police already utilised drones. He was also looking to double the number of officers that were specialist rural officers, and establish a 7 day a week rural policing service.
- 3.8 In response to a question relating to the use of ANPR in rural areas the PCC explained that ANPR was an expensive option. He was looking at more affordable ways to do this, and at the roadshows had been promoting the use of community speed watch with local volunteers.
- 3.9 A member stated that in the PCC's manifesto he had stated that he would end the culture of spin, which would save money, and questioned how much had been saved. The PCC informed the Panel that the previous regime had had its own way of looking at things, including spending on buildings; he preferred to focus on what was needed. The PCC stated that so far in the region of £2m had been saved.
- 3.10 In response to a question related to the costs of the additional Police Officers over the next 10 years was £10m.

4. DRAFT POLICE AND CRIME PLAN

- 4.1 The Deputy Chief Executive, OPCC, gave a detailed presentation on the draft Police and Crime Plan.
- 4.2 The Panel was informed that the OPCC would be introducing a survey scheme to get a broader understanding of the view of Gloucestershire residents on police and crime matters.
- 4.3 It was explained that the delivery plans would be scoped out once the plan was on a firmer basis. The Constabulary were also developing a performance framework for each priority; these would be reported to the Panel in due course. The performance framework/dashboard would be developed such that the lay person would be able to easily understand what the data was saying.
- 4.4 In response to a question it was explained that the manifesto pledges had been absorbed into the plan. The Panel agreed that it was good to see that targets/performance measures would be an integral part of the delivery of the plan.
- 4.5 With regard to how safe people feel the Panel was informed that Gloucestershire was rated as the seventh safest area in the country. However, the PCC stated that he was aware that there was a mass of unreported crime (eg. domestic abuse, sexual abuse, shoplifting); it would be important to encourage and give people the confidence to report crime.

- 4.6 Whilst welcoming a public health approach to policing there was concern that this was in direct opposition to the approach of some of the priorities, in particular to reduce anti social behaviour; it would be important to keep an eye on both sides of the agenda. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that all officers were trained to take a trauma informed approach to policing; the Police could not arrest its way through old problems. It was also important to ensure that there was a partnership approach.
- 4.7 The PCC indicated that whilst his focus was on the Police there were always opportunities to work holistically with other agencies. It was important to note that a public health approach to policing required a lot of resources, and the PCC would be encouraging other agencies to get around the table.
- 4.8 The PCC was clear that a lot more could be done with regard to the criminal justice system. The PCC acknowledged that the Constabulary could do better with regard to investigating sexual violence and fraud.
- 4.9 In response to a question about the Commissioners Fund the PCC explained that he had changed the approach to this fund; it was important to ensure that available resources were used effectively.
- 4.10 A member commented that there were some outstanding officers and support staff in the Police, but everyone had heard examples of not so good practice, and it was questioned how to encourage better use of police time. The PCC acknowledged that this was not an easy question to answer. From his perspective it seemed that previously a lot of money had been used on buildings rather than systems; he did see inefficiencies. With regard to operational matters the responsibility lay with the Chief Constable, the PCC could not instruct. The PCC did of course discuss issues with the Chief Constable, and he was aware that the Chief Constable wanted to achieve a level of excellence, and to get to a position where the Force had exemplars of excellence, and the Force achieved an outstanding rating from HMICFRS.
- 4.11 The Deputy Chief Executive informed the Panel that often the public were not fully aware of the breadth of work that the Police were involved in, for example, the response to mental health crises. A significant part of Police work now related to safeguarding issues as opposed to responding to crime. The Deputy PCC was clear that this must be addressed through a partnership approach.
- 4.12 The Panel agreed that it could support the draft plan; it was clear and comprehensive, and it was good to note that there was an emphasis on victims.
- 4.13 Some members expressed their concern that there did seem to be a two pronged approach from the police when responding to crime in that large stores would get an immediate response whereas a more moderate approach appeared to be the norm for small local stores/shops.
- 4.14 The Panel was assured that once the plan was final performance data would be published on the OPCC website. With regard to comparing with peers it was important to note that there was a time lag in the reporting of this data. It was reiterated that the OPCC would be launching a survey in due course to better understand the concerns of the people of Gloucestershire.

5. E SCOOTERS - THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE POSITION

- 5.1 The PCC informed the Panel that the OPCC had been pleased to support the trial of e-scooters. Information coming through indicated that enforcement was an issue. It was commented that in Cheltenham enforcement was mainly undertaken by Zwings.
- 5.2 The PCC informed the Panel that once the trial period was over the government would publish a report on the findings and recommendations on the way forward.
- 5.3 The Deputy PCC informed the Panel that the approach taken by the Police was to educate, engage and enforce. It was noted that it was difficult to engage with someone on an e-scooter if the officer was no foot. The Deputy PCC was of the view that there had been some irresponsible retailing of e-scooters; that is, not making it clear that they cannot be used on the highway (only those supplied through the trial can be used on the highway). He clarified that users of e-scooters would receive two warnings, the scooter would be seized on the second warning; the Police were seizing about 9 a month at present. Given the level of engagement the Deputy PCC felt that people were aware the limitations on use of e-scooters.

(Post meeting note: Following the meeting it was clarified that the statement that 'users of e-scooters would receive two warnings and that the e-scooter would be seized on the second warning' was incorrect and a genuine mistake. The correct position is that: - Privately owned e-scooters can only be ridden on private land with the permission of the land owner. They are classed as a motor vehicle and they cannot be insured, registered for road use and do not comply with any of the requirements of the Road traffic Act 1988 and are therefore not able to be ridden on a public road, pavement, bridleways or public place. Anyone caught riding an e-scooter in breach of the above can have their e-scooter seized as it has no insurance or if it is being used in such a way that it causes harassment, alarm or distress.

In the context of Trial rental e-scooters, that is, the current schemes in Cheltenham Town and Gloucester City that are running until April 2022, these can only be ridden within designated zones and if the rider has the relevant driving licence.)

- 5.4 The data supplied by Zwings showed that it was a small fraction of users who created the problems.
- 5.5 The Chairman informed the Panel that enforcement should not be the responsibility of the operator. It was being reported to him that the Police were intentionally not reporting this crime; he had yet to receive a rebuttal of this. He questioned what instructions had been given to the constabulary on this matter. The Deputy PCC informed the Panel that enforcement was an operational matter, but that he would be happy to take these issues forward with the Constabulary and requested further information from the Chair regarding the issue he raised.

ACTION: Chair/DPCC

6. THE FUTURE OF THE MOUNTED POLICE

- 6.1 The PCC informed the Panel that he had requested a review into the Mounted Section following some criticism of the section from some members of the public. The initial review found that the current model was not optimal. Further work has been requested to establish if an alternative model, with more horses, actually provided value for money opportunities through sponsorship and mutual aid. Similar opportunities have been realised in other forces, particularly Merseyside, which has achieved a close to cost neutral mounted section. The PCC was of the view that the current service was more of a

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

neighbourhood police service, supporting reassurance and problem solving activity when required. The PCC was clear that resources were directed to business need.

- 6.2 It was unfortunate that the current construction of stables at Bamfurlong could not be stopped; it was not contractually viable to do so from a financial perspective.
- 6.3 Members were concerned as to the costs involved in the provision of this service, and disappointed that the cost of withdrawing from the contract to build the stables was prohibitive. There was concern that the costs of this service had not previously been shared with the Panel; and it was questioned whether this was an effective use of public money. The Panel was informed that the Chief Constable was supportive of this section and agreed that it would be helpful to understand why this was.
- 6.4 The PCC was clear that the review of this service was not currently a priority. He acknowledged the Panel's comments and concerns and these would be taken forward as part of the review.

7. PANEL WORKPLAN

- 7.1 The Panel agreed that the meeting on 3 November 2021 should be focused on the HMICFRS inspection report which was due to be published.
- 7.2 The Panel agreed to progress the Budget Working Group.

CHAIRMAN

Meeting concluded at 12.56 pm