

Wiltshire Police and Crime Panel

MINUTES OF THE WILTSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETING HELD ON 13 JUNE 2023 AT WESSEX ROOM - THE CORN EXCHANGE, MARKET PLACE, DEVIZES, SN10 1HS.

Present:

Cllr Steve Bucknell (Chairman), Cllr Stanka Adamcova (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Abdul Amin, Cllr Ross Henning, Cllr George Jeans, Cllr Dr Brian Mathew, Cllr Tony Pickernell, Cllr Elizabeth Threlfall, Denisa Ahmeti, Louise Williams and Cllr Dominic Muns (Substitute)

Also Present:

Philip Wilkinson OBE, MPhil – Police and Crime Commissioner
Naji Darwish – Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, OPCC
John Derryman – Strategic Planning and Performance Officer, OPCC
Emma Morton – Head of Communications and Engagement, OPCC
Matt Hitch – Democratic Services Officer, Wiltshire Council

1 **Election of Chairman**

The Democratic Services Officer called for nominations for the position of Chairman for the forthcoming year.

Cllr Elizabeth Threlfall nominated Cllr Steve Bucknell for the position of Chairman, which was then seconded by Cllr Tony Pickernell.

There were no further nominations.

Decision

To appoint Cllr Steve Bucknell as Chairman for 2023/24.

2 **Election of Vice-Chairman**

The Chairman sought nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year.

Cllr Abdul Amin nominated Cllr Stanka Adamcova for the position of Vice-Chairman, which was seconded by Cllr Ros Henning.

There were no further nominations.

Decision

To appoint Cllr Stanka Adamcova as Vice-Chairman for 2023/24.

3 **Apologies for Absence and Membership Changes**

Apologies were received from:

- Cllr James Sheppard (substituted by Cllr Dominic Muns)
- Cllr Vijay Manro
- Cllr Jim Grant

The Chairman took the opportunity to welcome new members to the Panel and to thank the former members for their service in supporting its work.

4 **Minutes and matters arising**

On the proposal of Cllr Pickernell, seconded by Cllr Henning, it was resolved to make the:

Decision

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 9 March 2023, as a true and correct record.

5 **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

6 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no announcements.

7 **Public Participation**

Paul Sunners, Chair of Wiltshire Neighbourhood Watch Association, made a statement explaining that they had received lots of interest from the public and were managing two new schemes each week. He was pleased to report that there were many good examples of good practice within Neighbourhood Watch.

8 **Update from the PCC**

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) gave a strategic overview of the progress made towards the four key priority areas in his Police and Crime Plan. Key points included:

- He was pleased to report that there had been significant operational improvements in a number of areas, including in road safety, community engagement, and in reducing violence and serious harm.
- Wiltshire was now the second or third best performing force in England and Wales in terms of disrupting County Lines activity.

- In 2021 Wiltshire Police only issued 192 speed enforcement tickets but had issued over 2,400 so far in 2023.
- There had been support from the Justice Department to improve efficiency with courts and the probation service.
- A new call centre would be opened in Swindon to manage 101 calls. Swindon had been selected as the base for the centre due to its large workforce.
- There was strong engagement with the Chief Constable's Chief Officer Group.
- The complaints process had been formalised, with the Complaints Resolution Team in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) being the initial point of contact.
- They had received around £2.6 million through bids to the Home Office's Safer Streets Fund, which they would use in close consultation with the local authorities.

The PCC then took the opportunity to congratulate the Chairman on his reappointment and commended the cross-party Panel for the way that they held him to account. In addition, he praised the Chief Executive of the OPCC, Naji Darwish, and his staff, for formalising the governance processes that his office had in place.

During the discussion, points included:

- The Panel thanked the PCC for the update and welcomed the progress made towards his priority goals.
- The PCC reported that since the Panel's last meeting his office had received similar levels of complaints from pro and anti-foxhunting groups, which gave him confidence that he was handling these issues in an impartial manner.
- The Panel welcomed the appointment of a new interim head of Human Resources (HR) at Wiltshire Police to improve the staff retention rate.
- It was explained that armed forces personnel could join Wiltshire Police without a degree.
- It was planned to hold an engagement event in Tidworth to promote the police as a career path for ex-military personnel.
- Cllr Amin reported that he was still hearing lots of concerns about County Lines from residents and the Chairman queried whether there was a discrepancy in the level of community engagement between Swindon and the rest of the county. In response, the PCC stated that there was a need to do more to tackle drug issues and that he would be attending a conference considering the issue which was due to be attended by the MP for South Swindon Robert Buckland.
- A Super Intendent had been employed to come up with initiatives to improve the efficiency of the criminal justice system in Wiltshire.
- The Chief Executive of the OPCC confirmed that the Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) inspection process involved monitoring targets a monthly basis.

- When asked about his long-term plan to tackle knife crime and gang culture the PCC highlighted that they were making the necessary operational changes but acknowledged that it would take time to change public perceptions about the issue.
- It was noted that crimes could be reported anonymously through the [CrimeStoppers](#) charity.
- In response to a question about the impact of the PEEL assessment on the morale of the force, the PCC explained that both issues were interconnected. He believed that the streamlined command and control processes had improved leadership and accountability.

9 **Presentation by the Chief Constable**

Chief Constable Catherine Roper updated the Panel about the improvements she had put in place to deliver the objectives of the Police and Crime Plan. She also spoke about the ongoing work to move out of ENGAGE process, the response to an inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). She explained that at the core of her approach were her three operational priorities of creating safer public spaces, tackling violence and reducing burglary. Key points included:

- During her 107 days in post, she had implemented a number of reforms including reorganising her Chief Officer Group, introducing a new performance framework and increasing the number of press releases to improve transparency.
- She highlighted the importance of delivering a fundamental improvement in service delivery above and beyond the requirements of the ENGAGE process to develop a force that the public would be proud of.
- Key areas of focus would include developing a better strategic framework and enhancing victim support.
- She explained that burglary was a priority as it was an 'indicator crime', often being an indicative of other issues such as the need to fund drugs.
- In order to improve their accessibility to the public, Wiltshire Police were reviewing their estate strategy and setting up 24-hour deployment points.
- She emphasised the importance of recruiting a workforce with a mix of cultures and experiences.
- An interim Assistant Chief Constable had been recruited, with an aim to make a permanent appointment in the autumn.
- The rank of Chief Super Intendent, previously abolished in 2014, had been reintroduced to improve governance and leadership.
- Wiltshire Police were looking to recruit more Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and Special Constables, volunteer officers who have the same powers and responsibilities as regular officers.
- The Force were undertaking a review of their frontline uniform resources to ensure they were best deployed to meet the needs to different types of investigations.
- An internal audit inspection framework had been developed to give better oversight to the Chief Constable and PCC.

During the discussion the following points were made:

- The Panel thanked the Chief Constable for the update. They also took the opportunity to praise the work done by Cadets, Community Speed Watch and Special Constable volunteers.
- In response to a question about Special Constables, the Chief Constable reported that they had lost a large number of volunteers during the Covid pandemic but were now running a recruitment drive. She underlined that it was vital to ensure that the appropriate level of training would be in place.
- The PCC explained that he felt that reinforcing the Road Policing Unit would be a better use of funding than purchasing fixed cameras as they tended to be expensive and inflexible. The PCC was pleased to report that there had been a reduction in speeding in a number of speeding hotspots.
- The Strategic Planning and Performance Officer at the OPCC, John Derryman, praised the 930 volunteers in Wiltshire across their 115 Community Speed Watch Teams. He noted that the information from the teams helped to inform the deployment of resources and encouraged the public to report speeding issues. The teams also held quarterly meetings to share ideas and acknowledge the great work of volunteers.

Further details of the Chief Constable's plan are available in Agenda Supplement 2.

10 **Police and Crime Plan Highlight and Performance Report**

The PCC introduced his performance report which tracked the progress made towards the four key priority areas in his Police and Crime Plan. He noted that there had been positive trends in a number of areas, and he was confident that they would be able to deliver encouraging messages to the public. During the discussion, points included:

- The Panel thanked the PCC for his report.
- The Panel were pleased to note that the percentage of people that thought that the police could be relied on was higher than the national average but expressed unease that it was still only 57 percent.
- It was explained that the PCC's Executive Leadership Team met on a fortnightly basis with the Chief Constable to review progress.
- In response to whether there was a specific timeframe for targets to be reached, the Chief Constable noted that her Community Commitment would set out the minimum standards that the public could expect. She noted that the business plan was being set out over a five-year period. Her first 100 days in the role had been focussed on processes, so she wanted to give the new reforms time to embed before completing a more detailed assessment.

- The PCC noted that the next PEEL inspection was due next year and that he would like the majority of the progress indicators to be green on the RAG (red, amber, green) rating by that time.
- The Chief Executive of the OPCC noted that the PCC and Wiltshire Police would like to see continual improvement over a sustained period so needed to commit to measures and track their progress through the years of their operation.
- It was noted that the rate of rape and serious sexual offences had gone up but it was recognised that this could be a result of work being done to encourage more people to come forward.

11 **OPCC Delivery Plan 2023-24**

The Panel thanked the PCC for the report.

12 **Items for Communication to the Public**

The Panel felt that it would be useful to publicise the good work that was going on to disrupt County Lines activity and tackle speeding. They were also keen to praise the excellent work carried out by volunteers to help Wiltshire Police. The Chief Constable suggested that a web link could be provided to her [open letter](#) to thank volunteers.

The Head of Communications and Engagement at the OPCC, Emma Morton, noted that they circulated a performance newsletter and that Panel members would be welcome to share the links via their social media accounts.

13 **Protocol 12**

The Chairman reminded the Panel that their arrangements and rules of procedure, Protocol 12 of Wiltshire Council's Constitution, had not been updated since 2014. At their previous meeting they had agreed for an updated version to be drafted and considered by the host authority's, Constitution Focus Group. Revised documents had been prepared by officers in consultation with Panel members, before being considered by Wiltshire Council's Constitution Focus Group on 19 May 2023. The Constitution Focus Group had welcomed the overall changes and were content for the Panel to consider them in further detail. The Chairman then referred the Panel to the report in Agenda Supplement 1 summarising the changes from the existing documents.

It was clarified that approval for the changes would require a two thirds majority of the total membership of the Panel, nine of the 13 members. The changes would also need the agreement of both Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council, so, if approved by the Panel, would be brought to their respective Full Council meetings for ratification.

During the discussion, members welcomed the alterations including those to the public participation rules. It was questioned whether reference could be made to the Criminal Justice Board in the documents. The Chief Executive of the OPCC explained that the PCC chaired the Criminal Justice Board but that many

powers rested with partner agencies. The Democratic Services Officer noted that all of the powers of the Panel derived from the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (the Act) and its associated regulations, so it would not be possible to exercise any functions other than those conferred to it by the legislation.

Following on from this discussion, the Chairman suggested that the Panel might like to consider receiving a report from the OPCC about its wider work with the Criminal Justice Board.

It was noted that section 2.2 of the draft Panel arrangements included a reference to members of the European Parliament being prevented from being Co-opted members of the Panel. The Democratic Services Officer clarified that the wording came directly from the 2011 Act, which was drafted when the United Kingdom was a European Union member state. Members stated that they would welcome the addition of a footnote to highlight the reason for the inclusion of this restriction.

It was also discussed whether the balanced appointment objective panel arrangements should include an aspiration to reflect the diversity of the police force area.

On the proposal of the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Pickernell, it was resolved to make the:

Decision

To approve the new draft Panel arrangements and rules of procedure (Protocol 12 of Wiltshire Council's constitution) subject to both the ratification by Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council and the inclusion of the following amendments:

- 1. To add a footnote to section 2.2 of the panel arrangements to clarify that the restriction to members of the European Parliament becoming Co-Opted members of the Panel was drafted when the United Kingdom was a European Union member state.**
- 2. To delegate to officers, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the addition of wording to state that the appointment process shall include an aspiration to reflect the diversity of the police force area.**

Note: The 11 members of the Panel present voted unanimously in favour of the proposal, therefore the required threshold of two thirds of the total membership was met. The proposals had been presented to the Monitoring Officer of Wiltshire Council at least 10 working days prior to the meeting and the Panel had considered a report about the implications of the proposals.

The Chairman invited the Panel to consider the list on page 121 of the agenda pack containing 10 topics for future briefings suggested by the OPCC. He also asked them to consider an eleventh option, a briefing on the role of the PCC in relation to the Criminal Justice Board.

The Panel then selected the three topics on which they would most like to receive an update. Each Panel member was presented with a sheet of all eleven options and the two most popular were:

- Neighbourhood Policing – strategy and progress (six votes)
- Youth Justice Intervention – initiatives and impact (five votes)

Three options received four votes each so the Chairman invited a further vote to see which was most popular:

- Road Safety – the new strategy and delivery plan with performance metrics (four votes)
- Work to Reduce Anti-Social Behaviour – strategy and progress (five votes)
- Serious Violence – new duty and partnership activity (two votes)

It was therefore agreed to add Work to Reduce Anti-Social Behaviour – strategy and progress as the third topic on which to receive a briefing.

15 **Forward Work Plan**

The Panel noted the forward work plan and that the agreed briefings on Neighbourhood Policing, Youth Justice Intervention and Anti-Social Behaviour would be added.

16 **Future meeting dates**

The next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel will be on Thursday 14 September at 10:30am in the West Wiltshire Room at County Hall, Trowbridge.

Future meeting dates were:

Thursday 14 December 2023, 10:30am – Committee Room 6, Swindon.

(Duration of meeting: 2.30 - 4.35 pm)

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