

Wiltshire Police and Crime Panel

MINUTES OF THE WILTSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETING HELD ON 14 DECEMBER 2023 AT COMMITTEE ROOM 6, SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL OFFICES, EUCLID ST, SWINDON SN1 2JH.

Present:

Cllr Steve Bucknell (Chairman), Cllr Stanka Adamcova (Vice-Chairman), Nukana, Cllr Vijay Manro, Cllr Ross Henning, Cllr George Jeans, Cllr Dr Brian Mathew, Cllr Tony Pickernell, Denisa Ahmeti and Louise Williams

Also Present:

Philip Wilkinson OBE, MPhil – Police and Crime Commissioner
Naji Darwish – Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, OPCC
Chief Superintendent Phil Staynings (attending virtually)
Shaun Banks – Committee Officer, Swindon Borough Council
Matt Hitch – Democratic Services Officer, Wiltshire Council

29 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from:

- Cllr Abdul Amin
- Cllr Elizabeth Threlfall
- Cllr James Sheppard
- John Derryman - Interim Chief of Corporate Services, Wiltshire Police

It was noted that Swindon Borough Council would aim to appoint substitute members at their next Full Council on 18 January 2024.

30 **Minutes and Matters Arising**

Cllr Ross Henning reminded the Police and Crime Panel (the Panel) that at their last meeting he asked about the attendance of the Wiltshire Youth Offending Team at Out of Court Disposal Scrutiny Panel meetings. He reported that the Wiltshire Youth Offending Team was run by Wiltshire Council and the Out of Court Disposal Scrutiny Panel was run by Wiltshire Police. The Chief Executive of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Naji Darwish, reassured the Panel that there were partnership case conference arrangements in place for any young person deemed to be at risk of offending behaviour, including lessons learnt from out of court disposals.

On the proposal of Cllr Sudha Sri Nukana, seconded by Cllr Henning it was resolved to make the:

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2023 as a true and correct record.

31 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

32 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman noted that Parliament's Home Affairs Select Committee was running an inquiry into the role of Police and Crime Commissioners and had received oral evidence on 8 November 2023. He requested that the [link](#) to the video of the evidence be circulated to the Panel and that they be kept up to date with the Committee's findings.

33 **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

34 **PEEL ENGAGE Process - Progress Update**

The Chief Executive of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) introduced a report about the progress made towards addressing the findings of a Police Effectiveness and Legitimacy (PEEL) inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) through the ENGAGE Process. The Chief Executive was pleased to report that three interconnected workstreams had been implemented and were delivering clear and measurable progress. The three workstreams were:

- Innovation and Improvement
- Target Operating Model
- Audit and Assurance

Cllr George Jeans arrived at 10:49am.

During the discussion, the following points were made:

- The Panel thanked the Chief Executive for the report.
- An external organisation planning review had been completed in November, with changes being implemented to improve leadership and culture.
- A new role of Chief of Corporate Services (CCS) had been created and would be advertised as a permanent position in the new year. The role was being filled on an interim basis by the OPCC's former Head of Strategy, Performance and Oversight, John Derryman.

- The role of Deputy Chief Constable (Operations) was now focussed on operational policing and the CCS would be responsible for corporate services. This allowed a respective focus on both 'halves' of the organisation.
- Both the new interim Chief of Corporate Services and Deputy Chief Constable were in their first week in their new roles. The Chief Executive explained that the relationship between the roles would be key and that both were keen to drive transformation and performance.
- Due to the significant work required in 2024 to lead on the Public Inquiry into the Novichok poisonings, Deputy Chief Constable Paul Mills would be solely focussed on this as well as the national police work on the inquiry.
- Craig Dibdin had been appointed as the interim Deputy Chief Constable (Operations) with a permanent recruitment due to commence at the end of December 2023.
- The Panel requested that they be sent an organogram showing the previous and updated force structures.
- In response to a query about Wiltshire Police's response to Clare's Law, (Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme) which allows individuals to request information about their partner's history of abusive behaviour, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Philip Wilkinson OBE MPhil, stated that he was deeply concerned. The Chief Executive explained that Wiltshire Police had made voluntarily referrals to the Independent Office for Police Conduct as required. The PCC reported that there was a large team looking into more than 3,500 historic applications to ensure that the information provided to applicants was correct.
- The Panel stated that they were incredibly concerned about the issues relating to Clare's Law and sought clarity about why this issue had not been identified earlier as part of the PEEL inspection. The PCC shared the frustration of the Panel that the issue was not identified at an earlier stage. He reported that this issue was partly identified from his office taking on responsibility for complaints and identifying service failures.
- Work was also ongoing by the force to ensure that management structures were robust, with the Chief Constable and PCC jointly determined to make sure that any failures were not repeated.
- As the issue relating to Clare's Law had not been picked up during the PEEL inspection, the Panel worried about what else may have been missed and asked what the next point of failure was likely to be. The PCC stated that the query about the unknown unknowns was a great strategic question and emphasised that he had confidence in HMICFRS. The Panel has been updated on the improvements to the force and the OPCC's governance to ensure there are effective controls in place and management grip. The PCC also highlighted the role that locally elected officials had, underlining that oversight on a day-to-day basis by his office was vital to complement the force's management and HMICFRS inspections.
- The Panel welcomed the investigation into the historic cases relating to Clare's Law and sought clarity about whether a similar audit was being conducted in relation to Sarah's Law, a disclosure scheme allowing

parents and guardians to ask the police whether an individual had a criminal record for child sexual offences. The Chief Executive reported that this was being considered as part of the disclosure of information to applicants and being included in the force's review.

- It was confirmed that additional resources had been put in place to ensure that other operational matters were unaffected by the investigations into Clare's Law.
- The PCC argued that the PCC model was the way forward for delivering accountability across South West England and believed law-enforcement was on the up. He commented that there were strong leaders in all five police force areas in the region, including PCCs with military and successful business backgrounds. He felt that transparency, experience and setting high standards were key to identifying issues and driving performance.
- The PCC also stressed the importance of translating improved performance into making the public feel that they were safer.
- When asked about when Wiltshire Police would be high performing, the PCC stated that there had been improvement since the previous meeting, and this was demonstrated in the highlight report and force performance.
- Details were sought about the input that the workforce had had on the external organisational planning review. In reply, the PCC praised the Chief Constable for her weekly communication with the force and her management of the process. He was confident that Wiltshire Police had a senior leadership team that listened and that they had achieved greater accountability by measuring it against a performance network.

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

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) delivered a presentation about the progress made towards the four strategic goals in his Police and Crime Plan over the past quarter. Key points included:

- Since the PCC's first Panel meeting, the number of officers in Wiltshire Police had increased by 149.
- New learning and development facilities had been opened in Devizes, including the refurbishment of the old helicopter hanger to deliver more robust safety and first aid training. The PCC said he would be pleased to invite the Panel to visit the new facilities, which were also being hired out to neighbouring forces.
- The week before last, the PCC had attended the attestation of the first tranche of 46 officers joining Wiltshire Police via a non-degree course. He felt that these new officers came with a range of life experiences that would complement the workforce.
- The PCC described the new Interim Chief of Corporate Services as a man of very considerable talent, who would ensure that the support services were in place to help the Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constables.

- The new Chief Officer Group also included two Assistant Chief Constables with responsibility for the day-to-day delivery of operations.
- There had been improved response times for both 101 and 999 calls over the last quarter, through better joining up of demand with resources, enhanced training and better technology. The number of calls had increased, which the PCC believed was a reflection of improving confidence the public had in reporting crime. He anticipated that the number of crimes recorded would increase with greater public confidence in the force.
- The statistics relating to violence and serious harm were improving, but the PCC stated that Wiltshire Police would not be complacent.
- The number of recorded rape victims withdrawing their complaints had reduced whilst the number of complaints had increased 14 percent over the past quarter. There had also been a significant increase in the number of people being charged in relation to these offences and the prosecution rate has also increased.
- Wiltshire Police were the best performing force per head of population in terms of the number of County Lines disruptions.
- A comprehensive package to tackling anti-social behaviour had been implemented with greater collaboration between partner organisations to address the underlying causes.
- In 2021 194 speed enforcement tickets were issued in Wiltshire, whereas over 12,000 had been issued so far in 2023. Evidence suggested that fewer cars were speeding in monitored areas.
- Operation Ragwort was targeting organised crime gangs in rural areas by working alongside other regional forces.
- A more consistent package of support was in place for the victims of serious crimes.
- The PCC stated that in 2024 a new operation model would be implemented, with a new management structure, more officers, better training and greater support.
- The PCC took the opportunity to thank the Panel for their support and praised the relationship between different partners in delivering better services for the public.

36 **Focus Topic - Neighbourhood Policing**

Chief Superintendent Phil Staynings delivered a presentation about neighbourhood policing, including the introduction of the new Target Operating Model that would reform the structure of response teams from 8 January 2024. Points included:

Target Operating Model

- Based on feedback from staff and external partners, the new model was being introduced to ensure the best use of resources so that demand was being met at the right times.
- The changes aimed to improve support for victims and build resilience within the team to improve morale.

- The Target Operating Model would be based around five hubs with officers shifting from a five shift to four shift model. The shifts would be slightly longer under the new model, ensuring a better overlap in the numbers of experienced staff on duty and improved visibility for the public.
- The changes focussed on response teams and there would not be any changes in the structure of neighbourhood police teams.
- Staff were looking forward to the changes, anticipating that it would ensure that the right resource was available at the right time.

Community Commitments

- Each local team from Wiltshire Police would establish a set of community commitments, which would be published in January 2024.
- The community commitments would include attending a public meeting at least once a month as well as stepping up online engagement.
- Wiltshire Police were looking to broaden engagement through watch schemes.
- The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) had funded two additional mobile police stations for use by neighbourhood police teams.

Neighbourhood Harm Reduction Unit

- Neighbourhood Harm Reduction Units were being introduced to focus on early intervention to prevent issues from escalating at a later stage. The team would work alongside partner agencies, such as health providers and with the criminal justice system to prevent demand.
- The team would help to empower communities through a primary, secondary and tertiary approach to harm reduction.
- The Chief Superintendent provided further information about the four pillared approach to reducing neighbourhood harm:
 - Community safety
 - Community initiatives
 - Volunteers
 - Children and young people
- Recent community activity in the area included safety sweeps to identify weapons, work with special constables, and mini police groups in schools. The Chief Superintendent also highlighted the role of several watch schemes including, Community Speed Watch, Lorry Watch, Dog Watch and Farm Watch.

Governance

- The Chief Superintendent was chairing the monthly Local Policing Board with oversight of operational delivery, which a number of sub-boards reported to. One of these boards was the Performance Board, which was

attended by inspectors on a rotational basis, allowing them to meet regularly with the Chief Superintendent.

During the discussion, key points included:

- The Panel thanked the Chief Superintendent for his presentation and requested that the slides were circulated to them.
- The Chief Superintendent highlighted that he was excited about the progress being made including the new model for the response teams.
- In response to a query about how resources were allocated between the five hubs under the new Target Operating Model, the Chief Superintendent stated that it was based on demand.
- When asked about how the new model would impact morale in the force, the Chief Superintendent reported that he had led an extensive three-month long consultation on the new Target Operating Model and that close to 80 percent of the workforce preferred it to the existing model.
- The Panel sought assurance about the action taken in relation to domestic burglaries (excluding outbuildings), given that the percentage of cases where further action was taken was 4.8 percent since April 2023. They also requested greater detail about outcomes in future reports. In reply, the Chief Superintendent recognised the huge impact that residential burglaries had on victims and stated that it was a key priority for the Chief Constable. He reassured that Panel that Wiltshire Police had a dedicated team focussing on burglaries and that every burglary was attended by an officer.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) emphasised the importance of communication in translating improved performance into the public feeling safer. He spoke of the need to work collectively, highlighting that he had attended a large number of Area Board meetings and taken steps to improve the quality of reports to those meetings.
- Detail was sought about what could be done to improve the timeliness of court services. In reply, as Chair of the Wiltshire Criminal Justice Board, the PCC, emphasised the importance of different agencies working together to find a collective solution. He noted that funding was provided by the Ministry of Justice. The Chief Superintendent reported that a new system had been implemented to speed up the transfer of large files of evidence from the police to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). The CPS were also being encouraged to provide early advice on how to improve the files.
- The five regional hubs under the Target Operating Model would each have a neighbourhood police team inspector allocated to them.
- When asked about what teething problems were anticipated during the implementation of the new Target Operating Model, the Chief Superintendent emphasised the importance of monitoring and forward planning. He noted that he chaired a meeting to review shift patterns and explained that they were already looking at the balance of resources for 2024/25.
- In response to a query about how trust and confidence in the police was measured, it was noted that the OPCC conducted a confidence and trust

report and that they were monitored by a public service board. Sense checks were also carried out using mobile police stations and other forms of community engagement. The Chief Superintendent noted that public confidence was improving.

- Details were sought about whether the increase in online reporting impacted on the quality of information that was received to aid investigations. The Chief Superintendent noted that structures were in place to deal with the increase. There was also consideration being given to establishing an allocations team with the aim of giving more strategic overview of demand and helping to identify risks and repeat offending at source.
- The Chief Executive of the OPCC explained that they had invested in new technology to reduce demand on staff to free up capacity to answer calls. Online reporting had to meet requirements set out by the Home Office to ensure that crime recording practices were complied with.
- When asked about how councillors should advise the public to report crime, online or via 101, the Chief Executive of the OPCC stated that they public should use the method that they feel is most appropriate as both followed the same process.
- In response to a query about the responsibility of officers to record video 'phone data, it was noted that every crime had a digital footprint, and that evidence was collected by the regional forensics service. The Chief Executive of the OPCC highlighted that there were challenges nationally in the private sector in training people with the right specialist digital analytical skills. However, regionally they were investing in the digital forensics service and moving towards a tiered approach with different levels of specialisms.
- There were not widespread reports of illegal animal slaughter in Wiltshire. The PCC was on the board of the National Rural Crime Network so had a broad overview. He also praised the fantastic Rural Crime Team in Wiltshire.

37 **Update from the Police and Crime Commissioner**

The Panel noted that the update had been provided as part of the two previous items.

38 **Forward Work Plan**

The Chief Executive of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner stated that a report on non-police commissioning services would be bought to the meeting on 7 March 2024.

39 **Communications**

The Chairman noted that the meeting was the Panel's first to be broadcast live and thanked those who were watching at home. It was noted that 13 people had been watching the stream and that the Panel tried to make their meetings as open and transparent as possible. The Chairman requested that a [link](#) to the

video be made available to the Panel members so that they could circulate it to the wider public.

The Chairman also noted that Wiltshire Council had ratified the Panel's updated [constitutional documents](#) at their Full Council meeting on 17 October 2023. As the documents had already been approved by the Panel and Swindon Borough Council they were now in force. He thanked the Panel for their work in updating their constitutional documents and noted that the changes had bought public participation deadlines in line with Wiltshire Council's other committees.

40 **Any Other Business**

The Chief Executive of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) reported that the OPCC's Chief Financial Officer, Clive Barker, had decided to take early retirement. The role would be covered on an interim basis, but the proposed permanent candidate would attend a confirmation hearing. Following the hearing, the Panel would produce a report making a recommendation on whether to appoint the candidate.

Details were sought on how many of Wiltshire Police's staff were proficient in British Sign Language. The Chief Executive of the OPCC offered to provide further information and reassured that Panel that there were clear policies and access to language services in force to ensure that policing interactions were carried out in an accessible manner.

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) confirmed that he was still lobbying MPs about the police funding formula. The Chief Executive of the OPCC reported that the Home Office had carried out a review. The outcome of the review had yet to be published but the technicalities and assumptions had been made available.

When asked about funding for air support, the PCC stated that the majority of PCCs and Chief Constables nationally were in favour of reviewing the funding arrangements. The PCC noted that he was on the National Police Air Service Board and that they were engaging proactively with the National Police Chiefs' Council.

It was noted that guidance was available from the OPCC about installing Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) and that details about [road safety](#) were on his website. The decision about whether to install SIDs would be taken by individual city, town and parish councils.

41 **Future Meeting Dates**

The next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel will be on 18 January 2024 at the Kennet Room, County Hall.

Other future meeting dates were:

- Thursday 8 February 2024, 10:30am – Council Chamber, Monkton Park

- Thursday 7 March 2024, 10:30am
- Thursday 27 June 2024, 10:30am
- Thursday 26 September 2024, 1:30pm
- Thursday 14 November 2024, 10:30am

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 12.30 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Matt Hitch of Democratic Services,
direct line , e-mail matthew.hitch@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line 01225 713114 or email
communications@wiltshire.gov.uk