

## Wiltshire Police and Crime Panel

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**MINUTES OF THE WILTSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETING HELD ON 7 MARCH 2024 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.**

**Present:**

Cllr Steve Bucknell (Chairman), Cllr Stanka Adamcova (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Abdul Amin, Cllr Ross Henning, Cllr Dr Brian Mathew, Cllr Kelvin Nash, 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  
Rob Llewellyn – Director of Operations, OPCC  
Matt Hitch – Democratic Services Officer, Wiltshire Council

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**23 Apologies for Absence**

The Chairman took the opportunity to welcome Cllr Kelvin Nash, who had replaced Cllr Elizabeth Threlfall on the Panel. The Chairman thanked Cllr Threlfall for her contribution to the Panel's work.

Apologies were received from:

- Cllr George Jeans
- Cllr James Sheppard
- Cllr Vijay Manro
- Cllr Sudha Sri Nukana

**24 Minutes and Matters Arising**

On the proposal of Cllr Ross Henning, seconded by the Vice-Chairman, it was:

**Resolved**

**To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2024 as a true and correct record.**

**25 Declarations of interest**

For transparency, Cllr Kelvin Nash declared that both his son and daughter in law were both serving detectives in Wiltshire Police. He made an additional

declaration that he used to work in communications and IT. As a business consultant, he played a part in bringing Airwave into several police forces. He had worked with a number of forces in South West England as well as the Metropolitan Police Force and West Midlands Police Force. Over his career he had held a number of roles including with all three blue light services. He was also member of Wiltshire and Dorset Fire Authority.

## 26 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman noted that the Panel would be kept up to date about the Home Affairs Select Committee's [findings](#) into the Police and Crime Commissioner Model.

## 27 **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

## 28 **Progress Against PEEL**

The Panel considered a report updating them on 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 Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Philip Wilkinson, OBE, MPhil explained that Wiltshire Police were making significant progress against the assessment criteria and he was optimistic that the force would be able to come out of the ENGAGE process following the conclusion of their forthcoming PEEL inspection. However, the PCC was keen to emphasise that there were a number of legacy challenges still to overcome and that progress had been faster in some areas than others.

During the discussion, points included:

- The Panel thanked the PCC for the update and welcomed the progress made towards addressing the findings of the HMICFRS inspection.
- The Deputy Chief Constable was leading an Evolve Team to look at innovation and improvement to achieve and surpass HMICFRS standards.
- In response to a query about what the PCC and Chief Constable were doing to oversee the accountability of middle management, the PCC emphasised the importance of buying into cultural change and ensuring that officers were promoted in line with their attitude and ability. The PCC challenged a third of middle managers to go further in buying into the cultural change required.
- The PCC informed the Panel that the motto of Wiltshire Police was Primus et Optimus (First and Best) and he always welcomed new recruits to come on a journey to improve the force. The PCC highlighted the importance of honesty and openness in addressing the challenges faced by Wiltshire Police.
- It was noted that paragraph 5.2 of the report referenced positive anecdotal feedback from the public, but that this contrasted with

evidence on page 37 of the agenda pack showing that dissatisfaction had gone up. The Chief Executive of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), Naji Darwish, clarified that figures on page 37 referred to the number of formal complaints regarding specific policing action, which had been increasing nationally since 2020 following the introduction of new legislation. Anecdotal evidence was in the form of more positive feedback from stakeholders and councillors regarding visibility and accessibility of local policing. This was an important element of triangulation, however, was not included in the Police and Crime Plan Highlight and Performance Report, which provided statistical information used to judge performance.

- Details were sought about the relative satisfaction rates in police performance between Swindon and the rest of Wiltshire, as well as the findings of the audit assessment of Swindon Community Police Team by Operation Evolve. The PCC reported that he had recently been to two parish council meetings in Swindon where he had received positive feedback. He stressed the need to translate improvements in performance into the public feeling safer. The Chief Constable would be able to provide further information about the audit assessment of Swindon Community Police Team.
- When asked about Wiltshire Police's abstraction policy and how it was being adhered to under the new Target Operating Model for response teams, the PCC highlighted that abstraction had historically led to a large overspend on overtime. However, under the new Target Operating Model abstraction was now actively managed. There were 214 more police officers in place than when he came to office.
- Further information was requested about the challenges of implementing the Target Operating Model, including a new shift pattern. The PCC reported that the new system was delivering but was kept under constant review. The neighbourhood framework across the county had been reinforced and that specialist teams had become more centralised to improve their tasking. He noted that some response teams were having to travel further than he would like but that they were continuing to refine the system to optimise performance.
- The PCC was asked how he would hold the Chief Constable to account and whether he had confidence that she could deliver the second phase of the Target Operating Model, given the challenges in middle management, high proportion of new recruits and staff in the Professionalising Investigations Programme. The PCC emphasised that he had confidence in the Chief Constable as she had a considerable amount of leadership experience and capability. He also spoke about the importance of training and support to enable effective working.
- When pressed on how he could better communicate the improvements in performance to the public, the PCC mentioned that the Chief Constable wrote him an open letter every fortnight. There was also more detailed information available to Area Boards about road safety. The Chairman suggested adding snippets of the Chief Constable's letters to social media.

- When asked about how to reassure communities, the PCC stressed the efforts that had been made to improve the continuity of staffing in neighbourhood teams so that they would have longer to build relationships with their communities. There had also been approximately a one third increase in the number of neighbourhood officers and the Chief Constable had published a series of community commitments.
- The PCC would be informed about Wiltshire Police's progress towards PEEL at the Police Performance and Oversight Group on 16 May and he would update the public about the findings as soon as he was allowed.
- The PCC noted that management processes had been reviewed to place greater emphasis on wellbeing and staff retention. In his view good leadership was fundamental. A chain of command had now been implemented to align, authority, accountability and responsibility, so that supernumerary measures should not be required. He explained that the Chief Constable was personable, but robust, in ensuring standards and performance was being focussed on within a strategic framework.
- News that the staff retention rate in the 101-call centre had improved was welcomed by the Panel. When asked about specific targets for retention, the PCC stated that these were not currently set.

At the conclusion of the debate, on the proposal of Cllr Abdul Amin, seconded by Cllr Tony Pickernell, it was:

### **Resolved**

**To note the PCC's report and assessment of the force's progress.**

## 29 **Police and Crime Plan Highlight and Performance Report**

Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Philip Wilkinson, OBE, MPhil, gave an update about the progress made towards the targets in his Police and Crime Plan, in particular efforts to reduce waiting times for 101 calls. In order to give the Panel greater insight, the PCC gave a brief overview of the process followed in the Crime and Communication Centre to respond to 101 calls. Key points included:

- The PCC clarified a number of acronyms in the report including, CCHQ (Centre Call Handler) and CRIB (Crime Recording Incident Bureau). He explained that call handler would triage information and pass it on to the police for an immediate response if required. Incidents requiring further investigation would be passed to the CRIB team.
- The PCC was pleased to report that, in the last two years, the response time to 101 calls had fallen from 28 minutes to around eight minutes, although this often fluctuated with demand. Greater automation was being introduced to reduce the amount of typing that call handlers would have to do when transferring information. Members of the CRIB team would also call the public back so that they were not required to stay on a call for an unnecessary length of time.

- Progression was available for call handlers, as they were able to join the CRIB team. The PCC reported that in the last three months, 14 call handlers had gone on to become police officers.

During the discussion, points included:

- The Panel welcomed the improvement in response times for victims and further efforts to improve efficiency.
- It was confirmed that the CRIB team were highly trained in investigative processes.
- The public were notified that they would be called back, so they were not left on hold for longer than necessary.
- When asked about why response times to attend incidents were higher in Swindon than the rest of the county, the PCC noted that response times were a combination of geographical and manpower issues. The Panel noted that they would welcome further information on the differentials in response times at their next meeting.
- When asked about whether similar efficiencies implemented to improve the response times to 101 calls could also be applied to online reporting, the Chief Executive of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), Naji Darwish, noted that online reporting was a national system. It had the same information requirements compared with speaking to an operator. The PCC observed that a number of forces had raised this issue with the police minister to see how technology could improve reporting.
- The Panel stated that they would welcome text appearing when the public received a call back from the CRIB team, so that they were aware who was calling them and to make clear that it was not a nuisance 'phone call.
- The PCC was asked about whether there were multi agency toolkits to share information about individuals who committed persistent low-level offences. The PCC explained that persistent offenders were known to neighbourhood teams and that bespoke responses could be put in place by working with different agencies, including local authorities and by using commissioned services.
- It was confirmed that the 25 percent reduction in fatal collisions in 2023 was benchmarked against the 2022 figures. The PCC noted that over 11,000 speeding sanctions had been issued in 2023 and that they had procured three speed enforcement vehicles.
- It was noted that the positive outcome rate for rapes and serious sexual offences had improved from below two percent to around 12 percent, meaning that Wiltshire had gone from one of the worst performing forces in the country to in the top quarter of best performing. The PCC noted that there was still a long way to go and that extra training was being put in place to tackle rape and sexual offences as well as domestic abuse.
- It was confirmed that all of the historic cases relating to Clare's Law (Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme) which allowed individuals to request information about their partner's history of abusive behaviour,

had now been processed significantly and that the force were close to completing all rectification work.

- The Chief Executive of the OPCC explained that changes to legislation in 2020 had significantly lowered the threshold for formally expressing dissatisfaction with the police. He noted that a complaints team within the OPCC had taken responsibility for responding to and triaging complaints and that they had been able to satisfactorily resolve 85 percent of cases, without the complaint being taken further. The majority of cases related to contact with the victim. The number of complaints nationally under the original threshold had remained similar. The PCC noted that there had been a large backlog of complaints when he took office and bringing responsibility for complaint handling into the OPCC, at the Chief Executive's suggestion, had significantly reduced the backlog.

### 30 **OPCC Commissioning, Grants and Partnerships**

The Director of Operations at the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), Rob Llewellyn, gave an overview of commissioning plans for non-policing services for financial year 2024/25, as well as the progress that had been made in 2023/24. He was pleased to report that over £5.2 million in 2024/25, including the addition of the Serious Violence Duty Grant and Safer Streets Fund from the Home Office. They were also awaiting confirmation of an additional £1 million of additional money for anti-social behaviour hot-spot policing as well as £500,000 for immediate justice, a project of restorative justice for relatively low level offenders.

The Director of Operations noted that their focus in the forthcoming year would be embedding the systems that they had implemented and ensuring that they worked effectively across the whole system. There would be an emphasis on performance management and improving outcomes. He noted that the key risk to the programme was uncertainty about funding beyond March 2025, given the likely election later in 2024. However, overall, the Director of Operations was very positive about the commissioning programme and outlined the achievements across the three core portfolios of their work:

- A. Victims and vulnerability
- B. Criminal justice and reoffending
- C. Community safety and youth

During the discussion, the following points were made:

- The Panel thanked the Director of Operations for his report.
- In response to a question about whether Wiltshire Police planned to introduce the role of Deaf Champion to help people with a hearing impairment, the Chief Executive of the OPCC, Naji Darwish, noted that the force were reviewing their equality and diversity strategy to make it as inclusive as possible. A new Director of People would start their role in April to review the plans.

- Further details were sought about the initial resourcing challenges that had occurred under the new provider responsible for custody healthcare provision. The Director of Operations said that the relationship with their provider had matured well, and the terms and conditions had been improved to attract healthcare professionals.
- The Panel sought the Director of Operations' view on the relative merits of face-to-face and online interventions. The Director noted that there was a mixed picture, but they monitored the effectiveness of both closely. He noted that online meetings tended to be used more for lower-level interventions. Those for the more serious crimes had significant face-to-face engagement.
- When asked about offender management and reoffending, the Director of Operations stressed the complementary skills of the private and public sectors in addressing this challenge. He noted that the OPCC would hold discussions with businesses later in the year to discuss opportunities for those coming out of the criminal justice system. They would also discuss how they could provide early intervention to stop people entering the criminal justice system.
- The PCC confirmed that the public consultation on where the public would like to see further investment, did help to set his priorities. He emphasised the importance of those coming out of the criminal justice system not being separated from the wider community. He highlighted that PCCs in the South West of England had all invested in the Prisoners Building Homes programme to build modular homes for vulnerable people in the community.
- The Panel said they would welcome further information on how the United Kingdom's reoffending rate compared with other countries.

At the conclusion of the discussion, on the proposal of Cllr Ross Henning, seconded by the Vice-Chairman, it was:

### **Resolved**

### **To note the report.**

### **31 Update from the Police and Crime Commissioner**

Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Philip Wilkinson, OBE, MPhil, provided an update about the National Police Air Service (NPAS). He explained that a number of forces in the South West of England were building up their own drone capacity to reduce their reliance on helicopters from NPAS. He reported that he had been helping to build a consensus that it would be possible for the service to be delivered more cost effectively at a local level and had been asked the policing minister to help draw up an operational construct for regional aviation support.

During the discussion, points included:

- The Panel thanked the PCC for the update.
- In reply to a question about whether there would be a reversion to the model used in the 1990s, when helicopters were shared with the air ambulance, the PCC spoke about the need to deliver a layered concept. Part of the consideration would be the opportunities presented by new technologies such as drones and satellites. They would also look at potential opportunities for collaboration with other agencies such as the coast guard or air ambulance.
- The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner were working with the Wiltshire Community Foundation to complete a mapping exercise of organisations providing support to young people. The PCC stated that he was keen to set up a list of youth organisations on his website to ensure that they all knew about each other and could make the most of their available resources. It was also noted that Area Board could be a convening group for local organisations.

## 32 **Communications**

The Chairman reported that Wiltshire Council's website had been updated to be more user friendly for screen readers. The update had made the pages on the website about the Panel more easily accessible for people with a visual impairment.

## 33 **Forward Work Plan**

The Chairman introduced a report on page 61 of the agenda pack prepared by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) inviting the Panel to identify four topics on which they would most like to receive strategic briefings. A list of potential topics was handed out to each member of the Panel and they were each invited to select four topics. The topics that received the most votes were:

- Reducing reoffending – progress against strategy (eight votes)
- Work to reduce anti-social behaviour (seven votes)
- Serious violence - new duty and partnership activity (four votes)

The following topics each received three votes:

- Neighbourhood harm reduction – progress and priorities
- Scrutiny panels and IAGs – out of court disposals, use of force and stop and search.
- Road safety – the new strategy and delivery plan with performance metrics

The Chairman used his casting vote to select neighbourhood harm reduction as the fourth topic to be considered.



Some members of the Panel also stated that they would welcome further information about the work done by volunteers to help Wiltshire Police. The Chief Executive of the OPCC, Naji Darwish, explained that this would be covered under the neighbourhood harm update. The Panel were also keen for information on stop and search to be included in the anti-social behaviour update. The PCC reported that they held a PCC awards for volunteers and the Chief Constable had developed a portfolio in the Neighbourhood Harm Reduction Team to support volunteers.

#### 34 **Any Other Business**

The Chairman reminded the Panel that they had discussed the possibility of bringing an annual report about their work to the respective annual Full Council meetings in May. He noted that the Panel's next meeting was not until June, so there would be limited opportunity for the members to comment on a report before the annual Full Council meetings on 17 and 21 May.

On the proposal of the Chairman, it was:

#### **Resolved**

**That it was delegated to the Democratic Services Officer to write an annual report on behalf of the Panel, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, to be presented to the respective Full Council meetings of Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council, on 21 and 17 May 2024.**

#### 35 **Future Meeting Dates**

The next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel will be on 27 June 2024 at 10:30am in The Enterprise Network, Salisbury.

Other future meeting dates were:

- Thursday 26 September 2024, 1:30pm
- Thursday 14 November 2024, 10:30am
- Thursday 16 January 2025
- Wednesday 5 February 2025

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 12.32 pm)

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

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