

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

15th January 2014

Introduction

This report sets out a summary of the commitments I have undertaken since the last Police and Crime Panel meeting held on 26th November 2013. I write a weekly blog which provides a brief overview for the public of what I have been up to. This is published on my website (www.wiltshire-pcc.gov.uk) and the content of these blogs is copied below for the Panel's information.

ONE YEAR ON

Posted: Monday 18th November 2013

Monday 11 November

We have invited all the local media editors in today, which is an opportunity to have a rather informal chat. In the end it seemed to be me talking for an hour! It was very much a reflection on the first year, with an interview afterwards with ITV for their one year on coverage.

The two weekly monitoring boards seem to come around very quickly. I was pleased to be able to share a letter from Policing Minister Damian Green informing me that I would be getting extra money this year for Restorative Justice, £47k, and to prepare for commissioning victims' services next year. Helpfully they have also given me figures for next year, which will make planning easier. Exciting work to be done. We also received an estate review and an update on cadets. I have asked for some work to be done on a pan Wiltshire strategy for CCTV, which I think will help the town councils and two authorities have some clarity around my funding.

In the evening I attended the Swindon West Locality meeting at the Link. Major agenda item was a proposed skate park, so it was well attended.

Tuesday 12 November

Office based day, centered around a review of performance in the force.

Wednesday 13 November

For the second time BBC Wiltshire Radio have invited the Chief and I to a joint interview. A new presenter, Si, took us through both operational and planning matters, including the budget for next year. Interesting to hear the Chief ask that we increase by an amount that would force a referendum! I'm not sure Wiltshire would want that, or indeed needs it.

In the afternoon I attended the health and wellbeing board. When you consider the link between drinking, drugs and crime this board will be very important for our joint working around the prevention of crime. I will be asking for a report on mental health detentions in custody to share at that board in the coming months.

Thursday 14 November

Our association, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCCs) have put on a birthday event in London, with the Policing Minister as a key speaker. It was good to hear him announce £20m for the service to innovate, especially around collaboration. I hope we get our act together in the south west and get some of this money. In future it will be ours anyway, as future rounds will be top sliced from our grant.

Neighbourhood Justice Panels was mentioned by one of the speakers and I ended up inviting all my colleagues down to Wiltshire to see the Neighbourhood Justice Panels in action.

Apparently I was also on Wiltshire Radio all day, with 'the day in the life' feature, so hope that was appreciated.

Friday 15 November

The Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) Value for money profile 2013 for Wiltshire has been published. Although there are four or five areas to work on, we came out very well with a cost per head of population of £159 against the national figure of £184. Of similar forces in the country we are the lowest. We

spent a couple of hours pouring over the charts and figures, of what is one of the most useful things to be prepared by HMIC.

In the afternoon the Chief and I gave a presentation to the Deputy Lieutenants of the county about our respective roles and a reflection on one year. In the evening I was on a 'Question Time' panel for Swindon North Rotary. Interesting to see all the briefing notes that some of those on the panel had. Extremely useful on questions around the economy and Europe, but they didn't help with questions about what tattoo you would have!

Sunday 16 November

A real pleasure to attend the regional Special Constables event and the awarding of the Arthur Ellis awards. Wiltshire were the hosts this year and there were presentations all south west forces about the good work their Specials had done on specific operations or projects. Big cheer when the competition was one by Specials from Calne for their work with young people and support of Bluez 'n' Zuz, made even more sweet by being the second year in a row we have won. Well done team.

During the awards I was asked by my colleague from Dorset why Wiltshire Police had a Maltese cross in the logo. From a bit of research I think it mirrors the Wiltshire Regiment which adopted the eight point cross after service in the Mediterranean and Sicily in the period 1800 to 1813...unless any blog readers know better! Why the overall shape has been stretched from a circle to an egg shape I have no idea at all.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING AND CRIME

Posted: Friday 29th November 2013

Monday 18 November

Starting the week with my fortnightly meeting with the Head of Finance. We continue to be on track to make the current savings required, but not to fill the future funding gap in 2015/2016, so I need to prepare some material to present the case for an increase in the police and crime element of council tax. I've also just heard that the fire at the Blackrock Range (tri police force firearms training facility) has put back the opening by more than a year. The opening was supposed to be in the new year, so that is further savings that will be delayed.

I was invited by the Chief Constable to join his internal online chat with staff to mark the first year. Most of the questions were, rightly, for him, but it was a chance to emphasis the investment being made into IT.

Being a member of the health and wellbeing boards is very important to this role, so I was very pleased to join a planning workshop in Swindon around the direction for the boards. It was a good opportunity to feed in 'crime' to the agenda and we explored some useful areas around duplication.

Back last year I was 'sent on holiday' by the team here, and as a result we had to postpone my speech to the Keevil Society. This was rescheduled for this evening and I had a very warm reception. It is certainly a cohesive community and even choir practice was truncated so members could attend. Useful feedback around neighbourhoods as well.

Tuesday 19 November

In the morning I attended the Learning Disability Partnership Board in Swindon where I was invited to speak. Not directed connected, it reminded me to review the autism awareness card scheme, which was reported on at both health and wellbeing boards, but also that there is a need to establish or perhaps re-establish safe places in Swindon.

When the human trafficking awareness evening was held in Swindon I was keen to replicate it across the county, so I have made contact with the charity, Unchosen. They would like to link up with someone to run events next November, so thinking caps on!

There are a few big set piece events in the PCC calendar and the 'Meet the Commissioner' public performance meeting is one. This time held in Swindon, in the grandeur of the Council Chamber. We work very hard to publicise the meetings, so I was a tad disappointed by the attendance, but that said several had driven a long way to be there and all were engaged in the two way debate. It certainly works well having the Chief Constable there and there was a lively debate over the police and crime element of council tax level as well as the real/perceived benefit of more cops on the street.

Wednesday 20 November

We have decided that there would be benefit to meeting the Police and Crime Panel Chair in between meetings, so early morning coffee with Richard Britton. It was a useful hour to manage each others'

expectations of the meeting next week, then off to Swindon Women's Aid in Swindon. I was pleased to support a young person Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) and we did a piece for the local paper about the job and appointment, which has been commissioned through my Innovation Fund. The bigger piece of work is a full review of the IDVA provision and funding across the county.

Back to the Council Chamber in Swindon to speak at a British Citizenship event. This is always a privilege and very enjoyable. This was followed by a viewing in Melksham of the plans for the campus there. The transformation of Melksham House and the surrounding area is very exciting, and whilst Melksham Custody Suite is not too far away it will be so much better to have the neighbourhood officers based in the town.

The day finished by a networking session at the Bradford-on-Avon Area Board. I had an idea that Shreddies were made in the county, but the baking smell was very apparent at the Staverton Factory where we met! No issues raised for me so back to Swindon for a relatively early 8.30pm.

Thursday 21 November

Wiltshire Council Health and Wellbeing Board in the afternoon, and a chance to see a bit more of the refurbished County Hall. One thing that came out of the Swindon workshop earlier in the week was always to think 'wellbeing' and well as 'health'. I suppose it is a little like my mantra around the '.and crime' part of my job, but for an outsider it could all get too clinical. No blog tomorrow as I have a leave day.

SOUTH WEST PCCS SIGN OFF FORENSICS COLLABORATION

Posted: Tuesday 3rd December 2013

Monday 25 November

Very pleased to have been asked to join the civic line up for the Prince of Wales's visit to the Sherston shop, post office and enterprise, all of which have been reborn in the old village school with the help of one of the Prince's schemes. Also today the Lord Stevens Report was published, which suggested the office of PCC is scrapped. Rather misleading entitled 'Report of the Independent Police Commission' it was commissioned by the Labour Party. It is certainly a document that harks back to a previous age, but in fairness with the odd good point.

Media interviews today as the Home Secretary is announcing the roll out of both Clare's Law and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs). Wiltshire has been trialing both so the Home Secretary visited for the launch.

Commissioners Monitoring Board in the afternoon, where we looked in detail at the finances, ICT and collaboration which will be discussed on Wednesday at the regional meeting,

Tuesday 26 November

Another of the set piece meetings, with the Police and Crime Panel being held at City Hall, Salisbury. I thought it was a really enjoyable meeting and gave me the opportunity to update members on both performance and other aspects of the job.

In the afternoon I was joined by Wiltshire Council leader Jane Scott, Swindon Borough Council leader David Renard, Wiltshire Police Chief Constable Pat Geenty and Rosemary Macdonald from the Community Foundation to look at applications for the second round of the Innovation Fund. We had 47 applications totaling nearly £1.5 million for £330,000 so it was quite a job, but we got there and I think there are some really good projects. Equally there were some ideas that will be worthy of consideration as mainstream commissioning.

Wednesday 27 November

Up even earlier than usual for a briefing on Operation Harness before accompanying officers on a drugs raid. The theme of the day was the disruption of local drug suppliers, something I was keen to support. Not exactly a dawn raid as the first door was knocked at 8am, but the occupant was still in bed so all was well!

Then down to Avon and Somerset's HQ at Portishead for the regional meeting of Police and Crime Commissioners. I'm really pleased that we signed off our collaboration around forensics and agreed that we would apply to the new government fund for some funding in support of this and some other of our regional projects. That said, there is a long way to go on regional work and I don't think we have achieved as much as we should have done in the first year, after all Scotland have fully merged their forces in the same period, not that we want to do that.

Thursday 28 November

7am in the BBC for interview about tonight's meeting of the Federation of Small Businesses and then a drive to NHS England for a summit on Sexual Assault Reference Centres (SARCs). This was really interesting, and a good piece of regional work developing around the victims of sexual offences. I learnt a lot during the morning and it was a real help in formulating plans around the victim agenda and future commissioning.

Then across the county to the Haynes Motor Museum near Yeovil for a 4pm start of a conference being held by the Federation of Small Businesses. Our complex fraud team presented and Avon and Somerset PCC Sue Mountstevens and I gave a view on our roles. We were all promoting Fraud Alert, but one point I was pleased to make is that this service is provided by the National Crime Agency and not local forces. That said it is incumbent of PCCs to monitor and challenge the service, after all the majority of 'modern' crime will be reported through this. The conference finished around 9.30pm, so by the time I got home at 11pm it was another 16 hour day!

DO WE NEED TO RELAUNCH THE AUTISM ALERT CARD?

Posted: Monday 9th December 2013

Friday 29 November

This job is very broad and not just about crime. Thus today I was having a look at the autism alert card (developed by Wiltshire Police in partnership with autism charities in Wiltshire, including the National Autistic Society and the Swindon-based Discovering Autistic Spectrum Happiness (DASH)). The idea of the card is that it can be carried by anyone with an Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) and used in situations where people with ASC might find communication difficult, for example if they come to the attention of the police, the criminal justice system or other services. I have heard that getting a card is quite difficult and that the take-up is low. I think there is more to do here, and perhaps a relaunch is necessary. However the first thing will be to meet DASH in Swindon.

To Wharf Green in Swindon where Wiltshire Police, Swindon Community Safety Partnership (SCSP) and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service launched their Christmas campaign. The focus is on how to stay safe whilst out and about and how to help prevent crime during the festive season....

Following the High Sheriff's recent concert in aid of Youth Action Wiltshire, I invited the organisation to come in for a chat. They have 77 affiliated youth clubs in the county and are a useful resource for those wanting to start a club. I am pleased to have made contact with them.

Monday 2 December

The morning was taken up with the Wiltshire Assembly held at the very impressive new theatre at Tidworth. We were given a full briefing on the effect of the return from Germany of the Army, many of whose soldiers will be based in our county,

On the way back to Devizes I took a detour to Salisbury Custody suite to look at the new video link between the cells and the court. This will enable hearings to be held in a virtual court without having to move detainees around the county. It should work and be more convenient. There are issues that will have to be sorted, especially around the custody transfers, and the time that those who are remanded stay in police custody.

PCCs have been given new money this year to prepare for commissioning services for victims. Planning started today, but already I am keen that we try to increase resources around domestic violence and also look at our definition of victim. It should not just be confined to those who are in contact with the criminal justice system, but should include other victims in the wider society.

In the evening I visited Devizes Boxing Club, one of ten clubs in Wiltshire and Swindon that have signed up to the Outbox scheme that is supported by my Innovation Fund. It is a multi-agency scheme designed to refer young people to boxing clubs and to support, guide and mentor them. The aim is to give individuals a positive focus, reducing their risk of becoming involved with anti-social and/or criminal behaviour.

Tuesday 3 December

A brief hello to our partners who organise the Safe Drive Stay Alive roadshow. Today they are making a presentation at Dauntsey's School in West Lavington, Then off to a briefing on the fraud profile of Wiltshire. This is an area in which there is a lot of work to do, not least because of the non reporting of such crime. I'm keen that as PCC we seek a way to hold the National Crime Agency to account for its work around fraud and the operation of Action Fraud, the national reporting hub.

I invited the Chief Constable to accompany me on a visit to the force contact centre and the emergency contact centre at the Devizes HQ. The performance of staff dealing with calls now consistently exceeds the standard and I thought that it was time to say "thank you". It was also an opportunity to formally announce a £1.8m investment which will bring call centre teams together under one roof in a modern, efficient office.

The day finished with an update on the finances. I will be preparing a presentation to take out for consultation after Christmas, but I am more and more minded to seek a £3 per year increase in the police and crime element of the Council Tax, and that is before hearing what the Chancellor has to say in his autumn statement at the end of the week ...

Wednesday 4 December

At the regional meeting of PCCs earlier in the month I signed the draft code of ethics drawn up by the College of Policing. Internally the force have also developed a code and we will be looking to set up an independent strategic board to oversee its use. As we work so closely with both Wiltshire and Swindon councils it seems to me that we should seek to involve them so that our staff are all working to the same code.

Thursday 5 December

I had almost forgotten that I was on the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) reference group as it seem ages since any referring was done. Anyway an hour-long telephone conference took place today as we went through the agenda for the January meeting, as well as discussing accommodation, external communications and whether the APCC should apply to the Home Office's Innovation Fund. The fund, which consists of £20m this year, is designed to encourage new ways of working, especially around partnerships. The force has put in one stand-alone bid and we have put in three from the South West, only one of which was fully supported by all the south west forces. We really do have some way to go with collaboration.

On to a monthly update with Wiltshire Council leader Jane Scott and officers at County Hall before a Safeguarding Improvement Board, where I was held to account for the service and activity of the Constabulary. I seem to be drawn south for Wiltshire area boards at present ... an evening in Downton where I received a very friendly reception.

DOWN ON THE FARM, A GOOD IDEA TAKES ROOT

Posted: Monday 16th December 2013

Friday 6 December

Of all the projects supported by the PCC's Fund, which is run by The Community Foundation for Wiltshire and Swindon, the Caen Hill Countryside Centre farm project was the one I most wanted to visit. Today was the day. Situated at the bottom of Caen Hill just outside Devizes, the farm is a Wiltshire Council tenancy, but the land has not been farmed for many years. There is about 70 acres and the idea is that it will be a centre for learning rural skills in a hands-on way. A group was planting a hedge when I visited, but the wider vision is to provide a diversion for young people, especially those who are - or have been - in trouble. There is a long way to go yet, but it is a good project.

Saturday 7 December/Sunday 8 December

A weekend off, so away to London.

Monday 9 December

A morning looking at the performance figures, followed by a meeting of the Commissioner's Monitoring Board in the afternoon. The agenda included the interim Treasury Management Report, and an update of the progress regarding our estate at Salisbury and Corsham, plus a paper about the number of officers we can recruit and pay, given the reduction in funding that has already been announced. Protecting neighbourhood police teams is at the centre of all we do, but that does require better regional working on other police activities and a change in pace in our alliance with Wiltshire Council.

Tuesday 10 December

At the Home Office with the Chief Constable to hear about their Innovation Fund. Interesting timing given that the application had to be in on Friday. The Crime Prevention Minister came and read a speech, but I'm not sure it added anything to the event. It is interesting that ministers seem never to take the opportunity to listen to those who are at the coal face. This was a room of PCCs and Chief Constables, all of whom have the reduction of crime as their main reason for getting up in the morning, and yet no interaction. Overall it was an "interesting" day, but - given the time and costs - not that worthwhile. Returning to Wiltshire I got

stuck in a traffic jam caused by a collision so missed the public carol service in Malmesbury. I heard later that the Police Band performed well.

Wednesday 11 December

A meeting about our estate with colleagues from the force and Wiltshire Council, followed by a briefing on where Neighbourhood Watch is progressing in advance of a formal meeting. After a couple of private meetings I headed south for the area board in Bishopstone near Salisbury.

Thursday 12 December

An early start in Chiseldon, but only just up the road from my house. I met the Community Speed Watch volunteers who were joined by Inspector Steve Cox and Sergeant Barrie Card from the Roads Policing Unit. It was all part of the latest Operation Harness day of action. Sgt Card was there to breathalyse any speeding motorists. Quite a number were stopped, but it was pleasing that none were over the limit.

I also attended the launch of The Honest Truth, a campaign to enlist the support of driving instructors to explain to young people the terrible consequences of anti-social driving. The instructors are asked to talk about the dangers of distractions, not wearing seatbelts, speed, drink, drugs, mobiles, showing off and the impact of not having insurance.

At lunchtime I visited Outset in Swindon who are jointly funded by Swindon Borough Council and the European Community to offer help to those wanting to start out in self employment. Given the difficulty of getting a job when you have a "record", this is a useful service for ex-offenders.

Following that I went to Semington to visit Wiltshire People First. Situated in what was once a workhouse, they are advocates for those with learning difficulties, rather like Swindon Advocacy Movement. It was good to meet them and understand their work.

In the afternoon we had a reception in Devizes for those who were successful in gaining grants in the second round of my Innovation Fund.

Eleven projects were commissioned and a total of nearly £327,000 was awarded from my capital reserves.

Tonight it was my turn to be the driver for the Filling Station, a Swindon charity with which I am closely involved. It provides food for those in need. It was a welcome return to the streets and the real world, even if I was tracked down by a photographer from the Swindon Advertiser. I have to say her attention was drawn to the homeless person with two white rats up his jumper ...

Angus Macpherson
**Police and Crime Commissioner
For Wiltshire and Swindon**