

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

5th March 2015

Introduction

This report sets out a summary of the commitments I have undertaken since the last Police and Crime Panel meeting held on 15th January 2015. 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.

POSITIVE FEEDBACK FROM COUNCIL TAX CONSULTATION

Posted: Thursday 29th January 2015

Monday 12 January

First morning meeting was looking at the police performance statistics. Then I had a further meeting on CCTV in the county and the links it has into the Crime and Communication Centre at Devizes HQ and it looks like progress is being made. I then looked at present and future budgets with the finance team. I also checked the website responses about the precept proposal and was pleased to see that the majority are in favour.

I then met the Chief Constable and we drove to Westbury to launch Community Messaging. The system has been well received by Neighbourhood Policing Teams and by the public across Wiltshire. Fifty six people signed up in Westbury in the two hours we were present. A great result.



Chief Constable with Angus at Westbury's launch event

In the evening, I addressed the Swindon West Locality meeting at the Link Centre. There was a lot of support for the £3.06p increase in the precept for an average band D property. Furthermore there have been many positive comments from members of the public who have noticed an increase police presence in their neighbourhoods. From the Link Centre I went to the station to catch a train to London to be ready for meetings tomorrow.

Tuesday 13 January

Today I had a briefing from the National Crime Agency, which covered a lot of useful ground. It is interesting that they have not yet had to use their power of direction over the local forces. But the debate around national, regional or local policing continues. I am committed to local policing delivered locally. But I also recognise the benefit of specialist regional support. After the briefing I visited Justin Tomlinson, MP for Swindon North and Duncan Hames, MP for Chippenham, to brief them on the precept proposal and to hear their concerns on policing and crime matters for their areas. Both were kind to acknowledge what I am doing to protect local policing and my growing relationships with the local authorities.

Wednesday 14 January

The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) seeks to ensure that people serve the sentences and orders handed out by courts, both in prisons and in the community. NOMS is accountable for how prisons are run in England and Wales. Through [HM Prison Service](#) it manages public sector prisons in England and Wales. It also oversees probation delivery in England and Wales through the [National Probation Service](#) and community rehabilitation companies. Andrea Torode, Deputy Director of Rehabilitation Services for the South West and the Midlands, came to see me to discuss how contracted-out rehabilitation services will be managed. She was accompanied by her colleague Matt Douglas.

Next up was a phone call from one of my regional PCC colleagues, Tony Hogg. He represents people in Devon and Cornwall.

Like many people, I have been concerned about the number of young people killed or seriously injured on our roads over the past year. I discussed these recent tragedies with Insp Steve Cox, Head of Road Policing Operations.

After a quick break for lunch, Sgt Michael Hughes, the Mental Health Liaison Officer, arrived to discuss a paper for tomorrow's Health and Wellbeing Board meeting at County Hall. The paper provides an update on the number of people detained under section 136 of the Mental Health Act who are held in police custody.

Then it was off to Trowbridge with the Chief Constable for a meeting of the Wiltshire Public Service Board which, among other things, heard from a senior official from Working Links which is the preferred bidder to run community rehabilitation in Wiltshire; received an update on child sexual exploitation; a presentation by me on the roll-out of Community Messaging and how public sector organisations can benefit; and on the preparation and planning to deal with any potential ebola infection in the county.

A brisk walk to Trowbridge Station for a train to Swindon and on to a meeting of the trustees of Broadgreen Breakfast Club which offers support and a free cooked breakfast to homeless people in the town.

Thursday 15 January

Today the Police and Crime Panel met in Swindon. This was my opportunity to thoroughly explain what the Medium Term Financial Strategy demonstrates in regards to future funding and to introduce my proposal for next year's precept. My increase seems very modest at £3.06 for an average band D property; compared with the larger percentages that are being canvassed by some PCCs. Surrey is looking for 25 percent or £1 a week. The precept consultation will be discussed at the next Police and Crime Panel meeting at County Hall on 5 February.

The rest of the afternoon was spent with the Wiltshire Health and Wellbeing Board. I was able to report on the numbers of people with mental health issues who were taken to custody. We agreed that we would look at each case in more detail at future meetings and refer to the Mental Health Concordat we have all signed.

Luckily the Area Board was also in Trowbridge, so I spent the evening there. My agenda item was very late into the meeting and many had left by the time I was called on to speak. It was interesting to hear how groups had spent their Area Board grants and again, I received support for my precept proposal.

Friday 16 January

First thing in the morning I had a meeting with the head of People Services and dealt with an employment matter, before attending a grants meeting at the Wiltshire Community Foundation in Devizes. The Community Foundation distributes money from the Police Property Fund on my behalf, as well as having an excellent overview of need and opportunities in the county. This was followed by a meeting at Dauntsey Academy Primary School. A busy week, so I was pleased to have no weekend duties.

DRIVING DOWN SPEED, DRIVING UP SAFETY

Posted: Friday 30th January 2015

Monday 19 January

My week began with a briefing from Special Branch. Following the tragic events in Paris, and bearing in mind that the UK terrorism threat level is currently at 'severe', it was good to have some reassurance from officers in this area who told me there is no specific threat to Wiltshire. We must, however, remain vigilant and work together.

This was followed by a performance brief and then an update at the Commissioner's Monitoring Board on various matters, including the provision of a custody suite to serve the south of the county. The custody review team are due to report in April.

In the evening I attended the Chippenham Area Board to talk about my proposal for the policing element of council tax for 2015/16. There was general support for the proposition of a £3.06p increase for an average band D property and lots of compliments about the provision and visibility of the police within the area. It seems the work with local authorities is beginning to mature and I look forward to the opening of the Town Centre Hub in Swindon in a week or so.

Tuesday 20 January

Today is my birthday, so a brief "Happy Birthday" from the family before travelling to Headquarters for an 8am meeting with Sue Mountstevens, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset.

The main activity of the day was Operation Harness. Around 120 Community Speed Watch (CSW) volunteers and 50 Wiltshire Police officers carried out roadside speed checks at 40 locations across Wiltshire and Swindon.

Community Speed Watch is about local volunteers driving down speed and driving up safety. It is good to see they are getting involved with local policing matters and showing that speeding will not be tolerated in their area. The teams I met in Wroughton and Leigh were enthusiastic and dedicated to their scheme and it was great to see them work collaboratively with the constabulary out on the roads.



Angus with Wroughton Community Speed watch

As a result of the operation, 208 vehicles were identified as speeding, 147 vehicles were stopped with 132 drivers given warnings about their speed.

In the evening I gave the precept consultation presentation to the Swindon South Locality. There was again, a positive response from those present. It was good to see the local neighbourhood team, including the Inspector, present at the meeting.

Wednesday 21 January

An early start with a drive to Bridgwater in Somerset for the regional gathering of chiefs and PCCs. The whole atmosphere of the meeting was encouraging with everyone focused on a common aim. We were joined by our Community Rehabilitation Company and learnt more about the future probation provisions across the region.

In the late afternoon I joined the celebration for the work of Splitz in Wiltshire. It is 25 years old and provides help to individuals and families through times of difficulty to enable them to achieve and sustain independence. They do this through a variety of one to one and group initiatives delivered in the home or at venues in their local community.

The Lord-Lieutenant kindly gave me a lift back to Wroughton and it gave me a chance to talk to him about issues concerning the county.

Thursday 22 January

In the morning, I had my monthly meeting with Superintendent Marion Deegan who is responsible for the crime prevention portfolio for the county, among other things. It is interesting to note that many forces no longer have such a post, which I find very worrying. Much of her work is about volunteering and it was good to be updated on the positive stories that have come out of the volunteering programme.

This was followed by a meeting at Dauntsey's Academy Primary School before joining Jane Scott, Wiltshire Council leader and David Renard, Swindon Borough Council leader, at the Civic Offices in Swindon. I updated them on my talks with the Avon and Somerset PCC about a Strategic Alliance. It is important for it to be clear that local neighbourhood policing and response will not be in scope for the alliance. I will be building on the relationships with both councils to protect the local flavour of our policing in Wiltshire.

In the evening I was guest of the Wessex Brigade at a dinner at Tidworth Barracks. It was a very late but enjoyable evening. Friday 23 January

Had an early start attending the Swindon Chamber of Commerce business breakfast. This was a good opportunity to speak to business owners about their policing concerns. I am pleased that police visibility is appreciated and noted by those who attended.

Then I went to meet the local National Farmers Union and Country Land and Business Association. These meetings are very useful and I was pleased to be joined by the Rural Crime Team. This enabled us to talk about any rural issues and get an overall update on rural crime. It was an opportunity for me to promote Community Messaging again and confirm that Farm watch and other watch schemes will be rolled out over the coming months.

In the afternoon I attended the Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse (AAFDA) annual conference. This was addressed by Robert Buckland, the Solicitor General and Baroness Newlove, the Victims Commissioner. The conference was held at the Christ Church Hall, which has been redeveloped and is now a very good conference facility.

In the evening Sara Jane and I attended the annual dinner to the Swindon and District Caledonian Society. I gave the toast of the Immortal Memory of Robert Burns. The society has been active since around 1900 and my great grandfather was a founder member. I can't help comparing its purpose with that of The Tamil Association or the Bangladeshis. The society exists to promote the Scottish heritage with dance and verse. The difference is the time and the age.

Sunday 25 January

Following on from Burns Night I was pleased to join the Swindon Puja Committee for its Devi Saraswati celebration. There was a religious ceremony followed by a cultural event and meal. Around 400 people attended and I was pleased to be asked to say a few words. I even danced!

PARTNERSHIP WORKING WITH AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND LOCAL COUNCILS

Posted: Tuesday 3rd February 2015

Monday 26 January

First thing this morning I caught the train to Bristol Temple Meads to meet Sue Mountstevens, Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset Police. We are attending a media facility where we will be announcing our plans for a Strategic Alliance between our two constabularies. This is something we have been discussing since the end of last year and, after the talks we had last Saturday, we both thought it was right that our employees and the public have a better understanding of what the Strategic Alliance means and what it includes. I am still committed to our relationship with the local councils who are working alongside our Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Response, but they are not part of the talks with Avon and Somerset. We both think that our constabularies can be more effective together than apart.



Angus with the PCC for Avon and Somerset Sue Mountstevens

Neighbouring forces in Devon and Cornwall and Dorset announced their Strategic Alliance in December 2014. The advantage now is that we have four forces who are bringing policing together whilst maintaining their own identity at a local level. At our regional meeting we will be ensuring that the two alliances don't diverge but converge for the benefit of policing in the South West. I am equally committed to local policing being delivered locally. With the Strategic Alliance and the growing links with our councils, I see this as being a way forward to protect local policing from the pressures of both finances and resources at a regional level.

I told you in a previous blog that I attended a meeting in London with the National Crime Agency and it was quite apparent there that the local, regional and national debate continues.

My precept consultation at area board and locality meetings is now coming to a close. My proposed increase of £3.06 for an average band D property is to protect local policing and response so that local policing is paid for out of local money. In my view this is important to protect Wiltshire Police serving Wiltshire people. For some time now we have worked with partners and other forces, however we must never lose local policing. This is what the Strategic Alliance and the precept aim to achieve.

I'm pleased that I had the opportunity to speak to local MPs and council leaders in advance of the Strategic Alliance announcement and all supported this direction of travel for the police. Wiltshire Police has worked with Avon and Somerset in the past. The consolidation of existing departments will build on existing relationships.

Tuesday 27 January

Today's first meeting was with Swindon Borough Council to discuss funding for Fresh Moves for the coming years. I then attended a Holocaust memorial at the cenotaph in Swindon. This is the third year I have been to this ceremony and it is always moving. Not only are we remembering those who died in Nazi Europe but those who died in genocides since such as in Rwanda and Darfur. It's only by stopping and remembering these horrific events that we can hope to learn for the future. I was impressed by the number of young children who attended and are studying these events at school. Hopefully when they grow up there will be no repetition of these events.

Wednesday 28 January

Having been out of office for two days, today was a good day to catch up with office work and have a communications update. With the launch of the Strategic Alliance on Monday and opening of the Swindon's Town Centre Hub tomorrow it is going to be a busy week. In the afternoon I went to Royal Wootton Bassett Academy where the students have been collecting tins of food for the homeless for my Filling Station charity. I was very pleased to receive a cheque from the school from Royal Wootton Bassett Bakers and Iciers and a cheque from the school who sold sweets. The profits go to local charities. It was good to meet some of the students and I got the opportunity to thank a teacher, Deborah Sheehan, for her contribution to helping the homeless in Swindon. She will soon be leaving the academy but will continue to support the homeless in her new role.

Thursday 29 January

After a blood test at 8 am I attended the official opening of Swindon Town Centre Hub. The officers are now stationed on the civic offices campus which gives them easy access to the town centre but for me, more importantly, they can liaise with the council staff easily and face to face. So many issues in neighbourhoods arise from issues which have roots in housing, education and health. Therefore the local police working with professionals from local authorities is a tremendous benefit to the communities. We still have a little bit of work to do around ironing out the amount of public access that will be available, but I'm sure with the goodwill of the Swindon Borough Council we can achieve an answer which suits us all and, most important, serves the public.

In the afternoon, I had a governors meeting at Dauntsey Academy Primary School. Before heading south to Morgans Vale and Woodfalls village hall, south Salisbury where the southern Wiltshire Area Board met. I am nearly at the end of my presentations of the precept proposals and all the area board and locality meetings have been made easier by the attendance of PCSOs and NPTs. The value that the people of Swindon and Wiltshire place on local policing is reflective of the vote taken by the chairman of the meeting which was overwhelmingly supportive. One person at the meeting put the increase into context - a person spending money on ten cigarettes in a day costs twice as much as my proposal for a year.

Friday 30 January

Up at 6.30 am to get a lift to Cumberwell Golf Course for a meeting of Wessex chamber of Commerce. The meeting addressed by the Wiltshire Council leader, Jane Scott. What she said reflected what I have been saying about the precept. Whilst Wiltshire and Swindon councils are not seeking an increase, it must be remembered that a greater proportion of the total income of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner is from central government. So the effects of the central cuts are felt more severely in policing. It is good to attend these meetings and hear positive stories of policing in Wiltshire and Swindon, but that is only because of the strength of local policing, we must not lose that strength.

Then I went back to the office to sign certificates for the positive tickets scheme. Eight young people in Calne have received these tickets so far. This was an initiative created by officers in Calne and supported by the council and Calne Area Board. The tickets to reward young people who show good behaviour and set good examples for others. These certificates will be presented to the young people at the area board next week which I will be attending. I look forward to meeting the recipients.



Angus signs the positive ticket certificates with PCSO Mark Cook and Community Beat Manager Sonya Stockhill

Nice to have an evening off and I enjoyed a meal out with friends which was a pleasant way of ending a very busy and eventful week. Furthermore I was pleased to hear that Bob Wright from Swindon Borough Council has taken up some of the issues I raised about partnership working when I tried to help a homeless man to find shelter in Swindon.

CHIEF TELLS ME OF HIS DESIRE TO RETIRE

Posted: Tuesday 17th February 2015

Monday 2 February

I had an excellent start to the week with a visit to the chiropractor. There was a lot of bone "popping" but I have to say my monthly visits have kept me out of pain.

First meeting of the day was with Councillor Emma Faramarzi and the Head of Housing for Swindon Borough Council, Michael Ash, to discuss the current state of the Community Safety Partnership in Swindon. In my opinion we haven't established a programme that works.

This meeting was also a good opportunity to bring the borough up to speed with where Wiltshire Police is generally and I brought up my concerns over the decrease in numbers of anti-social behaviour officers. I need to know the effect this will have on the residents of Swindon.

I then had a performance briefing. We looked at the normal statistics for performance which are generally very satisfactory at present. This was followed by a Commissioner's Monitoring Board (CMB). I am pleased that we are within budget for December and our police officer numbers are being maintained. Furthermore the finances appear to be following the plan we expected.

I have asked at future CMB meeting that we have a report about our use of the National Police Air Service to ensure we are using its services and to ascertain its value for money, now that it is provided to us under a national agreement. We also discussed the Swindon Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and the integration of front line service desks as well as Lorry Watch.

I then went to the Steam Museum in Swindon for a presentation of Chelsea's Choice. This play is performed to audiences of year eight students across Swindon and it's about child sexual exploitation. The play was very powerfully produced and I hope that all year eight students will gain some knowledge of how to spot and deal with exploiters in their day to day social lives. I then made the journey to London as tomorrow I am attending The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) conference.

Tuesday 3 February

The APCC conference was held in Marsham Street, Westminster and during the day I was introduced to Chief Constable Sara Thornton, the Chair elect of the National Police Chiefs' Council. It is good to see this new body is ready to take over from the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). We were also joined by Lord (Tom) McNally, the chair of the Youth Justice Board, and his Chief Executive who reminded us of their priorities and how they engage with youth offending teams at a local level.

The meeting then moved on to eight updates from our standing groups covering such things as supporting victims, strategic policing and partnership working. Then we discussed a major topic concerning the police ICT company we commissioned. As a whole, I agreed to support the proposal for the company to be established and also approved the delivery plans for 2015/16. However, I raised matters around finances and whether the money we were being asked for to set this up could be considered as a loan to be repaid once it was up and running as it is a company limited by guarantee. I will be having a discussion with the directors later about my point.

Wednesday 4 February

In the morning I caught an early train from Swindon to Trowbridge for a meeting with Wiltshire Council Leader Jane Scott and Corporate Director Dr Carlton Brand. We were also joined by the Chief Constable and he shared his desire to retire from Wiltshire Police. He had mentioned this to me in confidence on Monday but obviously we must now share his wish to retire with our officers and staff and the public, via the media. There were no major issues raised by Wiltshire Council at the meeting and they agreed our work with them in co-locating is developing well.

In the afternoon I was back at headquarters to meet the new staff of Horizon Victim and Witness Care. In March 2015, Horizon will be launched by Wiltshire Police, working in partnership with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

I have commissioned Horizon to ensure that every victim of crime benefits from the best possible integrated support service according to their needs. Horizon Victim and Witness Care is a new team of police staff who will help to provide a co-ordinated, consistent end-to-end service for victims and witnesses, from their first point of contact with Wiltshire Police, through the entire criminal justice process. I am looking forward to Horizon's launch and to meet the staff again when they are getting their teeth into their roles.



(Chief Constable and Angus with the Horizon Team)

I then had a review of complaints before making myself available to the press to talk about the Chief Constable's desire to retire.

Thursday 5 February

In the morning I caught the train to Trowbridge and had to go via Bath. Somehow the Trans Wilts Express, which goes directly from Swindon to Trowbridge, seems not to run when I need it. I hope one day I can get on this mysterious train.

The major item of today was putting my proposed council tax increase of £3.06 a year for an average band D property before the Police and Crime Panel. I was pleased to share with the committee the outcome of the consultation both online and at area boards and locality meetings which was mostly supportive of the increase. I was pleased that the majority of the panel members saw fit to endorse the proposed increase. I also updated the panel about the proposed Strategic Alliance with Avon and Somerset Constabulary and explained it doesn't include local policing or response. I hope I was able to allay any fears they had about policing being reduced in local communities. Obviously, I also formally notified the members of the Chief Constable's desire to retire after 33 years of service to policing.

I then returned to headquarters for a presentation about phones for vulnerable people. This is something I am very enthusiastic to promote as many force areas in the country already have this in place and as a national scheme it is well worth us pursuing.

POSITIVE ACTIONS DESERVE POSITIVE RECOGNITION

Posted: Tuesday 24th February 2015

Monday 9 February

An early start this morning with an interview for Corsham TV. I haven't met this media organisation before but, being based in Corsham Institute, I'm interested in the concept of a local web-based TV station and its possible development and expansion across the county.

This was followed by the usual performance and finance meetings and a meeting with Bill Fishlock, chairman of the Audit Committee, to plan the next agenda and future meetings.

The day finished with a visit to the Holiday Inn Swindon, to meet those who provide appropriate adult services for those young people in the county who are in custody. The volunteers are an essential part of dealing with young vulnerable people in custody and this was a good opportunity to say thank you to them.



Angus with appropriate adults at the Holiday Inn

Tuesday 10 February

Had a meeting first thing with Tim Mason, the chair of the Crime Reduction and Community Safety Strategy Board. We discussed the agenda for the next meeting but the meeting schedule for February has to be postponed as the two council leaders are unable to make the dates and are an integral part of the board. To remind readers, this board oversees mental health issues within crime reduction, partnership engagement in Operation Harness days of action, restorative justice training and our support for victims through the new victim services like Horizon Victim and Witness Care which is launching on 24 March.

At lunchtime, I saw the occupational health doctor who keeps an eye on my working hours. Occupational Health have been a very good support for me and the office over the past few months and we have decided to maintain contact for the future.

In the evening, I attended Calne Area Board. The emphasis was on community safety and various stalls had been set up. I spoke briefly about Community Messaging which has now launched throughout the county. Interestingly, Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service want to be a partner in the system which is good because Community Messaging is not meant to be a police- only messaging service.

One initiative that has been promoted locally by the area board and town council is the issuing of positive tickets. These are awards given to young individuals who have demonstrated good community behaviour. I presented eight young people with certificates for their good behaviour in the town. This is perhaps something other area boards should consider developing with neighbourhood policing teams as I think it is a good scheme of reward and recognition. There were no concerns from the public at the meeting about local policing.



Angus at the police stall at Calne Area Board

Wednesday 11 February

In the afternoon, I attended the chairs advisory board for Swindon Heath and Wellbeing Board. I am very pleased that Mental Health Concordat will be on the agenda for the next meeting and there is now an action plan so all partner agencies can ensure we meet the standard in the concordat.

Another paper which will be discussed is a site loss joint strategic need assessment. I am interested in following this up with the constabulary as I visited Wiltshire Sight a few months ago and it concerns me that with the increase in the longevity of life, the number of people leading an active lifestyle with sight loss is on the increase. We need to ensure that those of more advanced years have the right support to manage their reduced vision

Thursday 12 February

This morning, I had the Strategic Improvement Board, chaired by Deputy Chief Constable, Mike Veale. The board looks at the performance of the Force including licensing, specials, sickness and complaints as well as planning for Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC).

The figures to the end of December show that crime has reduced and Wiltshire and Swindon statistics are the lowest compared to our most similar forces. Victim satisfaction is significantly above our peers and public confidence is stable and high at 83 per cent. I was pleased to see that anti-social behaviour in the year to date is down ten per cent. In the meeting was also given a demonstration of Quickview which is the tool for inspectors to understand what crime is occurring in their area. This has been developed over the last six months.

This meeting lasted two and a half hours and went into a lot of detail around performance across the force. We are now at the stage at which I will be publishing the progress of the Force in my Police and Crime Plan based on recent figures.

In the evening I chaired a meeting about the Filling Station, which regular blog readers will know is a soup run for the homeless in Swindon which I run.

Friday 13 February

I can drive again. Today I have my driving licence, so I had a leisurely drive to work in a borrowed car as mine needs it's MOT and tax sorting out as it has been resting for eight months.

I had a Commissioner's Monitoring Board meeting but this was cut short due to a request for an interview from BBC Points West with Steve Brodie. The interview was focused on the Chief's desire to retire and the timing of that retirement given the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) investigation which is ongoing. Steve started the interview with comments made by Unison and the Police Federation about a lack of leadership in the organisation. I explained that these concerns have not been raised with me nor are they reflected in the performance of the Force.

I must admit I am surprised that Unison have not requested a meeting with my office to share their concerns but what I would say is that my role is to commission a service and that service is being provided well by most measures, and my door is always open..

In the evening I attended the annual meeting of the North Wiltshire Conservative Association in Malmesbury. I must admit the most memorable part of the evening was being able to drive myself to and from the meeting

Angus Macpherson
Police and Crime Commissioner
For Wiltshire and Swindon