

Police and Crime Panel Report for Overview & Scrutiny – October 4 2021

Date of Panel: 28 September 2021

Agenda item no	Agenda item
1 & 2	<p>Apologies and minutes</p> <p>One issue raised but otherwise minutes agreed as accurate</p>
3	<p>Declarations</p> <p>None</p>
4	<p>Update from commissioner</p> <p>The commissioner reported that his programme of roadshows are going well.</p> <p>In his first months of the job, he has focused on analysing the finances of the constabulary, with a view to finding the funding for an additional 300 officers and a further 100 extra staff members. The new officers will be phased in, with 200 starting in the first phase and 100 in the second.</p> <p>The commissioner and the chief constable agree that there are problems with force control room which need resolving. In particular there are concerns about the integrity of crime data.</p> <p>The deputy commissioner also provided an updated. He has been focusing on visibility, and looking to improve Safer Gloucestershire. A new Terms of Reference will be put together by a working group and the deputy commissioner is looking forward to working with council leaders on a range of issues.</p> <p>The chief executive informed the panel that the constabulary has received a silver award at a public transformation event. The award was for the Sabrina Centre, which is now one of the best training centres in the country.</p> <p>The OPCC is about to recruit a domestic and sexual violence consultation officer, whose work will help focus work towards the meaning and purpose of the Domestic Abuse Act.</p> <p>Commissioner Q&A</p> <p>Members had questions for the commissioner relating to the introduction and financing of the new officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- the commissioner explained that some financing could be found by spreading the cost of equipment over time and by increasing the public precept- new officers will be phased in over the course of the commissioner's three-year term- the new officers and staff members will cost £10m over three years- this plan has been reviewed and is supported by the commissioner's financial team

	<p>The commissioner requested that the panel form a financial working group to review his proposals, including the precept uplift in February.</p> <p>Further questions related to rural policing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the commissioner intends to double the number of specialist officers and PCSOs, which will mean that there will be a 7-day per week policing service for rural areas - since taking office, the commissioner now feels that local authorities will prefer low cost solutions for roads policing, rather than ANPR and drones
5	<p>Draft police & crime plan</p> <p>The panel received a presentation on the draft police and crime plan. Key elements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a retained focus on the county's approach to restorative justice, which it feels delivers better outcomes for victims - the child-friendly Gloucestershire initiative is of high importance to the OPCC - this is considered to be in line with the commissioner's new zero tolerance approach, because it is designed to prevent things from happening in the first place - the OPCC will conduct a crime survey with residents, to empower local communities <p>Statistically, Gloucestershire is the seventh-safest county in the United Kingdom. But the commissioner feels that there is a discrepancy between how safe the county is statistically, and how it is in practice. This is because there are deficiencies in how crimes are reported by the constabulary. He believes there is a mass of unreported crime – such as sexual abuse, domestic abuse and shoplifting – and wants to do more to encourage the public to report crimes.</p> <p>The commissioner sees how his commissioner's fund can help this and says his opinion towards retaining the fund has is shifting now that he is in office.</p> <p>The commissioner intends to have greater public accountability and believes strongly in partnership working. He is hoping to make his roadshows a more regular fixture, and also asked panel members to arrange for their councils to invite him to hold meetings with them.</p> <p>DM resource shortage; how effectively we are using existing resources; what powers do you have as pcc to encourage police force to use police officers' time more effectively</p>
6	<p>E-scooters</p> <p>The panel discussed the existing enforcement regarding e-scooters.</p>

	<p>The OPCC relayed statistics to the panel regarding seizures, and commented on the ability of the operator, Zwings, to bar people from using their vehicles if bad behaviour is reported.</p> <p>As chair, I asked the commissioner what his position is on enforcement, and how the police will be expected to enforce rules if the trial is successful. I informed the commissioner and his team that members of Cheltenham Borough Council had expressed concern to me about an intentional lack of recording of any warnings issued to riders, which undermines the constabulary's ability to escalate punishment for repeat offenders.</p> <p>The commissioner repeated that Zwings have the power to ban riders, and that any incidents should be reported to them.</p> <p>A conversation followed, the outcome of which is that the OPCC will review the data from Zwings and the police, to see whether enforcement from either organisation is resulting in fines for riders and penalty points on driving licences. As far as the commissioner is aware, fines and points are being issued in the county and so there may be an issue with Cheltenham's recording of incidents.</p> <p>Members also noted that e-scooters are a mode of sustainable transport, which will be needed in order to hit carbon emissions targets.</p>
7	<p>Future of the mounted police</p> <p>The commissioner has recently reviewed the mounted section. He has concluded that the existing model is not fit for purpose and isn't achieving what was talked about in the business case.</p> <p>The financial argument for retaining the section is weak. New stables at Bamfurlong reportedly cost several hundred thousand pounds, while costs recouped from renting mounted officers out for events is not profitable. However, making a decision on the unit is not an urgent priority.</p> <p>One member requested that the chief constable came to the panel to present the case, stating that the mounted section is hard to evaluate in terms of money as it is a hearts and minds element of the constabulary.</p> <p>Members expressed concern about the potential cost and lack of profitability.</p> <p>This prompted a further conversation about the quality of financial control and the use of public money. One member referred to figures mentioned earlier in the meeting, saying that £10m to cover the costs of 400 people over three years only allowed for several thousand pounds per person, and called for the urgent provision of high-level costings in order to discuss things properly.</p> <p>This returned the panel to discussions about a proposed budget working group. It was agreed that the panel clerk would invite members to form a working group, which would meet well ahead of the police precept meeting in February.</p>
8	<p>Panel work plan</p> <p>Members noted the work plan and agreed to review it at a subsequent stage.</p>