

Police and Crime Panel Report for Overview & Scrutiny – 23 November 2021

Date of Panel: 3 November 2021

Agenda item no	Agenda item
1 & 2	<p data-bbox="451 434 751 463">Apologies and minutes</p> <p data-bbox="451 495 783 524">Minutes agreed as accurate</p>
3	<p data-bbox="451 557 751 586">Declarations of interest</p> <p data-bbox="451 618 517 647">None</p>
4	<p data-bbox="451 680 695 710">HMICFRS REPORT</p> <p data-bbox="451 741 1358 860">The constabulary recently received an inspection report containing several inadequate ratings. Three senior members of the constabulary attended the meeting to discuss the report: Chief Constable Rod Hansen, Assistant Chief Constable Rhiannon Kirk and Detective Superintendent Richard Ocone.</p> <p data-bbox="451 896 1369 981">Recognising the sensitivity of this report, as chair I requested that panel members and the commissioner conducted themselves in a collaborative and constructive manner.</p> <p data-bbox="451 1016 1358 1135">The commissioner introduced the report. In his opening remarks he pointed out that the data within the report relates to a time when he was not in office, but accepted that austerity has had a serious impact on policing. He is working with the chief constable already to find and implement solutions.</p> <p data-bbox="451 1171 1369 1321">While he and the chief accept the findings of the report, they also have reservations as to its fairness. The period under review was one of significant strain for police nationally and that the structure of the report itself contributed to a negative assessment. The structure of these reports has since changed, as the inspectorate itself accepts this.</p> <p data-bbox="451 1357 1342 1507">The Chief Constable Rod Hansen gave the panel a detailed assessment of the report and how it is constructed. He is determined to address the shortcomings identified. While he welcomes the scrutiny, he felt that the report gave no flexibility to the impact and consequences of policing the pandemic.</p> <p data-bbox="451 1543 1369 1780">Additional policing requirements in the past two years have included: 2019 general election, Brexit, G7, Euro 2020, Black Lives Matter protests, rioting in Bristol and COP26. Policing the lockdown had multiple additional, well-documented challenges, including many people trying to reach their second homes in the Cotswolds, and people heading to beaches and other leisure destinations. Furthermore, with the police unable to work from home, the high exposure to the virus meant that 600 police staff and officers were made to self-isolate over this period.</p> <p data-bbox="451 1816 1342 1901">The constabulary performs its own assessment and, according to its own records, would have delivered an outstanding rating in some key areas had the review period been different.</p> <p data-bbox="451 1937 1358 2022">An additional complication is that the review period happened while the constabulary was transitioning between two OPCC administrations, affecting its financial and strategic performance.</p>

	<p>The commissioner is in the process of recruiting 300 more officers and 103 more staff members. Many of these staff will be deployed to the control room in order to cope with demand. New technology will be brought in, especially to handle 101 calls. The commissioner has undivided and total confidence in the policing team and the chief constable and his team.</p> <p>The member response to this report and item was positive and collaborative. Members recognise the issues raised, appreciated the chief constable and his team attending to discuss the issues, and understand that the report in question has existing frailties. While all members expect a high standard of performance from the constabulary, they also consider that the constabulary is performing well under difficult circumstances.</p> <p>It was agreed that the OPCC would present a recovery plan overview at the next panel meeting.</p> <p>Panel members decided to pledge their support for the constabulary. As there is no specific mechanism for doing this, I requested indicative votes by show of hand, and panel members voted unanimously to support the constabulary.</p> <p>The chief constable expressed his thanks and assured the panel that he takes these matters very seriously and will do better in future.</p>
5	<p>AMENDMENT TO HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE</p> <p>This was a minor point to reword a procedure. It passed unanimously without need for debate.</p>