

## Briefing Note

### Overview and Scrutiny: Member Questions on the Police and Crime Commissioner's report/operational

OPCC, November 2023

*“The main purpose of the request is for Councillors on the committee to receive an overview of the current position in terms of levels of criminality in Cheltenham, with a particular focus on anti-social behaviour and organised crime. The committee would be interested to hear how success is measured and what the levels of performance are in a Cheltenham context.”*

NB: The Constabulary will be in attendance for the OS Committee to answer operational questions. There is a clear line between the Constabulary and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and that is along the line of operational duties that are the responsibility of the police. The questions posed will therefore be responded to from the perspective of the PCC, not the Constabulary.

#### **1. Question from Councillor Tabi Joy**

While I appreciate the results of the HMIC[FRS] inspection conducted this summer isn't suitable for full review at this time, what are the recommendations from it that you're beginning to implement now?

The 'hot debrief' from HMICFRS regarding their most recent inspection only happened on Wednesday last week (15/11/23). This is an informal part of the process, and discusses emerging themes, rather than providing specific gradings and can differ from what appears in the inspectorate's report. In the hot debrief, the Constabulary and invited observers from OPCC hear what the inspectors have found in their inspection via a presentation and then. In approximately two months, we will receive a draft report from HMICFRS.

We have an opportunity to provide feedback on this draft and this is then taken into consideration by HMICFRS. Their reports are then mediated with the other force inspection reports and only once this process is completed, will we receive a final report. This is likely to be early next year.

With this in mind, I'm not able to share the findings of the hot debrief as I have given an undertaking to the inspectorate not to share this information, and the content of the final report may vary from the points discussed in the hot debrief. Attendance at these briefings is restricted for example and we don't want to jeopardise our relationship with HMICFRS by saying something that may change or that they wouldn't be happy with.

We can say that the experience of being in engage has taught us (both the OPCC and Constabulary) to be much more self-reflective and rigorous in how we monitor performance. We can't (and won't) wait for inspection reports to tell us when things aren't right – we need to engender an environment where we speak truth to power so that issues are raised and dealt with as soon as possible, not just sit on issues hoping they will go away. That is a culture I am actively supporting as PCC.

Supporting Gloucestershire Constabulary in efforts to make the necessary improvements to exit the 'engage' process has been an absolute priority for me resulting in Gloucestershire exiting 'engage' in the fastest time of any force. Supporting the Constabulary has included (indicative only):

- Close scrutiny of force improvement plans and robust holding to account of the Chief Constable for their delivery
- Funding provision and reallocation including for ICT improvements and additional staff in the Force Control Room, in specialist teams such as those investigating child abuse and serious sexual assaults and financial support for in-depth demand analysis that led to an enhanced operating model for the whole force
- OPCC staff secondment into the Constabulary to support with the aforementioned demand analysis
- The development of joint performance monitoring and analysis through the creation of a PEEL monitoring tool developed by OPCC Senior Analysts
- OPCC support through staff involvement of a HMICFRS style review into neighbourhood policing

The supportive approach I have taken has facilitated the rapid exit from engage by the Constabulary. In fact, in his letter to the Chief Constable Rod Hansen providing formal notification of the decision to remove the Constabulary from the engage process, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Andy Cooke, commended the work of the Constabulary and OPCC:

*“Can I commend you and your staff on your engagement, professionalism, and determination to improve the safety of communities in Gloucestershire. Gloucestershire Constabulary and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner should be rightly proud of the significant improvements they have made during their engagement with the inspectorate.”<sup>[1]</sup>*

The experience of being in 'engage' and joint working between the OPCC and Constabulary has led to stronger links between the two entities. It is always vitally important that the two organisations respect their independence and respective roles however, both the OPCC and Constabulary have shared priorities (as per the Police and Crime Prevention Plan) and can support each other in realising our shared goals. This includes how we approach tackling ASB and VAWG as well as serious violence, support for victims and ongoing scrutiny. I have also been clear, as has the Chief Constable, that we would like the Constabulary to be Outstanding in the future. That is why we have retained the governance and oversight methodology we put in place to recover from being in Engage, and to use that rigour to help us reach 'Outstanding'.

## **2. Question from Councillor Tabi Joy**

It's good to see measures taken to protect women and girls, but I'd like to hear more about measures to address transphobic violence and intimidation faced by trans and gender non-confirming people, who have been facing a significant rise in hostile incidents over the past decade. What work are you carrying out and planning to approach this issue?

It is very important to note that both the Constabulary and OPCC strive to deliver equal service to all people and that hate crime is not prioritised by protected characteristic. Our work is driven by reducing hate crime, improving confidence to report hate crime and the adoption and promotion of non-discriminatory policies and practices.

The Constabulary rightfully has a full time dedicated Hate Crime Coordinator (Police Constable) who advises, assists and supports the wider Constabulary in helping to

<sup>[1]</sup> Letter from Chief Inspector of Constabulary Andy Cooke (HMICFRS), to Chief Constable Hansen (Gloucestershire Constabulary), 20 September 2023

upskill the workforce to deal with hate crimes effectively. The post holder additionally working with partner agencies across Gloucestershire to deliver on four strategic objectives outlined in a county-wide strategic hate crime plan. She is also the regional lead for the national LGBTQ+ Staff Association for policing nationally.

The Constabulary Hate Crime Coordinator works in close partnership with the Victim Support Coordinator for Hate Crime (funded by the OPCC) and a group of community hate crime volunteers within a steering group structure. Additionally there is a Superintendent Strategic Lead who oversees the portfolio of work for the police.

Both Constabulary Hate Crime Coordinator and the Victim Support coordinator will update the Safer Gloucestershire Partnership on all activity, including relevant statistics. This gives local Community Safety Partnership (including Cheltenham) leads the opportunity to understand local issues and influence ongoing activity.

OPCC specific: The OPCC has statutory responsibilities for the management of a scheme of volunteers that visit custody on a regular basis to check that the rights and dignity of detainees are being adhered to and maintained. These volunteers, Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs), receive a programme of training throughout the year from the OCPC from subject experts, including on equality and diversity. On request from the ICVs, training was delivered by an international lead for trans policing that coincidentally happens to be a warranted officer from Gloucestershire Constabulary.

The training inputs received by the ICVs ensures that the volunteers can check that the right dignity questions are asked of detainees and relevant safeguarding practices are adhered to for all communities. This is especially important in a custody environment as the experience of being a detainee can and will heighten stress and the need for safeguarding vulnerable individuals.

Further, our Domestic Abuse / Sexual Violence (DASV) Consultation Officer links with members of the LGBTQ+ partnership as part of the DASV consultation network. She has worked with GDASS on their Flushing Away The Myths campaign which was around hearing from underrepresented groups and engaging with them. This will remain an important part of the consultation work to ensure we do all that we can to broaden representation.

In conclusion, the Constabulary aims to become an anti-discriminatory organisation. Any offence where there are reasonable grounds, will be investigated and the OPCC will work with the police and partners to support communities to build confidence to report. Key to supporting this is improving the legitimacy of the Constabulary and key to that is improving diversity among the workforce. That is why the OPCC supports continued investment in the Better Together team.

### **3. Question from Councillor Tabi Joy**

It's important to encourage safe active travel to deal with a range of intersecting problems, including road maintenance to cope with higher volumes of vehicles, as well as potential speeders or dangerous drivers that can be difficult to enforce against. Combined with a recent trend in SUV ownership that can lead to higher-impact collisions, often causing tragic consequences, I'd like more information about the ways in which you're strategically working with Gloucestershire Highways cyclists and pedestrians are given equity of roadway use to stay safe.

Use of the Highway is a function of the County Council and in particular allocation of road space is a role for GCC, so it wouldn't be right for us to comment on the specifics of this question. However, through the newly reformed Gloucestershire Road Safety Partnership (RSP), one of the work streams the operational group are taking forward is looking at all vulnerable road users, and considering what sort of education and awareness raising campaigns we could take forward to keep all road users safe.

This could include things like Close Pass operations, which we have recently undertaken in Stroud with support of our Mounted Unit, and other education sessions including looking at the use of VR headsets to help highlight the vulnerability of other road users.

Road safety is one of the areas which concern our communities the most, which is why the OPCC works closely with a range of partners, to identify as many ways as possible of improving safety on our roads via the RSP. Interventions have included road safety education in schools, the provision of speed detector cameras to support the development of the Community Speedwatch scheme and the continuation of novice driver training with Under 17 Car Club Charitable Trust Pathfinder initiative.

The RSP has also offered communities and Parish Councils the opportunity to bid for funding to install a Community Speedwatch (CSW) cameras. These cameras collect vehicle details of those exceeding the speed limit so that letters can then be sent to advise safer driving. The cameras are provided by the County Council and the Constabulary Road Safety Team. The partnership liaises with local communities with regarding to siting of equipment. The following CSW cameras have been sited in Cheltenham: Charlton Kings (1), Benhall (1) and Prestbury (4)

In addition, an innovative new app, developed by the Constabulary alongside RoadHow (an organisation focused on road safety behavioural change), allows residents to report commercial vehicles for poor driving and parking as part of the newly launched 'Commercial Vehicle Watch'.

#### **4. Question from Councillor Tabi Joy**

Anti-social behaviour during Race Week has frequently been raised as an issue of concern, and many service workers during this time experience harassment at work when they're not empowered to leave the site. There's significant pressure just to smile and keep working even when you're feeling intimidated. Are you working on an awareness and support campaign to protect service workers and let them know both their rights and the networks available to them, as well as strategies for mitigating incidents while at work or when leaving the premises? Could this become an extension of the work you're already doing to address an increase shop-lifting?

When the OPCC bid for Safer Streets 3 funding from the Home Office, which was specifically focused on violence against women and girls (VAWG), we canvassed stakeholders and experts for their case studies as we know that VAWG offences are not always reported to the police. We heard stories about female students avoiding the town centre during race week and a hairdresser who ended up shutting up shop following continued abuse from pedestrians outside including an incident of flashing.

These stories, and others have helped us develop a whole range of activity to tackle VAWG, including campaign work including:

<b>SSF3 (2021/22)</b> £1,061,477 for VAWG	<b>SSF4 (2022/23)</b> £691,340 for VAWG	<b>SSF5 (2023 – 2025)</b> £442,950 for VAWG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bystander training - This focuses on primary prevention, tackling the attitudes that contribute to VAWG in a meaningful way and gives people the skills to prevent wider discrimination in society.</li> <li>• Sex worker outreach programme (SWOP) – funding towards supporting SWOP in Gloucester</li> <li>• <u>Consent video</u> – video and education package for primary school age children to learn and talk about consent. Understanding what consent is and what it means. “It’s not about getting the answer you want, but listening to the one you get”</li> <li>• Boost - As an early intervention programme, BOOST aims to increase awareness of compassion, empathy and humility. This will enhance self and social awareness and socially acceptable behaviours which serves as an added barrier to adverse behaviour traits</li> <li>• <u>Gloucester Park</u> - developments in the park, including lighting, CCTV and a community engagement officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Stalking Campaign</u> - romantic comedy trailer made to highlight the problematic behaviours which constitute stalking. A larger media campaign accompanied the video</li> <li>• Educational theatre - work in schools/colleges raising the awareness of violence against women and girls and misogyny</li> <li>• Local target hardening – CCTV, lighting and public realm improvements throughout the county, particularly in public spaces</li> <li>• Sexual harmful behaviour training for restorative Gloucestershire team</li> <li>• Personal safety apps and alarms – distributed through victim services throughout the county</li> <li>• Target hardening for Community Safety Partnerships</li> <li>• Spiking machines – purchased to be utilised in the night-time economy throughout the county</li> <li>• Street medics and night safe officers in Gloucester</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Op Vigilant - A plain clothed police operation in Cheltenham town centre to identify and disrupt predatory sexual behaviour</li> <li>• Educational theatre - work in schools/colleges raising the awareness of violence against women and girls and misogyny</li> <li>• CCTV, lighting, public realm improvements – funding throughout the county to improve feelings of safety, particular in public spaces</li> <li>• Young person’s engagement worker – delivered in schools, colleges and universities across the county. Develop age appropriate learning materials and presentations to include consent, healthy relationships, and a streamlined bystander programme.</li> </ul>



We work closely with Community Safety Partnerships to develop these schemes as we recognise that they are closer to the ground than us and more sighted on community issues. If they raise issues with us, we will try to build in approaches to deal with them.

With regards to the specific question about whether we could extend this approach to shop workers, this is definitely something to consider, although I would like to do this in partnership with the industry to give is the best chance of a much greater reach . The Jockey Club are renewing their very successful 'Love our Turf' campaign to tackle anti-social behaviour, and I would definitely encourage them to consider something along these lines as part of that campaign, not just for their own staff, but for others in Cheltenham Town as well.

#### **5. Question from Councillor Tabi Joy**

Following the increase of policing staff across Gloucestershire, do you collate data on ensuring that officers can effectively collaborate with one another? Given recent tensions of national UK police forces being 'boys clubs' that can exacerbate inner workplace tensions, particularly when staff are often working to tackle crimes that trigger trauma or distress, it's important to have reassurance of internal accountability and a code of working practice to ensure that police staff are well supported and given emotional support where needed. Can we learn more about your approach to this

We assume this question may be (at least in part) with reference to the Casey Report and recent high profile, tragic cases.

The first thing to say is that Gloucestershire Constabulary and the OPCC has not read that report and smugly thought that this is just a Met issue. We have looked at what the report says and what we can do to identify and deal robustly with any such similar issue as soon as possible. This includes, for example, a review cross referencing the new Enhanced Operating Model with the findings of the Casey Report to try build in positive, inclusive working environments for all personnel.

All officers (and staff including OPCC) are vetted and adhere to the national Code of Ethics for policing. The Constabulary is also investing in understanding how the workforce feels about working for the force including research into experiences of female officers and will shortly be commissioning a cultural audit of the whole organisation.

I would also highlight that, the Constabulary training and development department invest a great deal of time in ensuring that new entrants to the organisation, whether they are staff members or police constables, have a sound grounding in the Constabulary's values, and emphasise the importance of ethics and professional standards. I am supportive of this approach, as I am a strong believe that one of the ways you build a supportive culture in an organisation is to embed it from someone's first day in the organisation.

With regards to being trauma informed, our Occupational Health Department has expanded and access to support is readily available if and when needed. The supportive Leadership course, for example, includes a talk from the Chief Constable about how repeated trauma had actually damage the brain, therefore stressing the importance of looking out for each other and supportive wellbeing.

After any traumatic experience, officers and staff are offered a Trauma Risk Management Programme (TRiM) intervention, counselling and even trauma therapy with a local psychotherapist. Like many other forces we have signed up to Oscar Kilo – a

national police wellbeing support network and we also have a force therapy dog which is very popular.

We have a strong 'call out' culture in the Constabulary and not afraid to take swift action when needed but we are also a caring organisation that believes in investing in its people and supporting them when and how they need it.

#### **6. Question from Councillor Jackie Chelin**

The animations developed to teach school children about consent are a great idea. What are the evaluation mechanisms being put in place to measure the impact of this?

With a campaign like this, our impact measures are understandably focused on output measures (number of times seen, lessons delivered etc.). We ask for feedback from the lessons where the video is shown, and in the longer term, if we're able to, I would like us to contact those schools that have shown the video to see if there has been a reduction in unwanted activity reports.

However, this campaign is really aimed at achieving long term behaviour change. The real value of this campaign is equipping young people with the knowledge about the importance of consent that should hopefully lead to a long term reduction in sexual offences.

The Aardman videos are brilliant and are very effective at reaching their target audience (and even adults). In fact our Consent video has been viewed over 34,000 time on You Tube already. This is why we have just launched another video with Aardman, this time talking about dealing with conflict and using a restorative approach. This will have the same sort of lesson support as the Consent video, and I hope the same sort of positive reception.

#### **7. Question from Councillor Jackie Chelin**

The six steps for moving from "engage" to "outstanding" - What are the expected timescales for this? What are the dependencies? What are likely to be the key barriers and how will they be overcome?

Unfortunately, this is not really a linear process so this is a difficult question to answer. We have made some excellent strides forward in many areas, but others are more challenging. Nevertheless, a continued focus and grip, using the same focused governance that helped get the Constabulary out of Engage should help us make the progress we need to in areas like investigations and the Force Control room.

We are looking to build on what got us out of engage, and key to this is knowing the business – we have invested in improving performance awareness and using data to focus and check what we do. This includes in the OPCC where we now have two Senior Analysts that support the PCC's holding to account functions.

It also means approaching problems differently – like what we're doing with hate crime and ASB and the joint working between the OPCC and Constabulary.

Policing though is dynamic and the Constabulary needs to be able to respond to issues as they arise, even if those issues emanate from out of the area. We have, for example, sent officers to London to support with the policing of recent protests or with the findings of the Casey Report mentioned earlier. We rightly expect the police to be there when we need them, but to also continually improve as an organisation. That means long term

plans needs to sit alongside immediate improvement action and 'doing the day job' of answering the calls for help from Gloucestershire's residents. That makes the task of committing to a timeline more challenging, but not impossible as we've seen in Humberside. We are keen to learn from others and continue this improvement journey.

The next step will be the publication of our latest PEEL inspection in the New Year, and building on the findings of that report. We will continue with our action plans to improve areas, including enhancing the police operating model with the full number of officers it requires and getting better technology for our officers to make their job easier. This will certainly require more investment, but I'm determined to do everything I can to make those investments, as I want our Constabulary to be genuinely outstanding.

#### **8. Question from Councillor Jacki Chelin**

How impactful will the Community Speedwatch initiative be in reducing the number of deaths caused by motorists compared with a speed limit strategy that would reduce most residential, town and local centre streets to 20mph and create liveable streets (as proposed in the "Connecting Cheltenham strategy report" which was submitted to GCC as part of the Local Transport Plan consultation)?

When talking about road safety, it is ultimately driver behaviour that is the determining factor. This requires a focus on three key areas: Education, Engineering and Enforcement. Community Speedwatch and our Community Speedwatch cameras covers both education and enforcement, and in our pilot area in the Cotswolds, it reduced speeding by about 90%, which was far above our expectations. This is a significant help in making people feel safer on our roads, and encouraging more active travel.

The number of deaths and serious injuries on County's roads is increasing, and tackling this is an operational priority for the Constabulary. The Constabulary's new operating model, which has been brought in following our successful recruitment of 164 more police officers (with more on the way), is designed to give our front-line response officers more capacity to proactively patrol, including to tackle traffic offences, which haven't had the focus they should in recent years due to the demands on the service.

Unfortunately, the majority of Deaths on Gloucestershire's roads tend to involve the driver and vehicle passengers and tend to be on rural roads, which is why we're working with the County Council, through the Road Safety Partnership and considering a strategy for our rural roads to target this, alongside that extra patrol time from both response and specialist roads policing teams. Serious injuries however, do tend to be in urban areas, and this emphasises why a joined up approach, through the road safety partnership, is so important.