

27th October 2016

Nigel Ashton, Leader
North Somerset District Council
Town Hall
Walliscote Grove Road
Weston-super-Mare BS23 1UJ

Dear Councillor Ashton

Thank you for your formal response regarding the draft Police and Crime Plan 2016 – 21 presented to the Police and Crime Panel on 12 October.

I welcome the Panel's comments, and the recognition that the Panel's input, both through the contribution of the Link Member during the developmental process, and through responses from the Panel to the Annual report, have been considered and reflected in final draft.

I am pleased to respond to observations made by the Panel, as set out below.

Cyber-Crime

Cyber-crime is a recognised national threat and is having an increasing impact in both crimes affecting vulnerable people (for example cyber-enabled child abuse) and in terms of volume crime such as fraud. Addressing it cuts across all four priorities within the Plan. I have expanded the content on the priority of 'strengthen and improve your local policing teams' in light of the Panel's comments in relation to the prominence of this issue in the Plan. Observations made by the Panel in relation to acting upon shared intelligence and clearer communication with local communities in relation to reporting and investigation of cyber-crime will be addressed within Delivery Plans. The support of Panel Link Members will be welcomed in raising awareness among local communities and supporting partnership working with Local Authorities and local partners to support delivery of this aspect of the Plan.

Investigative Standards

I share the Panel's desire to see improvements in performance in relation to investigative standards. I believe that the priorities set within the Plan and the performance framework underpinning it set the conditions for driving this change. In the coming months, Panel Members will have an opportunity to scrutinise the planning assumptions and challenging budgetary position against which the new Plan will be delivered. I welcome the Panel's support in continuing to strengthen local policing teams, operating in partnership at a local level to bolster prevention activity.

Leadership

I endorse the Panel's comments regarding the need for strong and empowering leadership. Leadership is a theme that features prominently across the new Plan, and will be a specific focus in assurance work. The Panel will have an opportunity to hear from the Chief Constable at their December meeting about his vision for leading the Constabulary and progress across a range of initiatives with a focus on morale and health and wellbeing.

Representative Workforce

I welcome the Panel's endorsement of the objective within the Plan to ensure a more diverse workforce. I would welcome the support of the Panel Link Members in progressing this important area of work.

Hate Crime Definition

I note the Panel's request with regard to the extension of the categories of Hate Crime to include Misogyny. As discussed at the meeting, I intend to maintain a watching brief over approaches to the recording of Hate Crime, including the Nottinghamshire approach referred to by Panel Members. I welcome the support of the Panel to take forward work in the Delivery Plan with the aim to raise awareness of what constitutes a Hate Crime and to increase confidence to report.

Performance and Capability

Performance against delivery of the Plan will be monitored through the Police and Crime Board, through oversight of the performance framework. Assurance in relation to capability to fulfil the Strategic Policing Requirement will be monitored within the performance framework. I endorse the view of the Panel on the important role of community engagement to support delivery of the Plan. As described at the Panel meeting, effective support and communication channels are essential to give community volunteers the tools they need to contribute to keeping our communities safe. This is an important early focus of work, including for example recent improvements to the Neighbourhood Watch website and dissemination of information described at the last Panel meeting.

Multi-agency working

I strongly endorse the Panel's acknowledgement of the importance of a strong multi agency approach to delivering the Plan. I would welcome the role of Panel Members in supporting the development of a strong multi-agency approach, and forging links with the full breadth of partners in delivering an effective service to the communities of Avon and Somerset. As discussed at the last Panel meeting, public services together face an increasing financial challenge alongside ever increasing demand, support for vulnerable people and complex needs. To this end, I warmly welcome the support of Panel Members in helping to make the case for fairer funding through current Home Office consultation on the future police funding formula. Now is not the time to retreat into silos, and the role of Panel Members will play an important part in strong and effective partnership working.

Thank you for your continued support and constructive comments that will improve outcomes for those living and working in the Avon and Somerset area.

Best regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sue Mountstevens". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

SUE MOUNTSTEVENS
Police and Crime Commissioner
for Avon & Somerset