

Reply to:   Richard Brown

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Date:   4th July 2019

Dear Commissioner,

**PCC Annual Report 2018/19**

Thank you for attending the Panel’s AGM on 26th June 2019 and presenting your annual report. The Panel is pleased to review the progress made against the Police and Crime Plan over the period 2016-21. This response summaries the Panel’s views and recommendations in accordance with Part 1 Section 28(4) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

**Performance**

The Constabulary has made significant improvements in its accuracy of recording crimes in recent years, however the HMICFRS inspection rating remains at ‘requires improvement’. We understand that until a reinspection is carried out, it will not be possible to assess the impact of the remedial action that has been taken to address this. It is essential that crime is recorded accurately and ethically. This is a matter of Police integrity, of treating victims with respect and ensuring that officers have the most accurate possible information both to prevent crime and bring criminals to justice. The Panel welcomes the action you are taking with the Force Crime Incident Registrar and would be pleased to receive regular updates at the appropriate time as agreed at our meeting.

We recognise that there is work to be done in respect of the results from the annual staff survey. The Panel notes that more recent data suggests that the results have improved and that work currently being undertaken by the Chief Constable and the Health and Wellbeing Board will continue. The importance of leadership and staff feeling valued is key to the success of any large organisation and the Panel looks forward to the 2019 results and welcomes the updates offered. In the meantime, the Panel would still like to see the 2017 results - in the knowledge that the questions asked in 2017 were different. It will be useful to learn how the ‘Aspire’ Leadership Programme is making a difference and the Panel looks forward to receiving an update.

We recommend that where possible, the stated objectives in the plan around the wellbeing of staff should align with the Chief Constable’s Force Management Statement.

The Panel also recommends that the inclusion of a definition of a successful criminal outcome alongside the summary table of performance as this will be useful for residents. Please can you also consider using the space on the following information page to signpost partners – for example Unseen who are undertaking relevant work in relation to CSE and Modern Slavery.

The Link Member roles have been restructured under the four Police and Crime Plan strategic priorities and quarterly briefing sessions have been scheduled to brief Link Members on key issues and identify opportunities to contribute to specific areas of work. This formal mechanism will enable individual members to effectively monitor performance and delivery against the plan and influence the work of the PCC in key areas of business. The Panel is committed to making the process meaningful and we are grateful for your assistance in this respect.

**Strategic Priority 1 - Protecting the Most Vulnerable from Harm**

As part of your work to provide effective public sector services that are well-informed and victim-centered, the Panel notes that you have commissioned Constabulary-led assurance reports that look at key successes and identify areas for improvement with associated recommendations. The Panel observes that there was a missed opportunity to share your successes in the plan but welcomes your commitment to provide further information in this respect in the quarterly briefings.

The Panel feels there is merit in reconsidering the order of text at page 14 of the report to reinforce the gravity of the offences of CSE and FGM and to ensure there can be no perception of mixed messages in respect of the case study around the treatment of offenders that follows.

Thank you for confirming that the outcomes from projects and work around sexual violence will be included in the priority briefings. This will assist in getting an overall picture of what is being delivered both through funding and commissioning.

Although it has no formal powers, the Panel was interested to learn about the role of the Resolve board which pulls together a range of criminal justice partnership organisations to set priorities and strategic direction for the area. We note that this is chaired locally by your CEO and runs parallel to your role as Chair of the South West Reducing Reoffending Board. The oversight this provides on issues such as accommodation provision for ex-offenders, the needs of female ex-offenders and the response of organisations to adverse childhood experiences, appears to provide a solid framework within which relevant agencies can work together to meet the shared responsibility to reduce reoffending. The links with Neighbourhood Policing and the Integrated Management Programme suggests that the appropriate connections are being made and the Panel believes this is an example of a valuable joined up strategy.

The Panel notes your determination to drive this important agenda forward and wishes you well.

**Strategic Priority 2 - Strengthen and improve your Local Policing Teams**

A visible and responsive Neighbourhood Policing presence in our communities deters criminals and helps gather intelligence. In the light of increasingly restricted resources, the Panel supported your proposal to increase the Policing Precept in February 2019 and ensure that Police officer numbers were increased and burglary, drugs and knife crime have been given high level focus. However, the neighbourhood model has been in place under your stewardship for a number of years, overall performance in respect of positive outcomes suggest that those links with communities are not bringing forward information or intelligence of sufficient quality or quantity to significantly impact on reductions in crime, nor produce significant positive outcomes for communities. The Panel feels that greater emphasis is required in this area. The Panel also notes that whilst beat crime information is available, it is unacceptable that force level performance is not readily available to the public scrutiny and that action should be taken to address this issue. This would delivery greater transparency to the wider communities of Avon and Somerset and would reduce the impact of Freedom of Information requests upon the Constabulary and release staff to concentrate on other activities.

The Panel notes that technological improvements and new equipment introduced to support officers and staff in their roles have been well received by staff and the investment will be instrumental in improving organisational performance. Specifically, the introduction of innovative data analytics software hopes to mark a change in the way the Constabulary manages its data to draw conclusions, identify patterns and improve performance. The Panel welcomed the presentation on this work area earlier in the year and welcomes the ability to learn more as part of the priority briefings.

Anti-Social Behaviour, Drug Crime and Burglary continue to be the main priorities for most local communities. Consequently, the strategies in place locally to address these challenges are key to both providing the best possible service to the public and improving performance. As discussed on previous occasions, a Policing presence in both rural and urban communities that is capable of addressing local demand is essential.

***Burglary***

The Panel has shared its concern in relation to the investigation and detection of Burglary offences at various stages in recent years, expressing concern that low detection rates will impact on public confidence and act as a deterrent to reporting. We welcome your assurance that improving performance in relation to Burglary is a key focus and we note that you are taking assurance around levels of reporting from the England and Wales Crime Survey.

However, reports of burglary have reduced and positive outcomes have declined to 6% in 2018/19. The Panel is sighted on the progress of Operation Remedy and its role in combatting burglary. Additional officers and a strategy built around prevention, protection, and pursuing

offenders has brought about a significant improvement in outcomes in the first month (13.9%) and whilst we understand that this may not be sustainable, the strategy has secured immediate results and the Panel looks forward to updates on the results of the additional investment provided by the Precept increase. In the meantime, if most of victim dissatisfaction lies with lack of follow-up, the Panel recommends this is given increased focus in the strategy.

For clarity, the Panel recommends that “satisfaction of victims” should be amended to “satisfaction with the Police” and feel that some content about the support offered to vulnerable victims of Burglary could usefully be included.

The Panel understands that details of the proposed involvement of Panel Members in local activities associated with Operation Remedy will be provided in due course. We look forward to receiving this.

***Volunteers and Special Constables***

The Panel notes your plans to increase community involvement to deliver the Police and Crime Plan. The role of volunteers can have significant impact on constabularies and the communities they serve and we note your plans for further engagement to address a slight decline in citizenship activities last year. The Panel hopes the work underway with large employers to increase the number of specials produces results in the coming years.

**Independent Chair for the Lammy Review Group of the Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice Board**

Thank you for keeping the Panel informed on the work taking place to provide strategic direction on racial disparity in the area’s criminal justice service. The Panel hopes to invite Desmond Brown to a formal Panel meeting to comment on his role in ensuring delivery of the Lammy Group’s key objectives. Subject to approval from the Constabulary, if this could coincide with a report or presentation on the programme of work around recruitment which we briefly touched on at the meeting, this would be appreciated and can be built into the work programme at the appropriate time.

**Business Crime**

The Panel remains concerned about the increasing offences of theft and the impact on the business community. Whilst Operation Heron sets a higher criteria for Police attendance, response rates are still leaving businesses disheartened with the service they receive. The Panel would be grateful if consideration can be given to the recommendations to your office set out in the Link Member report on 12th March 2019. This includes the recommendation that progress against the joint OPCC/Chief Constable business crime strategy should be reflected in your annual report. We look forward to receiving your response.

The Panel is very conscious of the Constabulary’s reduced revenue and the need to make continuing savings. The on-going frustration of obtaining detailed performance information frustrates the Panel’s ability to make informed decisions. This was one of the reasons that led to the Panel applying clear performance requirements associated with Operation Remedy. The

Panel should not have to rely upon conditional funding to ensure relevant performance data comes forward. Openness and transparency of performance information is required and absolutely links to the effectiveness of the Constabulary and the delivery of the commissioner Policing Plan.

The Panel recognise the outstanding work that Police Officers, Special Constables and support staff do every day to support communities and would like to take the opportunity to formally record our thanks to all those that strive to make our communities safer.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Brown

Chair of the Panel