



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
EXTRAORDINARY CAMBRIDGESHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL  
HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM  
ON 11 JUNE 2020**

**Members Present:** Edward Leigh (Chairperson), Councillors A Sharp, A Ali, N Massey, S Wallwork, M Shellens, D Giles, S Bywater, S Tierney, S Warren, C Daunton, C Wiggin, and Claire George.

**Officers Present:** Jane Webb Secretariat, Peterborough City Council  
Fiona McMillan Monitoring Officer, Peterborough City Council

**Others Present:** Ray Bisby Acting Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner  
Jim Haylett Acting Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner  
Nick Dean Chief Constable, Cambridgeshire Constabulary

**1. Apologies for Absence**

No apologies were received.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Chris Wiggin declared an interest by way of a member of his household being an employee of the Fire Service.

**3. Public Questions/Statements**

No public questions or statements were received.

**4. Monitoring the Delivery of the Acting Police and Crime Commissioner's Response to COVID-19 Crisis**

The Panel received a report to update them on the Acting Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner's (the "Acting Commissioner") response to the COVID-19 crisis.

The Acting Commissioner introduced his report stating how incredibly proud he was of all the officers, staff, special constabulary and other volunteers that have dealt with the Covid crisis and worked

tirelessly to support communities, keep them safe and at the same time still continued their normal, everyday policing work, provided support to vulnerable victims and tackled offending. He also thanked the Chief Constable and his senior team for their leadership during this difficult time and thanked the Panel for providing him with areas of questioning prior to the meeting.

The Acting Commissioner stated that despite all the work the Acting Commissioner's Office and Constabulary had carried out to respond to the crisis, it has shown that normal operational policing has continued during the crisis. The Constabulary had undertaken a considerable amount of proactive work and had some excellent results around drugs arrests. The Acting Commissioner's Office had also assisted in the crisis through the redeployment in supporting the Constabulary, to working with partners across the county and regionally.

The Acting Commissioner added that Dorothy Gregson, as an accredited Public Health Doctor, had been seconded to Public Health, England during the crisis, which the Panel were aware of via a letter sent to them from the Acting Commissioner. Jim Haylett was now the Acting Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer to cover Dorothy's secondment.

Jim Haylett stated that these were unprecedented times and as expected, like other organisations, the OPCC has responded accordingly. From the outset, the approach was taken to prioritise two points; 1) support multi-agency response to covid and 2) to specifically support the constabulary in its direct response. Therefore when the Home Office asked for employees to work from home, OPCC sent all staff to work from home, this was a benefit for social distancing but also freed up office space which enabled the constabulary staff that needed to attend work, to be able to safely work at a social distance. A Member of staff was released to become a special constable and another to support the Victim and Witness Hub and another to work as part of the multi-agency Critical Incident Hub. Several staff also changed their working hours to meet current demands. Whilst normal work of the office had been carried out, there was some considerable pressure and some aspects of the reporting that would normally be carried out has been given extra time, hence the Annual Report will not be delivered, as normal, in the first week of July. There were still effective arrangements in place in respect of governance to hold the Chief Constable to account but the burden has rightly been recognised that is placed on the Constabulary in asking them to report to the OPCC, therefore a more proportionate approach has been taken regarding governance during this period.

The Panel made comment, asked questions and received responses from the Commissioner regarding the Annual Report, these included:

- a) Claire George - The announcement of additional funding to support victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence was welcomed. Can the Commissioner provide an update as to the uptake of the funding and what activities will be supported and in what areas of the County?  
Acting Commissioner – The details of how the funds were allocated are available on the website including a six-page guide. The process is nearing completion and the successful bids will be published on the OPCC website in line with the Ministry of Justice guidance.
- b) Claire George - Protecting children from abuse and families from domestic abuse is not just the responsibility of the police. How are frontline agencies working together under the Covid-19 restrictions to proactively support those known to be at risk?  
Acting Commissioner – The proactive interventions are particularly easy for identified victims. The disclosure made by the child leads to an investigation and engagement with partner agencies to support, rehabilitate and signpost for continued supportive interventions. What is more difficult are those victims the Constabulary are not aware of; therefore, the child abuse investigations and safeguarding unit have been working with frontline staff to educate them on signs and symptoms of abuse. The Constabulary's relationship with schools are usually important as teachers and staff recognise changes in children and learn information from different sources within the school setting. They have a statutory responsibility to make a referral, which is why the time spent in schools by Constabulary staff delivering training onsite to ensure teachers and staff are proactive at recognising signs and symptoms. The Constabulary work hard with the media to get this messaging out to the public, via podcasts,

Facebook chats and lots of campaigns to encourage reports when family, friends, neighbours etc have a concern about the safety of a child.

Claire George - Has there been a change in focus as children are not at school now?

Chief Constable – Gave reassurance that despite children not currently at school that the Constabulary still made links through the schools as there were a number of online services still provided by the educational establishment which linked directly with children whilst they were off. The child abuse investigation team and the domestic abuse element of the team have still been provided information.

- c) Nicky Massey – There has been a lower contact rate with some domestic abuse survivors with their (Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Service) IDVAs, who provide support to domestic abuse survivors, as they can no longer have face to face support. Have the Victim Support services that work with the OPCC had similar issues and what can be done?

Acting Commissioner – The victims are still able to receive support, no services have been stopped through Covid. There has been a need for some partners to adapt their responses recognising the lockdown restrictions however victims are still offered support by the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences which is known as MARAC and is still in operation. There are sufficient places within refuges and our third sector partners have been delivering some innovative responses to support victims and their families, including working with the Cambridgeshire colleges to obtain additional temporary accommodation.

Nicky Massey – Has having to respond either virtually or via telephone had an impact on the contact rate for the victim support services?

Acting Commissioner – The data both locally and nationally does not support this. Domestic abuse incidents have not increased significantly since Covid lockdown was introduced and are still within the levels the Constabulary would assess to be within normal ranges.

Edward Leigh suggested that the Panel would look at the data of domestic abuse at a later date as data suggested it had increased.

- d) Councillor Warren - What is the policy on providing regular guidance to officers to enforcing the social distancing measures in open places like parks? How frequent is this guidance issued to police officers?

Acting Commissioner – The National Policy from the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) is clear it is policing by consent using the four proportionate step response known as the four Es. Only legislation can be enforced and not government guidance, there is no legislation on social distancing which means it cannot be enforced.

Chief Constable – Gave his reassurance; in terms of legislation and flow of information to the officers and staff on the frontline, daily there is communication between the chair of NPCC and the Home Secretary. On a weekly basis the regional chiefs dial into the national level in order to understand the national picture and that information is disseminated on a weekly basis through to Chief Constables. In addition, the College of Policing are linked into the Home Office and the NPCC in order to be ahead of the guidance so they can provide information and briefing packs to each individual constabulary. Cambridgeshire hold a daily meeting chaired by Nick Dean, Chief Constable, this has now moved to a Monday and Thursday due to the progress of Covid. Therefore, frontline officers receive information direct from the Home Office, nuanced by the Chief Constable making it appropriate and relevant for Cambridgeshire.

- e) Councillor Warren – How is the Acting Commissioner supporting the Constabulary regarding small gatherings (over 6 people) and house parties?

Chief Constable – The change in legislation and rules and guidance has been far reaching since the beginning of lockdown. The Constabulary receive a lot of information about small gatherings and cannot react to every single report, but they are mapped and prioritised and staff are deployed accordingly. There is no legislation that can be applied to the two-metre rule.

- f) Edward Leigh – Had the OPCC received any correspondence complaining/supporting the response given to Covid-19?

Chief Constable – Complaints have been low. Number of enforcement fines (132) issued is also relatively low compared to other forces.

- g) Councillor Bywater – Passed on his thanks to the Acting Commissioner and to the Chief Constable and both non-operational and operational staff; and acknowledged that a lot of multi-agency work had taken place in the background.

Had child abuse reports increased since the implementation of the Coronavirus Act 2020 and had the Constabulary seen any increase in children safeguarding?

Acting Commissioner – Thanked Councillor Bywater for his sentiments as a lot of work had been done in the background.

Chief Constable – In child protection investigations, this year compared to last year there had been a 19.1% decrease in investigations, those flagged with child sexual abuse had shown a reduction of 13.2%. Clearly the work of the Child Abuse Investigation and Safeguarding Team was intrinsically linked to schools, and the children were currently not at school; during the early part of lockdown, incidents and referrals had slowed up considerably, however this had picked up over the last few weeks. Another aspect was the severity of referrals, although numbers were down, the severity had increased.

- h) Councillor Ali – Thanked all those involved as he had received positive comments on the work the Constabulary had carried out engaging with the communities. Was there any explanation regarding the number of violent crimes in Peterborough recently and had there been a significant increase?

Chief Constable – Violent crimes in the northern area of Peterborough ranged between 21 and 37 per day under normal circumstances; violent crime covered a multitude of offences from abusive telephone calls up to homicide, therefore a narrative was needed for clarification. At the start of lockdown, violent crime in the northern area of Peterborough took a dramatic downfall but started to rise a couple of weeks ago to 25<sup>th</sup> May to a peak, but the peak was still within the parameters of normal figures. Therefore, there had not been a significant increase in violent crime in Peterborough during the lockdown period.

Councillor Ali – Can communities be reassured that crime updates have occurred.

Chief Constable – Victim crime updates were fed back to the victims, but he reassured Councillor Ali he would feed this back to his team.

- i) Councillor Ali – Had the lockdown had an effect on reducing the number of PCSOs and the recruitment of Constables?

Chief Constable – There had been no issues relating to recruitment during the lockdown period as there were a significant number of applicants awaiting entry into the organisation and it was pleasing to see the representation of the community within the recruitment profile increasing. Over the last 12 months the BAME representation had increased to just under 5% and in terms of the last 12 months the BAME recruitment was just under 10% (BAME population of the county is around 9.7%). Recruitment had not stopped, pass-out parades had continued and the target of recruiting the 21 officers from the Government's funding uplift had been met by recruiting above that number. The recruitment of additional officers, including the 41 from the uplift funding, was on track for 2020/21.

- j) Claire George - We have seen some national incidents where frontline workers have been spat at by people claiming to have Covid, with disastrous consequences for their health, and in some cases lives. Have there been any such incidents with the Force area? Was adequate PPE available, and in use, by frontline officers in order to reduce the impact of such disgusting public behaviour?

Acting Commissioner – The Constabulary have personal protection equipment (PPE) and guidance to support them when required. They also have spit hoods which are deployable if a person does show signs of going to spit or has a history of spitting and is aggressive. Incoming cases are triaged and officers, where possible, are given the history, especially if someone is known to have a history of spitting. There have been two notable assaults which have resulted in jail sentences.

Edward Leigh – Made the observation that, had the OPCC looked at a more humane way of preventing spitting instead of using a spit hood, using a visor which would allow the person to still see?

Acting Commissioner – asked for the Chief Constable to answer as the use of spit hoods had national guidance.

Chief Constable – The use of spit hoods was relatively rare even with the increase of spitting incidences. Spit hoods were applied in relation to the aggression and possibility of the perpetrator spitting on officers. Spit hoods were been risk assessed, they are nationally procured and issued to officers. Each are subjected to a de-brief when used; the use of visors would not be appropriate in terms of the safety of an arrested individual or restrained or officers. Spit hoods have been subject to much controversy over the years but are rarely used in Cambridgeshire.

- k) Councillor Daunton - What effect has Covid-19 had on the disposal of police assets?  
Acting Commissioner – Covid-19 had had no effect on assets. There will be a press release on Monday which is currently embargoed, regarding the proposals for a Southern police station.
- l) Councillor Wiggin – The approach to larger scale gatherings, street parties – do you think the correct approach has been taken in terms of balancing the 4 Es and was this in line with your overall strategic vision of how you should police Cambridgeshire?  
Acting Commissioner – Stated he was happy the 4 Es were in line with what should be happening  
Chief Constable – Difference between disorder and anti-social behaviour, one is specific to intelligence around a disorder, the other is around mass gathering. On each occasion a command structure was in place and both worked well.
- m) Nicky Massey – Was impressed at how the Black Lives Matters protest was managed, by both the organisers and the Police. It was brilliant to see so many people socially distancing and being able to have their voices heard.
- n) Nicky Massey - How has the work on County Lines changed due to Covid?  
Chief Constable – During lockdown there will always be incidents of County Lines and drug dealing but it has given the Police an opportunity to exercise considerable proactivity in tackling the issue. Since lockdown began, over 113 arrest have been made in relation to heroin, cannabis and crack, with a street value of in excess of £5million.
- o) Councillor Tierney – Can the public have reassurance that there would be a robust response from the police should any protests turn into anti-social behaviour?  
Acting Commissioner – The Acting Commissioner was very pleased that the recent protests in Cambridge and Peterborough were carried out peacefully and respectively.  
Chief Constable – Difficult question to answer as there have been various protests and disorders across the nation and the policing response has been different; this is because their response is based upon intelligence and what happens at the time. Before every planned operation there are levels of acceptability the Commander sets out; it would be hoped that public order would be maintained, and any criminal damage would be followed up at the appropriate time.
- p) Councillor Daunton – During lockdown it has been noticed that cars have been driven at speed, particularly through villages.  
Chief Constable – Speeding is illegal, in lockdown or not and this has always been enforced. Officers and neighbourhood teams have been out through the villages during lockdown to reassure the public about speeding and anti-social behaviour.
- q) Councillor Wallwork – There are a large proportion of missing young people, how has that been impacted by the lockdown?  
Chief Constable – The number of missing persons reports have decreased over lockdown and has not significantly altered the approach taken; the co-operation of partners and agencies still remains when required.
- r) Councillor Ali – A lot of young people were involved in organising the Black Lives Matter event in Peterborough from the diverse communities and many attending were young people. It was very impressive to see the engagement between the Police and the organisers and the event went peacefully and successfully. Have any of the Chief Constable's colleagues across the county where protests were not successfully managed, learnt anything from how well the Peterborough protests were managed?  
Chief Constable – The approach that was adopted in managing the protest and those that peacefully protested combined, led to a peaceful weekend. There are always lessons to be

learnt. - Protest Liaison Officers, who are specially trained officers in pre-planned public order events, liaise with the organisers and the people who will attend, well before the planned protest, in order to understand the details and issues. A de-brief is completed after the event and issues are fed back into nationally policing so that lessons can be learnt from good practice. so that lessons can be learnt from good practice.

- s) Edward Leigh - The Ministry of Justice has increased the data requirements from all agencies during lockdown. What are those "data requirements"?

Acting Commissioner – Initially the OPCC were asked to facilitate fortnightly meetings but these have now gone to monthly and these are from victim support services funded through the OPCC. This included information on demand, staffing capacity, waiting lists (if relevant) and average length of time spent supporting victims. This information has enabled the Ministry of Justice to monitor need in each local area.

Edward Leigh – Has the additional data helped design/adapt the Victim Support services in Cambridgeshire?

Acting Commissioner – The data was more for the Ministry of Justice purposes rather than for the OPCC.

- t) Edward Leigh – Has a decision yet been taken as to when jury trials will resume and is the delay having an impact on the Police preparing evidence for court cases?

Acting Commissioner – The Acting Commissioner chaired the Criminal Justice Board on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020 where this was discussed and was informed by the Cluster Manager that the matter of when jury trials would start, was one that crown courts would determine. It was expected to be in early July, but this was dependent on several factors.

Edward Leigh – Is the Acting Commissioner aware of this having any negative consequences on the Constabulary?

Acting Commissioner – There are backlogs which will eventually have an impact. The OPCC is working with a recovery group which has been formed under the Criminal Justice Board and relevant plans and dates will be provided to the Board going forward.

- u) Edward Leigh – Can the Acting Commissioner provide a comprehensive list of all the communication channels used by the OPCC to provide guidance and advice to the public?

Acting Commissioner – Communication Channels include media releases which are posted online on the OPCC website and distributed to local media. Statements, responses, interviews and updates, updating the public on emerging issues, at times with the Chief Constable. Social media posts via Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, including blogs. Contributions to nationals, associations, police and crime bulletins and a seasonal newsletter reaching just under 20,000 people, partnerships, communications, campaigns often with partners and crime prevention events. A list can be provided if required.

Edward Leigh – A list would be useful, in particular, how effective the communication is at reaching people who are not actively interested in the police, those that are not signed up to alerts, social media, blogs etc as they are a large and important part of the population.

Acting Commissioner – A list will be provided.

- v) Edward Leigh – With the delay in the Annual Report, what is the estimated date that the Panel can expect the Outturn Accounts and Annual Report?

Acting Commissioner – The draft accounts are complete and are available to be viewed on both the OPCC and Constabulary's website. Nationally, the statutory deadline for accounts to be completed has been extended to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020, due to Covid. However, the OPCC are working with auditors and plan to have the accounts finalised by the end of July. Some areas, like pensions, may be delayed and as the OPCC must wait on the County Council Local Government Shared Services (LGSS), the accounts will be signed and completed by 30<sup>th</sup> November.

The Panel **AGREED** to note the report.

The Chair thanked the Acting Commissioner, the Acting Chief Executive and Chief Constable for attending the Panel Meeting and to pass on the thanks of all the Panel for all the work that has been done by the staff and officers and wished them all the best in their continued work,

The Acting Commissioner thanked the Panel for inviting him and thanked the Chief Constable and Jim Haylett for accompanying him. He also thanked for Force and his team for all their work.

The meeting began at 3:00pm and ended at 5:00pm

CHAIRPERSON

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