



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL  
ON 27 NOVEMBER 2023**

**Members Present:** Claire George (Chair – Co-Optee / Independent Member), Councillor Dennis Jones (Vice-Chair), Edward Leigh (Co-Optee / Independent Member) and Councillors Simon Barkham, Stephen Ferguson, John Gowing, Baiju Thittala Varkey, Susan Wallwork and Graham Wilson.

**Officers Present:** Adesuwa Omoregie Interim Director of Legal and Governance, Peterborough City Council  
Jonathan Deacon Senior Democratic Services Officer, Peterborough City Council

**Others Present:** Darryl Preston Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner  
Jim Haylett Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, OPCC (Office of Police Crime Commissioner)  
Nicky Edwards Director of Commissioning, OPCC  
John Peach Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner  
Philip Trussell Chief Finance Officer, OPCC

**25. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Marge Beuttell, Anna Bradnam, Helene Leeming, Alan Sharp and Bryan Tyler.

Councillor Graham Wilson was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Bradnam.

**26. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Varkey declared during the meeting that he was a criminal defence duty solicitor. He also declared that in respect of item 8 on the agenda, he visits Parkside.

**27. Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 September 2023**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

The Chair thanked Edward Leigh for all his sterling work as a member of the Panel, including in his five years as Chair, as it was his last Police and Crime Panel meeting.

## 28. Review Actions and Recommendations from the Previous Meeting

The Commissioner provided an update on matters which had been raised at the previous Panel meeting:

- Trained Police officers in Huntingdonshire, Peterborough, Fenland and Cambridge City were involved in trials of the use of the nasal spray 'Naloxone', which is intended to prevent overdoses occurring. There were plans to also roll out the trials in East and South Cambs. Since its introduction in April 2021, the spray had been successfully used, and had potentially saved lives, on 11 occasions.
- Further information was provided on the County Lines video. Cambridge Community Safety Partnership were leading on providing the message for a younger age group on behalf of the County. It was now being provided to Year 5 (ages 9 – 10) and Year 6 (ages 10 – 11) pupils. All the appropriate safeguards were in place and parents were being consulted in the putting together of the programme.
- Feedback from pop-up knife crime events in Peterborough was that they had been very successful with 1,200 young people attending.
- There was an issue around a lack of volunteers for the training and coaching of the Police cadets. He asked Panel members that if they knew anyone in their community who might be interested in becoming a volunteer to let either the Constabulary or the Commissioner know. The Commissioner clarified that any volunteers did not need to be a Police officer.

The Commissioner had stated in response to a question from Councillor Jones at the previous meeting that he would speak with the Constabulary in order to assist in local policing teams updating councillors. Councillor Jones thanked him as he had been contacted by PC Dave Stevens in Peterborough and been provided with helpful information which was ongoing.

## 29. Public Questions/Statements

The Panel had received a question/statement from Mr Fenton, who was in attendance at the meeting. The question/statement had been edited under Paragraph 7.12 of the Panel's Rules of Procedure because there had been a wider unsubstantiated allegation in the original statement / question submitted. The edited question was:

*"I would like to ask the Police and Crime Commissioner to explain whether he has exercised adequate oversight of the chief constable since being elected in 2021?"*

Mr Haylett responded to the question on behalf of The Commissioner. He expressed concerns that since earlier in the year Mr Fenton had, using his company name of Few's Lane Consortium Ltd on social media, conducted what Mr Haylett called a misinformation campaign in relation to the Chief Constable, the Commissioner and the OPCC. This, he commented, had serious consequences, including one example where the Commissioner had sought to raise awareness of stalking and harassment week together with a link for victims to seek support. Mr Haylett stated that Few's Lane Consortium had responded on social media that the data of victims was stored by OPCC on a computer system where it had been supposedly admitted there had been at least one serious data breach this year. Mr Haylett clarified that the statement that the OPCC stored the victims' details was not true. It was the Constabulary who recorded the details and the OPCC did not have access to it. It was also the case that the OPCC had not experienced a serious data breach. The overall impact of the allegations in the social media post, Mr Haylett added, would potentially deter victims of crime from seeking the support they need. He welcomed transparency and scrutiny of public officials but it had to be appropriate.

Mr Haylett expressed the view that the original and amended question / statement posed at the meeting fitted the criteria for exclusion in accordance with Paragraph 7.11c) of the Panel's Rules of Procedure as 'illegal, improper, irregular, frivolous or offensive' given the context of the Twitter / X campaign.

He also suggested that it was more appropriate for the Panel to answer the edited question by Mr Fenton than the Commissioner as it had met 14 times since the Commissioner was elected. It was the Panel's responsibility to satisfy themselves whether the Commissioner was fulfilling his statutory functions in holding the Chief Constable to account and Mr Haylett added that he would respectfully suggest that the Panel had done so at the 14 meetings.

Mr Fulton's supplementary question was not permitted by the Panel as it was not in keeping with Paragraph 7.16 of the Panel's Rules of Procedure that 'A supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question, statement or the reply and be directed to clarifying the reply. The Chairperson may reject a supplementary question on any of the grounds in paragraph 7.11 above'.

### **30. Police and Crime Commissioner's Approach to Commissioning and Grants**

The Panel received a report detailing the Commissioner's approach to commissioning and grants. The Panel made comment, asked questions, and received responses from the Commissioner and his staff regarding the report, which included:

1. Councillor Wilson requested some additional information on the criteria used by the OPCC to assess quotations and working relationships with partners. Nicky Edwards, OPCC, advised that there was a mixed model of commissioning. Funding was awarded through grants and contracts. The procurement legislation was followed via the financial standing orders and there was a tender process with responses evaluated generally on a 70% quality / 30% cost split, reflecting the greater importance of quality in, for instance, victims' services. Ms Edwards also explained that the OPCC co-commissioned services with partners. This avoided duplication and enabled them to pool the resources of the public sector to better suit requirements. The OPCC worked closely with a number of agencies who had statutory responsibilities in relation to providing victim support services, including the local authority, probation and health.
2. Ms Edwards advised in response to a question from Councillor Barkham that the Volunteer Police Cadets were established with a purely volunteer based model and at that time there had been no problem in attracting volunteers to train or coach the cadets. Since then, there had been a reduction in the number of volunteers coming forward nationally as a result of cost of living implications. The Commissioner made funding available for cadet activities and there had been investment in the Constabulary to give them more capacity to provide training. Safer Streets 4 and 5 projects had included a post which had included a time commitment to working with cadet units.
3. Councillor Barkham asked whether it was possible to set out more information on the criteria used by the OPCC for funding. Ms Edwards explained that the criteria for funding depended on the service the OPCC was seeking to commission. The Commissioning Strategy set out the key principles, including looking to fund services that were locally based to build capacity in local communities. There was the potential to pick some samples out and share them with the Panel.
4. Councillor Barkham requested further clarity on paragraph 5.2 of the report that 'we will clearly set out the outcomes to be achieved and consider if a new service is required or whether an existing service could be re-commissioned or enhanced to deliver the same outcomes'. The Commissioner responded that most would involve evaluation and there were regular and frequent monitoring meetings.
5. Edward Leigh thanked the Commissioner and Ms Edwards for their work in securing additional funding for services. He referred to paragraph 8.1 of the report mentioning that there was a

potential 'cliff edge of funding' (a shortfall of £1.1m) with the additional funding streams the OPCC is managing due to end on March 31, 2025. He expressed concerns whether the 'cliff edge' was due to success in winning competitive grants which were time limited and whether there was any step that could be taken to improve the situation such as the Commissioner working with the Association of Police Crime Commissioners to lobby for more consistent funding for this work. The Commissioner confirmed that he lobbied continually. He added that due to his commitment to support victims, whilst he would never be frivolous with public money, he was prepared to build in some risk appetite with funding commitments to ensure that the very best people were able to keep providing the best services.

6. Councillor Jones asked whether there were any OPCC funding initiatives which Panel members could steer local organisations towards. The Commissioner advised that he had a Youth Fund and a Community Fund. It needed to be demonstrated that organisations were having a positive impact in their communities.
7. The Commissioner commented that in the broader context of commissioning, more information could be provided to the Panel and other councillors. He would also look to include more information on this subject in his newsletter.
8. The Chair thanked Ms Edwards and the OPCC for the funding being obtained and the very robust and evidence based partnerships that had been formed which had made a real difference to local communities.

## **ACTION**

The Panel **NOTED** the report.

### **31. Constabulary approach to Operation Soteria**

The Panel received a report which provided members with an overview of Cambridgeshire Constabulary's approach to Operation Soteria, the Police and Crown Prosecution Service programme to transform the investigation and prosecution of rape and improve outcomes. The report was in response to further information being requested by the Panel at the meeting in September. The Panel made comment, asked questions, and received responses from the Commissioner and his staff regarding the report, which included:

1. Councillor Barkham asked whether Operation Soteria included both male and female victims. The Commissioner replied that males and females who reported having been the victims of rape or a serious sexual offence would receive equity of response from the Police. In response to a follow-up question as to the respective number of live rape investigations in Cambridgeshire of male and female victims the Commissioner said that he would come back to the Panel with the information. He had previously been made aware that around 25% of reports to Police of having been the victims of alleged domestic abuse were by males. There was however a national strategic policing priority of violence against women and girls as women were much more likely to be subject to domestic abuse and sexual violence and with catastrophic results.
2. Council Wilson asked whether there was anything more Panel members could do in this area. The Commissioner recommended that communities' representatives should always encourage victims to report crimes of this nature. The response received was much better than in the past. Ms Edwards advised of the OPCC's Rape Engagement Project which lasted 14 months and was done in collaboration with a national company called Lime Culture a sexual

violence training and consultancy organisation. The OPCC had worked with the Constabulary seeking to gain feedback at various key points from people who had reported an experience of rape to police and their experience through the criminal justice system. The feedback of their experiences had helped to change police processes as it happened. The Project had also looked at the experiences of accessing support services and quality check how the services were being delivered. New information had been obtained on how to commission. The Project had subsequently been replicated across the country.

3. Mr Leigh referred to a recent study which had been carried out in Australia, UK and US. Only the Australian report had been published so far, 'Identifying and understanding child sexual offending behaviour and attitudes among Australian men'. The study related to the propensity to commit sexual violence against children and Mr Leigh commented that the statistics were shocking and were much higher than generally recognised. The lack of focus on just how many sex offenders were in society contributed to victim prejudice and victim blaming. It was necessary to change public attitudes towards this, including via policy making where necessary.  
The Commissioner responded that whilst he had not seen the report, he was not shocked as he had worked within a police child abuse investigation team and had seen the impact of abhorrent images on the internet. He stated that child sexual abuse was a national threat set out in the Strategic Policing Requirement. There had been significant investment, with the involvement of the National Crime Agency and Regional Organised Crime Units, plus the Constabulary to take action against child sexual exploitation. It was the case that most of the crimes would be committed in familiar environments to the child and as a society it was necessary to seek to deal with the problem head on.
4. In response to a question from Councillor Varkey on digital forensics through new technology, the Commissioner replied that almost all crimes have a digital footprint which was a massive issue to policing and the criminal justice system given the data and encryption involved. Victim's phones could now be returned in most cases within 24 hours but not all cases. There were some suspect cases where evidence was found and the police would keep the mobile phones under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act.
5. The Commissioner mentioned that the challenges in relation to reported sexual offences went beyond lack of resources. They were complex and an evidential criteria threshold met for the Crown Prosecution Service to take a case on. Requiring a verdict of 'beyond all reasonable doubt' potentially made it very difficult for a jury to convict.
6. The Commissioner also recommended that there was more scope for early intervention and education taking place for young people, primarily young boys, on healthy relationships.
7. Councillor Ferguson asked for clarification on paragraph 4.3 of the report that 'the rape detection rate in September was 8% and the rolling average as of November 6th is 6.2%'. The Commissioner advised that the 'detection rate' was Home Office terminology including where there was a charge, a caution or an out of court conclusion of the case.
8. The report stated that Cambridgeshire was fourth in the country in relation to 'Improvements in digital forensics through new technology – victim's phones can now be returned in most cases within 24 hours'. Councillor Jones asked what more other areas could do to improve. The Commissioner referred to what the county was doing well including supporting victims throughout the process, a professionally qualified team to deal with rape investigations, dedicated police teams (a child abuse investigation team had won team of the year at the Constabulary awards), more resource in the area per size of county and population and a good relationship with the Crown Prosecution Service.

9. The Commissioner informed the Panel that Operation Soteria was one of the leading workstrands that the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners focussed on. It would remain a priority for the OPCC (as it would the Constabulary in Cambridgeshire) with a lot of the grants obtained and commissioning in response to the issue of serious sexual crimes. There also had to be national conversations around the capacity of the criminal justice system, including crown court backlog.

## **ACTION**

The Panel **NOTED** the report.

## **32. Constabulary Budget Considerations**

The Panel received a report with an overview of the Constabulary budget and the Police and Crime Commissioner's (the "Commissioner") approach to budget setting. The Panel made comment, asked questions, and received responses from the Commissioner and his staff regarding the report, which included:

1. Mr Leigh sought clarification on paragraph 6.5 that 'the OPCC and Constabulary, through its Treasury Management Strategy, will aim to minimise these costs through internal rather than external borrowing when cash balances enable this'. Mr Haylett responded that there was the option to borrow more and do so prudently. A 5% general reserve was kept. It was believed that it was more on the cashflow side where borrowing was minimised. Further information would be provided to the Panel.
2. Mr Leigh also raised the increased capital requirements for the 2 big building projects, the Cambridge Southern Police Station / Southern Hub and the Operational Support Unit (Public Order) training facility and new Firing Range. He referred to the anticipated cost for the Police Station / Southern Hub appearing to have gone up from £35m in February 2021 to £45m currently. The current proposed cost of the Operational Support Unit in the capital programme appeared to have risen to £12.3m. He asked whether the land secured through an option agreement for the Firing Range project with a budget in the capital programme of £5.1m was part of, or in addition to, the £12.3m figure. The concern was expressed that the inflation in the capital costs, for which there was no grant funding available, therefore translated into a revenue cost.

Mr Haylett advised that the figures were broadly from the medium term financial strategy and capital programme from earlier in the year. A comprehensive paper explaining the updated position would be provided at the next meeting in January. The position was similar throughout the public sector that a double whammy was being faced with significant inflation, including in the construction sector and at the same time a significant increase in interest rates. Any borrowing was at a much higher interest rate. The January paper would include the borrowing strategy containing advice from the Treasury Management specialists.

Mr Haylett also emphasised the need for the building projects, including there currently being an old estate that required updating. There were risks, including HM Inspectorate of Inspection's view following its next inspection of Parkside. The Public Order training facility was to replace the facilities previously used at Alconbury (MOD land that has been disposed of) and the Chief Constable had a requirement to maintain a certain number of trained public order officers so that the country was able to respond wherever a national incident occurred. The training facility had to comply with the accreditation requirements. Officers were currently being sent a considerable distance to receive training. The replacement Firing Range project was becoming an operational imperative for the training of firearms officers, which needed to

comply with health and safety issues such as air and noise pollution. Specialist facilities were expensive.

3. Councillor Barkham enquired about the income generation opportunities referred to in paragraph 5.2 of the report. The Commissioner stated that there was not a great deal of scope for these opportunities. One example was that the Deputy Chief Constable had developed a national training programme which was being used internationally. A potential opportunity could be if another police force was to use the updated discussed building projects upon completion.
4. In response to questions from Councillor Wilson, the Commissioner re-iterated the firm commitment (as had the Chief Constable) that there would be a city centre police station staffed by local officers. It was still being discussed what the best value for money option was in respect of Parkside. In relation to the building projects, policing and emergency services were not a statutory party for Section 106 commitments and would not receive funding unless it was via the local authority. The Commissioner added that he was aware there was national work proceeding which was seeking to enable police and the emergency services to become a statutory party for S106 funding.
5. The Commissioner confirmed in response to Councillor Varkey that Parkside would not be functioning as it currently is in the future. Parkside custody would be moving to the Milton site. It was an operational point but the Commissioner did not accept that there was a specific safety issue if a detainee was released in the middle of the night. He commented that there were less detainees as people were arrested less often than in the past, the Police had a duty of care and quite often people were taken home from the cells. It was consistent with the national model that the facilities would not always be in the middle of cities and towns.

## **ACTION**

The Panel **NOTED** the report.

### **33. Delivery of The Police and Crime Commissioner's Police & Crime Plan 2021-24 Progress Report**

The Panel received an update on the approach for successfully delivering the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan 2021-24. The Panel made comment, asked questions, and received responses from the Commissioner and his staff regarding the report, which included:

1. Councillor Varkey asked in relation to paragraph 5.4 of the report what percentage of the police force in Cambridgeshire was Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME). The Commissioner replied that it was still under 10% and was less than should be the case. He would be able to obtain the official figures. There was work taking place nationally to increase BAME recruits. The Commissioner advised that of the Cambridgeshire Chief Constable's 500 most recent recruits, 44% had been women.
2. In response to a question from Mr Leigh, the Commissioner stated that there was a commitment from the partners of the Vision Zero Road Safety Partnership to reduce the killed or seriously injured in relation to fatal and serious collisions. The most recent data showed the cases were coming down. It was a work in progress and the director of the Partnership role did need to be resourced. Up until now the OPCC had resourced it through a community reduction fund. This money was no longer available but the Commissioner believed if there was a collective will the post would continue. He was currently communicating with the

Combined Authority regarding this matter. It was intended that the OPCC would report back to the Panel on any developments regarding the Vision Zero Road Safety Partnership.

3. In relation to the Drug Strategy implementation in paragraph 5.2 of the report, Mr Leigh asked what the national expectations were in relation to the sentence that the 'latest indications are that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are performing well against national expectations'. The Commissioner responded that measurements included people taking up treatment and successfully coming out of treatment. The Panel would be provided with more details. OPCC was taking forward a lot of the work in the implementation of the Drug Strategy.

The Commissioner wished to comment, as it was Mr Leigh's last Panel meeting, that he valued Mr Leigh's well thought through challenge and his support both as chair and member.

Councillor Varkey expressed disappointment with the way in which the public question under agenda item 5 had not been directly answered. This was seconded by Councillor Ferguson.

## **ACTION**

The Panel **NOTED** the report.

## **(THE COMMISSIONER AND HIS STAFF LEFT THE MEETING)**

### **34. Meeting Dates and Agenda Plan**

It was agreed that the Commissioner would be asked to bring forward his Annual Report at the March 2024 meeting.

<b>DATES</b>	<b>ITEMS</b>
<b>(Wednesday) 31 JANUARY 2024 1:30pm Civic Suite Huntingdonshire District Council, Huntingdon</b>	<b>Review Actions &amp; Recommendations from the previous meeting Public Questions Precept Report 2024/2025 (full meeting – given importance) Meeting Dates and Agenda Plan</b>
<b>(Wednesday) 14 FEBRUARY 2024 1:30pm Bourges/Viersen Rooms Town Hall, Peterborough</b>	<b>If needed (Veto)</b>
<b>(Wednesday) 13 MARCH 2024 1:30pm Reception Room Town Hall, Peterborough</b>	<b>Review Actions &amp; Recommendations from the previous meeting Public Questions Commissioner's Annual Report Complaint Guidance Meeting Dates and Agenda Plan</b>

The meeting began at 1:30pm and ended at 3:26 pm

CHAIR