

## **Report to Area West Committee – Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel**

The Panel meets every 2 months but also has other meetings involving Scrutiny of specific topics and deals with any Complaints made against the Commissioner.

I have been involved in a number of scrutiny panels, the last being failures of the Commissioners plan (2015/16) in relation to dealing with Burglary, which are on the rise after some years of declining reports.

I also sat on two Complaints Panels, the first being in connection with the Commissioners handling of the dismissal of the last Chief Constable and the other a complaint re information given to a Public meeting.

The Commissioner has no power re operational decisions but does set the budget and publishes a Plan which set out the direction and priorities of the Service

The Panel has input into the Plan and has to approve the Annual budget.

The Commissioners Plan for 2017 has the following headings-

**Protect the most Vulnerable from Harm**, acting as a fierce advocate for victims and ensuring the most vulnerable are protected.

**Strengthen and Improve your Local Policing teams**, ensuring the Police are accessible and tackle the crime that matters to you

**Ensure Avon and Somerset Constabulary has the right people, right culture and right equipment**, working with the Chief Constable focusing on supporting the representative workforce programme, providing suitable equipment and technology for Officers and Staff, developing leadership capability to embed a positive culture and to reform how complaints are handled

**Work together efficiently with other Police forces and key partner agencies to provide better service to local people**, working with other Constabulary and other public sector partners to share estates and enabling services and make savings for reinvestment in priority areas, and transform the criminal justice system locally into a criminal justice service.

The December meeting was attended by the Commissioner and Chief Constable Andy Marsh.

The presentation from the Ch. Constable informed the Panel on the issue of Body Cameras to all Officers and PCSO's and their advantages, the success of 'County Lines' in relation to drug offences, the issue of palm- held commuters and their use, changes to PACE re arrests and stops, difficulties of attracting certain ethnic groups to take up a Police career and the arrangements to be made in relation to prisoner transportation after the closure of charging facilities at Yeovil Police Station and the relocation of officers to the town centre.

The Commissioner explained that with over £8 million deficit on the 2017 Budget difficult decisions have to be made. When questioned she stated that neighbourhood policing would be maintained and where possible strengthened but Policing would be directed and the return to general patrol 'was never going to happen'.

In relation to Yeovil Police Station she stated that the cost of making the Yeovil cells compliant with current standards could not be budgeted for and made assurances in relation to prisoner transportation to the charging centre at Bridgwater, at peak times!

The location of the response teams (24 hour emergency service) has yet to be decided and it is possibly going to have a prisoner holding facility.

Chard Police Station has for some time been earmarked for closure but this is in the second phase of cuts and no date was available.

I realise that most of the above gives rise to more questions than it does supply answers, but I will do my best to answer any of your questions either at Area West or by email.

Martin Wale

Police and Crime Panel Representative, SSDC

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