

MINUTES of the meeting of the **SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL** held at 10.30 am on 28 September 2023 at Woodhatch Place, Reigate, Surrey.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Panel at its next meeting.

Members:

(*Present)

Harry Boparai
Borough Councillor Alex Coley
District Councillor Richard Smith
Borough Councillor Danielle Newson
Borough Councillor Richard Wilson
Keith Witham
District Councillor Paul Kennedy
Borough Councillor Victor Lewanski
John Robini
Mr Martin Stilwell
Borough Councillor Barry J F Cheyne
Borough Councillor Ellen Nicholson

Apologies:

Borough Councillor Nick Prescott

52/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Nick Prescott.

53/21 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 29 JUNE 2023 [Item 2]

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

54/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

None were declared.

55/21 PUBLIC QUESTIONS [Item 4]

None were received.

56/21 SURREY POLICE UPLIFT & WORKFORCE PLANNING [Item 5]

Witnesses:

Lisa Townsend, Police and Crime Commissioner

Damian Markland, Head of Performance and Governance, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) explained that Surrey was on target to meet its Officer uplift target and now had more police officers than at any other time in its history. A panel member asked whether BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic group) targets were met during the uplift recruitment programme. 40.2% of officers recruited were female and 6.5% from a Black, Asian, Mixed or Other background. The Commissioner said that she was broadly content that the Force reflected local ethnic demographics although an exact mirroring was preferable. Statistics provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) showed that 14.5 % of Surrey's population was BAME. On female representation the Commissioner reported being very pleased. Surrey was one of the most equal Forces in the country in terms of male/female representation.
2. A member asked about the attrition rates for women and ethnic minorities. The Commissioner assured the Panel that strong governance arrangements were in place to monitor and oversee attrition and workforce development. Officers from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) were fully represented on relevant boards including on the equality and diversity inclusion board. OPCC had were working on an equality framework for its staff and were actively involved in the development of the Force's race action plan. The Chairman asked for a fuller answer to be provided in writing.
(Action i)
3. A member asked about the financial penalties that would be incurred if officer numbers slipped below the stated threshold (2,253). Was the Commissioner worried that this threshold might be reached? The Commissioner responded that this was not a concern. The Force projection was for uplift milestones to be met for September and March 2023/24. Options for an additional entry route in January were being assessed in case further recruitment became necessary to address attrition.
4. The PCC was asked about attrition amongst probationers. The report showed probationer attrition rate standing at 32%. This was a clear issue. The Commissioner explained that it was a problem faced by all Forces. Surrey was working hard to understand why officers leave. The Commissioner highlighted governance arrangements in place to monitor attrition including through the Capacity Capability and Performance board, Strategic Resource Management meetings and regular Joint Force Retention reviews. A number of changes had been implemented to ease the pressure on student officers including improved study guidance, changes to the timing of knowledge

assessments and a reduction in volume. The programme structure had been redesigned with improved guidance and better oversight of the protected learning days. It was important supervisors were appropriately informed to support their student staff. The OPCC continues to monitor progress in this area closely.

5. A member questioned detective capacity and the 30% attrition rate for *Police Now* Detective Probationers. The Commissioner explained that the Force had undertaken a review into the *Police Now* programme to understand the challenges. The main findings were that it teaches policing in a generic not Surrey-specific way which can make the transition into Surrey more difficult than the other in-house entry routes. In addition *Police Now* students were not entitled to protected learning time. This made the additional demands of the programme particularly challenging for those with caring responsibilities or a family. *Police Now* was no longer central to Surrey Force recruitment.
6. A member asked about Contact Centre capability. The Commissioner explained that the centre was now up to full numbers and that the Force was 'overrecruiting' in this area. A small capability gap remained while staff were being trained but did not impact on the rest of the service. Recruiting and retaining Contact Centre staff was a top priority and the Force had done an excellent job improving this situation.
7. The PCC was asked about the reasons cited for leaving by officers in exit surveys. The Commissioner explained that the key reasons were salary, pressures of university work, time off being cancelled or not approved, night/weekend shifts and the effect on family life. Being a police officer requires a significant degree of service and dedication and some find the demands and pressures of the job are not for them. The Force initiates conversations early on with those thinking of leaving to find out why and to support them to stay where possible. A member emphasised the importance of alleviating the issues outlined and addressing the reasons given for leaving in order to retain as many members of the Force as possible. The importance of making expectations clear to new joiners during recruitment was highlighted. They should be aware at the outset what policing involves. It is a 24/7 service so there will always be a requirement to work unsociable hours.
8. A member noted that the strength figure for police officers was significantly higher than for police staff (99.8% Vs 88.98%) and asked which area of staff vacancies caused the most impact or concern. The Head of Performance and Governance explained that the force control room and contact centre were the biggest issue in terms of staff vacancies. Many checks and measures had been implemented to keep staff in post and reduce attrition. The other pressure point was around technical skills, IT and fleet management. It was easy for those

with IT skills to earn considerably more in the private sector. The Head of Performance emphasised that staff were intrinsic to frontline operations in many areas including in relation to online paedophilia and that it was important not to draw too much of a distinction between officers and staff.

9. A member noted the response provided in writing to a panel member regarding numbers of Surrey police officers currently suspended or on restricted duties and questioned why, unlike the Met police, Surrey would not publish these figures. The Commissioner responded that the threshold to instigate an investigation was low and ultimately many cases were deemed not to require further action or found not to warrant formal misconduct proceedings. Providing statistics on pending cases could potentially mislead the public regarding the size and scale of inappropriate behaviour within the force with a corresponding and undue impact on public confidence. A member questioned whether a breakdown of the reasons for suspension could be provided if not the numbers. The Commissioner maintained that this was not possible.
10. The Commissioner was asked about plans to make it easier for Chief Constables to sack rogue officers and what impact this would have. The Commissioner thought that Chief Constables should be able to remove officers where they were not suitable but noted that the work undertaken by legally qualified Chairs to oversee Police Appeals Tribunals was also incredibly important. A balance should be struck.
11. A member asked about the proportion of the Force not fully operational due to ongoing training. How long would it take for a normal recruit to get to the stage of being fully operational? The Commissioner explained that training happened throughout an officer's career through continuous learning, training and updating skills. There was not a clear transition point from partly to fully operational.

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the report.

Actions/Further information requested:

- i) OPCC to respond in writing to Cllr Kennedy's question regarding attrition rates for women and ethnic minorities.

57/21 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL FORECAST (MTFF) UPDATE 2024/25 TO 2027/28 [Item 6]

Witnesses:

Lisa Townsend, Police and Crime Commissioner

Kelvin Menon, Chief Financial Officer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. A member noted that according to the Medium-Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) paper £3M of the £6M savings required for 2024/25 had been identified and asked where these savings would come from and how they would affect the Force and its capabilities. The Commissioner explained that of the £3m only £250000 had so far been delivered. The rest would flow from a review of contact, fleet and back-office services as well as a longer-term review of Custody. The ambition was to ensure that savings and efficiencies did not impact Force capabilities or the level of service the public received. It may be necessary to use reserves to cover the gap whilst these reviews were taking place. The Commissioner highlighted the importance of the reviews and assured the panel that these were discussed regularly with the Chief Constable who was equally focused on delivering value for money without detriment to the service to residents. On the possible use of reserves a member asked if there would be a plan to rebuild the reserves if they had to be used. The Chief Finance Officer explained that the priority was to address the savings needed, and that the reserves provided welcome contingency for this, but that it was intended that reserves would be rebuilt when the finances allowed.
2. A member questioned what assumptions had been made about the level of precept increase required for 2024/25 and over the remaining MTFF period. The Commissioner responded that a decision on the precept would be made at an appropriate time after consultation with the public and the Force. For the medium-term forecast it been assumed that the precept would increase by £10 for 24/25 and rise by 2% after that. Each additional pound raised £0.5m for the Force. The CFO explained his view that from a financial standpoint the level of precept should be maximised in order to maintain services. Precept changes were cumulative meaning that an increase not taken in a particular year could not be recovered in future years resulting in a loss of income in every subsequent year going forward. The PCC would have other considerations as well as finance to weigh up in coming to her final precept decision. A member endorsed the comments of the CFO and urged the Commissioner to follow the advice of her Chief Finance officer to request the maximum increase and not to be over cautious. His view was that past precept increases for policing had not caused an outcry in the County and that improved and continued policing services was the priority for Surrey residents. The Commissioner highlighted the importance of the precept consultation with the public in making her decision. Another member reminded the panel that Surrey residents already pay the highest level of police council tax in England.
3. A member asked if the Commissioner was optimistic that lobbying would achieve a change in the Police funding formula which could benefit Surrey. Unless the formula changed Surrey would need to make increasingly high calls on residents through their council tax bills. The Commissioner explained that all PCCs were making representations and had different concerns regarding the review of the

formula. However, it was unlikely that a change would occur any time soon. Both the CFO and PCC were pushing hard through various channels. They were not optimistic that Surrey would do better under a change of Government either. The Chairman highlighted the panel's past support to the Commissioner on this issue and the letter sent to the Home Office requesting redistribution of the funding.

4. The PCC was asked where Police staff costs could be reduced and what the impact would be on officers. It seemed insanity to boast of smashing recruitment and uplift targets whilst simultaneously proposing savings through headcount reduction. The PCC explained that officers' numbers were protected under the Uplift programme. However, with over 80% of costs relating to staffing, Police staff costs were an obvious place for savings to be found. Whilst the focus was on finding efficiencies and service improvements it might be necessary to continue to carry vacancies forward in some staff areas. The CFO again highlighted the work underway to find savings through fleet rationalisation, changes to IT and custody services. A member asked for a guarantee that officers would not be used to take on the responsibilities of police staff. The PCC replied that this was an operational matter for the Chief Constable. The decision to move a couple of officers into the force contact centre was highlighted and had proved to be beneficial.
5. The report highlighted the risks associated with rising interest rates and suggested some Capital projects might have to be modified or deferred. A member asked which Capital projects were most at risk and what the impact of delaying these projects might be in terms of Force efficiency and effectiveness. The PCC explained that any impact would be on the phasing of projects such as IT upgrades, Net Zero and the new HQ building. The projects themselves were not at risk.
6. The PCC was asked what efforts have been made to change ways of working to reduce the impact of staff reductions. Was there any further scope for efficiencies through shared services? The PCC responded that new technology made a big impact on reducing administrative demands and saving time. Surrey and Sussex had already achieved savings through collaboration and may consider further collaborative opportunities where there was potential to provide a better service for the same cost or the same service for a reduced cost.
7. The impact of the closure of borough and district council offices was raised. The PCC explained that this was kept under review. Positive relationships existed between the Surrey Police estates team and officers in each of the Districts and Boroughs. The Commissioner thought there might be further opportunities to work more closely with Districts and Boroughs and to use shared services. The benefit of having the Police sited with council services was clear and could provide value for money for the public. A member commented on the situation in Woking where there was a risk of Woking council offices being closed with a potential knock-on impact on the borough commander and staff. The member asked for the Commissioner's assurance that Woking was included in any conversations with the force. The Commissioner provided assurance that Surrey Police

Estates Office were in contact with Woking Council officers to ensure any changes had minimal impact on local policing and the local policing team.

8. A member asked if there was a risk that Surrey Police might need to consider issuing a section 114 notice. The Chief Finance Officer explained that the National Police Chiefs Council had undertaken a survey on financial sustainability for policing which concluded that nationally there was a £3billion gap for the sector. In Surrey there was a gap of £15.6M against a £300M budget. Taken against the wider £3billion context this was not a bad position. Moreover, Surrey had reserves which could be as a last resort and the decision could also be taken not to fill vacancies. In conclusion the risk to Surrey of having to issue a section 114 was currently assessed as extremely low. This was not the case in other forces where bigger savings were required or there was a larger capital budget.
9. A member asked if there was a Medium-Term Financial Strategy covering the next 5 years, rather than just a budgetary approach as outlined in the MTFF paper. The CFO suggested that the assumptions underpinning the medium-term financial plan provided the strategic approach. The Chief Constable was developing a strategy to capture the change needed to deliver the savings required. This would look at custody, provision of vehicles, usage of assets and changes to IT. As to whether a single strategy document existed, the CFO said there was a strategy to attempt to deliver the savings but that this was not contained in one document.
10. A Member asked about para 9-12 of the report and whether the welcome pay increase which had been awarded to officers had been covered by the government Grant. The CFO had provided a response to this question in writing ahead of the session and it was agreed this should be added to the Minutes. A member noted that the recent pay increase for 2023/4 was covered by the Grant but that subsequent increases were not. The CFO explained that Surrey had the lowest proportion of the formula grant, and these additional grants were shared out using the same proportions. Any steps that could be taken by the Panel to lobby funding formula change on the OPCC's behalf would be more than welcome.

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the report.

58/21 COMMISSIONER'S QUESTION TIME [Item 12]

Witnesses:

Lisa Townsend, Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. A member asked a follow-up relating to Community Sentence Treatment requirements and thanked the OPCC for sharing the reducing reoffending plan. Surrey has the highest reoffending rate of the three counties covered in the plan. Two probation delivery units

inspected last year had been declared 'inadequate'. The member noted the view of others that the probation service should return to local control. What action could the PCC take to work with partners including the Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board to combat these issues and to mitigate the risk of a crisis of reoffending on Surrey streets? The PCC shared some of the concerns expressed about centralisation and emphasised the existing close working with the Health and Wellbeing Board. As a cohort PCCs have been clear they are willing to take on further responsibility for probation. However, Surrey has one of the smallest OPCCs in the country and the resource available to work on probation was very limited. A change from central government would be necessary in order for PCCs to be able to provide further support in this area.

2. A member flagged the question that had been submitted on Car Meets and asked for the work with Districts and Boroughs to be explained. The Deputy PCC responded that work was taking place locally via Joint Action Groups and suggested specific local queries or concerns be raised in writing. A member requested that local Councillors are kept informed by their Borough Commanders on these issues and highlighted problems arising from frequent turnover of Borough Commanders in certain areas. The PCC assured the Panel that the importance of communication with Councillors and MPs was emphasised in a recent training event for Borough Commanders at Mount Browne.
3. On shoplifting, a member asked about the practice of aggregating multiple shoplifting incidents where they were taking place on the same day in the same place and whether this was an appropriate way to record the crimes. The PCC indicated that this was an operational matter for the Chief Constable but that she expected a much harder line to be taken on shoplifting in the future. The member questioned whether national guidelines were set around the capture and management of data on shoplifting crimes and queried whether Borough Commanders considered shoplifting a priority. The PCC said that the approach was changing in line with the new Chief Constable's priorities. When asked if the Police and Crime Plan should be updated to reflect this new priority the Commissioner responded that the Plan already covered the issue of shoplifting and that there were no plans to review or update the wording of it. A member asked whether the PCC was content with Surrey Police's policy for tackling shoplifting and fuel station drive-offs and the mechanisms in place for reporting these crimes to the police, and asked for assurance that an effective policy was in place to ensure these crimes are investigated properly. The PCC emphasised her clear intention, and that of the Chief Constable, to take a hard line to tackling shoplifting and offered to write to the Panel with more detail on the Pegasus industry group that had been established. **(Action ii)**
4. A member asked a follow-up on the question about publishing data on officers under investigation. Surrey's policy was not to do this

although data had been published by the Metropolitan police service to increase public confidence. What was the Commissioner's view on the level of public confidence in Surrey Police? The PCC responded that Surrey emerged as having one of the highest levels of public confidence in policing in the most recent crime survey. The PCC expressed confidence that Surrey does not have the same degree of problems as the Met police.

5. The PCC was questioned whether an additional one-off bonus payment to officers should be considered (using the Force underspend) given the real terms pay freeze suffered by officers since 2010. The Commissioner highlighted the 7% pay increase which had been awarded and explained that the cost of any further payments would be prohibitive. Pay did not seem to be the top concern amongst officers.
6. The issue of police community support officers (PCSOs) was raised. Concern was expressed about establishment figures and whether there were sufficient PCSOs to support community policing in rural areas. The Commissioner responded that there were now rural teams in place within which PCSOs play an important role. Recruitment of PCSOs was a problem however and panel members were urged to promote PCSO job opportunities locally.

Actions/Further information requested:

- ii) Commissioner to write to the Panel to give more details on Project Pegasus and the new industry group that has been established.

59/21 SURREY POLICE GROUP UNAUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2022/23 [Item 7]

Witnesses:

Lisa Townsend, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

Kelvin Menon, Chief Financial Officer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. A member asked what lessons had been learnt from the revenue and capital underspends detailed in the report for 2022/23 (£8.7M & £6.6M respectively). How would these feed into budget profiling for 2024/25? The CFO explained that revenue underspend was due to phasing of uplift recruitment and staff vacancies which had been higher than anticipated. The vacancy margin for 2023/24 had been increased to reduce the risk of underspend in the 23/24 budget. On capital, the plan was to move to a two-year capital programme rather than expecting all the capital to be spent in one year. The CFO was asked about overtime costs which had increased on the previous year (£8.1M to

£8.9M). This was due to vacancies which had increased overtime particularly in the contact centre. Staff were now less willing to do overtime and the Force was looking to reduce the overtime budget to £7.4million. An overtime Working Group looked regularly at the issue including from a staff wellbeing point of view. The Chairman asked about the practice of banking overtime and taking time off in lieu. The CFO agreed to come back to the Chairman on whether this remained a practice. **(Action iii)**

2. A member asked about the overspend in Digital Forensics, Professional Standards Department and legal costs. What was the reason for the rising demand in these areas and how much overspend was attributable to outsourcing? On digital forensics the CFO explained that most crimes now had an electronic element which meant significant demand for digital forensics services. Staff were trained to do this within the Force, but costs were rising due to volume. On legal costs, improved mechanisms for reporting concerns to the professional standards department had increased the volume of incidents to be investigated and associated legal costs for disciplinary procedures. The CFO agreed to revert with further detail on the question of outsourcing Digital Forensics work. **(Action iv)**
3. A Member noted that OPCC Operational costs represented around 0.5% of net total group expenditure and asked how this compared to other Force areas. The CFO explained that comparative data was not readily available. Many Forces do not separate OPCC figures out in their budget. The Chairman supported the Commissioner's transparency in providing these figures when others chose not to. The Commissioner explained that most PCCs aimed to keep the figure at around 1% or below of total group expenditure on which basis 0.5% for the Surrey OPCC seemed a reasonable amount. The use of reserves to cover business as usual costs was raised.
4. Asked about the government's uplift target for officers and discrepancies between different figures provided the CFO explained that the government's officer target was for headcount (2,253) whereas the Force budgeted on the basis of FTE. This can cause discrepancies due to the numbers of part time staff. As at 30 September the Force was on target to meet the baseline government target for headcount in 2024.
5. A member queried IT slippage which accounted for a £3.7M underspend and asked whether the IT strategy was fit for purpose. The CFO responded that in the past the strategy was lacking. A new CDIO Anthony Croxford was now in place and working to restructure and upskill the workforce to ensure it was fit for the future. The difficulties of attracting staff with the necessary IT skills were highlighted in a highly competitive jobs market. A member pressed the

CFO on the timing for IT transformation. When would the IT improvements required to achieve more efficient ways of working and associated savings be delivered; and what was the timeline for moving from physical IT servers to the Cloud? The CFO responded that there were many hundred IT applications some of which were not suitable to put into the cloud. Each one needed to be reviewed and rationalised. There were also security implications. It was a complex area, but progress had been made. Officers were now well equipped with laptops and personal devices and could work remotely. Surrey was ahead of most neighbouring Forces in this area, including the Met. The Chairman accepted the PCCs offer and asked for CDIO Croxford to come and talk to the Panel about Force IT.

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the report.

Actions/Further information requested:

- iii) The CFO to respond to the Chairman's question regarding the practice of banking overtime and taking time off in lieu and whether this remained a practice.
- iv) The CFO to revert with further detail on the question of outsourcing Digital Forensics work - how much of the Digital Forensics spend is attributable to outsourcing and are we spending more because we are having to spend on suppliers not staff?

60/21 PCC FORWARD PLAN AND KEY DECISIONS [Item 11]

Witnesses:

Lisa Townsend, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. A member noted that the Commissioner's review of Fire & Rescue Service governance was not included in the forward plan and asked for an update on progress. The Commissioner responded that there was no update to give the Panel at this stage and no further detail on timings. It was suggested that unallocated items should also appear in the key decisions log as not yet having a date. The Joint Audit Committee report was raised and a member asked for an explanation of the limited assurance review in relation to *accounts receivable*. The CFO said these issues had been addressed and were to do with invoices being raised more quickly and the speed of debt collection. The CFO agreed to provide an interim Financial Update at the next Panel meeting.

61/21 COMMISSIONING UPDATE [Item 8]

Witnesses:

Lisa Townsend, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

Damian Markland, Head of Performance & Governance

1. The Head of Performance and Governance introduced the item. The OPCC is responsible for a multimillion-pound commissioning budget which is used to commission a wide range of services a subset of which was highlighted in this report.

Key points raised during the discussion:

2. A member asked about the Surrey Healthy Schools Project: How are participants chosen for the professional development course and is attendance targeted at areas or communities with a higher risk of VAWG (violence against women and girls)? The Head of Performance & Governance explained that any school in Surrey could apply to make use of the scheme. There was targeted promotion in certain areas but a universal approach was felt to be the best. The challenge with VAWG was that it could affect any girl anywhere. It would be unhelpful to promote the idea that there were some areas or communities which were not at risk or conversely other areas where the risk was higher. VAWG occurred across all demographics. A Member asked about the Anti VAWG Public Campaign, where and how would it be delivered and how would the impact be measured? The Officer explained that this was a county wide campaign. The detail was currently being worked out. A more detailed update would be provided to the Panel in due course. **(Action v)**
3. A Member asked about the *Steps to Change* Service aimed at preventing offending. How would success be measured, and should we be measuring impact rather than outcomes? The OPCC explained that the formal service contract included a range of KPIs and performance indicators against which performance would be measured. The aim of the scheme was to create positive behavioural change. There were various ways this could be measured for example through pre and post engagement assessments, however the challenge of demonstrating and monitoring behavioural change long term was noted. Demand for the Service was expected to be manageable. Steps could be taken to expand the service if uptake was high. The Head of Performance and Governance offered to share detail on the contractual KPIs for measuring success and impact of the scheme, and to report back to the Panel at the end of the funding period 2025. **(Action vi)**

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the report.

Actions/Further information requested:

- v) OPCC to provide Panel with a more detailed update regarding Cllr Cheyne's question on the Anti VAWG Public Campaign - Where and how will the campaign be delivered? Will it be targeted or Surrey-wide? How will you get a result?
- vi) OPCC to circulate detail on contractual KPIs for measuring success/impact of *Steps to Change*. OPCC to report back to the Panel on progress/success of the scheme at the end of the funding period 2025.

**62/21 INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITOR SCHEME ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23
[Item 9]**

Witnesses:

Lisa Townsend, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

Ellie Vesey-Thompson, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner

1. A member asked about the areas of concern identified in the joint HMICFRS & HMIP Inspection report on Surrey's Police Custody Services published last year. The Commissioner responded that both issues had been dealt with or were in progress. In November 2021 a new training and compliance team had been introduced. Compliance had since increased from 81 to 88% in July 2023. There had also been an increase in the compliance rate for accurate recording of detainee check times from 22% to 100% in July 2023. The Force was taking the issue seriously and the PCC expressed satisfaction that the causes of concern were being addressed. The Vice Chairman noted that the annual report made good reading and congratulated the team.

[The Police and Crime Commissioner left the meeting]

2. The Commissioner was asked about the shortage of Criminal Justice Liaison Diversion Service (CJLDS) staff in custody suites highlighted in the Report. Had the Commissioner done anything to raise concerns at a strategic level with NHS England? The Deputy PCC flagged that the Commissioner was the national PCC lead on mental health and liaised regularly with the NHS on this and related issues. Improvements had been made to ensure cover was in place for the majority of shifts. There were two applicants currently awaiting vetting which would further alleviate pressures. The new Custody Scrutiny Panel was discussed. OPCC was represented on the Panel which provided oversight of challenges faced by Custody Suites. No recurring or systemic issues were identified.

3. A member paid tribute to the volunteers of the Independent Custody Visitor Scheme who give up their time to carry out this important role. There was a discussion around volunteer demographics. The OPCC said it was proactive in trying to encourage increase diversity in terms of ethnicity and age, but it was a struggle to get younger people represented.

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the report.

63/21 PERFORMANCE MEETINGS [Item 10]

Witnesses:

Ellie Vesey-Thompson, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the report.

64/21 COMPLAINTS RECEIVED SINCE THE LAST MEETING [Item 13]

Witnesses:

Alison Bolton, Chief Executive Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Complaints Sub-Committee has been notified of 6 recorded complaints made against the Commissioner since the last Panel meeting. In each case the Sub-Committee endorsed the Chief Executive's decision to disapply the informal resolution procedure. A member asked which criteria were used in the disapplication of the regulations regarding the 6 complaints which had been received. The Chief Executive explained that the criteria were set out in the complaints protocol. From memory the complaints were disappplied on 'repetitious' grounds. The Chairman confirmed that each case the Complaints Sub Committee agreed with the criteria that had been applied by the Chief Executive for dealing with the complaints in question.

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the report.

Actions/Further information requested:

- vii) Chief Executive to share summary of the criteria under which the 6 complaints were disappplied (and to confirm whether all were 'repetitious').

65/21 RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 14]

12. The Panel noted the tracker and forward work programme.

66/21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 24 NOVEMBER 2024 [Item 15]

- 13.** The Panel's next meeting will be held on 24 November 2023. The Chair reminded the Panel about the informal session with the Chief Constable on 24 October.

Meeting ended at: **12:54**

Chairman