

MINUTES of the meeting of the **SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL** held at 10.30 am on 26 September 2024 at Woodhatch Place, Reigate, Surrey.

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

Members:

(*Present)

- * Ms Juliet Fryer
- * Borough Councillor Danielle Newson
- * Borough Councillor Richard Wilson
- * District Councillor Paul Kennedy
- * John Robini
- * Borough Councillor Barry J F Cheyne
- * Borough Councillor James Baker
- * Borough Councillor Mike Smith
- * Borough Councillor Tony Burrell
- * Ayesha Azad

Apologies:

District Councillor Richard Smith
Borough Councillor Ellen
Nicholson
Borough Councillor Shanice
Goldman

32/24 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION FROM CHAIRMAN [Item 1]

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed the members and Officers.

33/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 2]

Apologies were received from Cllr Shanice Goldman, Cllr Richard Smith and Cllr Ellen Nicholson.

34/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

None received.

35/24 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 20 JUNE 2024 [Item 4]

The Minutes of the previous meeting were **AGREED** as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

36/24 PUBLIC QUESTIONS [Item 5]

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Two public questions were received in advance of the meeting. A response to the questions were published in a supplementary agenda.
2. A member raised, on behalf of Cllr Ashley Tilling, that several of the Surrey BIDs that already had DISC paid for by levies were waiting for the direct link into Surrey Police (the Force) for ease of reporting incidents and to encourage more business engagement. The member asked if the Force could commit to creating the direct link and provide a schedule for this. The PCC explained she would not commit to anything on behalf of the Force. A written answer could be provided to the Panel, or the member could ask the Chief Constable at the Panel's meeting with the Chief Constable.

Actions/Requests for further information:

The PCC to write to the Panel in response to Cllr Ashely Tilling's supplementary question, asked by Cllr Paul Kennedy.

**37/24 POLICE AND CRIME PLAN CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY
[Item 6]**

Witnesses:

Lisa Townsend, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

Ellie Vesey-Thompson, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC)

Alison Bolton, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer (OPCC)

Damian Markland, Head of Performance and Governance (OPCC)

Kelvin Menon, Chief Finance Officer (OPCC)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman provided the background of the report. The PCC gave a brief introduction, noting that consultation was ongoing.
2. A member noted that the report referred to "*...a period of refinement and maintenance*" that reframed some issues of the previous plan while maintaining the same foundations. The member asked if there were other areas being descoped or removed from the Plan to allow this change. The PCC explained that some areas, since the last Police and Crime Plan (Plan), had become 'business as usual' for the Force, and therefore did not need as much focus. The first Plan was reviewed in Summer 2024 to review any possible areas for change.
3. The member asked how impartiality and fairness would be ensured through the consultation process. For example, if

political proportionality was guaranteed when consulting with political representatives and if there was a risk that the consultation could constitute an 'echo chamber' of similar views. The PCC explained that she viewed the consultation as apolitical. Everyone in Surrey had an opportunity to contribute. The public survey and wider engagement events would ensure everyone in Surrey had the opportunity to contribute, should they wish.

4. A member asked how the focus of the Plan was expected to change due to the methodology, and if the PCC could commit to altering the plan significantly to reflect stakeholder feedback. The PCC explained that her Office (OPCC) awaited the results of the wider consultation. The public consultation would follow. She did not possess set expectations on the feedback. The Head of Performance and Governance explained that the methodology was a structural mechanism to collect and interpret data, to ensure the building of the Plan was based on a firm foundation. When the Panel would be given the final draft Plan, a breakdown of how the methodology operated and translated into the Plan would also be provided.
5. A member noted the report's reference that "*...preliminary findings will be shared with focus group participants for feedback and confirmation*" and queried if this group of participants would be a sub-set of those consulted in earlier rounds of consultation. The Head of Performance and Governance explained that after each focus group, the OPCC returned to participants with a transcript of the discussion for checking. An electronic form was also sent to participants, so they could clarify their statements and the OPCC's interpretations of them.
6. A member asked how the views offered in the more 'informal' Community Engagement events in September to December 2024 would be incorporated into the new Plan if the same statistical methods were not applied. The PCC noted that the first 'informal' Community Engagement meeting took place in Guildford on 23 September 2024. Consideration was given to recording and producing a transcript of these sessions, but this would need consent of those attending. A written record of themes that arose in the meetings would instead be taken, to identify trends, which would inform the Plan. Community Engagement sessions were less to inform the Plan and were instead to inform and encourage people to take part in the consultation. It was also an opportunity to speak to the Chief Constable and Borough Commander.
7. The member asked if the PCC could provide the absolute values for the numbers of participants involved in the focus groups and surveys as well as each response category. The PCC confirmed

this could be shared after the consultation and draft Plan was complete.

8. A member queried how robust the internal review process was and if there was a peer review. The member raised that apart from management and rehabilitation of offenders, the PEEL reports found performance had deteriorated across the board. The member suggested that this performance could be linked with the performance against objectives in the Plan, as well as synchronising the Plan with the Chief Constable's plan and national policing priorities. The PCC noted that everyone in the commissioning team and the OPCC reviewed the Plan. These teams were non-political and had experience of writing and delivering plans - the PCC also consulted with the Force on the Plan. The Head of Performance and Governance added there were different layers to the consultation. There was an internal review with officers in the OPCC and the Force. Focus groups were being reviewed and were thematically based, such as with groups from commissioned services and the business community. A public consultation would also be launched. There was a desk-based exercise where areas such as the Force Control Strategy, national directives and HMICFRS inspections were reviewed. The PCC noted that the current Plan is the most widely consulted Plan that Surrey has ever had, and the OPCC was going further with the new Plan. The Head of Performance and Governance noted the continuity brought by the PCC's re-election when building and refining the Plan, as it allowed for more detailed discussions with stakeholders.
9. The member asked how much of the analytical review would be shared with the public and the Panel, along with the draft Plan. The member noted that when the current Plan was released 3 years ago there was a lot of consultation that led up to its development, but he felt that the draft plan was not consulted on, as such. The member asked if the way this was conducted would change. The Head of Performance and Governance clarified that the Panel would receive the draft Police and Crime Plan, and an analytical summary of the data, how it was interpreted and why it led to the formation of the Plan's policies. The Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer raised that when the draft Police and Crime Plan came to the Panel, it was not an additional stage of consultation, it was for the Panel to review, but there was still opportunity for the draft Plan to change. When the current Plan was brought to the Panel in draft, the member had raised the view that there was not enough focus given to rural crime, which was subsequently amended in the Plan. There was an element of time pressure to the plan, with lots of consultation in a relatively short period, but the Chief Executive was satisfied that the consultation was robust.

10. The PCC raised that the duty of the PCC was to consult, but it was not set out how to consult, how widely and who with. The PCC did not want to rush the Plan, and wanted to ensure it was done right.
11. The Head of Performance and Governance noted that the survey had been developed. The temptation was to make the survey long and detailed, but equally that this would likely deter enough people from completing the survey, so a balance was needed. It was agreed to share the survey with the Panel.
12. The Chairman raised a suggestion of forming of a sub-committee within the Panel, noting the need to look at the results of the consultation and methodology.
13. A member asked if invites for the focus group sessions referred to in the report had been distributed, given the process was set to end in October 2024. The member also asked if councillors would be invited to these sessions given that they, and Councils, were identified as a stakeholder group in the report. The PCC explained that the focus groups were ongoing. Councillor sessions were still being worked on. Council Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) were already invited to the sessions. It would not be feasible to meet personally with all Surrey councillors. Online feedback and smaller one-to-one groups would be used to engage with councillors.
14. The Chairman requested that if there was a focus group session in a Panel member's area, they were invited. The PCC explained it was not geographical in this way but encouraged all Panel members to attend the community engagement meetings and invite their constituents.
15. A member asked if there had been engagement with local councils to try to ensure the dates and locations of the community engagement meetings were suitable. The PCC highlighted the difficulties of finding a date that suited the diaries of herself, the Chief Constable and the Borough Commanders. The meetings also needed to be in a specific area, on an evening and in an appropriate venue. Given this, the dates had not been checked with each council. However, there was a second opportunity with an online session in January 2025.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

Actions/requests for further information:

- OPCC to provide the absolute values for the number of participants involved in the focus groups and surveys, as well as for each response category once the consultation is completed.

- The Head of Performance and Governance to share the consultation survey with Panel members.

38/24 POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24 [Item 7]

Witnesses:

Lisa Townsend, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

Ellie Vesey-Thompson, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC)

Alison Bolton, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer (OPCC)

Damian Markland, Head of Performance and Governance (OPCC)

Kelvin Menon, Chief Finance Officer (OPCC)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman provided a brief outline of the purpose of the report. The Commissioner moved to take questions.
2. In reference to the Domestic Abuse Hub, which secured £2 million in funding from the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Intervention Fund, a member noted that the standards published alongside the fund required intervention programmes to take place within a wider community response, be delivered by well-supported specialist staff, and benefit from monitoring and evaluation. The member asked how these interventions at the Surrey hub met these requirements. The PCC outlined the requirements were factored into the service specification and procurement process. Requirements were also embedded into the contractual obligations as part of receiving the funding. The commissioning team had lots of experience working with organisations to ensure contractual obligations were met and issues were tackled early. There were good relationships with funding partners which made a big difference.
3. The Head of Performance and Governance added that when the OPCC received devolved funding, as part of the standing allocation or through a competitive process, the Home Office and/or the Ministry of Justice paid a lot of attention to what was done with the funding. The commissioning team were required to provide regular, formal updates on how money was being spent. This, in addition to the procurement process and tendering exercises, was all factored into the final contract.
4. The member requested that in the Police and Crime Commissioner Annual Reports, a summary of what was achieved in-year with the Domestic Abuse Hub could be provided. The PCC confirmed this could be provided.

Cllr Mike Smith left the meeting at 11.07am.

5. A member, in reference to the report's statement that "...we have made millions of pounds available to support victims of crime", asked if the level of funding for these services had increased, decreased or remained the same in the last three years. The PCC explained that all the funding data was available in the annual financial statements on the OPCC's website. The absolute level of funding available to the OPCC each year varied. In addition to funds received from the government, which was not yet known for future years, the OPCC and commissioning team bid for additional funds for areas such as Safer Streets and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). The annual difference does not necessarily reflect a trajectory of the OPCC's commitment or lack of commitment, as the funding was often outside their control, she added. It was not always easy to separate victim services from community safety or reducing reoffending, as support offered by any one service, such as the Domestic Abuse Hub, was often there to support a range of people such as both perpetrators and victims. For 2022/23, the OPCC funded local services to £5.4 million (m) and for 2023/24 this rose to £6.5m.
6. A member queried why the total funding being allocated to increase public safety in Walton, Redhill and Guildford was set to decrease in 2024/25 from the previous year. The member also asked if sufficient advances in community safety had been realised in these areas, and if this reduction could compromise the delivery of the Serious Violence Reduction Strategy. The PCC explained this was part of the Safer Streets Fund that came from the last government. The amount of money the OPCC could bid for each year varies, as do the issues the government want PCCs to prioritise. The government had revisited its financial commitment to some of the national funding, which included the previously agreed funding such as that for Safer Streets. Surrey's allocation had been reduced as a result. Regarding Walton, Redhill and Guildford, funding provided earlier in 2024 was to support the establishment of new infrastructure and some street scene changes. The OPCC worked closely with CSPs to identify specific areas of need and to ensure funding opportunities were going to the right places. The Safer Streets funding delivered was always done in conjunction with district and borough councils.
7. A member asked what work was being done to consult with the Voluntary and Community Frontline Sector (VCSF) or third sector experts in violence against women and girls (VAWG), such as organisations like End Violence Against Women. The member also asked if there was certainty that the work of other such organisations in this field would not be duplicated. The PCC explained that the OPCC had been commissioning

services for victims of VAWG for over ten years, and had developed strong relationships, regionally, nationally and locally. The OPCC worked closely with national organisations such as Women's Aid. Historically, local service providers were represented on police boards within the Force.

8. The Head of Performance and Governance added that when the OPCC first started commissioning services for victims of crime there were occasions where services were delivered by different government departments –particularly with services for victims of rape and sexual assault, there were occasional instances where money was provided by central government and a new service appeared with no 'join-up', they added, noting that this has ceased in the last five years. They stated that the government now appeared better at understanding the value PCCs could bring to commissioning, and consulted with PCCs. This meant that most of the funding for services flowed through PCC offices which helped with coordination between the government and the OPCC. The OPCC had good relationships with providers and other statutory agencies, such as joint commissioning with Surrey County Council Central and NHS England, for example with the recommissioning of sexual assault referral centres (SARCs). The OPCC was part of the process in terms of supporting services through funding and commissioning. He clarified that there is now much less duplication.
9. The Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC) raised that the OPCC was leading the way in many areas, particularly regarding VAWG. Generally, any action on VAWG in Surrey was in collaboration with charity partners and therefore not duplicating, they noted, adding that the OPCC supported rural-specific Independent Domestic Violence Advisors. As part of her role to lead on rural crime in Surrey, the DPCC sits on the National Rural Crime Network and had been asked to chair the working group nationally on rural domestic abuse.
10. The Chairman raised interest in rural crime, and suggested the OPCC could produce a future report on how this was going.
11. A member asked if the PCC could explain the choice to use a report format that did not involve Key Performance Indicators, RAG (red-amber-green) rating or other similar measures to track performance against stated objectives. The member referred to the example of *Priority 1: Reducing violence against women and girls* in the report, which did not state whether the violence had reduced or explained what the outcomes of the outlined activities were. The PCC explained that each priority in the report had a link and a QR code that took the reader to the Data Hub. Within this, there was a basket of measures for each element of the Police and Crime Plan, with both monthly and annual rolling-

trend data. Including data in a static report document meant the data would be out of date by the time the report was published. The PCC felt the current report format was more transparent, rather than a simplistic RAG rating determined by the PCC. It also ensured that residents, stakeholders and Panel members had access to the latest data. It allowed for the OPCC to show comparisons with previous years' data, providing a better sense of the overall trajectory. The OPCC had started using custom mapping tools that made use of the *Police.uk* Application Programming Interface (API) data, allowing users to plot crime, ASB and stop and search activity in their area. The PCC was not aware of other OPCCs in the country that had a Data Hub or was publishing the amount of accessible and transparent data as Surrey is and clarified that all the data on VAWG could be viewed on the Data Hub. The PCC noted when first appointed as the PCC she felt VAWG was not being reported on enough and wanted to see this increase. The Head of Performance and Governance outlined he was happy to take any suggestions panel members should have concerning the Data Hub and noted that it would be updated after the launch of the new Police and Crime Plan to ensure it was reflective.

12. The member expressed appreciation for the Data Hub but raised that the purpose of an annual report was to look at what happened in-year to compare to previous years. The PCC reiterated that all the data was available on the Data Hub and would prefer this approach over producing a report with out-of-date data. Another member suggested that a simplified RAG rating would still provide an opportunity to compare to previous years' performance, even if it was out-of-date. The PCC took the comments on board but reiterated her previous answer.

Cllr Mike Smith returned to the meeting at 11.24am.

13. A member raised that the existing Police and Crime Plan listed numerous objectives within each of the five headlines and asked what approach had been taken to identify which objectives to highlight in the report, to avoid the appearance of cherry-picking. The PCC explained this had been discussed within the OPCC, particularly regarding the new Police and Crime Plan. The Head of Performance and Governance explained that when the Data Hub was launched there was a breakdown of the objectives/actions, both for the OPCC and the Force, and joint actions. The OPCC started to provide updates under each of the actions, but due to the number of actions it was difficult to keep track of them, so this is being reviewed. The OPCC would have a new set of actions in the new Police and Crime Plan. Around when the new Plan was published, the Head of Performance and Governance would return to the committee with a process to make it easier to understand the delivery of the actions. The

OPCC did publish, in the annual report and the Data Hub, qualitative updates around specific areas of work.

14. The DPCC highlighted the work of the Surrey Youth Commission. The Youth Commission recently had their second annual big conversation conference where their findings for 2024, which would feed into the Police and Crime Plan, were delivered. The Youth Commission went through the objectives it set for the OPCC, the police and partners in 2023 and identified what was delivered and what needed continued work. The Youth Commission's plan would be published in early winter 2024. The DPCC encouraged the Panel to read this and ensured it would be shared.

15. A member raised that with 4 years to go until the PCC was next up for election, there was an opportunity for the PCC to take a balanced approach and highlight areas that were going well and areas of frustration. The member raised an opinion that there was a tendency to pick the positives in the annual report. For example, the member referred to the report's mention of the Surrey Police Inspections which referred the readers to the Data Hub, but the reality of the latest HMICFRS PEEL report was challenging. The PCC agreed that the PEEL report was challenging but explained it was not reflective of the situation at the time nor reflective of the current situation. The PCC wanted to ensure that data was available to the public and was not sure how many members of the public would read the annual report.

16. A member asked about supporting armed forces and veterans, and how schemes to help employ veterans into the Force were being promoted. The DPCC referred to both her and the PCCs desire to scrap the degree requirement for policing when first appointed into their roles. The DPCC felt this requirement did not entice veterans to join the police and this change had helped. Both herself and the PCC supported the new Armed Forces Support Group in Surrey Police, which worked collaboratively with Sussex Police. This group applied for Silver Level in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme, on behalf of the Force, which was achieved earlier in 2024. This group attended career's fairs, visited barracks and spoke to departing soldiers. The group often went to 'drop-ins' at the veterans' hubs. The group was looking into a veteran-specific route into Surrey policing, but now the degree requirement was dropped and the presence of alternative routes into policing was more established, this may not be as needed. The DPCC agreed to check the status of this and provide an answer to the committee.

Actions/requests for further information:

- PCC/OPCC to provide update on what was achieved in-year on the work of the Surrey Domestic Violence Hub in the next Annual Report.
- OPCC to produce a future update on the progress made in regard to rural domestic abuse.
- The DPCC to provide a written a breakdown of veteran's work and Surrey Police- specifically on the status of a potential Veteran-specific route into Surrey policing, which was previously being considered.

39/24 HMICFRS PEEL INSPECTION [Item 8]

Witnesses:

Lisa Townsend, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

Ellie Vesey-Thompson, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC)

Alison Bolton, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer (OPCC)

Damian Markland, Head of Performance and Governance (OPCC)

Kelvin Menon, Chief Finance Officer (OPCC)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman outlined the purpose of the report. The PCC provided a brief introduction to the report and highlighted the work done on the ability to answer emergency calls quickly enough, noting that the Chief Constable informs her that Surrey Police was the fastest improving Force in the country on this measure.
2. A member asked if there was a link between the latest PEEL inspection report finding that the Force required improvement on data recording, and the Information Commissioner ordering Surrey Police to address backlogs in its responses to information requests. The PCC did not believe there was, as it was done separately in different teams, but suggested members could ask the Chief Constable at the Panel's meeting with him in October.
3. Regarding the report's reference to a new shift pattern being introduced in the call handling centre from September 2024, a member asked how the introduction of this measure featured into the plan for call response times, given the advances that had already been attained. The PCC noted she was pleased with performance improvements in 101 and 999 calls, and it was important to maintain this, and that revised shift patterns were being explored to ensure performance could be maintained. There were lots of measures being reviewed across the Force to ensure that where there were areas of improvement, it was improved, and where areas were improved, it would be

maintained, she added, stating that she felt the workforce was integral to this.

4. In reference to page 63 of the report, a member noted that the compliance against published response times for Grade 1 and Grade 2, despite an improvement from 2023, remained below the March 2022 level. The member asked how confident the PCC was that improvement in this area could be achieved. The PCC explained that the Force was making good progress, but were not there yet, which was important to recognise, and that the Chief Constable has highlighted it as an area he wants to improve. She stated that it was important to be transparent about the data, and that the Force was looking at the grading system as whole to allow for a more refined target. The Commissioner clarified that the grading system produced some unintended consequences, such as how the broad parameters for a Grade 2 response could make it seem that the Force had not attended something in time, when it may be that officers had spoken to a member of the public and agreed another time to arrive that suited the resident, meaning that it would appear that the Force had missed its Grade 2 target. The PCC encouraged the Panel to ask the Chief Constable about this at its next with him.
5. The Head of Performance and Governance added that particularly with domestic abuse cases, it was found that the best approach in terms of integrity and getting the best victim statement was to give the victim some time, as opposed to officers arriving straight away, provided there was not an immediate risk to a victim or complainant. In domestic abuse cases classified as Grade 2, the officer or contact centre may agree with the victim at the time to meet with them later, get resources in place and ensure access to support services, they said. However, this was not considered when measuring the Force's response time for Grade 2, as this started at the point of report. He noted that the new grading structure would try to provide more granularity around this.
6. The Vice-Chair asked if detail of the performance management measures, training programme and longer-term sustainable model being implemented for AFI (area for improvement) 1 concerning the handling of sexual offences and their recording could be provided. The PCC explained this was a large piece of work and suggested the Panel could look at it as a separate item for another panel meeting.
7. Regarding AFI 4, on Stop and Search and Use of Force, a member noted that these could be useful tools when used in the right way, but if misapplied it could lead to damage to the public perception of the Force. The member asked how the outcomes

of the community engagement sessions with members of the public would impact Force behaviour and policies, and how the Force would know when it had satisfied this AFI. The PCC noted the importance of stop and search but that it had been used as a 'political football', and that the Force has lots of experience and expertise using community feedback on stop and search, which informed the approach to operational policing more generally. Historically, stop and search included a community scrutiny panel, where volunteers reviewed instances of stop and search and provided feedback. She also clarified that the OPCC had been working closely with the Force over the past year to refine the process, and that a staff member in the OPCC helping with the analytics had specific experience as an academic working with MOPAC (The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime) on this issue and produced a report on it. The Panel were informed that the Force was introducing a RAG rating system to formalise the way the data was captured and that the OPCC was working with the Force to review the recruitment process for this, to ensure as many people as possible can participate. In reference to her participation in many residents' and community engagement meetings, the PCC was not aware anyone had raised issues around stop and search here. Therefore, the PCC expressed more confidence in the Force and the OPCC working with them to ensure there was a proper scrutiny panel who were the right people to look at stop and search rather than community engagement meetings, which were less formal.

8. Regarding how the Force would know AFI 4 had been met, the Head of Performance and Governance clarified the internal process. When there were AFIs from HMICFRS, they were overseen by the Strategic Planning team, who work with Surrey Police to ensure that updates are provided. The Strategic Planning team have an ongoing dialogue with HMICFRS inspectors and provided updates on what was done to address issues raised. Through this ongoing communication, eventually a point was reached where HMICFRS was satisfied that issues addressed were met.
9. A member asked how the Crime Improvement Plan would achieve better outcomes for victims of crime, and what would occur in each of the three phases of the plan. The PCC explained that the AFI in the HMICFRS report was specifically related to outcomes for types of crimes and not support offered to victims more generally. In terms of Surrey Police's compliance with the Victims' Code of Practice, HMICFRS found that the Force had effective measures in place. Victims of crime are taken seriously and the OPCC looked closely at this area, they noted. The PCC shared that she has recently taken over the role of the national victims' portfolio - the overarching aim of the three phases was to bring the proportion of victim-based crimes,

assigned specific crime outcomes, more in-line with the national averages. She clarified that there was not a large discrepancy between Surrey Police and other Forces, but HMICFRS inspectors did note that Surrey Police was using more out of court disposals and encountering more evidential difficulties, which was an important part of the work.

10. The Head of Performance and Governance added that there would be checking of the existing processes to ensure officers know which powers to use and when to use them appropriately.
11. The member raised that the Force had a '3-pillar strategy' for tackling discriminatory behaviour and asked if the Force sought advice from government or specialist VCSF/third-sector organisations for this. They also asked about how the behaviour of the organisation would be 'tracked.' The PCC stated that she did not know who the Force specifically used but noted that police forces put a lot of effort into this area nationally, such as through the National Police Chief's Council. There was a lot of experience for the Force to draw from, in addition to internal experience. Feedback would be tracked through various channels including a staff feedback mechanism and pulse surveys. The PCC encouraged the Panel to ask the Chief Constable about this area at the Panel's next meeting, as it was an area he had put a lot of effort into.
12. The Head of Performance and Governance noted the Force's ability to bring organisations from the voluntary sector into some of the governance processes. For example, when he was looking after victim services, the Force often had representatives from some domestic abuse and rape and sexual assault provider services on boards, and at times jointly chairing the boards with police officers and those responsible for delivering internally.
13. Regarding AFI 7, around the Force's need to do more to understand the workforce's wellbeing needs and tailor accordingly, a member felt this AFI linked to problems the Force had with areas like officer and staff retention. The member referred to a previous answer from the PCC, that the workforce was integral to improvement. The member quoted from the *Surrey PEEL assessment 2023-25* report that *'the force told us that it hasn't completed a force well-being survey in three years. And it hasn't completed the Bluelight self-assessment to understand what affects good or poor well-being'*. The member noted there had been a survey of the police staff, but asked if the OPCC knew if what was raised in the PEEL assessment was addressed. The Head of Performance and Governance outlined that the Chief Constable could provide more information on this and that the Force had put a lot of effort into improving this process, such as through pulse surveys. They noted that there

are now more opportunities to feedback issues, such as workloads and discrimination, and there were other internal pieces of work looking specifically at issues of discrimination, such as the Race Action Plan and other boards that oversaw workplace discrimination-based issues.

14. The PCC highlighted point 10 of the Chief Constable's 'Our Plan' which spoke specifically about staff and officer wellbeing, stating that this is an area that the PCC also wanted to look at with the Chief Constable, noting admiration for those that did shift work. The Chief Constable and herself were going to meet with Surrey University shortly to hopefully help to develop a pilot around shift work. The PCC noted the importance of ensuring the workforce could live a long and healthy life beyond policing.
15. The member quoted from the *Surrey PEEL assessment 2023-25* report that '*during our fieldwork, we learnt that police staff investigators do not have access to police radios, unlike police officers. Police staff investigators must use mobile phones to ring 999 if they need back-up. This makes police staff investigators more vulnerable which negatively affects well-being*'. The member asked if the OPCC was aware of this and if it had been dealt with. The Chairman raised it would be a question for the Chief Constable.
16. The Chairman thanked the PCC for promoting the welfare of the workforce and those doing shift work. The PCC highlighted the impact shift work had on families, and that society should be doing more to support all shift workers.

The Panel **NOTED** the report.

Actions/requests for further information:

- **To clarify:** How will AFI 1 (force is too often failing to record sexual offences, particularly sexual assault, and rape crimes) and detail of the performance management measures, training programme and longer-term sustainable model being implemented for this be updated on for the Panel? Will this be a future report?

The Chairman paused the meeting at 12.59pm

The Chairman resumed the meeting at 1.10pm

40/24 SURREY POLICE RECRUITMENT AND WORKFORCE PLANNING UPDATE [Item 9]

Witnesses:

Lisa Townsend, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

Ellie Vesey-Thompson, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC)

Alison Bolton, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer (OPCC)

Damian Markland, Head of Performance and Governance (OPCC)

Kelvin Menon, Chief Finance Officer (OPCC)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman outlined the purpose of this report.
2. In reference to Surrey Police now employing more officers than ever before, due to exceeding the government officer recruitment uplift target, a member asked what impact this had on Surrey Police Group's finance, given the £18m of savings required over the next four years. The PCC explained that the previous government offered two incentives to Forces to recruit above uplift. The Force took advantage of both offers in 2023/24 and 2024/25. 10 people applied in the first year, and a further 12 people in 2024/25 - for each officer recruited above the uplift in 2024/25, the government provided a grant of £48,000, and it was assumed that the additional officers would continue to be funded separately, not under the wider Force budget. She noted that, if this ceased to be the case, officer numbers may need to be reduced through natural wastage and until it returned to the uplift figure, clarifying that all Forces lobbied the previous government to recognise the cost of funding. Uplift officers increased overtime, as officers moved up the pay scale, which was a challenge, she added. This had so far not been recognised in funding allocations and was a growing pressure. The OPCC was waiting to see if this would be reflected in the spending review later in 2024, but the PCC was not hopeful. The Chief Finance Officer added that he was on the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) Finance Committee which had put in their submission that the rising cost of the uplift needed to be recognised and adequately funded. However, public finances were tight.
3. The member asked if there was any indication on this from the new government. The PCC reiterated that the spending review was awaited, along with more detail from the government. Police Chief Constables had been told to not expect more money.
4. The Chairman asked if Surrey was still lobbying for different funding formulas so that Surrey received a fair amount. The PCC confirmed this was the case and stated that any change in the funding formula would not necessarily benefit Surrey, despite this being the assumption due to Surrey's position.
5. A member asked for clarity on how the PCC expected government plans for 13,000 new neighbourhood police, PCSOs and special constables across the UK would affect the Force

and be implemented. The PCC explained that the OPCC and the Force were still waiting for clarity on this. It was a manifesto commitment, so the OPCC was expecting it, and early discussions with Home Office indicated it would be a mixture of officers, the PCC added. Chief Constables had been told to not expect any extra funding, which would be a potential challenge, and it was believed it would be a combination of new PCSOs and Officers. Although recruiting for PCSOs was a challenge in Surrey, the Force was now 18 PCSOs short of establishment, which was a better position, and the Force was continuing to try different methods of recruitment. The Commissioner noted that the NPCC Finance Committee had stated that that if Forces nationally were to meet the pledge of 13,000 Officers/PCSOs, more funding would be needed and that the committee had spoken about some of the PCSOs and Officers being re-deployed from other areas, which was a concern for the PCC as it may involve moving Officers away from specialist services.

6. The member asked if the PCC could provide any insight into the reasons suspected to be behind the higher and slightly increasing rate of officer attrition in the Force. The PCC explained there were several factors, including a competitive job market, with better salaries available elsewhere. Policing was not generally that flexible, for example, some roles could not involve working from home, and Surrey Police had to contend with the Metropolitan Police's recruitment campaigns, which tended to offer higher salaries or benefits. She noted that Surrey was an expensive county, particularly for young people and due to national pay scales, it was often cheaper to leave Surrey and go to a different force. Policing was not for everybody, which some applicants did not realise until experiencing the job. Work was going into HR and recruitment teams in trying to be open, explicit and setting expectations on what was expected from applicants, she added, as well as into ensuring that there are early conversations with people who were considering leaving the Force or if a manager noticed an employee was not satisfied with the work. When the Force was recruiting high numbers of officers quickly, increased attrition was a challenge, she said.
7. The member raised that the report referred to the new enhanced scrutiny arrangements for local policing bodies and PCCs with respect to misconduct hearings, including meetings with hearing Chairs. The member asked what impact the PCC envisaged these changes would have, and if the PCC believed there was a way that the Panel could be updated on strategic issues or themes that arose from this. The PCC explained it was anticipated that all Forces nationally would see an increase in misconduct hearings. The Force was doing work in rooting out all kinds of behaviour that was considered inappropriate, which would lead to a corresponding increase in appeals. These

processes are supported by the OPCC through the recruitment of legally qualified Chairs and independent panel members. The provision of training and ensuring compliance was managed by the OPCC. The OPCC had been working to ensure better and more efficient working relationships, particularly with neighbouring OPCCs. She explained how this allowed the OPCC to deal with any increases in demand and the ability to borrow from other OPCCs and vice versa. The data associated with misconduct cases is confidential, but the OPCC would provide updates on strategic issues as part of the standing workforce planning update.

8. Regarding the report's statement that the proportion of officers and staff facing misconduct hearings was small in comparison to the 4000 staff, although the Force conducted 47% more hearings this year than in 2022/23, a member asked how the Panel could be certain that the Force was not simply failing to detect a greater number of instances of misconduct. The PCC noted that no vetting or misconduct process would be perfect, but time and effort went into ensuring the Force's local processes were as robust as possible. The PCC felt process was better now than previously. The OPCC played a larger role in the oversight of misconduct hearings than previously, both in terms of the PCC's role and bringing in new staff to oversee this, and that had a close working relationship with the organisations such as the Professional Standards Department and the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW). The PCC speaks regularly to the PFEW to understand their concerns. The PCC was pleased to see an increase in misconduct hearings as it meant reporting and detection mechanisms were more robust. The last report detailing the Force's misconduct clarified that most misconduct proceedings were because a colleague had reported another colleague. The PCC felt this was reassuring, as it showed police officers were feeling enabled and confident to report.
9. A member raised that the PFEW Pay and Morale Survey found concerning levels of dissatisfaction among Surrey officers, including with pay, and a large number confessed a desire to leave the service within two years. The member asked how dissatisfaction with compensation could be reconciled with the Medium-Term Financial Forecast. The PCC noted it was a challenge and police pay was set nationally by the Pay Review Body. Once the government had reviewed the body's findings and decided on the increase officers would receive, the Force was obliged to comply with the recommendation. In the current year, the government provide additional funding to help fund the cost of the pay rise above 2.5%. Going forward, she said, the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) included annual rises of 2.5%, assuming that if a larger increase was agreed by the

government following the Pay Review Board, it would be funded. There were lots of reasons why people left the police force, including better or more convenient opportunities, as well as pay, she added. The Chief Finance Officer stated that the pay was set by the government, and the assumption was that any rise above 2.5% would be funded. If it were not funded, it would add pressure on the MTFP.

10. A member asked how officer numbers were expected to change over the PCC's term in office, how financial penalties for low officer numbers would be averted, and what the assumption was around uplift penalties. The PCC explained there was a lot of uncertainty around government policy in this area and that officer numbers were therefore not able to be forecasted with certainty beyond 2024/24. For the current year, the Force was required to obtain their uplift baseline, which was 2,253 officers, as well as the additional 22 that was agreed to recruit post-uplift. The PCC clarified that the Force believe they are on track to meet the target but were waiting for the government to reveal the funding arrangements. The Chief Finance Officer confirmed there were financial penalties if the target for uplift arrangements were not met - uplift arrangements are put in place for each year, and therefore Surrey Police Group only knew the arrangements for 2024/25. It was the responsibility of the government what arrangements would be put in place for the uplift in future years. Until this was revealed, predictions could not be made with certainty.
11. The member raised that it would still be a decision around how resources were used to maintain, increase or decrease officer numbers. In reference to the last PCC election, the member noted that the ballot papers bore the description "*more police, safer streets*" by the Commissioner's name -the member asked if voters should take this as a commitment that the number of officers would increase during the PCC's term. The PCC stated that the number of officers had increased and was still increasing and expressed commitment to do everything possible to ensure this. In terms of operational resources, it was for the Chief Constable to decide where operational resources were best deployed.
12. A member referred to the Equalities and Human Rights Commission's updated guidance for the Prevent duty, which would require all organisations to take positive and reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment. The member queried how confident the PCC was that the Force would meet this objective. The member noted it was good to see the initiatives, in relation to tackling misogyny and victim blaming on page 79 of the agenda and asked if there was any evidence that it was having a positive effect on attrition rates. The member also asked if there

was similar work in relation to ethnic minorities and LGBT+ officers and staff. Regarding updates on the Prevent duty, the PCC noted it was an important announcement and that it had likely duplicated work and previous announcements that came from other organisations. Therefore, the PCC did not believe Surrey Police were going to be required to do anything differently to meet it. In terms of attrition and misogyny, the Force had increased female applicants to police officer and detective positions, - Surrey Police looks quite different now to how it did in the past. The PCC remarked that, as the world moved on, policing was traditionally behind, but Surrey Police was moving in the right direction, and that the Chief Constable's vision was to have a workforce that was diverse, inclusive and equal, and a workforce that understood why this was important. The PCC was seeing this happening under the current Chief Constable and noted that the Force had agreed an equality, diversity and inclusion policy. There were several dedicated forums that considered equality issues, which included the Disability Advisory Group, the Race Advisory Group, the LGBTQ+ Advisory Group, as well as dedicated Liaison Officers within the Force for people experiencing issues. These were well-signposted. The Force and Deputy Chief Constable had taken a real interest in leading the Gold Group around this area. Pulse surveys and wider HR feedback mechanisms were designed to capture this data.

13. The member referred to a statement from a senior member of the Surrey Police prior to the riots that Surrey Police was an anti-racist organisation and asked if the PCC endorsed this statement. The PCC replied she would not endorse a statement without seeing it.

14. A member asked if an officer resigned during a misconduct case, whether the case would be subject to the same thoroughness of investigation. The PCC confirmed that a resignation did not end the process of the investigation.

The Panel **NOTED** the report.

Actions/requests for further information:

- The PCC/OPCC to provide updates on the strategic issues regarding the enhanced scrutiny arrangements around misconduct hearings, as part of the standing workforce planning update item.

**41/24 MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE 2024/25 TO 2027/28
[Item 10]**

Witnesses:

Lisa Townsend, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

Kelvin Menon, Chief Finance Officer (OPCC)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman outlined the purpose of the report. The Chief Finance Officer gave a brief introduction, outlining the report was the latest updated financial forecast for the period from 2025/26 to 2028/29. It set out the level of savings based on assumptions in the forecast, which may need to be found in the period.
2. A member raised that the report stated that “[...] *cumulative savings of £23.4m will be required for the 4 years from 2025/26 to 2028/29*”, while the Annual Report stated that “[...] *the MTFF indicates that savings of over £18m are required over the next four years*”. The member asked what the reason for this discrepancy was or if it was an updated figure. The Chief Finance Officer explained they were updated assumptions. In particular, the pay assumptions in the intervening period were updated, which was why the gap increased.
3. The member noted that the report assumed for 2025/26 that the referendum limit would be returned to 2%. The member asked if this assumption was the same for the next three years. The Chief Finance Officer confirmed this was the assumption in the forecast, but hopefully in the October Budget the Government will announce what the referendum limit will be.
4. A member referred to paragraph 11 of the report which noted that Surrey could receive the lowest share of a £175m Home Office grant for funding Police Force pay awards, depending on the calculation methodology used. The member asked what contingencies were being explored for if this occurred, and what impact meetings with the Home Office had had on this area. The Chief Finance Officer explained the Force had received pay grants in previous years which unfortunately were all allocated on the funding formula basis despite the PCC lobbying the previous government to change the methodology. The same formula allocation was done this year despite the Home Office informing him that various methodologies were considered. This meant Surrey Police had the lowest share nationally of the £175m amounting to £2.1 million to cover the pay increase for officers and staff for 2024/25. One of the reasons provided was that the Home Office did not want Forces to lose faith in the current formula methodology overall. The £2.1m grant awarded should cover the increase in officer pay this year but for later years need to wait to see what next year’s increase would be.
5. The member asked what the gap between the £2.1m and the total cost of the Force’s pay award was. The Chief Finance Officer explained that for police officers, the grant just covers the

additional cost over the 2.5% allowed for in the budget. However, there was no additional money to cover the staff increase and the government had been clear that the grant was intended to cover the staff and officer increase. The shortfall on this was around £2.4m.

6. A member asked if detail on the potential areas for further savings being identified by the tactical reviews and the 2025/26 in-depth budget review could be provided. The member also asked if there was a likelihood that reserves would need to be drawn on. The Chief Finance Officer explained there was an extensive change programme over the next few years, which was looking at areas such as changing shift patterns, benefits of upgrading the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system and reducing overtime. There was a programme looking to rationalise the Force's vehicle fleet. There was also a detailed budget review by area, adding that there were still savings that needed to be identified for next year. If these savings were not identified in time, reserves may have to be drawn upon to cover the shortfall.
7. A member asked to what extent had the PCC been speaking to Surrey MPs to lobby them and referred to a vote in early 2025 where Surrey MPs had an opportunity to express satisfaction or dissatisfaction with what was offered. The PCC explained that this conversation happened constantly and that there would be a meeting with herself and the Chief Constable, with all Surrey MPs, and it would be part of the discussion.
8. A member raised that the report referred to the possibility that services may be impacted by the savings required, and asked what this could mean for Surrey residents, and if there were emergency plans in place should this occur. The Chief Finance Officer replied that it was too early to comment, until it was known what the level of savings would be. It would need to be worked out which areas savings would need to be taken from. He added that The Chief Constable and the PCC were committed to try to minimise any impact on residents.
9. A member raised that his local authority was given an 'optimistic' and 'pessimistic' version of the Medium-Term Financial Plan as well as the main version of the plan. The member asked if any thought had been given to doing the same for the Surrey Police Group. The member noted that areas such as the extent to which one should allow for the possibility of income through mutual aid and renting out police cells to the prison service, had been debated in the past, though the reality was this occurred even though there had been no assumption for it. Equally, the assumption that grant funding would be essentially 'flat' was pessimistic. The member raised there had also been promises

for more neighbourhood policing from the PCC, which required funding to deliver. The PCC stated she would welcome the Panel's joint efforts, noting that Surrey Police Group would suffer if it was required to hire more officers, which, although good in principle, could leave the Force in a worse position if there was no additional funding.

10. The Chief Finance Officer explained that some scenario modelling was done and could be shared with the Panel. On an optimistic basis, the gap fell to £21.5m, and on a pessimistic basis the gap rose to £27.6m. The gap depended on the assumptions used in the forecast, and hence it was probably better to understand the sensitivities within the forecast. For example, if Surrey Police Group had put 2.5% pay into the forecast and if the government it would fund an additional 1% of this, it would move the forecast by £2.5m. Similarly, if the council tax cap was moved from 2% for every pound it increases a further £0.5m would be received.
11. The Chairman suggested the Panel could write a letter, together with the OPCC, to send to the Home Office in support of extra funding and the unfairness of the funding formula to Surrey.

The Panel **AGREED** to a write letter to Home Office.

RESOLVED:

1. The Panel **NOTED** the initial outcome of the forecast, the likely need for additional savings and the financial challenge that this represents.
2. The Panel **NOTED** the current assumptions being employed in the scenarios and the risks therein.

Actions/requests for further information:

- The Chief Finance Officer to share the scenario modelling on the pessimistic and optimistic versions of the MTFS.

42/24 SURREY POLICE GROUP UNAUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2023/24 [Item 11]

Witnesses:

Lisa Townsend, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
Kelvin Menon, Chief Finance Officer (OPCC)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman outlined the purpose of the report. The Chief Finance Office provided a brief introduction, noting that the audit was currently being conducted and was on track to be completed by the statutory deadline in February.

2. A member asked how the underspends in 'Supplies and Services' and 'Grants and Income' (of £1.8m and £5.8m, respectively) were achieved in 2023/24, and if it was anticipated that these would be repeated for 2024/25. The Chief Finance Officer explained that the £1.8 m was an effort to drive savings earlier in the period for use in 2024/25. This meant several centrally held budgets for things like estates were not all used. The £5.8m was made up by things such as additional income for the use of custody cells, due to prison overcrowding. Grants were also awarded in-year for Safer Streets. Although there was an underspend in 'Supplies and Services', there would be an overspend elsewhere in the budget, they added, noting that Surrey Police Group had income from mutual aid and counterterrorism, and received a £1.6m refund of business rates which would go towards the Group's estates programme. He noted that some of these would be repeated in 2024/25, such as additional income for custody cells and mutual aid due to civil disturbance.
3. A member referred to the £0.2m that was underspent by Surrey Police Group and the substantial increase in total reserves which had increased from £30.8m in 2023 to £37.2m in 2024. The member queried if there was a significant revenue surplus, but it had been put into reserves. The Chief Finance Officer confirmed there was a revenue surplus and part of this increase was the £1.6m rates refund. During the year, Surrey Police Group had sold several assets, and this money was put into reserves. He stated that some programmes had slipped in the capital programme, and this money also went into reserves, and that more information could be retrieved from the Force to provide more detail to the Panel.
4. Regarding the additional funding that was secured from the Home Office for recruiting above the uplift target, a member asked if this was financially prudent, given this increase did not cover the future salaries of officers as they were promoted up the pay scale. The Chief Finance Officer explained that the government offered the incentive to recruit above uplift, but Surrey Police Group was not monitored on this target as part of the base uplift figure. Therefore, if the funding was not renewed, Surrey Police Group was no longer obliged to keep to those additional officer numbers and so the overall total could fall back to the uplift total through natural wastage. This meant that Surrey Police Group could recruit ahead of time and get paid an incentive to do so. It was felt this was the right thing to do at the time, but it would need reviewing depending on what the uplift conditions were in future years.

5. The Chairman raised that overtime costs were overspent by £2.7m in 2023/24, but not all of this was due to contact staff vacancies, that were now filled. The Chairman asked how the costs from the other sources, namely Neighbourhood Policing, Specialist Crime and Custody, would be mitigated in future years. The Chief Finance Officer explained that an overtime working group was established which reviewed areas such as shift patterns and handovers. There would always be an element of overtime to cover, for example, special operations, bank holidays and sickness though in the past, there may not have been enough senior officer oversight of where overtime was spent. Therefore, the working group was reviewing working practices to try to minimise the amount of unplanned overtime. It was noted that overtime impacted on officer's wellbeing as well as cost.
6. A member referred to the June 2024 internal audit progress report, which highlighted limited assurance reports for financial controls in seven different areas. The member noted the written response received and further raised that it would be helpful to understand what the concerns raised by internal audit were. The Chief Finance Officer explained that auditors not only reviewed financial controls but also operational controls and systems. The Chief Finance Officers outlined the different areas highlighted in the report, and what the recommendations related to, including the leavers process and if the correct procedure was being followed. He noted that several vehicle recovery recommendations related to inadequate storage of vehicles seized by police, and that one recommendation was for the armouries related to training records that required updating. Recommendations around business continuity related to several outstanding plans that require testing, he said, while recommendations around redundancy related to instances where redundancy policy had not been precisely followed. He added that the recommendations demonstrated that the auditors had done a thorough job and allowed for actions to improve the areas highlighted. The Joint Audit Committee reviewed the full report, together with the PCC and the Chief Constable, and so managers were then held to account.
7. The Chairman referred to the £1.9m more than what was budgeted for in grants received in 2024, as demonstrated on page 5 of the report. The Chairman asked if this was likely to be repeated in future years, and what would happen if similar amounts were not acquired for future budgets. The Chief Finance Officer explained that the grants were applied for or simply awarded by government. For example, this year grants were awarded for ASB and Safer Streets. Surrey Police Group would like these grants to be repeated and increased in the future. However, if the grants stopped, initiatives would need to

reduce or be stopped. Conversely if additional grants were awarded, it would enable the Police to support more initiatives which could include extra policing.

8. A member referred to paragraph 36 of the report, which stated *“The Force has benefited financially from a tight labour market in that its inability to recruit Police Staff has enabled it to not only to have a larger vacancy margin than planned [...] The Force cannot afford for all these posts to be filled [...]”*. The member raised that it was not just salary levels that determined retainment of staff, it was also based on whether the Force was a good employer. The member asked if the above passage from the report implied that the Force should not try too hard to retain and recruit staff, as financially it could not afford to fill all vacancies. The Chief Finance Officer outlined that from a purely financial viewpoint the greater the number of unfilled vacancies the more chance there was of balancing the budget. However, this has operational impacts and creates pressures on current staff. This was partly being addressed by putting in several restructures, changing working practices and shift patterns and investing in technology so that reductions in staff can be made permanent. He clarified that Surrey Police Group had to be smarter and more efficient with the resources currently available.

9. A member raised that in the past the Panel had received an update on the relative strength of the Force’s establishment in particular areas and asked if the latest figure could be provided. The OPCC agreed to provide this.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

Actions/requests for further information:

- The Chief Finance Officer to provide more detail on the revenue reserves surplus of the force.

- OPCC to provide an update on the strength of the force’s establishment in particular areas e.g. PCSOs.

43/24 PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY MEETINGS [Item 12]

Witnesses:

Lisa Townsend, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman outlined the purpose of the report.

2. A member asked why no Performance and Accountability meetings had taken place since late 2023 when they were supposed to occur every six weeks. The PCC confirmed that

regular scrutiny meetings were taking place, and formal meetings took place in January, March and July 2024. The next meeting was scheduled a couple of weeks after this Panel meeting, clarifying that there had been a small gap between meetings due to the PCC elections. Approach to the public meetings, which were historically webcasted, was being reviewed to balance holding the meetings and holding them publicly. She further stated that with the public events up to Christmas, the PCC was confident the public had ample opportunity to question the Chief Constable and raise concerns. Dates set aside for the public meetings were being used to continue the 6-weekly meetings with the Force. Work went into ensuring scrutiny meetings were well attended but it was recognized not everyone had time to watch the meetings. Therefore, the PCC stressed the importance of transparency and accessibility of the website and Data Hub.

3. The member asked if the Chief Constable was making himself available for the scrutiny meetings. The PCC confirmed this was the case, and added she met with the Chief Constable at least once a week to discuss issues.

The Panel **NOTED** the report.

44/24 PCC FORWARD PLAN AND KEY DECISIONS [Item 13]

Witnesses:

Lisa Townsend, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. A member asked if the PCC could provide an update on the award of contract to a developer for Mount Browne Headquarters. The PCC explained that the tender process was intense, and a contractor had been selected. The contractor would be announced publicly as soon as it was appropriate.

The Panel **NOTED** the report.

45/24 COMMISSIONER'S QUESTION TIME [Item 14]

Witnesses:

Lisa Townsend, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
Alison Bolton, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer (OPCC)

Key points raised during the discussion:

On the question received from Cllr Richard Wilson

1. The PCC added that she was regularly updated on the early release of some prisoners by Surrey's Gold Commander. There was one of the regular meetings of the Surrey Criminal Justice Board where the issue was discussed amongst all of Surrey's criminal justice partners. Surrey was in a much better position than perhaps other forces, partly because Surrey had a relatively low number of prisoners released and had taken a proactive approach.
2. A member asked if Surrey Police had a greater workload or was undermined due to failures in other public services such as the courts and probation. The PCC did not believe this was the case, stating that, particularly since Covid, ongoing court backlogs have been experienced. Surrey Police had charged 3000 more offences than in the same period the year before.

On questions received from Cllr Paul Kennedy

3. On question 2 - The Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer explained that the principal difference from five years ago to the point which the PCC received the report was the steer the OPCC had from the previous government that it wanted fire governance to be in the hands of an elected individual. The report was received in early 2024. Then PCC elections took place, and there was since a change in government. She stated that it is not clear what the new government's views are around fire governance. The PCC's direction was that the review was not a priority to progress.
4. On question 2 - A member asked if there was any significant change found in this piece of work - the PCC replied that there was not. The big change was the Home Office's direction around fire governance. It felt wrong to focus on this work without any further direction from the government.
5. On question 4 - A member raised that, from residents' responses, a challenge seemed to be around why local authorities had to pay for this when CCTV was there to help the police, but simultaneously the public wanted CCTV to be funded. The PCC raised that CCTV was there to help all residents, regardless of who was providing it, though was not always as helpful as what some people thought, particularly given other tools available to the police. The PCC referred to the written response provided.

46/24 COMPLAINTS RECEIVED SINCE THE LAST MEETING [Item 15]

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman outlined that three complaints were received. Two were considered by the Complaints sub-committee, while one had the Complaints Protocol disappplied and was not considered.
2. A member asked if the Panel was allowed to know what the outcome of the two complaints were. The PCC explained she had since written to one of the complainants. The Scrutiny Officer agreed to check the rules on disclosing the outcome of the complaints.

The Panel **NOTED** the report.

47/24 APPOINTMENT TO COMPLAINTS SUB-COMMITTEE [Item 16]

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman outlined that a nomination was received for Cllr Richard Wilson. No other nominations were received, and Chairman took this as general assent.

The Panel **AGREED** to the appointment of Cllr Richard Wilson to the Complaints Sub-committee.

48/24 RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 17]

The Panel **NOTED** the Recommendations Tracker and Forward Work Programme.

49/24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 18]

The next Public Panel meeting due to take place on 28 November 2024.

Meeting ended at: 1.31 pm

Chairman

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