

Public Forum, Yate – 7th June 2018
Q&A Notes

Q. Having heard tonight about the lack of money and resources that the police are facing, how does this sit with the Magistrate Courts closing and the additional travel that officers will now have to get into Bristol and the associated time lost and additional cost?

A. The PCC advised that the closure of the courts was imposed by the Government without any consultation with the police. In response the police are creating Live Links in police stations so that officers can travel to their local station and provide their evidence remotely.

Q. A resident recommended a book – The Cyber Effect by Dr Mary Aitken.

Q. A resident stated he had been a victim of a break in last year – the police were excellent and attended straight away but the CSI service was less impressive. They didn't look for any fingerprints or other evidence and he was told they didn't do that for burglaries.

A. The Chief Constable empathised that burglary is a horrible crime – it's such an invasion of your privacy. Burglary is considered a 'traditional' crime and some forces have deprioritised their response to these crimes but Avon & Somerset have not done this and want to do more to investigate. He apologised as it did not sound like the best service had been provided on this occasion. It must be noted that there isn't always any evidence to find – but they will collect blood samples or DNA from cigarette butts etc if they have been left by offenders. It sounded like CSI may not have explained the process as thoroughly as they could have done.

Q. A big worry for the nation currently is terrorism. Police colleagues at London Bridge responded magnificently, are Avon & Somerset officers sent to the Met for training on what to do in these situations?

A. The Chief Constable commented that the officers seen running towards the danger in those situations are frontline officers, just the same as frontline officers here and they all receive the same training and our officers would be just as skilled and brave as the officers in the Met. Often Forces are called upon to support each other in incidents like this, for example every day we have 13 officers going to Wiltshire to support them in their investigation of the poisoning incident.

Q. One of the major local complaints is about parking – need to solve Yate's parking issues. Residents phone the police to report incidents and are told it is a Local Authority problem, when they phone the Local Authority they are directed to the police! The message is not getting out there and it needs to be a partnership – is there anything you can do to sharpen this aspect?

A. The local Chief Inspector advised that if the parking causes an obstruction or is a danger the police will attend and deal with it but if it is a longer term issue the Beat Manager will work with the Local Authority. In South Glos the Council do have two cars that work as parking enforcement for double yellow infringements etc. He acknowledged that there seemed to be some learning for call handlers and there is training in hand for this. The main concentration for parking concerns for the police is around schools due to the dangers to children.

Q. A resident commended Avon & Somerset Police for their work doing the drug testing at Love Saves the Day and in Brunswick Square in Bristol – it will have saved a lot of lives and allows people to know exactly what they are taking. County Lines has been mentioned this evening – what can residents do about it to help the police? It is understood that it is a national problem and the scale of it is concerning – it's possible to intervene with children to educate them but when they are given the choice of £300 a week for running drugs or GCSEs it's not surprising many choose the money – what should residents do? Are there any plans to legalise cannabis in the same way Canada has which has been shown to protect children from being used in the drugs trade?

A.. The PCC confirmed Avon & Somerset has lots of plans in relation to disrupting drug dealing but they have to work within the law. There are plans to increase the work that The Loop undertook at Love Saves the Day and Brunswick Square. In Avon & Somerset there is a drugs education programme for any drugs – those caught in possession are offered this as a chance to challenge their own behaviour – so far the team have worked with over 700 people and the number of those reoffending has been reduced. The police are also talking to health partners and discussing heroin assisted treatment rooms but these are very expensive. To achieve legalisation of cannabis residents will need to lobby MPs to get parliament to change the law, it is not within the remit of the police.

The Chief Constable thanked the residents for their support. Avon & Somerset is an innovative and progressive force and are doing all they can within the law to support those with drug problems. He mentioned the TV programme Drugsland which showed some of the work Avon & Somerset do in relation to County Lines – using most developed and covert tactics. In 2016 there were over 200 arrests made in relation to County Lines – they are mostly the street dealers but A&S are working at getting those 'upstream' – the serious dealers. The hallmark of County Lines is very serious violence – firearms and machetes – every day young men are admitted to hospital with injuries – the police are doing all they can to combat it.

Q. A resident wanted to express their thanks to the police – they had awoken to a person in their bedroom and the police response was excellent and very fast and fitted a free mortice lock. This is a success of community policing and he can't praise them highly enough, thank you.

Q. Thank you for the presentations tonight – interesting and informative. There's a particular estate in Yate which is rear access only – there are a number of incidents where people are driving over the kerb to park out the front of their houses and this should not happen. On one occasion someone reversed into his vehicle – this was witnessed and reported to the police but the driver failed to exchange details at the time of the offence. The police advised that it was not their policy to prosecute non-injury incidents – is this right? Also, pleased to hear about the bikes being brought into estates – hopefully they will deal with the mini moto issues.

A. The local Chief Inspector advised that in relation to the vehicles driving over the kerb it was relevant to know whether it was private or public land. He went on to advise that in other areas they have been able to take some actions such as installing bollards but this can have an impact on the residents. The Chief Inspector would talk to the local Beat Manager about options for the estate. In terms of the accident reporting – the police will follow up on a fail to stop incident and a road traffic collision is reportable if there is an injury – if there is no exchange of details

this is an offence. He advised there should be some follow up and advice if no action is taken by the police.

Q. Thank you for the presentations – pleased to hear the focus is on protecting Neighbourhood policing, but concerned about Neighbourhood Watch – previously had 3 Beat Managers to report to but following the presentation will it now only be 1? Also, police officers used to be attached to schools – is this still the case?

A. The PCC confirmed that in the Neighbourhood Review all the schools will have a PCSO or Beat Manager allocated to them – this does not mean an officer per school, it is a named contact. The PCC also noted that in Bristol some schools with particular issues have funded their own officer, and the police would welcome that approach in other areas if it was required.

The local Chief Inspector confirmed that the PCSOs and Beat Managers have been allocated their schools, details will be circulated and available online soon. The Longwell Green area has two Beat Managers and two PCSOs.

Q. The Chair of Acton Turville Parish Council advised that they have not had any contact with their Beat Manager for 16 months – now do have contact following a complaint. How will the new Neighbourhood Policing plan address the issues of attendance at Parish Council meetings?

A. The local Chief Inspector advised that there has been a change to the Beat Manager recently and knows that he has been able to attend community meetings – so hopefully the parish Council will see the difference soon. The team are committing themselves to attending meetings but where they are unable to they will provide information in advance. The PCC commented that due to the increase in the Council Tax that the police were able to have this year they have not had to cut Neighbourhood Policing and are now able to fill some vacancies they had been holding.

Q. A Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator commented that they lived in an area where two large families have taken to abandoning cars – with support from the police over the last 18 months they have been able to eradicate the illegal parking. In conjunction with the local PCSO they used a ‘3 strikes’ approach which was very effective. As Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator he had attended a meeting at Police Headquarters which was very good but the message doesn’t seem to be getting down to the beat officers and there is no link up for co-ordinators.

A. The local Chief Inspector advised the Constabulary have been working on this – they are aware it needs reinvigorating. There are some good Watches and some that are less successful – they could do with more people joining the schemes. There has been some discussion about getting the parish councils involved with the Watches too to encourage information back from residents. The PCC agreed that there has been a step change recently within the Constabulary and the Neighbourhood Watch is now seen as essential to their engagement with communities.

Q. How do you go about setting up a new Neighbourhood Watch? A neighbour has suggested it would be a good idea and want to support them.

A. The information you need is all available on the Constabulary website. A link to this is [here](#).

Q. A resident was interested in the TV programme recently regarding police being able to strip assets, following a crime, with some assets going back to the Government and some being used for 'other causes'. She would like to know, from the proceeds of crime act, what 'other causes' in South Glos have benefitted from the proceeds of crime act?

A. From confiscation (following a criminal conviction and a process that takes all available assets) – 50% is retained by the Home Office and the remaining 50% is split between Police (or Law enforcement agency) – 18.75%, CPS (or Prosecuting authority) – 18.75% and the Court Service (HMCTS) who are the enforcement authority. All money returned is though top sliced by the Government by 5% up to £5million (across all agencies and forces) to fund other programmes of activity. So what that means is we don't quite receive 18.75%. We get 50% of cash forfeitures back (Civil proceedings and only deals with cash in police possession).

The caveat to the above though is that from Confiscation – if there is a victim(s) then 100% is returned to victims and nothing is split between agencies. The majority of these funds are used in A & S to fund the part of the team that are responsible for Asset Recovery. In previous years – the PCC has used some funds to fund the PCC Community Fund and we have done so also this year – invested in a Full time Cyber Protect Officer for a period of two years – and that member of staff is utilised to deliver online safety advice, briefing and presentations to our communities. Many of these have been in S. Glos and we also have a 2 day event at Cribbs Causeway in October in partnership with Get Safe Online.

The PCC has also this year invested some of the funds in an additional Financial Investigator to see whether further asset recovery returns can be demonstrated by focusing on the new provisions contained in the Criminal Finances Act.

Probably a wordy way of saying we have invested in stripping criminals of their assets as well as a cyber protect element.

Q. If Pub Watch is running in an area will it be a condition of new licences that it is mandatory to join it?

A. The local Chief Inspector advised that Licensing is run by the Local Authority. The police are asked to visit premises and discuss issues but they are not the decision makers. It is helpful when people who run licensed premises are community minded and aware of the impact their premises are having on local residents. If they allow anti-social behaviour to continue the police will become involved in the case. For example, the impact of closing down Barcelona in Kingswood a few years ago has been noticeable – there has been a year on year reduction in violent crime in the area and the police have seen a saving of over £60,000 as a result. The police can only make recommendations to the Council though; they are not the decision makers when it comes to licences. The PCC noted that the night time economy is vital to communities but it is essential licence holders co-operate and ensure everyone is safe.