Agenda Item No 04

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY PANEL

Notes of a meeting of the Community Scrutiny Panel (Police) held on Thursday 15 May 2025, Conference Room 2, Police HQ at 10.30 am

PRESENT
Jane Scattergood (Chair)
Eloise Abbott
Andrew Dodd
Ben Phillips
Alison Ramsey
Shaun Thomson
Penny Walker

Also present:
OPFCC Chief Executive – Gill Shearer
Chief Superintendent Matt Kennerley
Chief Inspector Hayley Wilkinson
HR Manager – Kate Ruddick
Senior Legal Advisor – Tom Young
OPFCC Governance Manager - Joanne Head

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

123. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Meg Masters and DCC Martland.

124. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of personal interest regarding any agenda item.

125. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business to be considered by the Panel.

126. NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The notes of the meeting held on Thursday 6 February 2025 previously circulated with the agenda were noted.

Agreed; that, the notes of the meeting held on 6 February 2025 were agreed.

127. ACTION SHEET

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In relation to minute 115 Chief Superintendent Kennerley provided an update on the identified case which the Panel had reviewed prior to the previous meeting. He advised that subject matter experts had carried out 2 reviews of the case and identified organisational learning had been taken to the Use of Force Board with officer training being updated to include more scenarios with children. Review of the individual officer's performance was being carried out with firearms authority being withdrawn whilst this was taking place.

A number of partnership meetings with social services and unitary councils had occurred regarding processes to notify the Constabulary when placements within the county were being made. This would then enable the control room and officers to be able to respond to incidents appropriately.

Chief Superintendent Kennerley also updated the Panel that work had been carried out to ascertain why when less women were arrested they made a high proportion of complaints than male detainees. Of the cases reviewed there were no issues or trends identified, although it was acknowledged that the sample size was small. However over a period of 12 months this could be more statistically significant and would be reviewed.

AGREED: that the updated be noted.

128. CORPORATE UPDATES

Chief Superintendent Kennerley briefed the Panel on the police corporate update which had been circulated to the Panel prior to the meeting.

A member was pleased to see that Stop and Search had increased, however there was no explanation as to why vehicles offences had declined. Chief Superintendent Kennerley advised that fewer vehicle offences occurred due to better designs of vehicles and with the introduction of Operation Enhance which saw more police officers on foot patrols within local communities. Proactive work was being carried out with partners such as the National Trust and local authorities to raise awareness of vehicle crime and give prevention advice.

The Panel had received a written corporate update prior to the meeting from the OPFCC Chief Executive. On 8th May 2025 the Commissioner had been in post for a year with a primary focus on providing a quality service for the people of Cumbria.

In relation to the Keeping Town Centres Safe initiative the Panel were informed that the current focus was on Carlisle, Workington, Whitehaven, Penrith, Kendal and Barrow. The Government had also asked the Commissioner to consider Cockermouth, Keswick and Ambleside and work was being carried out to scope these areas.

Earlier in the year it had been announced that Cumbria would be one of 6 regions to be considered by the Government for the Devolution Priority Programme which would see a Mayoral structure be implemented. Initial work was being carried out and a Government decision in June was awaited.

AGREED; that, the reports be noted

The Chair advised that agenda items 9 and 10 would be taken next to allow the HR Manager to attend another meeting.

129. RECRUITMENT AND ESTABLISHMENT

The HR Manager guided the Panel through the report which had been circulated with the agenda. The force currently had 1,359 officers which had increased to 1,386 following a new intake. Police staff establishment stood at 673 with a number of vacancies being managed. A Special Constable intake and further student officers via the university course would take place later in the year. The force were also using a target payments process to enable them to attract officers to some areas of the force.

Retention of officers and staff during 2024/25 had increased and was being attributed to those officers who had joined during COVID19 pandemic. Work was being carried out to have conversations with officers who were thinking of leaving to try and find different solutions to enable them to stay. This trend had however slowed down since April with only 2 officers leaving the force.

Sickness had seen a spike of 6% in the three months of December, January and February, although this had now decreased to 4.2% at the end of April 2025. Commanders were provided with weekly updates on sickness and work was being carried out to put in place early interventions particularly for those suffering from psychological illnesses.

AGREED: that, the report be noted.

130. GRIEVANCES

The HR Manager presented a report which detailed the ongoing, finalised and newly submitted grievances during the previous six months. Eleven new grievances had been received during the reporting period, thirteen cases had been resolved with 7 remaining outstanding. Many were attributed to a review of police roles throughout the force resulting in officers being deployed to either the Comms Centre or out on patrol. This had also resulted in an increase in sickness and some officers leaving the force.

Three members had carried out a dip sample of finalised cases prior to the meeting and provided their feedback. They had found the cases were dealt with appropriately and cases were handled well. A member suggested that were officers were provided for funding for degrees, particularly masters degrees, that it should be made clear whether the funding was for the whole of the course or if funding was only provided on an annual basis and had to be re-applied for. Clear communication would negate misunderstanding or assumption.

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The OPFCC Chief Executive asked that this matter be raised at the Commissioner's Executive Board Police meeting through the Chairs Update report.

AGREED: that
(i) reported be noted; and
(ii) the Chair's report to Executive Board (Police) provide a narrative regarding the grievance matter.

(Note: The HR Manager left the meeting at this point)

131. QUARTERLY CUSTODY DETENTION, STOP & SEARCH AND USE OF FORCE REPORT

Chief Superintendent Kennerley guided members through the quarterly report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. He advised that the force had now moved to the Mark 43 system to recorded all Stop and Search and Use of Force incidents. These were then subsequently forwarded to supervisors to review. All incidents which related to individuals from an ethnic background were reviewed by the Chief Superintendent to ensure no disproportionality.

The Panel members had carried out dip samples of Stop and Search cases prior to the meeting and provided their feedback. In the main the members were pleased with how the incidents had been approached and dealt with by officers. They did comment that when they viewed Use of Force officers were frequently swearing at detainees and unacceptable language to belittle individuals. The Panel Chair read out quotes from some of the footage they had viewed and Chief Superintendent Kennerley agreed to review the footage and take appropriate action regarding the officers.

AGREED; that, the
(i) Report be noted;
(ii) A copy of the Use of Force Form be provided to C/Supt Kennerley to review the incident footage and take appropriate action.

132. CIVIL CLAIMS

The Senior Legal Advisor presented a report outlining active and closed Public Liability Claims, Employer Liability Claims, Employment Tribunal applications or proceedings.

There remained a national trend and increase in the number of public liability claims being made. Seventy one had been opened in the last 12 months but no trends or themes were identified from the individual cases. A number of legal firms from outside the county who were specialists in this area of business were targeting individuals or making themselves known to assist with claims against the police.

Members had noticed that cases were often taking a significant amount of time to complete, generally attributed to court backlogs. A member asked that with the increasing number of cases whether the department was appropriately staffed to deal with them. The Senior Legal Advisor assured members that although there were peaks

and troughs throughout the year staff within their team were able to deal with the claims. When required the department would purchase the services of specialist legal advice.

AGREED: that the report be noted.

[Note: The Senior Legal Advisor left the meeting at this point.]

133. PROPERTY STORE UPDATE

With the introduction of the new system, Mark 43 this had improved the way in officers seized, recorded and stored property. An App on an officers smart device enabled them to record and track the movement of property across the force. It also enabled supervisors to monitor property attributed to officers and how they were dealing with it.

Officers were being encouraged to photograph items where appropriate rather than seizing it to reduce the volume of property retained.

The force had now found a solution to digitally wipe devices which didn't cause harm to the environment and made them usable. A member asked what the Constabulary proposed to do in relation to the introduction of new legislation on the storage of mobile phones/lithium batteries. The recommendation was that large numbers should not be stored in the same place and potentially this should be raised as a risk for the departments. Chief Superintendent Kennerley advised he would make checks with the relevant departments to ensure that they were fully aware.

The report indicated that work was being carried out regarding the force's freezer capacity and management. Work was being carried out to explore a phased and needs-based replacement rather than wholesale replacement across the force. The Panel asked that they be provided with a copy of the replacement programme to understand the timeframe and extent of this work.

AGREED; that, the
(i) report be noted; and
(ii) Panel be provided with a copy of the freezer replacement programme.

134. INTEGRITY

Chief Inspector Wilkinson advised that the number of public complaints received by the Constabulary had risen by 24.3% in the past year. The majority of complaints were against young in service officers who made up the largest proportion of officers on front line duties and this was no unexpected.

A discussion was held regarding the conduct case information within the report. Chief Inspector Wilkinson briefed members on current trends or issues and training which was provided to officers.

Prior to the meeting some Panel members had carried out a dip sample of public complaints, including a sample of repeat officer cases and misconduct cases. Members had felt that all the cases sampled had been dealt with thoroughly and asked that their feedback be provided to the department on the good work being carried out..

AGREED; that, the report be noted;

Meeting ended at 12:50 pm

Signed: **Date:**

Panel Chair

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