



Date: TBC

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(by email)

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Dear Mr Lane,

### **Hampshire Police and Crime Panel's Proactive Scrutiny of Traffic Crime and Related Nuisance**

At the 6 October 2017 meeting, Members of the Hampshire Police and Crime Panel reviewed the evidence received from yourself and other organisations in relation to traffic crime and related nuisance within the Hampshire policing area.

This review aimed to scrutinise and support you in your role as Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in your intention to prevent and tackle traffic related crime and nuisance, and to improve road safety across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. This scrutiny considered how you were listening to and engaging partners, community associations and members of the public in enhancing current prevention measures. The Panel also reviewed how effectively you are holding the Chief Constable to account for policing community concerns related to traffic crime and disturbance.

The review looked at the following key questions:

- How well has the PCC, through holding the Chief Constable to account, ensured an effective policing response to community concerns related to traffic crime and disturbance?
- How are the PCC and his office engaging with local partners, community groups and members of the public to enhance current prevention measures for traffic crime and nuisance to improve road safety?
- What are the key priorities which need to be considered by the PCC to reduce and prevent traffic nuisance within the communities Hampshire and the Isle of Wight?
- What best practice exists which could also be considered by the PCC in his approach to enhancing the approach to tackling and preventing traffic crime and nuisance to keep roads safer across Hampshire and the IOW?

Following a review of the evidence received, the Panel have outlined their findings below for your consideration.

### *Findings*

Members of the Panel noted that evidence received demonstrated that this was a topic of significant public interest and concern, with the Panel receiving over 70 responses to the scrutiny from members of the public plus a wealth of information from community speedwatch groups, town and parish councils and other local and national organisations. In particular the evidence has suggested:

- Speeding and the excessive noise produced by illegally modified motorcycles is of significant concern to residents, particularly those living along the A32. It was recognised that whilst this only represented a small minority of motorcyclists, it had a considerable impact on the quality of life for those residents affected. A public meeting had been held in December 2016 to hear, and seek to address, these concerns; however to date little agreement has been reached on what measures would be most effective in deterring this illegal activity and maintaining road safety.
- Dealing with noise offences by motorcycles presents a challenge to the constabulary, due to the technical difficulties in securing evidence that can be presented in court. The use of body worn video, which has been supported by funding from the OPCC across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, is now being used as a means of capturing best evidence at the scene to support what officers saw and heard.
- Traffic crime and speeding is also of particular concern within the New Forest National Park. A deputation was heard and evidence received noting the high number of animal casualties, particularly outside of daylight hours, resulting from speeding and dangerous driving. Also discussed was the distress this causes to residents, commoners, and those witnessing accidents. It was noted that Hampshire Constabulary had recently increased their presence within the park area to cover the times of dawn and dusk, but it was felt that better signage and greater enforcement was needed to prevent accidents.
- Both residents and community organisations would like to see greater engagement with the PCC, particularly at large scale public events such as the New Forest Show. Understanding that it is difficult for the PCC to attend all commitments, Members heard that the PCC was meeting regularly with partners to ensure that they are identifying areas for improvement and welcomed suggestion by the Chief Executive that the OPCC were seeking to meet with representatives from the New Forest to hear their concerns.
- Vulnerable road users were particularly at risk and there was little awareness around how statutory agencies were prioritising and addressing these concerns. It was suggested that Hampshire Constabulary speed vans should operate more frequently during times when vulnerable users were at risk,

such as the early hours of the morning, when dog walkers are using the road, or at the start or end of the school day.

- Whilst parking has been decriminalised in many areas, in accordance with the Road Traffic Act 1991, parking infringement featured strongly in concerns raised through public responses, with the majority of respondents still considering this a policing matter.
- Hampshire Constabulary's current roads policing strategy is targeted towards the 'Fatal Four', which aligns with the national strategy. Use of mobile phones behind the wheel is heavily policed in Hampshire, with 97% of those caught receiving a penalty. Targeted driver awareness messages along with some very serious accidents in Hampshire and Thames Valley, has seen a significant reduction in the use of mobile phones behind the wheel.
- Evidence considered by this review suggests that a perceived lack of enforcement may be contributing to drivers regarding speeding as acceptable. Understanding that nationally there is a cap on the number of penalties that can be issued for speeding offences, which for Hampshire is currently 80,000-85,000 per year and is a figure being met through existing enforcement, other methods of reducing speeding are required such as driver education and awareness. It has also been suggested that a change in public perception is needed regarding the risks associated with speeding, so that it is as socially unacceptable as drink driving, which could be supported through increased public awareness messages from the Constabulary and greater sharing of successful enforcement and conviction rates.
- A number of local parish and town councils suggested in their evidence that they would be willing to financially meet or contribute to the cost of the installation of permanent vehicle speed indication displays (SID), however Hampshire County Council explained that such measures are reserved as a last resort when all other preventative attempts have been ineffective at a particular accident hotspot. It was felt that overuse of SIDs may reduce their effectiveness in changing driver behaviour.

Whist Members acknowledged that Community Speedwatch (CSW) is an operational scheme of Hampshire Constabulary, it was recognised as a key element of the road safety provision within Hampshire. CSW had received funding from the previous PCC and was discussed heavily within both oral and written evidence. Through this evidence it was noted that:

- Currently 93 schemes operated across the Hampshire and IOW area, however there were few opportunities for these groups to come together and share concerns and best practice. It was also suggested that the sharing of the latest information regarding speeding and road safety by the Constabulary could support CSW groups to be more effective.
- Within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, CSW may only operate on roads of 30mph or less. Previously, volunteers were permitted to operate on roads of up to 40mph, however a decision had been taken to reduce this to 30mph for

volunteer safety. A considerable number of CSW groups expressed their dissatisfaction with this decision; particularly as in the neighbouring Thames Valley area CSW still operates on 40mph roads. It was suggested that this position should be reconsidered in April 2018, when collaboration is planned between the two forces on road safety.

- Another significant concern raised by CSW teams was the use and analysis of the data they were producing. Many teams suggested that the lack of feedback from the Constabulary on how the data was being utilised had been a key factor in the disengagement of volunteers. During the oral evidence session the Chief Executive of the OPCC offered to lend his support to evaluating and analysing this data, recognising that analysis of this data would aid Hampshire Constabulary in future decision making.
- The evidence had provided a number of alternative means for reducing speeding within local communities, including mobile average speed cameras. Such technology would overcome issues faced by volunteers, including being able to operate 24 hours per day, and outside of daylight hours. It was explained however that in order to operate these cameras internet access was needed, which may not be available in all areas. The Chief Executive of the OPCC agreed that he would consider the viability of the use of mobile average speed cameras once the data from the CSW teams had been fully analysed and discussed with Hampshire Constabulary.
- Volunteers had experienced abusive behaviours from drivers and through social media. Volunteers suggested that they would welcome uniformed officers joining them when in operation, or official signage demonstrating that they are endorsed by Hampshire Constabulary. Likewise it was felt that greater support was needed from the Constabulary in raising the profile of CSW through online mediums.
- Whilst examples were provided regarding the operation of CSW in urban areas, this was not consistent across the whole of the policing area. In particular those urban areas which were non-parished had seen less take-up of the scheme.

### *Recommendations*

In reviewing the evidence received, Members brought forth a number of recommendations, which they wish to raise for your consideration:

- a. Given the level of public interest and concern over traffic crime and nuisance, the PCC should seek opportunities for greater engagement with communities, both directly and through working with partners to understand the issues facing residents. Consideration should be given to encouraging two-way conversation, to enable responses and concerns to be relayed back to the OPCC and to allow the Commissioner to assure residents that their concerns are being heard.

- b. That the PCC should continue to develop and lead partnership working with other organisations that have a shared interest in addressing traffic crime and related nuisance. An initial focus for such partnerships should include addressing concerns regarding illegal activity on the A32, seeking to better protect vulnerable road users, and reducing speeding and animal casualties within the New Forest National Park.
- c. In particular, following the public meeting regarding concerns over road safety and noise disturbance on the A32, the PCC and his office should take a lead in supporting relevant partners to devise a fully coherent action plan, ensuring that any actions agreed are addressed by those partners in a timely manner.
- d. Further, the PCC should seek to encourage those partners responsible for parking enforcement to enhance their communication with members of the public, to ensure that it is clearly understandable who is responsible for addressing parking infringements. This should be with the intention to reduce demand on police time and enable concerns to be addressed more quickly by the appropriate organisation. Consideration should be given through partnership working as to whether a '101' style service for the reporting of parking infringements and anti social driving would enable a more effective response to parking concerns within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.
- e. The PCC and his office should also consider engaging with those town and parish councils willing to fund road safety measures, to ensure that any funding available can have the most immediate and effective impact on enhancing road safety.
- f. That the PCC should, through his role in holding the Chief Constable to account, review in partnership the concerns raised regarding the current operation of the Community Speedwatch Scheme. The Panel welcomes the suggestion that the OPCC's performance team offer their support in analysing the data produced by CSW teams, with the view to this data being used to assess the effectiveness of the scheme in delivering both an immediate and sustained reduction in speeding across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Once the data is fully analysed, the PCC should consider, in conjunction with Hampshire Constabulary, the viability of the use of mobile average speed cameras.
- g. Road safety is mentioned as one of three key public concerns within the Police and Crime Plan, however no specific projects currently feature in the Delivery Plan under this heading. Therefore it is recommended that the PCC and his office should consider the inclusion of specific projects within the Delivery Plan which would seek to remedy the concerns raised through this review.

The Panel were pleased to hear, through oral evidence that the OPCC consider this review an opportunity to listen to the valued opinion of residents and that the recommendations of the Panel are anticipated to form a basis for discussion with partners about the future of road safety across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

We look forward to receiving, in due course, your response to the recommendations outlined above, including consideration as to how the recommendations made will be incorporated into related activities within your Delivery Plan.

Yours Sincerely,



**Councillor David Stewart**  
**Chair, Hampshire Police and Crime Panel**

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