

**National Assembly for Wales - Inaugural Cross Party Group on Policing,  
Committee room 5, Ty Hywel, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff,**

**Tuesday 10 July 2018 at 12:30pm**

**Present**

National Assembly for Wales

John Griffiths, AM/AC – Chairman

Llyr Gruffydd, AM/AC

Ann Jones, AM/AC

Elin Jones, AM/AC Presiding Officer/ Llywydd

Darren Millar, AM/AC

David Rees, AM/AC

Bethan Sayed, AM/AC

Mark Reckless, AM/AC

Representative of Jayne Bryant, AM/AC

Becs Parker – Communications Officer, Office of John Griffiths AM/AC

Rhiannon Tapp – Caseworker, Office of John Griffiths AM/AC

**Police and Crime Commissioners**

Jeff Cuthbert – Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent and Chair of the All Wales Policing Group.

Dafydd Llywelyn – Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys

Alun Michael – Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales

Ann Griffith – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for North Wales

Cerith Thomas – Police and Crime Commissioners Advisor to the All Wales Policing Team, Group Secretary

Sian Curley – Chief Executive, Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner's team

Carys Morgans – Chief Executive, Dyfed Powys Police and Crime Commissioner's team

**Chief Constables**

Matt Jukes – Chief Constable, South Wales Police and Chair of the Welsh Chief Officer Group

Julian Williams – Chief Constable, Gwent Police

Mark Polin – Chief Constable, North Wales Police

Darren Davies – Deputy Chief Constable, Dyfed-Powys police

Robert (Bob) Evans – Deputy Chief Constable, All Wales Policing Team

Tony Brown – Chief Superintendent, Police Liaison Unit.

### **Invited attendees**

Joanne Hopkins – Home Office team in Wales

Andrew Felton – The Commission on Justice in Wales

Inspector Dave Gordon – The Commission on Justice in Wales

Steve Trigg – Police Federation

Steve Carr – Welsh Government Community Safety Division

Steve Chapman – Welsh Government Community Safety Division, Anti-Slavery Co-ordinator

### **1. Welcome**

Mr John Griffiths AM/AC welcomed everyone to the inaugural meeting of the Cross Party Group on Policing and highlighted the importance of the Group with specific reference to the National Assembly and Welsh Government's ambition for policing to be devolved.

### **2. Appointment of Chairperson and Secretary**

Nominations were sought from the Assembly Members present to appoint the Chairperson of the Group. Mr John Griffiths AM was nominated and unanimously appointed to serve for a term of 12 months. Mr Griffiths thanked the Assembly Members for their support and looked forward to working as Chairperson during the inaugural year of the Group.

Nominations were sought for the appointment of Secretary to the Group. Mr Cerith Thomas from the Policing Team for Wales was proposed and accepted by those Assembly Members present.

Chief Superintendent Tony Brown provided the Group with an overview of the purpose of the Police Liaison Unit that was based in the Welsh Government Offices, Cathays Park, Cardiff. The Unit provided a link between the police service in Wales and the Welsh Government, which had become increasingly more important given the interdependency between their respective roles and functions.

### **3. Frequency of Group meetings**

It was agreed that meetings would be held on a termly basis equating to three in total per annum.

### **4. Introduction of Members of the Cross Party Group on Policing**

Each of the Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables or their nominated deputies, introduced themselves to those present.

## **5. Presentation by Jeff Cuthbert, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent and Chair of the All Wales Policing Group.**

Jeff Cuthbert outlined the role and responsibilities of Police and Crime Commissioners and distinguished them from those of the Chief Constables, which were operationally focussed.

In summary Commissioners responsibilities included, but were not restricted to -

- The responsible person for the totality of policing within their area.
- Cutting crime and delivering an effective and efficient police service.
- Setting the strategic direction and priorities for policing in their area through their Police and Crime Plan.
- Determining the policing budget and responsible for setting the local policing precept.
- Appointing and if necessary dismiss the Chief Constable.
- Holding the Chief Constables and the force to account, effectively making the police answerable to the communities they serve.
- Commissioning local victims services in their area.
- Ensuring that community policing needs are met as effectively and efficiently as possible
- Working with local partners and building public confidence and trust.

Further details about the role and responsibilities of Police and Crime Commissioners are attached at "appendix A".

When Commissioners were first elected, in 2012, the Home Office provided approximately 70% of police funding in Gwent and 30% was raised from the local council tax precept. Since then the funding split had shifted so that now 60% was provided by the Home Office and 40% by the local council tax precept.

Police and Crime Commissioners were also responsible for the police estate however; Chief Constables were responsible for allocating police officers to the police stations, which was in keeping with their operational role.

The police service in Wales enjoyed good relationships with Welsh Government and specific mention was made of the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and the importance of working in partnership in relation to community safety. The support of Welsh Government was acknowledged through its funding of the Police and Community Support Officers and the schools liaison programme.

## **6. Matt Jukes, Chief Constable of South Wales Police and Chair of the Welsh Chief Officer Group.**

Chief Constable Matt Jukes set out the challenges currently facing the police service in Wales and may be summarised as follows.

Since 1995, overall crime and traditional crimes, such as car crime and burglary, had reduced to the extent that, of the 1 million calls received in South Wales last year, approximately 90% were non-crime related.

The police response to persons with vulnerabilities and mental health issues had however increased considerably during that period.

Reports of sexual violence had doubled and included both historic and recent instances. A significant reason for the increase was due to a greater level of confidence to report such crimes. Other crimes such as domestic abuse had placed additional pressure on forces and

in South Wales, approximately 34,000 domestic abuse cases were reported each year. Crimes in other areas categories such as violence, sexual violence, cyber and internet related crime were also increasing. In addition, a digital component had become prevalent in a high number of crimes. Mobile phones could hold as many as ¼ million messages, which placed more complex demands on the police workforce.

There was a level of unmet demand in terms of mental health and South Wales dealt with, on average, more than 100 calls on a daily basis.

The terrorist threat was also evolving and some had emanated from Wales and was a present issue in South, South East and South West Wales. Far right extremism had also increased.

The threat from “County lines” which involved organised crime gangs exploiting young people to distribute illegal drugs had also become an issue as had the associated increase in knife and firearms offences.

The pressures of policing Cardiff as a capital city meant that resources had to be drawn in from elsewhere to cover the hundreds of events that took place during a typical year as well as the higher profile ones such as the UEFA Champions League Final.

Public sector austerity had resulted in excess of 20% taken out of organisations budgets and the support of Welsh Government for Police and Community Support Officers (PCSOs) was appreciated. PCSO’s had been reduced in many English forces however that was not the case in Wales where they continued to perform an important function.

There were also national issues to consider including working with the National Crime Agency and dealing with complex matters such as modern day slavery.

## **7. Open session**

The following points and discussions took place during the open session.

In response to a question about whether there are enough mental health crisis units within the region the Group was advised that the number of people who would have been taken to a police cell until relatively recently had reduced and many were now taken to other places of safety however there was still a need for additional crisis teams.

Reference was made to the need to accommodate people, who had come into contact with the police and had not been diagnosed with a mental health problem, to a place of sanctuary. A partnership approach was needed to resolve the problem as the situation was not operating effectively.

An instance in Ysbyty Gwynedd was highlighted whereby staff could not cope with two 14 year olds who were self-harming and being violent. It was felt that more suitable accommodation was needed to deal with such cases.

Details were provided of an initiative in the Gwent Police control room where five people are seconded from the health service, but paid for by Gwent Police, to assist control room staff to deal with emergencies involving mental health.

An issue was highlighted whereby police officers had to remain at the scene of incidents for several hours waiting for ambulances. Such situations were viewed as safe because the police were in attendance; however, that meant resources could not be deployed elsewhere

and the injured person had to wait longer for medical attention. This was seen as a common problem across Wales.

The Joint Emergency Services Group (JESG) had an adverse incidents Group that was looking in to the problem. The biggest issue was because of ambulances queueing at hospital accident and emergency departments.

The Swansea Help point initiative in the night-time economy was mentioned as one that had saved over 1300 ambulance admissions over a 12-month period, which meant they were available for other emergencies and officers could get back to their policing duties.

There was a general view that the devolution of policing and the criminal justice system should be done simultaneously. The Cross Party Group provided an opportunity for a constructive relationship and several topics had already been highlighted for debate including how we engage with communities.

The Chief Constables had responded to the Thomas Commission on Criminal Justice and Policing and they felt that the two should be devolved together.

Reference was made to the anticipated spike in sexual violence and domestic abuse arising from the football world cup matches.

It was confirmed that police forces had arrangements in place to deal with domestic violence following sporting events including visiting vulnerable people during those periods.

Commissioners were asked for their views about taking on responsibility for the fire service, which was an option for their counterparts in England.

Jeff Cuthbert advised that only one Commissioner had taken on responsibility for the fire service in England (*although five other applications have now been approved*). The Welsh Government had made it clear that the Fire and Rescue Service is a devolved responsibility in Wales and would not come under the responsibility of Police and Crime Commissioners. The issue did not therefore arise in Wales although that did not mean good collaboration should not take place between the emergency services.

In relation to an observation that drug abuse was seemingly being done more openly, it was questioned whether that was due to a lack of a policing presence and whether more could be done in schools to tackle the problem.

In response an example was given of an 18 month covert operation to tackle drugs which highlighted the work that was going on to deal with the issue and which may not always be visible to the public. The schools liaison programme was seen as an important component to deal with the problem.

The point was made that this was not an urban problem and it also affected rural communities. Members of the public did not always report crime and an initiative was being launched in Dyfed-Powys in relation to "county lines" which encouraged people to report crimes.

Drugs trafficking was consistently increasing even in rural areas such as Dyfed-Powys.

## **8. Topics for discussion at future Cross Party Group Meetings**

The following topics were suggested for discussion at future meetings of the Group

1. Mental Health
2. Domestic Violence & Sexual Violence
3. Modern Day Slavery
4. 3<sup>rd</sup> sector partnerships
5. Devolution and Criminal Justice
6. Illegal drugs and county lines.

It was agreed that mental health would be the topic for discussion at the next meeting of the Group.

The meeting ended at 13:26