

Overview and Scrutiny – Outside Organisation

Update from the Council’s appointed representatives

Councillor David Palethorpe

Organisation: Police & Crime Commissioner Panel

The Council’s representatives are invited to report on any meetings of the appointed outside organisation, the role the organisation(s) they represent plays in promoting and aligning with the Council's priorities, policies and strategies, their impact and results, and advising on partnership discussions which are open and in the public domain. Feedback is scheduled across a full year cycle once per annum for most organisations and twice where meetings are more frequent (greater than 5).

<p>Purpose of the Organisation:</p>	<p>This report provides Overview & Scrutiny Committee with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary of the current position regarding policing, community safety, and Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) developments in Devon & Cornwall. • Analysis of strategic risks and opportunities arising from national policing reform. <p>This report particularly focuses on implications for Teignbridge, partnerships, anti-social behaviour (ASB), community safety, accountability, and future governance arrangements.</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>The PCC identifies a period of significant transition and uncertainty for policing governance nationally and locally.</p> <p>Key issues include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed abolition of PCCs and Police & Crime Panels by 2028. • Potential restructuring or merger of police forces nationally. • Continuing financial pressures despite precept increases. • Increased emphasis on neighbourhood policing and ASB. • Ongoing concerns regarding police vetting, misconduct, and standards. • Expansion of hotspot policing and CCTV initiatives. • Significant investment into Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) services. “Lets Talk “ initiative • Concerns around rural funding inequity. • Growing emphasis on partnership working around drugs, homelessness, mental health, and repeat offending. • Financial pressures on both policing and local authorities.
<p>Attendance requirements/ meetings attended:</p>	<p>As programmed with all meetings held at Plymouth City Council</p>

<p>Feedback:</p>	<p>The report highlights positive operational progress, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased frontline officers. • Additional PCSOs. • Retention of custody suites. • Strong ASB intervention statistics. • Improved partnership activity. <p>However, concerns remain around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public confidence. • Governance transition. • Long-term funding sustainability. • Accountability arrangements after PCC abolition. • Youth confidence in policing. • Financial pressures on both policing and local authorities.
<p>Examples of where the brief above has been followed:</p>	<p>National Governance Reform</p> <p>Current Position</p> <p>Government intends to abolish PCCs and Police & Crime Panels at the end of the current term in 2028.</p> <p>The Government has not yet provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A final governance model. • Clarity on accountability structures. • Details regarding funding arrangements. • How non-mayoral areas such as Devon & Cornwall will operate. <p>The forthcoming Policing White Paper is expected to provide greater clarity.</p> <p>Financial Context</p> <p>Key Issues</p> <p>Devon & Cornwall Police faces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A projected £3m budget gap even after maximum precept increases. • Continued concerns regarding rural funding formulas. • Increasing operational demand. • Inflationary pressures. • Recruitment and retention challenges. <p>The PCC has argued that rural forces remain disadvantaged compared to metropolitan areas.</p> <p>Operational Policing Position</p> <p>Positive Developments</p> <p>Frontline Policing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 71 officers added to patrols by Dec 2025. • Further 50 recruited by March 31st 2026. <p>PCSOs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 49 additional PCSOs being recruited.

Custody Review

- Decision taken not to close custody centres including Torquay.

ASB Enforcement

Hotspot policing has produced:

- 42,000+ patrol hours.
- 136,386 public interactions.
- 3,403 ASB incidents attended.
- 381 arrests.

Key Strategic Concerns

Public Confidence

Survey results show:

- Confidence in local policing remains higher than national averages.
- However, “not confident at all” responses increased.

Young people’s confidence fell significantly:

- From 54% to 42%.

This is a significant area for further scrutiny by the PCC

Police Standards & Integrity

HMICFRS rated the force as requiring improvement in:

- Vetting.
- Professional standards.
- Corruption prevention.

Although improvements are underway, this remains a reputational and operational concern.

Governance Uncertainty

The abolition of PCCs presents several unresolved issues:

Potential Risks

- Loss of democratic accountability.
- Reduced local influence.
- Centralisation of policing decisions.
- Weaker rural representation.
- Confusion around future scrutiny arrangements.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

ASB remains the number one public concern.

Current Initiatives

- Hotspot patrols.
- Closure orders.
- CCTV investment.
- Street Focus Programme.
- Night bus schemes.
- Noise camera deployments.

Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG)

The PCC is significantly increasing investment in:

- Sexual violence services.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victim support. • Education programmes. • Male allyship initiatives. <p>61% of survey respondents support greater investment in VAWG work.</p> <p>Drugs, Homelessness & Complex Needs</p> <p>The report identifies strong links between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance misuse. • Mental health. • Homelessness. • Repeat offending. <p>Operation Scorpion delivered notable enforcement outcomes.</p>
<p>Additional information relevant to Overview & Scrutiny including the value that TDC brings to this organisation and/or why this organisation needs TDC:</p>	<p>Areas Overview & Scrutiny May Wish to Consider</p> <p>Future Governance Arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic accountability post-2028. • Role of councils in future policing governance. • Rural representation concerns. • Scrutiny mechanisms after PCC abolition <p>Youth Confidence in Policing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why confidence among young people has reduced. • School engagement programmes. • Social media impacts. • Diversionary activities and youth services. <p>ASB and Prevention Strategy</p> <p>Overview may wish to examine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectiveness of hotspot policing. • Long-term prevention vs enforcement. • Repeat offender management. • Environmental and design approaches to ASB. <p>Violence Against Women & Girls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility of support services. • Rural provision gaps. • Outcomes and reporting rates. • Education and prevention work. <p>Rural Policing and Funding</p> <p>Potential considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairness of national funding formulas.

- Rural response times.
- Visibility of policing in villages and market towns.
- Community perceptions of service quality.

Police Standards and Integrity

Potential scrutiny questions:

- Progress against HMICFRS recommendations.
- Vetting reforms.
- Misconduct handling.
- Public trust rebuilding measures.

Partnership Working

Potential scrutiny themes:

- Integration between police, councils, NHS, housing and probation.
- Information sharing.
- Prevention of repeat offending.
- Homelessness and addiction interventions.

Overview & Scrutiny Committee may wish to consider:

1. Monitoring of national policing reform proposals and implications for local democratic accountability.
2. A future spotlight review on youth confidence and engagement with policing.
3. A detailed review of ASB prevention outcomes and hotspot policing effectiveness.
4. Engagement with Devon & Cornwall Police regarding rural policing challenges and funding inequities.
5. Further work examining partnership responses to homelessness, addiction and repeat offending.
6. Consideration of future scrutiny arrangements should PCCs and Police & Crime Panels be abolished.

Conclusion

Devon & Cornwall policing is entering a period of major transition. While operational improvements are evident in several areas, significant uncertainties remain around governance, funding, accountability, and long-term sustainability.

Overview & Scrutiny has an important role in:

- Ensuring democratic oversight.
- Monitoring community confidence.
- Challenging effectiveness.
- Supporting evidence-based partnership working.
- Preparing for future governance reform.

The Committee may therefore wish to maintain active oversight of these issues over the coming 24 months.