

NORTHUMBRIA PCC MINUTES

Title

Business Meeting

Date

28 January 2021

Location

Middle Engine Lane/Teams

Duration

2pm-3.20pm

Present:

Kim McGuinness – Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) (Chair)

Ruth Durham – Chief of Staff of the OPCC

Debbie Ford – Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)

Winton Keenen– Chief Constable (CC)

Adrian Pearson – Director of Planning and Delivery

Tanya Reade – Corporate Governance Manager - NP

Mike Tait – Chief Finance Officer (CFO)

Vicki Wilson – OPCC - Minute Taker

OPEN SESSION

1. Minutes of the Open Session of the Business Meeting held on 25 November 2020

The minutes were **agreed** as a true record.

2. Matters Arising

The Action Log displayed one item regarding Op Talla (COVID-19) Response and Recovery and the DCC sharing information from the National PSV meeting. This was provided and the item was now complete.

3. Violence Reduction Unit

The PCC gave a verbal update.

- Year three funding had not yet been received and it was hoped confirmation of this would be received as soon as possible.
- Most of the services were continuing to operate and the Education and Engagement Team had managed to engage with over 600 young people which was extremely positive.
- A concern had been raised from Detached Youth Workers over police challenge when undertaking group activities. The DCC asked for further details to be provided by the OPCC and **agreed** to investigate this issue.
- 11 organisations had been identified for funding and had submitted bids.
- The PCC had received positive feedback regarding the policing of Anti-Social Behaviour in Southwick.

4. Op Talla (COVID-19) Response and Recovery

The DCC would be taking over the lead as Op Talla Gold as of 25.2.21.

The COVID-19 infection rates per area were outlined. Despite huge efforts in remaining COVID safe, there was a significant concern regarding the level of infections with staff. High visibility controls had been maintained in the high areas of concern. The Force continued to support vaccination centres and was prepared should Officers and staff be offered an opportunity to be included in the vaccine rollout. Demand remained high and the enforcement position continued to be the main focus. The main issue revolved around student gatherings and accommodation; however, this was being dealt with accordingly. The Fixed Penalty Notice figures were outlined.

Overall the response to COVID-19 was very good. Plans were already in place for post-March where there would be a lack of funding. This was a cause for concern as the enforcement used by the Force was supported by this funding.

Following national reports, a brief discussion took place over the backlog of cases within the court system and the injection of funding needed to assist with dealing with this. It was noted that the Local Criminal Justice Board and Recovery Group were dealing with these issues; however, due to the third lockdown, and the new COVID-19 strain, there had been several challenges with staffing and resources to fully operate. Court One within the Crown Court was being kitted out to handle multi-handed cases which should help alleviate the pressures from the existing backlog, and there remained six jury trials running. The R-Rate currently stood at 1.2. The Defence Community Representative had been extremely complimentary about the Force and their COVID safety within the stations.

Following a query from the PCC, the DCC outlined the various Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and COVID safety measures in place across the workplaces. Footfall was constantly being monitored and virtual meetings were taking place where appropriate. The PPE uptake across staff was very good and regular floor-walks were taking place to ensure compliance.

5. National Issues Impacting on Policing

The DCC advised EU Exit is not currently impacting; however, this is subject of ongoing monitoring. There is still currently a grace period from an intelligence and security perspective. Likewise there has not been an impact on protest and community tension; the focus of activity being on COVID-19.

The Chief Constable noted the loss of direct access to SIS-II and replacement arrangements with INTERPOL. There was awareness of the impact on timeliness of enquiries and also the different arrest protocols in place for people coming in to the borders; however, these were not causing significant impact. The DCC highlighted a new national team had been set up to deal with these issues.

6. National APCC Workforce Update

The PCC had attended a national meeting with diverse partners. Various issues had been addressed including the Black Lives Matter movement. The meeting had been beneficial with many positive outcomes.

The Chiefs' Remuneration meeting had agreed the outlined recommendations which would now be put to the Government for approval.

7. Joint Strategic Risk Register

The DCC advised an annual review would be due March/ April 2021.

The new Chief Information Officer would be reviewing the ICT risk and would give further clarity for JIAC regarding Digital Policing; it was felt this would be moved from a very high risk. Further minor changes were being made.

The Chief of Staff explained that the scoring system from the OPCC would remain the same. There had been minor amendments regarding Partnership and Collaboration, and Public Confidence. Further amendments may be made before the JIAC meeting if confirmation of VRU funding was received in advance along with correspondence regarding the PCC Review.

8. Update from Joint Independent Audit Committee following meeting on 16 November 2020, and Progress against the Internal Audit Work Plan

The CFO highlighted the circulated report as presented.

9. Safe to Share? Report on Liberty and Southall Black Sisters' super-complaint on policing and immigration status

The DCC drew attention to the results of the investigation. Eight recommendations and three actions were outlined; three recommendations had been to Chief Constables. The Force position against each recommendation was highlighted by the DCC. The Force was satisfied with its position regarding each recommendation and action points.

Following a query from the PCC regarding how immigration issues may differ across the country, the CC and DCC advised that this would depend upon various factors; however, within Northumbria Police Force, the main priority would be safeguarding and vulnerability for each case.

10. Pre-Charge Bail and Released Under Investigation (RUI), Striking a Balance

The DCC highlighted the main points from the report. Six police forces across England and Wales were inspected to assess how they used bail and RUI between October 2019 and February 2020. Across all six forces, 140 cases had been assessed. As a result of this, 10 recommendations had been made; however, only two of these were for police forces to consider.

The two recommendations and force position were outlined as follows:

Recommendation:

Forces should develop processes and systems to clearly show whether suspects are on bail or RUI. This will help them to better understand the risk a suspect poses to victims and the wider community and will help to increase safeguarding.

Force Position:

The Force is currently able to gather data regards to suspects on Bail and RUI and systems differentiate between the two. This is managed centrally within Criminal Justice and collated by the Bail Sergeant. A higher level data document that allows monitoring of trends and risk is produced.

Bail where CPS advice is requested is not currently captured. Domestic Abuse Data from the report is used in the weekly performance reports for area command and safeguarding. Generic data is not currently used for team performance at area command level at this time.

Recommendation:

Forces should record whether a suspect is on bail or RUI on the MG3 form when it is submitted to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). This should be regularly checked and any information changes in bail or RUI provided to the CPS. The CPS should work with the police to ensure this information is provided.

Force Position:

Force systems currently allow the recording of Bail details for a suspect within the functionality of the MG 3 Officers in charge have a responsibility to update the CPS in relation to any changes to Bail or RUI, but there are no electronic systems in place to ensure this takes place. This would be addressed in the new IT systems being introduced in 2022.

11. 'Feeling Heard', partner agencies working together to make a difference for children with mental ill health – findings from joint targeted area inspection

The DCC highlighted the main points. Six Joint Targeted Area Inspections had been carried out between September 2019 and February 2020 by Ofsted, Care Quality Commission, HMICFRS and HMI Probation. The joint inspections looked at how local partnerships and services were dealing with children living with mental ill health.

The findings of the inspection were detailed together with the force position, which included the Street Triage Service, the awareness raised across the force for Children's Mental Health Week, and the mental health training that was planned for 2021.

12. Forward Plan – Open Session

The Forward Plan was noted.

The HMICFRS: Impact of the pandemic on the CJS was being addressed at the LCJB. The HMICFRS report on the Police response to COVID-19 would be reported to the Business Meeting.

13. Any Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

14. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place on Thursday 25 February 2021 at 2pm.