

NORTHUMBRIA PCC MINUTES

Title

Business Meeting

Date

1 April 2021

Location

Middle Engine Lane/Skype

Duration

2.50pm-4pm

Present:

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

Ruth Durham – Chief of Staff of the OPCC

Winton Keenen– Chief Constable (CC)

Mike Tait – Chief Finance Officer (CFO)

Neil Hutchison – Assistant Chief Constable (ACC)

Jill Coleman – Governance and Planning Manager NP

Vicki Wilson – OPCC - Minute Taker

Apologies:

Debbie Ford – Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)

OPEN SESSION

1. Minutes of the Open Session Business Meeting – 25 February 2021

The minutes had been **agreed** as a true record.

2. Matters Arising – Action Log

It had been suggested that Steven Hume (VRU) carry out a presentation for the force on 26.5.21, however the PCC would not be available on this date. It was **agreed** that an alternative date would be sought.

The Chief of Staff had passed the relevant LCJB information to the DCC. This action had now been complete and could be removed from the Action Log.

3. Violence Reduction Unit

The PCC advised that a Public Health Specialist had now been appointed. The interviews for the Comms and Engagement Specialist were taking place on this day.

Plans for Year three were progressing well, and there was a focus on establishing more relationships with businesses; a roundtable had been planned for 20.4.21 where various opportunities for young people would be discussed. The PCC felt the force and VRU continued to work together extremely well.



4. Op Talla (Covid 19) Response and Recovery Planning

ACC Hutchison gave a verbal update as follows:

- Planning for resources was taking place on a daily basis
- The ease of restrictions had introduced new challenges, with one example of Tynemouth Beach being highlighted
- Easter Bank Holiday weekend was expected to be busy, along with a potential protest being planned for the Saturday. Considerable resources were fully in place
- The force were third highest nationally for the use of enforcement
- Public confidence data was above 80% which was extremely positive
- Covid and Non Covid ASB data was highlighted
- Links with both Northumbria and Newcastle Universities remained strong, and both had offered positive feedback over the force's approach to enforcement
- The force was exploring joint working with the Universities around student safety, particularly female students. This would include the Wellbeing Officers and it was hoped publicity of the event could be arranged
- The NPCC would be holding a debriefing event regarding the Police response to Covid 19. The force would be involved with this meeting
- The HMIC report regarding dealing with protests had been highlighted which would introduce new challenges

The PCC had received positive feedback regarding police presence in hotspot areas since restrictions had been eased.

The PCC felt there was not enough clarity between Covid and non-Covid ASB and could cause confusion, especially when presenting this to the Police and Crime Panel.

The PCC requested to be involved in the joint venture with the Universities regarding student safety. ACC Hutchison **agreed** to communicate the plans to the PCC.

The Chief of Staff gave a verbal update:

- There had been a Covid outbreak in the Crown Court, and Trinity Chambers had been closed. This would cause an inevitable delay with cases within the system
- The work provided by the force regarding Domestic Abuse data had been extremely beneficial
- The YOT information regarding diverting young people had been very positive
- The courts and CPS would be increasing the amount of data available to offer further clarity
- Newcastle Magistrates Court would be opening on 6.4.21

5. National Issues Impacting Policing

The main issues had been covered in Item 4. The CC reiterated the potential challenges of protests in the near future, and the extra crowds due to the ease of restrictions, and ensured the force would aim to deal with these appropriately.



EU Exit issues were being constantly monitored.

6. HMICFRS – Disproportionate Use of Police Powers: A spotlight on stop and search, and the use of force

There had been a comprehensive report provided, however particular attention had been drawn to the following points:

The use of Body Worn Video (BWV) was not currently mandated during stop and searches, or use of force. However it was recommended that officers did activate their BWV where practicable. The force currently used BWV 55% of the time however the aim would be for 100% usage.

Nationally, far fewer searches under Section 60 were carried out compared with the high point in 2008/09.

A digital package for unconscious bias training was developed by an external provider as part of an overall Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Training Programme. This was launched at the end of December 2020 using two external research campaigns which focussed on stereotyping. Officers and volunteers were asked to complete the training and as of 18.3.21 the completion rate was 90%.

The force was highest in the country for recording their use of force.

The national report outlined that Black people were about 5.7 times more likely to have force used on them than White people. The data further showed that officers were more than nine times as likely to have drawn Tasers (but not discharged them) on Black people than on White people. Additionally, Black people were eight times more likely to be 'compliant handcuffed' than White people, and over three times more likely to have a spit and bite guard used on them than White people. The reasons for this were unclear and needed further exploration.

The PCC felt that clarity over this issue was paramount and the reasons should be known. The CC highlighted that there were many factors why the narrative could be misleading and agreed that explanations would assist with much needed clarity.

While some good and innovative practice was acknowledged, HMICFRS had concerns and advised further improvements were needed. They intended to continue their focus on disproportionality in aspects of policing practice and planned to collate all the data and information about disproportionality in one place on their website, to increase ease of access.

In 2015, HMICFRS assessed the extent to which forces in England and Wales recorded and analysed data about their traffic stops. Despite the fact that thousands of people were stopped in their cars every year, findings showed very limited information recorded about such stops and no sufficient attempts by police forces to determine how fairly and effectively the power was used. HMICFRS also conducted a public survey of more than 7,500 drivers. According to the survey results, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people were more likely to believe that traffic stops were used unfairly.



ACC Hutchison was thanked for his presentations and then left the meeting.

7. HMICFRS – Regional Organised Crime Units: An inspection of the effectiveness of the Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU)

The CC highlighted the main points from the report.

ROCUs were established in 2009 and their primary functions were to provide a range of specialist capabilities to forces and to lead the regional response to serious and organised crime (SOC).

The last inspection report on ROCUs was published in 2015 and since then, substantial progress has been made in some areas.

The CC noted that the force was in an extremely strong position with regards to ROCUs and had a robust structure including specialist investigative teams.

The report had outlined six recommendations however the CC advised that only two were specific to the force.

Recruiting specialist police staff had proven to be challenging, however this had been echoed across the country.

There had also been a recommendation that the Home Office should lead work with the NPCC and APCC to identify a sustainable funding model for ROCUs. However, this would be a government led decision.

8. Update from Joint Independent Audit Committee (JIAC)

The Joint Chief Finance Officer highlighted the main points from the report.

- JIAC had previously met on 22.2.21
- The meeting received a presentation from The Chief Information Officer (CIO) outlining the current status of the ICT Transformation Programme
- Mazars presented the Annual Audit Letters for the previous financial year and agreed to provide a presentation at the next meeting on upcoming changes in the approach to reporting by External Auditors
- The Treasury Management Policy Statement and Strategy were presented and JIAC approved onward progression to the PCC for final approval
- JIAC considered and accepted the latest Internal Audit reports and required no items to be escalated to the PCC and CC
- The OPCC Chief of Staff advised members that the recruitment process for two new members of JIAC would commence shortly.

9. Forward Plan

The Forward Plan had been noted.



The report regarding Responding to the Pandemic scheduled for 29 April would likely not be available for this meeting and would be pushed back.

10. Any Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

11. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place on Thursday 29 April 2021 at 2pm.