



NORTHUMBRIA PCC MINUTES

Title

Business Meeting

Date

3 June 2021

Location

Middle Engine Lane/Teams

Duration

2pm-3.10pm

Present:

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

Ruth Durham – Chief of Staff of the OPCC

Debbie Ford – Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)

Mike Tait – Chief Finance Officer (CFO)

Tanya Reade – Corporate Governance Manager (NP)

Adrian Pearson – Director of Planning and Delivery (OPCC)

Vicki Wilson – OPCC - Minute Taker

Apologies:

Winton Keenen– Chief Constable (CC)

OPEN SESSION

1. Minutes of the Open Session Business Meeting – 29 April 2021

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

2. Matters Arising – Action Log

There were no matters arising and no action log.

3. Violence Reduction Unit

The PCC explained that a bid had been submitted from both the Endowment Fund and the Youth Intervention Fund. The next Strategic Board meeting would take place on 3.8.21 where there would be further updates. The PCC noted she had ministerial visits booked for 21.6.21 from both HMI Andy Cooke and Kit Malthouse MP.

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

The DCC advised the SCG would transfer to the RCG. The surge of Covid cases within North Tyneside was now beginning to settle. Northumbria Police had issued the most FPNs for Covid breaches. A national report had been created regarding disparities of FPNs issued however the DCC felt there were no negative comments regarding Northumbria Police and overall their



response to Covid had been very good. There was a current focus on the courts and the work involved to tackle the backlog of cases which would also assist the Force. There had been a slight rise in infections across staff however this had not impacted heavily but would continue to be monitored.

The Chief of Staff highlighted issues that had arisen from the LCJB Recovery Group. There had been good progress made regarding diverting young people from courts. Rob Bosson was leading this and working alongside the YOT Teams. The CPS had trained a number of special prosecutors for the youth courts. The Magistrates Court had a national five point action plan to achieve pre-covid levels by the end of 2021. Venues for nightingale courts were currently being sought. A member of the CPS had attended an Operation Bluestone session which focussed on rape investigations and would share the information. Common Platform had now been rolled out in the Magistrates and Crown Courts. However there were two systems running alongside each other at present which affected the accuracy of the performance data.

5. National Issues Impacting Policing

The impact of Covid had created socio-economic issues and had also impacted on many people's mental health. As a consequence, there had been an increase in crime and ASB. The new call handling system would likely increase the amount of time it takes to deal with calls however this would only be temporary. However, the increase in people socialising and the warmer weather had created a surge in calls and increased demand on the Force. Staffing shift patterns were being tailored to deal with the various demands of both 101 and 999 calls. The PCC requested to be kept up to date with high demand call times and other issues to ensure social media complaints could also be responded to accordingly.

There were several planned protests in the region which had a huge impact on resources. The PCC advised this had been addressed at a national level, but also noted that positive feedback had been received following a recent protest in Newcastle. An organiser and member of a protest stated that the police presence had been fair and their actions had been very supportive and professional.

6. HMICFRS: Responding to the Pandemic: The police response to the Covid-19 Pandemic in 2020

The DCC highlighted the main points from the report.

The report presented a snapshot of policing in the pandemic between March and November 2020. The report assigned seven recommendations and 22 learning points to help in the continuing response to the pandemic. The DCC advised that all of the recommendations had been tackled.

The recommendations covered the following aspects:

- Managing registered sex offenders
- Legislation and guidance
- Test, track and trace
- Custody records



- Overall scale and impact of changes

Although home working had proven to be a success and productivity remained high, the DCC felt there were certain meetings which would benefit further from being held in person. A balanced approach was currently being devised for those meetings going forward.

The Force changed its RPT shift pattern to move from a tidal demand-based pattern to an exigency 12-hour pattern. The exigency pattern was being reviewed as demand changed back to normal levels to ensure this remained appropriate.

A significant wellbeing pressure was reliance on overtime to resource demand such as COVID-19 enforcement patrols, public order operations around protest and funded activity in relation to serious violence and knife crime. Officers had been working considerable overtime on top of shifts and this was likely to continue over this year resulting in reduced rest time. This pressure was partly exacerbated for more experienced officers by tutoring demands for new recruits under Operation Uplift. Ways to address this were being considered.

The report also outlined several recommendations for LRFs. The DCC advised there was a LRF Action Plan in place and this would likely include multi agencies including Local Authorities, Public Services, the NHS plus many more. It was likely the OPCC would also be involved in this. A thorough discussion took place regarding the complexities of the LRF.

7. HMICFRS: Custody Services in a Covid-19 environment

The DCC highlighted the main points from the report.

The report supplemented the wider HMICFRS inspection of policing in the pandemic with more detailed findings on how custody services operated in a COVID-19 environment. Several recommendations had been outlined in the report along with the Force position.

The Electronic Custody Record (ECR) system did not have a facility to record whether a detainee has, or is suspected of having, COVID-19. Currently within daily management reporting all detainees in custody who are being treated as potentially infected with COVID-19 are reported. The migration to the Northgate Connect custody system in 2022 should allow data to be extracted via a keyword search facility.

The Force stopped virtual remand hearings in November 2020 due to resources. The NPCC lead for custody DCC Kemp was working with partner agencies to evaluate the VRH process to determine whether it could be adapted to work on a permanent basis and how it would be funded. Northumbria Police took part in the national custody group meetings where regular updates on progress were provided.

The DCC felt that overall custody monitoring was in a strong position.

8. Forward Plan

The Forward Plan had been noted.



9. Any Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 7 July at 1pm.