



NORTHUMBRIA PCC MINUTES

Title

Business Meeting

Date

29 April 2021

Location

Middle Engine Lane/Teams

Duration

3.15pm-3.55pm

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)

Tanya Reade – Corporate Governance Manager (NP)

Adrian Pearson – Director of Planning and Delivery (OPCC)

ACC Hutchison – (NP)

Vicki Wilson – OPCC - Minute Taker

Apologies:

Debbie Ford – Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)

OPEN SESSION

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

The minutes had been **agreed** as a true record with the addition of apologies from Debbie Ford (DCC).

2. Matters Arising – Action Log

The Action Log outlined two items, both of which related to setting up meetings. These were in the process of being dealt with and could now be removed.

3. Violence Reduction Unit

The PCC advised that the Year 3 application for funding would be submitted on 30.4.21. A Changing Futures bid had been submitted with a focus on Newcastle/Gateshead. A joint bid with Edge North East was also being submitted for the Youth Endowment Fund focussing on youth justice.

A Business Roundtable had taken place with representation from several local and national businesses, all of which were keen to be involved with the work of the VRU and work with staff that had been through the criminal justice system. Work with Recruitment Junction was taking place to assist with this.



ACC Hutchison gave an update of the GRIP funding. The Force had submitted their bid and ACC Hutchison gave a brief outline of the spending plans for this, noting half of the funding would be used on hotspot patrols. Detailed data would need to be submitted to the Home Office outlining the impact of the funding.

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

The CC advised that the situation remained similar to the previous meeting however sickness absences had significantly decreased since then.

The Chief of Staff gave a brief update from the work of the LCJB Recovery Group. The R Rate currently stood below one; this was the receipts versus the disposals rate within the CPS. Rob Bosson from the Force had delivered a presentation to the LCJB group demonstrating the work being carried out regarding diverting young people from the courts which was extremely positive. The timeliness of charges remained in a good position. The Magistrates Court were back to pre-Covid levels however there remained a significant backlog within the Crown Court. Focus work regarding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion was also taking place to tackle disproportionality.

5. National Issues Impacting Policing

EU Exit issues continued to be monitored. The CC was aware that the Covid infection rates could continue to fluctuate and therefore impact staffing. The impact of the pandemic regarding the economy and unemployment would likely have an impact on criminality however this was too early to predict. The protest and demonstration activity seen across the country would likely continue throughout the summer period; this would have an impact on resources and finances, along with community cohesion.

6. Joint Strategic Risk Register

The CC highlighted the main points from the report.

The risk register incorporated the strategic risks faced by the Force and OPCC within twelve thematic areas. Updates were highlighted in the following areas as detailed in the report:

- Finance (Force)
- Governance (OPCC)
- Infrastructure and Assets (Force)
- Operational (Force)
- Partnership and Collaboration (Force and OPCC)
- Public Confidence (Force)

A detailed RAG status of the Strategic Risk had also been provided for both the Force and the OPCC.

7. Getting the balance right? An inspection of how effectively the Police deal with protests



The CC advised that on 21.9.20, the Home Secretary commissioned HMICFRS to conduct an inspection into how effectively the police managed protests. Ten Forces had been inspected however Northumbria was not one of them.

The CC highlighted the main points from the report.

- In the public survey carried out, for every person who thought it acceptable for the police to ignore protesters committing minor offences, twice as many thought it was unacceptable.
- The majority of respondents felt it was unacceptable for protests to involve violence or serious disruption to residents and business.
- Among those interviewed, strong and often polarised views were presented illustrating just how much of a balancing act the police face when dealing with protests.
- The report concluded that the police did not strike the right balance on every occasion. The balance may tip too readily in favour of protesters when – as is often the case – the police do not accurately assess the level of disruption caused, or likely to be caused, by a protest.
- After speaking to police forces, protest groups, businesses and the wider public, the inspectorate stated that a modest reset of the scales was needed and to help achieve this, four areas for improvement (AFIs) and 12 recommendations had been outlined. These were detailed in the report.

HMICFRS found that the forces that regularly dealt with protests tended to have the best planning practices. The CC noted how the report indicated that the Force was already carrying out much of the work that was recommended through their Intelligence Teams. The CC also advised that there were 26 PSUs and the aim was to uplift this by a further 10 to assist with the inevitable protests throughout the summer months. The CC felt the Force were in a good position to deal with protests.

The PCC felt that advance notifications of protests were always well received and demonstrated the Force were handling these situations very well. However, although the PCC was aware of the good practice work already in place, a query was put to the CC as to whether the report had thrown up good examples of work which were not already in place in Northumbria. The CC felt that there were no real concerns from the report and the processes in place within the Force were sufficient to deal with protests and demonstrations.

The CC also referenced the recent news story suggesting Forces may need to reimburse FPNs due to errors. The CC advised that the Force had given out the highest number of FPNs however alongside that, they also had the lowest number of returns at only 6.5% which indicated the fines had been issued accordingly. This was testament to the staff who had worked tirelessly to protect the public and was a huge success story for Northumbria Police.

Following a query from the PCC, the CC advised each individual FPN was checked by ACRO who ultimately decided whether to return the FPN if they deemed this to be given in error.

8. Forward Plan

The Forward Plan had been noted.

The HMICFRS Custody Report would also be added to the meeting on 3.6.21.



9. Any Other Business

The PCC outlined the ASB focus work in place within the OPCC in-conjunction with Janice Hutton (NP), and felt collaborative work with the Force would be needed moving forward to share knowledge and good practice. ACC Hutchison **agreed** to remain involved and communicate accordingly on this issue.

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place on Thursday 3 June at 2pm.