



NORTHUMBRIA PCC MINUTES

Title

Business Meeting

Date

19 January 2023

Location

Teams/MEL

Duration

5pm-5.40pm

Present:

Kim McGuinness – Police and Crime Commissioner
Winton Keenen – Chief Constable (CC)
Debbie Ford – Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)
Ruth Durham – Chief of Staff of the OPCC
Adrian Pearson – Director of Planning and Delivery (OPCC)
Tanya Reade – Corporate Governance Manager (NP)
Kevin Laing – Chief Finance Officer (CFO)
Brad Howe – ACC Communities (NP)
Joscelin Lawson – ACC Corporate Services (NP)
Laura Repton – Public Affairs and Governance Officer (OPCC)
Vicki Wilson – Minute Taker (OPCC)

Apologies: There were no apologies.

OPEN SESSION

1. Minutes of the open session of Business Meeting held on 22 November 2022

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. National Issues Impacting on Policing

The CC noted that the insufficient budget was having an effect on recruitment with regards to attracting candidates. The public sector wage inflation remained disappointing especially when compared to the private sector. The CC also highlighted the fact that the Police were legally not allowed to go on strike.

There were signs of workforce fatigue which affected staff morale, especially with the current rhetoric towards policing.



4. Violence Reduction Unit

The PCC advised that from the next meeting, a written report from Steven Hume – Director of the VRU, would be circulated.

The PCC felt that although there was excellent processes in place to pro-actively work with larger projects, more joint up working with the Force could be carried out to pro-actively target and work with adhoc smaller groups of youths who needed intervention and long term diversion. This would be a focus of conversation in future VRU meetings. ACC Howe explained that the Force worked closely and frequently with the VRU.

The PCC advised that discussions continued with the relevant agencies regarding A&E Navigators.

The DCC requested to meet with the PCC separately regarding the VRU Information Sharing Agreement and the challenges regarding this.

ACC Howe left the meeting.

5. Update from Joint Independent Audit Committee

The CFO highlighted the main points from the report.

Jiac had last met on 21 November 2022 and members had received training on several aspects which had been well received. The key items covered at the meeting had been outlined as in the report.

6. Capital Monitoring Q3

The CFO highlighted the main points from the report.

The finance table for the Capital Programme had been highlighted. There would be a total variance of £17.023m.

The forecast capital outturn and variations figures as at December 2022 had been highlighted. The CFO expanded upon the Scheme Expenditure and noted the SARC St George's building was now operating. Operation Safeguard was due to start in February 2023 which would be set up to release 400 spaces in cells. Due to this, the fire alarm systems work in custody suites had been delayed until 2024. Improvements were taking place at Etal Lane, Bedlington and Byker for wellbeing and the relocation/increase in personnel to these premises; as well as improvements to meeting rooms across the estate.

The PCC queried whether this concerned operational custody suites, or those which were not being used. The CFO confirmed this was down to personal choice.

The Connect system had encountered a delay with going live. There had been a delay with the Body Worn Armour contract and a new tender would be put out. There was a concern over the timeline being met of being able to acquire the equipment once the new



contract was in place. The ESN project had been re-phased until 2027/28 therefore the ESN control room conversion would not be completed in 2022/23. £145k of capital had been deferred for the ESN conversion.

The prudential indicators for capital were set out in a separate appendix and all were within the agreed limits as of December 2022.

7. Group Revenue Monitoring Q3

The CFO highlighted the main points from the report. The Quarter 3 position would be included in the precept report.

The overall group position was a forecast underspend of £2.758m.

Police Officer pay was forecast to be overspent by £0.521m. The Home Office confirmed that the previously declined higher overshoot bid of 90 Officers would be accepted. An additional £0.020m of income per officer delivered over Uplift would be paid and there would be no penalties if this was not met.

There were ongoing RRP appeals which had on average a 23% success rate. These were being monitored.

The forecast in relation to ill health retirements had been reduced from the budgeted 8 to 5 retirements.

Core Police Officer and Staff overtime positions were currently reflecting an overspend of £1.300m.

Within the current forecast was £4.661m of inflationary pressures. These included pressures on utilities, fuel, office supplies, software, and vehicle recovery contracts.

The Force contribution to the NEROCU collaboration would reduce by £0.250m.

The external training year-end projections had reduced by a further £0.132m from the position previously reported.

The projected year-end budget position inclusive of core OPCC revenue and Supporting Services were currently forecasting an underspend of £0.164m, this included a £0.100m underspend against the OPCC Discretionary Fund, with the balance across a number of headings within Office costs.

The outturn against capital financing now reflected a forecast underspend of £2.021m. The forecast for interest receivable 2022/23 had increased due to higher interest rates following a succession of bank rate rises leading to the rate of 3.5% in December.

8. HMICFRS Publication – An inspection into how well the police and other agencies use digital forensics in their investigations

The DCC highlighted the main points from the report.



HMICFRS carried out a thematic inspection of digital forensics in England and Wales between February and May 2022. The inspection examined how effective the provision of digital forensics was in forces and Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU), how well they understood and planned for future demand and whether victims of crime were receiving a quality service.

There were nine recommendations outlined in a separate appendix, three of which had been completed. There would be a heavy focus on ensuring the remaining recommendations were completed in a timely fashion.

Northumbria Police DFU was part of the Forensic Services Department and had been governed alongside traditional forensic services since October 2022. An ongoing programme of work was being led by the Forensic Services Senior Management Team to identify and respond to demand, growth, and efficiencies within service delivery to ensure quality delivery across the Force.

As part of the current DFU Improvement Plan Northumbria Police was reviewing the use of digital triage of devices at scenes in a holistic approach considering the use of CSIs/Digital Forensic Investigators and DMIs. A proposal relating to these changes would be developed in Q1 2023.

Northumbria Police had recently been successfully recommended for ISO 17025 accreditation in the use of Magnate Automate, which had been utilised within DFU since 2019 to assist with the processing of digital devices.

9. HMICFRS Publication – An inspection of the north east regional response to serious and organised crime

The DCC highlighted the main points from the report.

In 2022, HMICFRS changed how they inspected serious and organised crime (SOC) to incorporate inspections of the ten regions, as well as the nine regional organised crime units (ROCU) throughout England and Wales and the 43 police forces to improve understanding of how well forces and ROCUs work together to tackle SOC.

The findings of the report had been disappointing. The report graded Northumbria Police as good, NEROCU and Cleveland Police as adequate and Durham Constabulary as outstanding. Northumbria Police received one AFI which stated that the force should make sure that there were sufficient resources in specialist areas to meet serious and organised crime demand.

Within the summary of findings, it had been highlighted that there was good leadership and management of SOC in Northumbria Police. Innovative practice was identified for the development of a data and analytical tool to map place-based harm. The Force received



recognition as the 2020/21 Tilley Award winner (a national award for preventative policing) for identifying county lines activity, linked to Merseyside.

The DCC advised however that the report had offered good suggestions for discussions going forward including the experience of staff within NEROCU. The PCC also highlighted the fact that in the NEROCU meetings, there was a rotating Chair and this led to a lack of ownership, especially when tackling any high level issues that may arise.

10. HMICFRS Publication – Police super-complaint – How the police respond to victims of sexual abuse when the victim is from an ethnic minority background and may be at risk of honour based abuse

On 7 August 2020 HMICFRS received a super-complaint from the Tees Valley Inclusion Project (TVIP) about the police response to victims of sexual abuse from ethnic minority backgrounds who may be at risk of honour-based abuse.

In its super-complaint, TVIP outlined in detail nine features of policing that were causing significant harm to these victims. The DCC advised this was reflective of the work already being carried out by the force.

The report made five recommendations: four for the police. These recommendations had been outlined in detail in a separate appendix.

11. Joint Strategic Risk Register (JSSR)

Workforce risk had been previously split into two sections however these had been merged to refocus on the risk faced by the Force titled 'Reduction in attraction and retention'. The context now reflected how the force would attract, retain and develop a high performing and engaged workforce.

Amendments to the OPCC Strategic Risk Register had been made as follows: Following the successful recruitment of a new Chief Constable, current factors around the governance risk had been updated to include the need for the development of a robust and supportive professional relationship. All references to the Chief Constable recruitment process had been removed.

The current factors impacting the partnership and collaboration risk had been updated to include reference to the current economic crisis and funding pressures on partners.

A RAG status of the strategic risks had been highlighted in a separate appendix.

12. Forward Plan Open Session

The Forward Plan had been noted.

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 Wednesday 22 February 2022 – 2pm – Middle Engine Lane/Teams.