

NORTHUMBRIA PCC MINUTES

Title

Business Meeting

Date

20 April 2023

Location

Teams/MEL

Duration

12pm-1pm

Present:

Kim McGuinness – Police and Crime Commissioner
Vanessa Jardine – 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)
Alastair Simpson – ACC (Crime and Safeguarding) (NP)
Joscelin Lawson – ACO Corporate Services (NP)
Scott Young – ACC (Force Coordination) (NP)
Paul Godden – Head of Corporate Development (NP)
Steven Hume – Director of Violence Reduction Unit (OPCC) *Items 4 and 5 only.*
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 February 2022

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

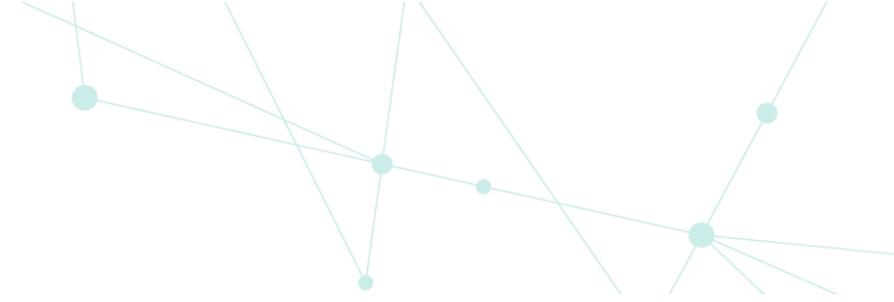
2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. National Issues Impacting on Policing

The DCC advised that increasing public confidence remained a main priority. Alongside this, all national report publications were being completed. The CC noted that there would be a change in the way crime was recorded and this should offer more transparency, and as a result, would see the crime statistics reduce.

The PCC highlighted the Home Office were compiling a report of local crime measures including performance indicators and this would likely be distributed to forces at the earliest opportunity.



4. Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) Update

The Director of the VRU highlighted the main points from the report.

There would be a conference in Birmingham in the following week to officially launch the Serious Violence Duty. As part of the implementation of the Serious Violence Duty, the Home Office Commissioned Crest Advisory to carry out an assessment of all 43 force areas to determine their readiness for taking on the requirements of the duty. The assessment for Northumbria was deemed 'Mature' with the assessment concluding that 'The partnership has demonstrated a high-level maturity across all the core elements of the Duty and partnership behaviours'.

Areas for improvement had been highlighted as part of the assessment however work was already in place to tackle these. One of the main areas was to gain further clarity on the definition of 'Serious Violence' and ensuring this was universally understood and agreed amongst all partners to ensure work remained effective and target measures were consistent.

Another area for improvement was the continued development of a needs assessment to inform targeted operational responses to serious violence as well as the use of more complex forms of analysis. Work was in place to tackle this to ensure it could be disseminated to the Community Safety Partnerships which would assist with their strategic plans.

The Strategic Violence Reduction Board was proving to be effective with representations from all local authority areas.

A recent exercise had highlighted several issues and inconsistencies across the Northumbria area where a young person has been found in school (or had made threats in school) with a knife or offensive weapon. The findings from this exercise were recently shared with senior members of Northumbria Police and the VRU. There were several recommendations as a result of this exercise, all of which were being tackled accordingly.

The Northumbria wide community diversion was now in the mobilisation phase. A webinar for partners was held in March which provided an overview of Humankind who would be delivering this project, and further detail on the two strands of the Community Diversion service.

Humankind would also be delivering a Youth Violence Intervention Service in the Newcastle RVI and Sunderland Royal. Working alongside and utilising the specialist staff within the Community Diversion project, hospital navigators would work within the emergency departments of the hospitals and subsequently in community settings to deliver the Hospital Navigation Programme to reduce serious and violent crime. There had also been an opportunity expand this into A&E, and as a result the A&E Navigator work was gathering pace. This had previously been delayed due to the pandemic.



There were a number of differences across the force area when it came to reporting serious violence progress. A data table had been highlighted showing the VRU indicators that were reported to partners and the Home Office, the measures included in the Northumbria Police Serious Violence Strategy, and the Digital Police and Crime Performance measures that were to be publicly recorded on a quarterly basis.

As the Serious Violence Duty progressed, it was hoped there would be an opportunity to review reporting requirements and explore how this could be consolidated. Following a discussion, the Force would compile their serious violence data and share this with the VRU. This would allow more focus on measuring the impact in more localised areas.

5. HMICFRS Publication: An inspection of how well the Police tackle serious youth violence

The DCC highlighted the main points from the report.

In January and February 2022, twelve police forces were inspected by HMICFRS including Northumbria, ten with a VRU and two without, and included a document review, interviews, focus groups, monitoring data and research from 'User Voice', a charity created and run by people with 'lived experience' of the criminal justice system.

The report made four recommendations, two for the Home Office and two for police forces. The two for police forces were as follows:

- By 31 March 2024, chief constables should make sure their officers are trained in the use of Home Office crime outcome 22.
- By 31 March 2024, chief constables should make sure their forces, through data collection and analysis, understand the levels of racial disproportionality in serious youth violence in their force areas.

The use of serious violence reduction orders under section 165 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 was planned to be piloted, giving police new powers to look for offensive weapons.

In 2019, Outcome 22 was introduced, allowing police to divert people from crime and improve their life chances. This inspection found that forces were starting to use Outcome 22, but some officers had a flawed understanding of it. Additionally, evidence showed a flawed understanding of this may disproportionately affect young people from ethnic minority backgrounds and contribute to these young people being more likely to be prosecuted than their White counterparts. With regards to Northumbria, the use of Outcome 22 was low with only 26 Outcome 22 recorded between October 2022 and February 2023. The ACC for Crime and Safeguarding was currently carrying out focus work regarding this.

There were good collaborative relationships between Northumbria Police and the Violence Reduction Unit with regular meetings between the SV lead and the Head of the VRU,



representation at ACC level on the VRU board and strong tactical relationships between VRU co-ordinators, SMTs and neighbourhood teams across the force area.

The VRU had commissioned external evaluations for some of their interventions. In addition, the Do-it profiler project was to be evaluated by Newcastle University with the first evaluation report expected towards the end of summer 2023. Newcastle University were leading on securing additional funding for a more detailed evaluation of the use and impact of the intervention over a longer period of time.

Outcomes related to youth serious violence as well as any disproportionate application or impact would be a key focus for the forcewide serious youth violence suppression group. This was assessed and monitored as part of the disproportionality work already in place.

6. Update from Joint Independent Audit Committee (JIAC) and progress against the internal audit work plan

The CFO highlighted the main points from the JIAC meeting that had taken place on 27 February 2023. The key points had been detailed in the circulated report.

It was noted that the Statement of Accounts had been unable to be signed off due to an issue with the Tyne and Wear Pension Service. The CFO was awaiting a final letter of assurance from the Local Government Pension Fund in order to complete the audit. Once received the Statement of Accounts could then be signed off. This delay would result in an unexpected cost for the Force, and therefore the CFO would be investigating this further.

The Annual Report had not been ready for the meeting, however it had been verbally updated that there were no significant weaknesses identified with either the PCC or CC.

7. HMICFRS Publication: Joint Targeted Area – Inspection of services for children in Sunderland

The ACC (Crime and Safeguarding) highlighted the main points from the report.

The purpose of the report was to provide an overview of the findings from the Joint Targeted Area Inspection of services for children in Sunderland. Overall the report had proven to be positive.

One of the main strengths outlined was the robust governance arrangements in place were enhanced by a culture of professional curiosity, accountability and respectful challenge. Which in turn proved that leaders knew their services well.

An example of highly effective practice had been highlighted demonstrating a strong targeted partnership approach to early help at a community level. This was delivered via three multi-agency community hubs in Sunderland's areas of highest need. Each hub worked to tackle community-based issues as early as possible, so included a focus on supporting adults as well as children, providing a unified response to individual families.



One of the areas for improvement had been the consideration and analysis of children's ethnic identity, cultural heritage and diverse needs in referrals, assessments and plans. Following a query from the PCC as to whether this could be easily rectified, the ACC (Crime and Safeguarding) felt the current data did not offer a solution and therefore focus work would be put into place to ensure this was dealt with accordingly.

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 Thursday 8 June 2023 – 2pm – Middle Engine Lane/Teams.