

AGENDA ITEM I

NORTHUMBRIA PCC MINUTES

Title

Business Meeting

Date

15 October 2024

Location

Teams/MEL

Duration

2pm-4.15pm

Present:

Susan Dungworth – Police and Crime Commissioner

Clare Penny Evans – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner

Vanessa Jardine – Chief Constable (CC)

Jayne Meir – Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)

Ruth Durham – Chief of Staff of the OPCC

Kevin Laing – Joint Chief Finance Officer

Sarah Robson – Chief Inspector Staff Officer (NP)

Steven Hume – Director of the VRU (OPCC)

Tanya Reade – Corporate Governance Manager (NP)

Debra Alderson – ACC Force Coordination (NP)

Helena Barron – Superintendent Police Services (NP)

Lisa Laverick – T/Chief Superintendent Safeguarding (NP)

Vicki Wilson – Minute Taker (OPCC)

OPEN SESSION

1. Minutes of the open session of Business Meeting held on 5 September 2024

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising that had not been included in the agenda.

There were no actions to be addressed on the Action Log.

3. National Issues Impacting on Policing

The CC advised that funding information regarding an extra 13000 police officers had not yet been received.



AGENDA ITEM I

The CC would be attending a meeting later in the week regarding international work regarding borders and immigration likely regarding criminal gangs and would give an update on this once more informed.

HMIC and the College of Policing had been working on a national policing model, however details of this were still yet unknown due to being in the early stages.

The PCC advised information regarding funding information regarding various streams had not yet been confirmed by the Home Office.

The PCC attended the Labour Party Conference where several goals had been highlighted, one specific being to halve violence against women and girls within the next 10 years.

The PCC advised she would be taking on a role with the National Rural Crime Network.

The PCC requested the incident regarding the South Yorkshire Police funding be added to the Business agenda for the next meeting in order to give assurances that this would not occur at Northumbria Police.

4. Violence Reduction Unit Evaluation Update (VRU)

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

The VRU commissioned Rocket Science Lab to conduct external evaluations of the YOLO and Focussed Deterrence interventions, in addition to OOCs, the Education Team and the review and creation of an Outcomes Framework.

Alongside this the VRU had also conducted some internal evaluations, specifically of the Northumbria Hub & Spoke Domestic Abuse Perpetrators Model, and the Findaway Project.

Some of these evaluations would also continue during 2024/25, with additional external evaluations of the A&E Navigators, the Community Diversion Service, and a VRU Programme level evaluation.

It was noted that findings regarding the A&E Navigators would be shared with other Violence Reduction Units due to the varying levels of success in different areas.

A detailed report had been circulated outlining the findings of the evaluations. One of the stand out results across the board was that every intervention had ensured a positive impact.



AGENDA ITEM I

The CC offered assistance within the intervention programmes should this be needed.

The ACC for Force Coordination suggested the VRU join the relevant board for children who were not in school to ensure this demographic was not missed.

The DCC queried the knife crime statistic being higher in Northumberland. This had been explained to be potentially one individual, however further investigation work was being carried out to understand this in more detail. Data from Morpeth Hospital was also being analysed to give a better insight. It was likely this would be discussed at the next Strategic Violence Reduction Board meeting.

The DCC clarified the figure highlighted in the national press regarding corrosive substance attacks. It was noted that Northumbria also included Ammonia under their corrosive substance definition and recorded this alongside Acid attacks. Therefore, it was explained that due to differing recording methods across forces, this could produce misleading figures for particular areas.

The PCC had written to the Home Secretary with an invite to meet the A&E Navigators and Domestic Abuse Specialists. A response had not yet been received.

The Director of the VRU was thanked for the report and then left the meeting.

5. Update from Joint Independent Audit Committee (JIAC)

The Joint Chief Finance Officer highlighted that JIAC had met on 23 September 2024 and no issues had been escalated to this meeting.

The key items covered in the meeting had been summarised in the report.

6. Joint Strategic Risk Register

The DCC highlighted the main points from the report.

Storage capacity for evidential property had been added as a current factor. If property was stored without formal recording or Retention, Review, Deletion processes in place, this might result in non-compliance with regulations and a potential negative impact on investigations. Volumes retained also impacted on the planned transition to a new records management system.

The Data Management Assessment Team was assisting with property management and ACC (Communities) had a sub-group working towards improving the property system. This would be a labour-intensive task with a stretched timeline.



AGENDA ITEM I

There was a risk of overwhelming the Force Strategy with too many new projects/initiatives which would impact on staff, resources and timelines. This was under review.

Misinformation and disinformation spread through media networks had been added as a current factor, and results from experience in recent protest activity. The Force Engagement Strategy and supporting plan had recently been refreshed.

The Chief of Staff at the OPCC advised that an annual review of the risk register had now been completed. The review identified no additional risks, and no risks were proposed to be removed. Updates were focussed around three key areas; the uncertainty around the new government's direction for crime, policing and criminal justice; the uncertainty around additional funding streams; and the inclusion of the External Advisory Panels in both the governance and public confidence risk.

It was noted that the Deputy PCC had agreed to chair the External Advisory Panels.

7. HMICFRS: An inspection into activism and impartiality in policing

The Superintendent for Police Services highlighted the main points from the report.

Northumbria Police were one of 12 forces inspected. There had been 22 recommendations made, 9 of which were directly for Chief Constables. Policies and procedures would be reviewed as a result of these.

HMICFRS found three systemic problems regarding a near-total absence of any definition, guidance or judicial consideration of impartiality insofar as it related to policing; legal application of the Equality Act 2010 was now too complicated; and legislation did not clearly define the boundary between police operational independence and appropriate external influence or accountability.

8. HMICFRS Publication: Operation Soteria

The T/Chief Superintendent for Safeguarding highlighted the main points from the report.

Operation Soteria was an unprecedented programme to transform how the police handled rape and other serious sexual offences (RASSO). It aimed to create effective suspect focused RASSO investigations, where the police support victims and understand their needs. It also aimed to make sure intelligence, analysis and digital forensics were used effectively to support cases.

Out of nine forces inspected so far, early signs of positive progress were being seen, but improvements were required to ensure Operation Soteria was implemented effectively.



AGENDA ITEM I

Wellbeing leads in the forces inspected were proud of the range of well-being support they offered the workforce; however, inspectors were told that due to workloads, most RASSO teams did not have time to research and access the support available. Only some forces offered mandatory psychological screening. Northumbria Police felt they performed well in this area.

The shortage of RASSO detectives continued to be a problem making dealing with demand difficult. Forces were trying different methods to recruit more RASSO detectives, but HMICFRS had suggested the Home Office should urgently complete its review of the role of detective constable to make the career path more attractive and help reduce detective shortages.

The PCC queried whether there were plans for the experienced senior detectives to mentor those new into the role. It was advised there were plans in place to expand the skillset across the various force aspects with relevant training packages for those staff moving areas.

The Northumbria response to implementing Soteria Bluestone had been coordinated and managed by a trained rape investigator Detective Sgt from within the Safeguarding Department. Pillar leads from across Northumbria Police were identified for each of the 6 Pillars. From the original 211 actions required, 22 remained outstanding.

There were 14 recommendations from the report, 5 of which were relevant to the force. These were all being worked towards achieving/completion.

9. Forward Plan – Open Session

The Forward Plan had been noted.

10. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

11. Date and Time of next meeting

The next meeting would take place on Tuesday 12 November – 2pm – Middle Engine Lane/Teams.