

# **SOUTH YORKSHIRE'S POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**

## **PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD**

**7 APRIL 2020**

PRESENT: Dr Alan Billings (Police and Crime Commissioner)  
Michelle Buttery (Chief Executive and Solicitor, OPCC)  
Erika Redfearn (Head of Governance, OPCC)  
Fiona Topliss (Community Engagement & Communications Manager, OPCC)  
Sophie Abbott (Interim Chief Finance Officer, OPCC)  
Kevin Wright (Evaluation & Scrutiny Officer, OPCC)  
Sally Parkin (Governance and Compliance Manager, OPCC)  
Stephen Watson (Chief Constable, SYP)  
Mark Roberts (Deputy Chief Constable, SYP)  
Tim Forber (Assistant Chief Constable, SYP)  
Carrie Goodwin (Head of Corporate Communications, SYP)  
Debbie Carrington (Interim Chief Finance Officer, SYP)  
Alison Fletcher (Office Manager, SYP)  
Sarah Poolman (Temporary Chief Superintendent, Barnsley District, SYP)  
Andrew Lockley (Chair of the Ethics Panel)  
Steve Wragg (Chair of the Joint Independent Audit Committee)

Apologies for absence were received from: David Hartley, Lauren Poultney, Jackie Bland and Councillor Paul Wood

### **1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Commissioner acknowledged the extraordinary circumstances in which the meeting was taking place and welcomed those who had dialled into meeting, including Councillor Grocutt, a member of the Police and Crime Panel, and three members of the press (P Whitehouse, G Dennison and G Torr).

The Commissioner apologised for the late arrival of papers.

### **2 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Commissioner confirmed that the meeting was being sound recorded and, subject to the sound quality, would be published on the Commissioner's website.

### **3 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

The Commissioner informed the Board that four questions had been submitted. Two were from members of the Police and Crime Panel and two from a member of the public.

The first two questions related to domestic abuse.

Question from Professor Adrian James, independent member of the Police and Crime Panel.

*"I know this issue has been raised and that SYP have taken some steps to highlight and respond to the issue of domestic violence during the current situation, but there are reports in this morning's paper of a three-fold increase in contacts between victims of DV and third sector support services.*

*This prompted me to wonder whether perhaps any more could be done by the OPCC to monitor the situation as it develops, such as having contact with those services for which it provides some support, rather than depending solely on stats recorded by the police, which we won't see until, arguably, it's too late."*

Question from Cllr Julie Grocutt, member of the Police and Crime Panel.

*"In light of the recent news that calls to support lines by victims of domestic abuse has significantly increased during recent weeks, what steps are SYP taking to protect victim of domestic abuse? Are officers making any contact with known victims to check on their welfare and offer support? Are officers who work in domestic abuse units still operating or have they been moved to other duties?"*

M Roberts reassured the Commissioner and the public that officers will continue to work in domestic abuse units.

He acknowledged that officers and staff are not immune to Coronavirus but a range of contingencies are in place. So far, the Force has maintained very good levels of attendance and despite challenges are offering the full range of policing services. Even in extreme circumstances domestic abuse incidents will still be prioritised with the resources available.

The Force is taking significant steps to take positive action to protect vulnerable people. Superintendent Shelley Hemsley is the Force and regional lead for protecting vulnerable people. She is linked into the College of Policing to ensure that everything the Force does is in line with best practice. She is also working with partner agencies and forces in the north east region to ensure vulnerable people are being protected during the Coronavirus.

M Roberts highlighted the Force's use of domestic abuse protection notices and orders. The Force has a Domestic Violence Protection Order team that went live on 30 March 2020. This team will apply for notices and orders as well as deal with any breaches. The Force has not seen a reduction in the number of applications to the courts and courts are still being supportive of the work the Force is doing in this area. The Force has shared its guidance on domestic abuse protection notices and orders nationally so that other forces can minimise the risk to domestic abuse victims whilst being cognisant of the virus.

The Force has multi-agency risk assessment conferencing and is continuing to assess and support Claire's Law.

The Force performance dashboard tracks trends around domestic abuse.

The Force Intelligence Bureau is producing a weekly briefing for all crime including domestic abuse. This ensures the Force is giving support to victims and monitoring offenders appropriately.

M Roberts confirmed that the media is being used to engage with potential victims to make them aware that the Force is still here to support them. There are radio adverts going out. If a victim presses 55 while they are on to the operator but do not feel that they are able to speak the Force will despatch an officer.

The Commissioner thanked M Roberts for a thorough and reassuring answer.

M Buttery highlighted the work undertaken by the Commissioner's office in relation to his commissioned services. Two weeks prior to the Coronavirus measures being put in place the Partnerships and Commissioning Manager wrote to all services providers requesting business continuity plans. These are currently being reviewed.

R Staniforth from the Violence Reduction Unit is also focusing on domestic abuse. There are concerns around under reporting and she is working with Superintendent Hemsley to see what more can be done in this area.

Work is also taking place with local authorities to establish if the provision of refuges is sufficient. There are no concerns at the moment but this needs to be kept under review.

The Commissioner highlighted a further two questions from a member of the public in relation to the enforcement of emergency powers and invited the Chief Constable to respond to this under item 4, Urgent Items.

Questions from member of the public.

*"What is being done on the Page Hall estate in Sheffield? Many people are concerned around big groups of people from the Roma community still hanging around completely ignoring lockdown rules. I know officers have been out in a public engagement exercise but I fear this won't be enough. How many fines have been issued in this area to properly deter people from ignoring the rules?"*

*"How many fines have been handed out across the county in relation to breaking lockdown rules in South Yorkshire?"*

#### 4 URGENT ITEMS

The Commissioner asked the Chief Constable to provide an update on the impact of the Coronavirus on the Force and how the Force had been using the Coronavirus emergency powers to date.

S Watson confirmed that whilst the Force is suffering from abstractions amongst staff, so far this is manageable. Abstractions are being offset by a general

reduction in demand. This is as a result of, amongst other things, pubs, clubs and restaurants being closed and football matches not taking place.

The Force is still able to manage business as usual, as well as deal with the specific demand brought about by the Coronavirus. This includes supporting partner agencies whilst upholding the restrictions put in place by the government.

In so far as the restrictions themselves are concerned, South Yorkshire communities are broadly compliant. S Watson confirmed that the response of the public has been absolutely magnificent and people appear to understand the restrictions are to save lives, protect vulnerable people and to ensure that the NHS do not become overwhelmed.

The Force's approach has been based on encouraging and educating people whilst engaging with them in a friendly and helpful manner.

The Force has been very clear that enforcement is something provided for in legislation but will only be used as a last resort. Issuing tickets is the last thing the Force wants to do.

S Watson confirmed that the Force had responded to reports of people in breach of the restrictions. However, the use of formal enforcement powers is very low.

S Watson highlighted that the longer the restrictions are in place people may start to find these too onerous. He urged people to stick with it.

S Watson highlighted some communication difficulties in the Page Hall area of Sheffield. Officers have intervened to help some members of the community understand the restrictions currently in place and why these need to be adhered to. Leaflets in foreign languages have been produced and engagement with community and faith leaders continues to further assist this messaging. There has been a significant reduction in the number of concerns being raised.

M Roberts confirmed there had been a small number of prosecutions. These have included drug dealers and people threatening to spit at officers and staff, or members of the public.

M Roberts highlighted the drop in crime as a result of the isolation / social distancing measures.

When the legislation had initially been announced the Force experienced a spike in calls to Atlas Court from people not understanding what the legislation meant. The Force is asking people not to make calls of this nature.

ACC Hartley is gold commander for the Coronavirus, there is also a silver tactical command and numerous bronze commands which sit below this. There is a reserve for both gold and silver command.

A dedicated cell is supporting every aspect of the Coronavirus operation, including Personal Protection Equipment (PPE). There is a specific team dealing with Coronavirus related matters.

M Roberts highlighted the exceptional work of the Force's business continuity lead, Eric Mirfin.

The Force has pre planned and scoped out its response for abstractions at all levels and plans are in place to deal with every eventuality.

M Roberts highlighted that quieter areas of the Force are re-training officers to assist in more busy areas. For example the Force media team has undertaken training to become call handlers in Atlas Court and the Business Change and Innovation Team has re-focused work to enable the Force to respond to demand based on the number of resources available following abstractions.

The Force is a key partner in the Local Resilience Forum.

The Force Strategic Coordinating Group now meets every day to deal with the response for what is a very fast moving situation.

The Commissioner thanked S Watson and M Roberts for their comprehensive update and confirmed that this should have given reassurance to the public that the Force is working extraordinarily hard to keep people safe.

The Commissioner highlighted that he has regular dial-ins with the Policing Minister, Kit Malthouse.

5 ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

There were no items to be considered in the absence of the public and press.

6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

7 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD HELD ON 10 MARCH 2020

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record, subject to the following amendments:

Item 15 - page 8, fourth paragraph: The target number of surveys is 6000 be changed to 600.

8 MATTERS ARISING/ACTIONS

387	An update report on the key findings and suggested areas of focus relating to compliance against the Victims Code of Practice be presented to the Public Accountability Board in 6 months' time. <b>03/04/2020 – Added to the work programme for September 2020 meeting. DISCHARGED</b>
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9 FORCE PERFORMANCE REPORT AGAINST THE POLICE AND CRIME PLAN 2017-2021 (RENEWED 2019) - TACKLING CRIME AND ASB

A report of the Chief Constable was presented to the Board. The purpose of the report was to provide an update on the progress against the tackling crime and ASB priority of the Police and Crime Plan 2017-2021 in support of the Commissioner's overarching aim of South Yorkshire being a safe place in which to live, learn and work.

The Commissioner thanked M Roberts for the report and suggested that in future paragraphs be numbered.

The Commissioner enquired about emerging crime and whether there had been an increase in cyber-crime as a result of the Coronavirus. M Roberts confirmed that cyber-crime and fraud has increased. He highlighted that parents need to be aware of who young people are communicating with.

There has also been an increase in scams and bogus callers who are approaching people offering to disinfect gardens and clean homes.

T Forber highlighted that problem solving is fully embedded in neighbourhood policing. This enables the Force to adapt to the changes in crime trends. For example, there has been an increase in commercial burglaries as a result of businesses being unoccupied. The Force has been able to react to this and put patrol plans in place for neighbourhood policing teams.

The Commissioner highlighted promoting the right culture and enquired about the impact of the Coronavirus on recruitment. T Forber confirmed that the culture of the Force is very different to three years ago where the Force reacted rather than problem solved.

S Watson confirmed that the Force training centre is still operating and there are no plans to stop existing training for new recruits, but this may be subject to change. The Force is still intending to increase the staff in neighbourhood policing teams.

The Commissioner highlighted the two Designing Out Crime Officers and enquired if these posts are as a result of the Safer Street funding bid. T Forber confirmed the posts are a good example of how academic qualifications and training can help professionalise different areas of business. S Watson confirmed that the post pre dated the Safer Streets fund.

The Commissioner enquired about the rehabilitation of offenders and whether the government's announcement to release offenders back into the community would impact on the Force.

T Forber confirmed that Integrated Offender Management (IOM) process is well embedded. The Force has four IOM teams and each district has a Local Offender Management Panel in place to ensure multi agency information sharing and to identify offenders who need to be managed by the IOM units. Offences considered

for IOM include offenders linked to domestic abuse, Child Sexual Exploitation, Organised Crime Groups and Serious Acquisitive Crime.

In relation to the early release of prisoners back into communities. T Forber confirmed that there are strict guidelines around who will be released, these will be low risk offenders who are nearing the end of their sentence. The Commissioner enquired if these offenders would be tagged. T Forber confirmed that this was his understanding.

The Commissioner enquired about the management of registered sex offenders. T Forber confirmed that the number of registered sex offenders continues to rise in South Yorkshire. This is as a result of the number of sex offenders being identified via social media platforms. Medium and high risk sex offenders are managed by Sexual and Other Violent Offender officers. Where appropriate low risk offenders are visited by local neighbourhood teams who have received specialist training. This allows the Sexual and Violent Offender officers to focus more on offenders who pose a higher risk in the community and allows the local neighbourhood officers who sit at the heart of communities to understand the local picture of residing sex offenders.

The Commissioner made reference to the Force's understanding of demand and the identification of additional resources. T Forber gave a number of examples where this had taken place including the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Protection Order team referred to earlier in the meeting. The Force is currently considering bringing aspects of digital forensics in-house.

T Forber raised the positive start the Violence Reduction Unit has had and confirmed that this needs to be built upon. He highlighted the Custody Navigator programme. Custody Navigators are based in custody suites between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday and offer young people a 'Plan B' whilst they are detained in custody. This time in custody is seen as a moment where the young person may be most responsive to support and guidance.

The Commissioner confirmed the Violence Reduction Unit had been established following a successful Home Office bid of £1.6m by the Commissioner and acknowledged this is a huge partnership approach.

## 10 FORCE PERFORMANCE BARNSELEY DISTRICT SUMMARY REPORT

A report of the Chief Constable was presented to the Board. The purpose of the report was to provide a brief update in relation to local operationally based delivery of the Police and Crime Plan in Barnsley, in line with the reporting requirements.

The Commissioner thanked S Poolman for her report.

The Commissioner highlighted the improvement in response times and enquired if this was sustainable. S Poolman confirmed that Barnsley had made vast improvements in response times in the 6 months preceding the last PAB report. The district is now seeing marginal gains and are focussing attention on

maintaining response times. The district is consistently better than targets set for emergency and priority calls.

The Commissioner enquired if this was replicated across all districts. M Roberts confirmed that it was replicated across the Force and is being sustained. He reiterated that this was not about driving faster but is about good management and intelligence and having the right resource in the right place at the right time.

The Commissioner highlighted the new neighbourhood policing team that has been created in Barnsley covering Rockingham, Hoyland, Darfield and Wombwell wards. S Poolman confirmed this was the final step in reinvigoration of neighbourhood policing in Barnsley and aligns the policing teams with the six area councils. The renovation of Hoyland police station should be completed in the summer, enabling the new neighbourhood team to move in and provide increased visibility and enforcement across the four wards. A full launch will take place once the Coronavirus crisis is over.

The Commissioner referred to the discussion earlier in the meeting around domestic abuse and asked S Poolman if she wanted to add anything about domestic abuse offenders. S Poolman confirmed that the IOM process mentioned by T Forber includes offenders of domestic abuse. This process looks at repeat offenders to try and break the cycle.

M Buttery informed the Board that the Commissioner, through his Countywide Community Safety Forum, commissioned services around domestic abuse. One of the commissioned services, Inspire to Change, is doing everything they can to ensure the training goes ahead during these uncertain times.

S Poolman confirmed that the Force has a spectrum of tools including Inspire to Change.

The Commissioner highlighted the increased flow of intelligence from communities to enable Barnsley district to tackle drug dealing and enquired how intelligence is obtained. Members of the public can pass intelligence directly to an officer or PCSO, they can email it in or report it to Crimestoppers. Certain communities do not submit as much intelligence as others. A key role of the neighbourhood policing teams is to engage communities to increase the confidence in the police. This will lead to increased intelligence.

The Commissioner noted the anti-social behaviour case study in Goldthorpe and Bolton-on-Deane and enquired if youth provision was still lacking. S Poolman confirmed that the tri-local authority initiative 'Epic' are quite active in the area.

The Commissioner highlighted his grant scheme and asked people to encourage local groups to apply for funding.

The reductions in burglary and serious acquisitive crime were noted. S Poolman commented that the figures in the report were based on 2018/19 data. She has now received 2019/20 end of year figures and Barnsley district have achieved a further 10% reduction in residential burglary and a 4% reduction in commercial burglary.



The Commissioner enquired if Barnsley had seen a rise in commercial burglaries as a result of the Coronavirus. S Poolman confirmed that in March there had been some displacement from residential to commercial burglaries. The district is working with the Chamber of Commerce and the Force Communications Team to raise awareness of the rise.

The Commissioner acknowledged the involvement of financial investigators in diverse areas of policing including high risk missing person enquiries, disruption of organised crime groups and follow-up on unpaid orders from the past. T Forber confirmed this was replicated across the Force. He highlighted that this team was as good as he had seen anywhere and he had made it clear that this is what he wants other districts to aspire towards.

#### 11 FOCUS OF ACTIVITY 2020-21 - FOR THE DURATION OF THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

A report of the Commissioner's Chief Executive and Solicitor was presented to the Board. The purpose of the report was to set out the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) focus for 2020-21, for the duration of the Coronavirus situation.

M BATTERY informed the Board that it had been necessary for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to consider the Commissioner's role and responsibilities as a result of both the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic; and the postponement of the 2020 PCC elections to 7 May 2021.

It is also important for the Police and Crime Panel to understand how the Commissioner intends to discharge his responsibilities.

The Commissioner had already determined that the priorities of the Police and Crime Plan should remain for the coming period and now that his term had been extended to May 2021 he reaffirms them.

The emergency situation created by the Coronavirus means that business cannot be as usual. In order to respond to the emergency and fulfil his statutory responsibilities, the Commissioner's focus will be on:

- Ensuring the Chief Constable has sufficient resources to respond to the emergency
- Ensuring, on behalf of the public, that the police respond in ways that are necessary, sufficient, proportionate and ethical (holding to account)
- Facilitating effective partnership working among agencies and groups working in community safety, violence reduction and criminal justice
- Commissioning and co-commissioning services, particularly for victims of crime, and providing grants for policing and anti-crime purposes

Annex 1 to this report provides more details on the Commissioner's new focus.

Annex 2 is a report based on information collated through the OPCC's engagement with the public and partners, and relevant correspondence and complaints

addressed to the Commissioner. This is the first report of what will be a monthly report to PAB.

A Lockley informed the Board that the Commissioner had asked the Independent Ethics Panel (IEP) to provide assurance, to him and the public, on how the new legislative powers will be used in South Yorkshire. The scoping document will be completed in the next few days. The Panel think initially there will be three tasks: understanding how the Panel might support the Force in its implementation of the new legislation; understanding how the Force will handle the public reporting of breaches; and understanding the approach being taken to protect vulnerable groups.

M Buttery highlighted that it was important to note that governance and assurance arrangements should not impede the Force in its operations.

The Commissioner acknowledged work undertaken need to be efficient, effective and proportionate.

11a Annex 1 - Focus of Activity 2020-21

Discussed under agenda item 11.

11b Annex 2 - Coronavirus - Public Engagement & Communications Activity Update

Discussed under agenda item 11.

12 PCC DECISIONS

The report was noted.

13 PAB WORK PROGRAMME

M Buttery highlighted that she will be liaising with M Roberts in relation to what reporting can be maintained going forward throughout the Covid-19 period. The Commissioner confirmed he did not want to put undue pressure on the Force.

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS - TO BE NOTIFIED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MEETING

There was no any other business.

15 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

12 May 2020 at 10am, Sheffield Town Hall, Pinstone Street, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S1 2HH.

CHAIR

