

Our Ref: FOI 1315

22 January 2021

Dear

Freedom of Information Request – Reference FOI 1315

I refer to your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, received on 5 January 2021.

Set out below is the request you have raised and our response to it.

REQUEST

‘Please read the attached YP article which outlines the appalling record high homicide rate in South Yorkshire and inform me, under FOI Regulations, what SMART (Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Time bound) measures, plans, documents, letters, presentations, work schedules, in whatever format, you intend to take to -

a - hold South Yorkshire Police Chief Constable to democratic account to reduce the homicide rate;

b - what specific community education measures you intend to undertake to improve community safety and confidence with respect to the increased homicide rate.’

RESPONSE

The Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) states that:

‘The Freedom of Information Act 2000 ‘the Act’ provides public access to information held by public authorities.

The Act does not cover information that is in someone’s head. If a member of the public asks for information, you only have to provide information you already have in recorded form. You do not have to create new information or find the answer to a question from staff who may happen to know it.’

Your request asked what the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) ‘intends to take ...’. Therefore, your request is not covered by the Act.

However, to assist you in your request, the following information has been provided.

The PCC's 'Holding to Account' Arrangements

There are limited time and resources available to the PCC and the Office of the PCC (OPCC) to scrutinise SYP in all the areas in which the PCC is required to hold the Chief Constable to account (i.e. relating to the Chief Constable's statutory functions). The PCC therefore adopts a risk-based approach, and focuses on those areas posing most significant risk, including to the delivery of the PCC's Police and Crime Plan. (A copy of the Police and Crime Plan can be found here <https://southyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk/app/uploads/2019/05/police-crime-plan-2017-2021-refreshed-2019.pdf>)

The requirements set in the PCC's 2017/21 Plan cover the principal areas of focus where the PCC must hold the Chief Constable to account, namely:

1. the **operational performance of SYP** in the priority areas set by the PCC after consultation with others including local people
2. SYP's arrangements for **partnership working and collaboration**
3. SYP's arrangements for **engagement with local people**
4. **the efficient and effective running of SYP, including financial management arrangements and ensuring Value for Money**

SYP is held to account through a combination of meetings and activity by the PCC / OPCC staff, internal and external audit, assurance panels and committees, the public and stakeholders (as well as HMIC / other external inspectors / scrutiny arrangements).

The schematic found at **Appendix A** provides an overview of these arrangements.

The PCC and OPCC have been drafting a short document for the PCC to publish which will act as an addendum to his current Police and Crime Plan. This will take SYP beyond the PCC elections, due to be held in May 2021. After the elections, it is anticipated that the returning PCC, or a new PCC, will issue a new Police and Crime Plan for the remaining three years of their term of office.

The PCC's Public Accountability Board

At the centre of the PCC's arrangements is the PCC's regular, public-facing governance meeting – the Public Accountability Board ('PAB'). This meeting occurs monthly and is where most of the PCC's 'holding to account' arrangements come together. The PCC receives formal reports from SYP and others on a range of areas in which the CC must be held to account. These areas are programmed in for the performance and financial year ahead.

Information on the Public Accountability Board can be found on the PCC's website at <https://southyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk/openness/public-accountability-board-meetings/>



In relation to what specific community education measures the PCC intends to undertake to improve community safety and confidence with respect to the increased homicide rate. The PCC has a Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) which is working to prevent and reduce violence across South Yorkshire, including knife crime.

Information on the South Yorkshire VRU can be found here:
<https://southyorkshireviolencereductionunit.com/>

If you are unhappy with the way your request for information has been handled, you can request an internal review by emailing this office.

If you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at:

The Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Telephone: 08456 306060 or 01625 545745

Website: www.ico.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

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