

SOUTH YORKSHIRE'S POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

10 DECEMBER 2020

PRESENT: Dr Alan Billings (Police and Crime Commissioner)
Michelle Buttery (Chief Executive and Solicitor)
Sophie Abbott (Chief Finance Officer)
Erika Redfearn (Head of Governance)
Fiona Topliss (Community Engagement & Communications Manager)
Sally Parkin (Governance and Compliance Manager)
Kevin Wright (Evaluation and Scrutiny Officer)
Sharon Baldwin (Evaluation and Scrutiny Officer)
Stephen Watson (Chief Constable)
Mark Roberts (Deputy Chief Constable)
Tim Forber (Assistant Chief Constable)
Lauren Poultney (Assistant Chief Constable)
Debbie Carrington (Interim Director of Finance)
Alison Fletcher (Office Manager)
Carrie Goodwin (Head of Corporate Communications)
Sarah Poolman (Chief Superintendent, Barnsley)
Steven Kent (Police Federation Chairperson)
A Macaskill (Interim Chair of the Independent Ethics Panel)
Steve Wragg (Chair of the Joint Independent Audit Committee)
Sam Mawson (Violence Reduction Unit)
Councillor Garry Weatherall (Sheffield City Council)

APOLOGIES: D Hartley, J Bland and R Staniforth

1 **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Commissioner welcomed those who had joined the meeting, including Councillors Short and Steinke, members of the Police and Crime Panel, and three members of the press (P Whitehouse, J Tolson and D Andrews).

The Commissioner highlighted that this was P Whitehouse's last meeting prior to him starting a new job in North Yorkshire. He thanked him for his reporting of the meetings and for taking the time to understand the issues being reported on.

RECORDING NOTIFICATION

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

3 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

5 URGENT ITEMS

The Commissioner invited the Chief Constable to provide an update on the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Chief Constable acknowledged the well-developed approach with partner agencies to manage the Covid-19 responsibilities. He highlighted the Covid-19 vaccination but guarded against people thinking this was now all over. Restrictions will need to stay in place during the Christmas period and beyond.

T Forber highlighted that Assistant Chief Constable David Hartley is the Force lead for Covid-19 and represents South Yorkshire Police at the Local Resilience Forum (LRF). The focus of the LRF now is on assisting health partners with the mass vaccination programme.

The Force is in good shape and has low abstraction rates and continues to provide a full policing service.

The Force Covid Team is working closely with partners to enforce the regulations. The rise in Covid-19 incidents has now slowed across South Yorkshire.

The Force continues to take a robust approach to policing the Covid-19 pandemic.

T Forber highlighted the different approach being taken for Christmas this year. The impact on the night-time economy is profound and the Force is planning to focus on house parties and large gatherings.

6 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.

7 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

8 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD HELD ON 10 NOVEMBER 2020

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

Page 9, paragraph 6 The National Fraud Agency (*NCA*) be amended to (*NFA*).

9 MATTERS ARISING/ACTIONS

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| | <p>Crime Plan priorities The content of future Protecting Vulnerable People reports be discussed with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) 10/09/20 – Ongoing 13/10/20 – New templates are being developed 10/12/20 – The OPCC is working with the Force in relation to this. Discharged</p> |
| 396 | <p>The Commissioner’s Office would establish if Sheffield City Council are considering a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in the Page Hall area. 13/10/20 – Ongoing 10/12/20 – No update received. The Commissioner agreed to write to the new Leader of SCC.</p> |
| 398 | <p>A report on Restorative Justice be brought to a future Public Accountability Board 10/12/20 – A report will be brought to the February 2021 meeting. Discharged</p> |
| 399 | <p>A further report on crimes affecting older people be brought to a future Public Accountability Board 10/12/20 – A further report will be brought to the November 2021 meeting. Discharged</p> |
| 400 | <p>A further report on cyber-crime be brought to a future Public Accountability Board 10/12/20 – A further report will be brought to the November 2021 meeting. Discharged</p> |

10 FORCE PERFORMANCE - BARNESLEY DISTRICT SUMMARY UPDATE

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 complimented S Poolman on the style and content of her report. The report flowed, read well and was jargon and acronym free. It was the sort of report members of the public would like to read.

The Commissioner referred to the good progress made by Barnsley in tackling domestic abuse. The volume of domestic abuse crimes reported to the police has remained relatively stable over the last year. Barnsley saw a slight dip in April but this quickly returned to normal and exceeded pre-Covid levels in July and August 2020. The Force recognised the higher number of occurrences in domestic abuse and introduced different mechanisms through which to report domestic abuse, such as the Silent Solution and the Force’s dedicated domestic abuse online portal.

S Poolman highlighted the Independent Domestic Abuse Services (IDAS), a specialist charity which supports people experiencing or affected by domestic abuse or sexual violence. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic IDAS was co-located with the Force. The co-location has had to stop but they continue to support victims and survivors.

Barnsley has continued to invest in the Domestic Abuse team. To try and embed the Force's approach, and increase staff understanding of domestic abuse, quality of investigations and safeguarding options, staff are being rotated.

S Poolman highlighted the marginal and continual improvement of the 'action taken' rate for domestic abuse from 15.6% (Nov 18 – Oct 19) to 20.7% in the last 12 months (Nov 19 – Oct 20).

The Commissioner enquired how the positive outcomes compared with other forces. S Poolman did not have the specific figures but confirmed that South Yorkshire was above the national average for outcomes overall not just domestic abuse.

M Roberts provided reassurance around positive outcomes and highlighted the Domestic Abuse Matters training staff are currently undertaking. This has been funded by the Violence Reduction Unit. Feedback from the training providers are that the Force is in a much better place than most other forces.

The Force is recording more crimes and taking positive action in terms of the number of arrests.

M Roberts highlighted that the Force is probably the most proactive force in the country in relation to Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs).

The Commissioner raised the difficulty in identifying crime and non-crime incidents involving mental health. Barnsley is seeing a rise in incidents involving people with a mental health problem. The Barnsley Safer Neighbourhood Service (SNS) Hub, which is made up of police officers, council staff and a mental health worker deals with individuals with complex needs, who frequently become dependent on statutory services. Making use of all of the skills and tools available across the partnership, they support and work with these individuals to enable them to cope and reduce the demand on policing and other services.

The Commissioner acknowledged the case study on page 19.

The Commissioner enquired about the improvements in response times and whether this is a reasonable and ethical approach. S Poolman confirmed this was about getting the right resources to people quickly and safely and focusing minds to work as efficiently and effectively as possible. Priority response obtain the greatest gains whilst managing victim expectations. Barnsley has a 'one team approach' with no artificial boundaries between areas. The increase in response times has stabilised and is being maintained ethically and proportionately.

M Roberts gave assurance that improved response times are being undertaken across the Force in an ethical manner. He highlighted the significant improvement and maintenance of the improved response to emergency calls. The median response time to emergencies now sits just over 10 minutes and is consistently below the 15 minute target. Priority response times have been massively reduced by over an hour, with the median average consistently being below 45 minutes and well within the one hour target. The emphasis is not about driving quicker but about having the right resources and dealing with calls effectively.

The Commissioner highlighted Barnsley's reduction in burglary and enquired about their burglary plan. S Poolman confirmed that Barnsley had seen a 17.5%

reduction in residential burglary. Whilst some of this can be attributed to the first lockdown Barnsley have been able to maintain this during June, July and August. The burglary plan is live and is continually refreshed. The plan looks at the interaction between teams and defines roles and responsibilities. The plan is driven through Barnsley's daily management process. Proactive patrols are assigned to hot spot areas.

The Commissioner made reference to members of the public contacting him about drugs. He highlighted that since April 2020, 62 people have been arrested for drug dealing and 29 warrants under the Misuse of Drugs Act have been executed, in addition to the house searches following arrest. S Poolman confirmed that as a result of the first lockdown and the reduction in theft and burglary the District had been able to be more proactive and had been successful in dismantling organised crime.

The Commissioner referred to speeding vehicles and thanked S Poolman for all the work the District had done around the Dearne Valley area.

The Commissioner enquired about the Community Challenge Board. This has been in place for three or four years. It is a group of local residents who are interested in policing. They meet monthly to look at stop and search, hate crime and disproportionality. They have been meeting less frequently online but they are still fulfilling their function.

S Poolman acknowledged the commitment of the officers and staff during the Covid-19 pandemic and commented that the low abstraction rate was a testament to this.

11 FORCE PERFORMANCE REPORT AGAINST POLICE AND CRIME PLAN 2017 - 2019 (RENEWED 2019) - TREATING PEOPLE FAIRLY

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 'Treating People Fairly' outcome 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 enquired how the recruitment of additional police officers was progressing. T Forber confirmed the Force has committed to recruit 1,400 officers over the next three years. This is a huge challenge. The Force has been planning for this for some time and has expanded the recruitment and training teams. The Force has quarterly campaigns, which normally attract over 1,400 applications each time. There are currently 1,624 student officers in varying stages of the process. Everyone who goes through the apprenticeship or degree holder programme will achieve a qualification in Professional Policing Practice. T Forber confirmed the quality of the recruits is very strong. The recruitment has continued during the Covid-19 pandemic.

T Forber reminded the Board that the Force had committed to increase officer numbers before the Government announcement.

The Commissioner enquired about the Resource Allocation Formula. T Forber confirmed this took into account a number of factors including population size and Force demand. He highlighted the strategic approach the Force takes to allocating posts in areas such as public protection, cross border criminality and road crime. These are areas not usually seen by the public. The Commissioner confirmed this was helpful and acknowledged that a way needs to be found to explain this to the public.

The Commissioner highlighted the demographic data currently being used and suggested a range of data is considered to get a better understanding of the population of South Yorkshire. Smaller cohorts should be compared.

M Roberts confirmed this had been discussed at the Independent Ethics Panel (IEP). Education data could be used to compare the age profile of young people who are stopped and searched. Data is being compared in different parts of the country based on old data.

The Commissioner enquired about the increase in the number of BME/VME officers and staff leaving the Force and asked if any work had been undertaken in relation to this. T Forber confirmed that the numbers are so small it is difficult to obtain a firm conclusion. He is not aware of any issues. Exit interviews are offered to all leavers.

The Commissioner highlighted the work the Force is undertaking on cultural statements and suggested the Force involve the IEP and Professor Macaskill. T Forber highlighted the significant improvements in performance the Force has made in the last four years and the importance the leadership style and behaviour has had in relation to this. The Force is now wanting to get to the next level and empower sergeants and inspectors.

M Roberts confirmed the Force was working hard to achieve results. It has invested in problem solving for neighbourhood policing and wants to build on this. It was not necessarily about looking at leadership culture but it is about taking stock of where the Force is.

M Buttery highlighted the welfare and wellbeing of staff and the investment being made by the Force.

M Roberts confirmed that the welfare of staff is a priority. He highlighted a 30% increase in the number of assaults on officers, 16 officers per week. He acknowledged this was a cause for concern. This is not acceptable and the Force will prosecute offenders. The Commissioner acknowledged this and confirmed this had been raised with the Policing Minister and he, as the chair of the Local Criminal Justice Board, was raising this with partners to ensure they are appropriately punished.

12 SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME

A report of the Chief Executive and Solicitor was presented to the Board. The purpose of the report was to provide an update to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) following the commissioning and assurance work carried out

by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) in 2019 in support of victims of crime.

S Baldwin reminded members that in March 2020 a report was presented to the Board which provided an overview of the commissioning and assurance work carried out by the OPCC in support of victims of crime. The work included an assurance assessment of criminal justice agency compliance with the Victims' Code of Practice. This work coincided with a request for the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) in May 2019 that all PCCs (and their offices) to work directly with LCJB partners to review compliance against five entitlements.

S Baldwin highlighted the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on organisations working with victims. This has meant organisations have needed to adapt quickly in an effort to continue to support victims.

Since the last report, South Yorkshire Police has made good progress both in addressing the suggested areas of focus highlighted within the victim code compliance assessment conducted during 2019, and in the overall focus on the importance of Complete Victim Care (CVC). This includes the development of a CVC framework which incorporates the key entitlements within the Victims' Code for which the Police service is responsible and embedding a clear message of victim focus throughout the Force.

Work continues to improve victim satisfaction and the area of follow up, which includes keeping victims updated, remains an area of focus.

Other examples of victim focussed work include the introduction of a Force wide Hate Crime Scrutiny Panel and additional bespoke victim satisfaction surveys looking at wider crime types.

The Victims' Code of Practice has been subject to an open consultation by the MoJ which commenced in March 2020 and a revised Victims' Code was published in November 2020. The revised Victims' Code is not expected to come into force until April 2021 in order to enable service providers to understand and embed any changes within their own organisation.

S Baldwin highlighted the real impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on victims and survivors. The South Yorkshire Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) has commissioned the OPCC to gather the views and personal experience of victim witnesses including the impact of delays at court. The work also includes gathering information about the changes experienced by those services supporting victims and survivors during their journey.

The Commissioner enquired about the Force's response to the revised code. T Forber confirmed that the Force needed time to establish what this means and understand what changes may be required.

13 PCC STRATEGIC AND FINANCIAL PLANNING UPDATE

A report of the Chief Executive and Solicitor was presented to the Board. The purpose of the report was to provide an overview of the Police and Crime Commissioner's annual strategic and financial planning process in relation to

reviewing his Police and Crime Plan (2017-2021 – renewed 2019) and setting a supporting budget and council tax precept for 2021/22.

S Abbott highlighted that the report provides information on the process undertaken each year and where the Force and Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) are in that process.

The 2021/22 planning process started internally at the Planning and Efficiency Group in September, with updates and options being presented in relation to the assessment of policing need and the resources required to meet that need efficiently and effectively. Work is ongoing to cost a number of options, and how these translate into the medium term financial forecast and level of council tax precept discussions.

Further meetings are scheduled to take place over the next couple of months, to firm up the plans, and assess against the Home Office settlement which is expected on 16 December 2020 but could be later.

A flat cash settlement is anticipated.

D Carrington highlighted that there would be a requirement to make efficiency savings which is difficult given the majority of the budget is for officer pay. The pay freeze is helpful to the organisation but this is not a good reward to police officers and staff for all the work they have done during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Consultation is undertaken throughout the year by the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) Communications and Engagement Team. This engagement is usually carried out face-to-face, however due to Covid19 there has been limited face-to-face consultation during 2020. Online surveys, consultation and engagement and monitoring of public views and comments via social media as well as virtual meetings with groups, individuals, communities and organisations (including parish councils) has instead taken place.

Targeted consultation with the public about their willingness to pay more in their Council Tax Precept to fund policing and crime services will begin once the Home Office settlement is known.

The Commissioner highlighted that there is some flexibility to increase the Council Tax Precept with a £15 per annum maximum increase on a Band D property (this equates to a 7.57% precept increase in South Yorkshire). There is a national expectation that this flexibility will be maximised in the grant settlement, otherwise there will be a further budget shortfall.

14 PCC DECISIONS

A report of the Chief Executive and Solicitor was presented to the Board. The purpose of the report was to provide the Board with a record of key decisions taken by the Commissioner outside of this Board since the last PAB meeting.

M Buttery highlighted the additional Covid-19 funding to organisations who provide support to victims of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence across South Yorkshire.

M Buttery raised the number of small pots of money available and the amount of work undertaken by the PCC's Commissioning Team to meet Government

deadlines to apply for these. There is also a large amount of pressure to get the funding out to organisations to enable them to spend this in the current financial year. Whilst the PCC is grateful for the funding this does not help organisations with their long term sustainability.

15 NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING - PUBLIC VIEWS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

A report of the Chief Executive and Solicitor was presented to the Board. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the work undertaken by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) in South Yorkshire in gathering the views of the public on the effectiveness of neighbourhood policing.

F Topliss highlighted that the OPCC had planned to carry out a follow-up face-to-face survey around Neighbourhood Policing this year but due to the Covid-19 pandemic this has not been possible.

The Communications and Engagement Team (C&E Team) are continuing to gather information from the public around their views on the policing service to inform the focus of the PCC's Police and Crime Plan for the coming year.

This is being carried out using a number of mechanisms, including monitoring opinions and comments through online forums and discussions in virtual meetings with communities, organisations and groups, as well as social media comment.

The C&E Team has just undertaken a 'Priorities Survey'. This has provided valuable information as to the areas of policing and criminal justice that residents would like to see prioritised. The results are currently being analysed but early indications as to why people do not feel safe are; a lack of visibility of officers and low response and lack of attendance at incidents.

T Forber highlighted the number of additional neighbourhood policing officers. 25 additional posts are being created by 1 February 2021. The total complement will be in place by the end of the financial year.

A performance management framework for neighbourhood policing has been developed. This will be used to help determine the effectiveness of neighbourhood policing.

An accredited training package for neighbourhood policing officers is also being rolled out.

There will be an extra 48 neighbourhood officers through the 'Police Now' scheme. Discussions are taking place around how to recruit more officers through this route next year.

The Commissioner highlighted how quickly neighbourhood policing had become embedded and commented on social media and SYP Alerts. These are very much appreciated by local communities.

16 PAB WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was noted.

17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no any other business.

18 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

11 January 2020 at 10am.

CHAIR

