

SOUTH YORKSHIRE'S POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

11 AUGUST 2020

PRESENT: Dr Alan Billings (Police and Crime Commissioner)
Sophie Abbott (Interim Chief Finance Officer)
Erika Redfearn (Head of Governance)
Fiona Topliss (Community Engagement & Communications Manager)
Kevin Wright (Evaluation & Scrutiny Officer)
Sally Parkin (Governance and Compliance Manager)
Stephen Watson (Chief Constable)
Mark Roberts (Deputy Chief Constable)
David Hartley (Assistant Chief Constable)
Lauren Poultney (Assistant Chief Constable)
Jackie Bland (Interim Director of Resources)
Debbie Carrington (Interim Head of Finance)
Carrie Goodwin (Head of Corporate Communications)
Alison Fletcher (Office Manager)
Mark James (Superintendent, Barnsley)
Andrew Lockley (Chair of the Ethics Panel)
Steve Wragg (Chair of the Joint Independent Audit Committee)
Cllr Garry Weatherall (Sheffield City Council)
Tracy Webster (Community Engagement Officer)
Nancy Burn (Doncaster Partnership Manager, VRU)

APOLOGIES: Michelle Buttery and Tim Forber

1 **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Commissioner welcomed those who had dialled into meeting, including Councillor Steinke, a member of the Police and Crime Panel, Councillor Khayum and two members of the press (P Whitehouse and G Dennison).

2 **FILMING NOTIFICATION**

The Commissioner confirmed that the meeting was being sound recorded and, subject to the sound quality, 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 highlighted the disorder and murder in Sheffield over the weekend. He expressed concern that emergency services workers were inhibited from undertaking their job during the disorder and confirmed there was an urgent need for communities to enable the emergency services to do their job.

M Roberts acknowledged that South Yorkshire has had a number of violent incidents but stipulated that Sheffield remains a safe place to be.

He confirmed there had been a great deal of aggression and hostility towards the police and other emergency services during the incidents over the weekend. This had made getting to the victim and rendering first aid difficult.

The Force has teams engaging with local communities following the murder and has a good track record of bringing people to justice which it wants to maintain.

M Roberts highlighted the violence reduction funding secured by the Commissioner and confirmed that robust action is being taken around violent crime. A large number of firearms have been taken off the streets in the last few weeks. The Force is not just looking at enforcement but also a longer term public health approach, but this will take time.

The Commissioner confirmed that conversations are taking place with civil servants and Ministers around the comprehensive spending review. The Government remains committed to the police officer uplift, although the support services around this is unclear. There is concern around the amount of funding spent as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the erosion of the council tax base.

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 7 JULY 2020

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

9 MATTERS ARISING/ACTIONS

390	The uplift position would be monitored and a full picture established and presented at a future PAB 11/06/2020 – Ongoing 07/07/2020 – D Carrington confirmed that an update on the uplift position would be presented to the August PAB alongside the Budget Monitoring report. On today's agenda. DISCHARGED
391	Consideration be given to district reports following the same format

	24/06/2020 - A template for district reports will be developed for the August meeting. Ongoing 28/07/2020 – Template has been developed and will be used at the September meeting. DISCHARGED
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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 thanked Superintendent Mark James for a full and comprehensive report.

The Commissioner enquired about the impact on children at risk during the lockdown period. M James confirmed that Barnsley had seen a 50% reduction in child protection referrals as a result of schools closing and fewer visits by healthcare professionals. This drop was predicted and the Force was in constant dialogue with Children's Social Care and schools to proactively monitor the most vulnerable. Referrals have returned to normal levels in June.

The Commissioner highlighted the rise in anti-social behaviour and in particular fly-tipping. M James confirmed that the district had not seen this level of reporting since January 2017. Analysis has shown that the rise is directly linked to the Covid-19 regulations and lockdown with the district seeing different types of anti-social behaviour including an increase in speeding vehicles and environmental issues. A Cohesion and Resilience Strategy is in place to address these challenges.

The Commissioner highlighted the increase in the number of new recruits due to join the Force over the coming years and enquired if their lack of experience would impact on investigations. M James acknowledged there would be a lot of new officers who would be keen but lacking in experience. Barnsley has a central team who support the new recruits. Officers will initially be placed with dedicated tutors with response teams but then exposed to more specialist work such as the neighbourhood policing, Domestic Violence and CID. This will maximise capability.

The Commissioner commented that Barnsley has 6 neighbourhood teams which corresponded with local authority areas. He enquired whether these are co-located. M James confirmed that neighbourhood policing was fully embedded and multi-agency. The Safer Neighbourhood Service (SNS) hub is a joint base with BMBC and Berneslai Homes which deals with people with complex and multiple needs.

The Commissioner enquired whether decisions around co-location are left to local officers or whether it is the same in each district.

The Chief Constable confirmed the SYP Operating Model includes the requirement for joint problem solving but local relationships differ in each of the four districts and District Commanders and Local Authority Chief Executive decide what works for them locally. The Commissioner highlighted the Cannabis Grow Scheme as a good example of partnership working with BMBC and private sector housing providers. This involves tackling cannabis production in rented accommodation.

The Commissioner commented on the amount of correspondence he is receiving in relation to speeding in Barnsley, including Cortonwood, the Dearne Valley, Edenthorpe and Ardsley. M James confirmed that speeding and anti-social use of vehicles is an issue and as such a priority for the district. A partnership approach is required and the neighbourhood teams are working with BMBC and the Safer Roads Partnership to identify longer-term solutions.

An associated issue is off-road bikes in the Hoyland area. A number of bikes have been seized and enforcement action is being taken.

D Hartley highlighted that there is a Gold Group looking at speeding and anti-social use of vehicles. A Force Trigger Plan is in place and a problem solving approach is being taken. For example, if a vehicle has been modified they may not be insured, the Force is able to check with the insurers and if not insured the Force is able to remove the vehicle.

The Commissioner made reference to the domestic abuse results. M James confirmed that Barnsley had been the first district to introduce dedicated domestic abuse teams in 2019. There is a dedicated Detective Inspector overseeing performance. Additional training for staff has been provided. The arrest rate has increased from 40% to 55% over the last 3 months.

The Commissioner enquired about the Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) service. M James confirmed that the ISVAs are in place and are co-located. There had been some displacement due to the Covid-19 pandemic but as lockdown eases they are re-engaging.

Barnsley is working with the Violence Reduction Unit in relation to the most serious violence incidents.

The Commissioner noted that the district want to maintain reduced levels of burglary.

The Commissioner commended the outstanding bravery of PC Steven Miller. M James confirmed that PC Miller is being put forward for a number of bravery awards.

M James highlighted that Barnsley district had performed well through the Covid-19 pandemic with low abstraction rates and this was testament to the staff.

11 FORCE PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE POLICE AND CRIME PLAN 2017 - 2021 (RENEWED 2019) - PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

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 'protecting vulnerable people' 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 requested that headings be included in future reports in relation to the Protecting Vulnerable People priority within the Police and Crime Plan. He highlighted that not all the priorities were covered in the report and asked for this to be rectified in future reports.

M Roberts explained that a balance had been struck in relation to the length of the report but if there are any areas of particular interest these would be included. It was agreed that the content of the report be discussed with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).

The Commissioner raised Operation Encompass, which is a programme providing details of children living in a household where domestic abuse has occurred over the last 24 hours and is sent to the Local Authority Multi-Agency Safeguarding hubs. He enquired how many schools are involved and what the impact had been during lockdown. L Poultney confirmed that referrals had continued during lockdown but the Force is anticipating an escalation in September once the schools are back. All schools are engaged and the programme is being monitored through the Countywide Community Safety Forum.

The Commissioner acknowledged that bespoke Domestic Abuse Teams are being established in each district.

The Commissioner enquired about the number of ISVAs in each district. L Poultney confirmed that the number of ISVAs in each district varied to reflect the volume of incidents.

The Commissioner commented that he understood hate crime, and in particularly race related hate crime, had increased and asked why this was. L Poultney confirmed that that there had been a 22% increase in reporting and race related hate crime had increased significantly. The increase was associated with Covid-19 and the increase in stop and searches as a result. There had been an increase in race related hate crime reporting from white people following the death of George Floyd.

The Commissioner highlighted the improvements in call wait times and enquired if call back assist had made a difference. L Poultney confirmed that more people are choosing to have a call back. D Hartley confirmed that call back assist is well used.

M Roberts highlighted the uplift in staff at Atlas Court but acknowledged that the Force would always struggle when there is an unexpected peak in demand. 999 calls have improved from 21 seconds in April 2019 to 11 seconds in April 2020. Call wait times for 101 calls were previously at an average of 6 minutes 48 seconds in April 2019, this has reduced to an average of 2 minutes 38 seconds in April 2020.

The Commissioner confirmed that correspondence received into the office in relation to this was nowhere near the levels it used to be.

M Roberts highlighted the disruption caused to Atlas Court by Covid-19. Calls had increased following members of the public ringing the police because they did not understand the regulations. He highlighted the need to educate the public around when to ring the police and provide information on other services which are available, such as online reporting.

S Abbott confirmed that funding for additional lines for call back assist had been secured.

It was agreed that:

- **Headings be included for all future reports on the Police and Crime Plan priorities**
- **The content of future Protecting Vulnerable People reports be discussed with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)**

12 SYP'S QUARTERLY BUDGET MONITORING OVERVIEW

A report of the Chief Constable was presented to the Board. The purpose of the report was to inform the Public Accountability Board of the Force's projected outturn on its revenue and capital budgets as at 31st March 2021. It is based on an analysis of income and expenditure for the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 before accounting adjustments. This report covers the Force financial position only and should be read in conjunction with the report by the PCC Interim Chief Finance Officer.

D Carrington confirmed the Force is currently projecting a £2.56m overspend.

The main areas are overspend on police officer pay and overtime, other employee expenses and income.

Police officers pay overspend is due to having fewer leavers than projected in the first three months of the year. This needs to be monitored and if it continues, the Workforce Plan may need to be reviewed. Police officer overtime is mainly as a result of Covid-19.

The Commissioner commented that the Covid-19 expenditure is being captured and reported monthly to the Home Office. D Carrington confirmed that the Force was expecting £1.4m for medical grade Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) but there is no suggestion that the Force will receive anything else. Consideration is being given to the financial impact of this in future years.

Covid-19 is also having an impact on income recovery, such as, income from speed awareness courses, immigration and the policing of concerts, festivals and shopping centres. Lack of / fewer concerts and festivals will mean that there will be a lower spend on overtime and this will need to feature in the budget setting for 2020/21.

A piece of work has been concluded resulting in a more realistic capital programme.

The Commissioner thanked D Carrington for the report.

13 POLICE OFFICER UPLIFT PROGRAMME

A report of the Chief Constable was presented to the Board. The purpose of the report was to provide an update to the Public Accountability Board on the Police Officer Uplift Programme, which includes the 2019/20 progress and current and future plans to achieve the Force's allocation of the national uplift in Police Officers.

D Carrington informed the Board that in June 2019, it was announced that the Force planned to recruit an additional 220 officers in the period to 2024. Following

this, the Government announced plans to uplift officers nationally by 20,000, over the period to March 2023. South Yorkshire's initial allocation of the national uplift for the period to 31 March 2021 was confirmed as 151 officers.

The Force did not meet its target of 50 by 31 March 2020. The Force plan was to achieve an uplift of 30 officers to March 2020 and a further 121 in the year to 31 March 2021, however, the Home Office allocation over the 18 month period differed and the Force was measured against a target of 50 at 31 March 2020.

To ensure that the 2021 target is achieved, additional recruitment has been planned to be funded from the ring-fenced Police Uplift Programme grant.

The Commissioner enquired if this would be achieved. D Carrington confirmed that Covid-19 had caused some challenges but recruitment is on track.

The Commissioner enquired if all the costs would be covered by the Government including support costs. D Carrington identified the lack of clarity around what the Government will fund. The Commissioner expressed concern around the impact on the budget if the Government just fund police officer numbers.

S Abbott highlighted that this is being discussed as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review. She confirmed the lack of clarity around the infrastructure costs. There are a number of other factors also being considered including the council tax base.

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.

E Redfearn confirmed that a number of decisions of public interest had been made since the last meeting.

Discussion had already taken place around call back assist, Covid spend and Police Officer Recruitment. The remaining decisions related to the Commissioner's community grant scheme, an extension to the current contract for the provision of the National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme (NDORS) and Wellbeing Strategy.

15 USE OF EMERGENCY POWERS DURING COVID-19 OUTBREAK - REPORT OF THE IEP

A report of the Independent Ethics Panel was presented to the Board. The purpose of the report was to set out the Panel's findings in relation to the police response to Covid-19.

The Commissioner highlighted that the policing of the Government response to the coronavirus crisis had the potential to put the police in a difficult place with the public. He had asked the Independent Ethics Panel to provide him with assurance that, on behalf of the public, the Force responded in ways which were 'necessary, sufficient, proportionate and ethical'.

A Lockley confirmed this was an independent look at policing in South Yorkshire and was evidence based. Due to the exceptional circumstances the Panel had been unable to carry out empirical observations. However, the consistency of the material available had been striking.

Section 8 of the report sets out the positive conclusions on the way policing has been undertaken in South Yorkshire during the Covid-19 pandemic.

South Yorkshire Police might consider for further evaluation the 'disparity' rate for enforcement against BAME citizens and Fixed Penalty Notices where ethnicity is marked as 'unknown' which is more than twice that of the national figure.

A Lockley highlighted that the Panel's assessment is that the public generally has had a high level of trust and confidence in South Yorkshire Police during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Chief Constable thanked A Lockley and the Panel for the completion of a timely report. He acknowledged the usefulness of an independent report and confirmed that these are unprecedented events and lessons learnt will be factored into future events.

The report reflects the adaptability of the Force during difficult events.

The Chief Constable commended D Hartley for the management of Covid-19 pandemic. He highlighted the Covid-19 hub and confirmed this was the tightest and well run he had seen and this was reflected in the report.

The report acknowledges that the Force carried out what it intended to do and demonstrates the work undertaken with the public.

The Chief Constable reiterated that enforcement had been the last option and the Force sort to engage with the public. There were very few occasions when enforcement had to be taken. The lack of complaints as a result of enforcement shows that people were dealt with fairly and respectfully.

There is a clear correlation between proportionate enforcement and the fewer complaints received.

The Force is working to understand the disparity around the BAME community and is working with the Independent Advisory Groups and stop and search groups. The Chief Constable highlighted the language barriers and lack of understanding around the regulations in areas such as Page Hall which are also BAME communities and suggested some of the disparity may be justified.

The Chief Constable thanked the Panel for the document of record and confirmed that D Hartley and his team will use the information to inform future practices.

A Lockley was grateful that the Chief Constable found this useful as a document of record. He acknowledged that it was sensible to draw a line on 30 June 2020 but suggested the Panel may be called upon to undertake a further report at a later date.

16 PCC'S ENGAGEMENT WITH BLACK COMMUNITIES

A report of the Chief Executive and Solicitor was presented to the Board. The purpose of the report was to provide an update on the engagement between members of the Black community in Sheffield and Police and Crime Commissioner and his office following the national and local protests earlier this summer.

The Commissioner confirmed that the meeting with members of the Black community in Sheffield had arisen following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, USA on 25 May 2020.

The purpose of the meeting was to listen to the concerns raised to better understand how Black people feel they are treated differently by the police and the criminal justice services.

The group has committed to working together more closely and will continue to meet on a bi-monthly basis to discuss improvements which have been made and further actions that can be taken.

The Chief Constable confirmed it was important to maintain communication with local communities and listen in good faith. The Force is far from perfect and can improve.

The Commissioner highlighted the quality of the dialogue and confirmed that it was positive that people wanted to engage.

17 PAB WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was noted.

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

There was no any other business.

19 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

10 September 2020 at 10am.

CHAIR

