

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

## **PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD**

**11 JANUARY 2021**

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)  
Sharon Baldwin (Evaluation and Scrutiny Officer)  
Melanie Staples (Community Engagement Officer)  
Ellie Parkinson (Performance and Assurance Officer)  
Stephen Watson (Chief Constable)  
Tim Forber (Assistant Chief Constable)  
Jackie Bland (Director of Resources)  
Debbie Carrington (Interim Director of Finance)  
Alison Fletcher (Office Manager)  
Carrie Goodwin (Head of Corporate Communications)  
Shelley Hemsley (Temporary Chief Superintendent, Sheffield)  
A Macaskill (Interim Chair of the Independent Ethics Panel)  
Steve Wragg (Chair of the Joint Independent Audit Committee)  
Rachel Fletcher (Violence Reduction Unit)  
Councillor Garry Weatherall (Sheffield City Council)  
Thomas Bright (Sergeant)

APOLOGIES: M Roberts, D Hartley, L Poultney and R Staniforth

### 1 **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Commissioner welcomed those who had joined the meeting, including Councillors Short and Steinke and A Carter independent member of the Police and Crime Panel, and one member of the press (D Andrews).

He welcomed Sergeant Thomas (Tom) Bright to the meeting. Tom is on the SYP 'fast track' scheme to become an Inspector within two years.

### 2 **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**

The Commissioner extended congratulations to DCC Mark Roberts who had been awarded the Queen's Police Medal in the Queen's New Year Honours list.

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 highlighted that the pandemic continues, restrictions remain and have to be enforced. The Force's broad approach remains the same; the 4 E's: Engage. Explain. Encourage. Enforce. Although they will now be moving through Engage, Explain and Encourage more quickly. A proportionate and sensible approach will be taken but where people are being put in danger the Force will take action.

The level of enforcement is small compared to the number of people in the county.

The Chief Constable highlighted the community engagement taking place and confirmed that the Force understood that people are fed up and finding the lockdown challenging particularly if they have children at home. In the most part people are complying with regulations.

The Chief Constable confirmed that the Force has capacity to retain a full spectrum of policing services. Absorption rates are manageable although some staff have tested positive or are isolating in line with the regulations. The Chief Constable acknowledged having concerns about the new variant but confirmed the Force has good controls in place for this.

The Commissioner highlighted that confidence in the police will depend on the clear messages which come from Government.

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 DECEMBER 2020

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

9 MATTERS ARISING/ACTIONS

396	The Commissioner's Office would establish if Sheffield City Council are considering a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)
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	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.
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T Forber confirmed that he and the Deputy Chief Constable had met with Sheffield City Council (SCC). Whilst the Force acknowledge a long term strategic plan with partners for the Page Hall area is required, a PSPO in the short term would give the Force more enforcement powers to deal with the immediate issues. SCC has agreed to consider this.

There is now a dedicated neighbourhood policing team and a new Neighbourhood Manager in place.

The Commissioner enquired if the Page Hall police building is a council owned property. S Hemsley confirmed that it is and the Force is open to any suggestions from SCC in relation to co-locating.

T Forber confirmed that the issues in Page Hall will be solved by different agencies working together at a tactical level to address the issues.

#### 10 FORCE PERFORMANCE - SHEFFIELD 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 Sheffield, in line with the reporting requirements.

The Commissioner complimented S Hemsley on a good public friendly report with a strong narrative. He also thanked S Hemsley for highlighting the specific areas he had asked her to cover.

The Commissioner highlighted engagement and feedback and asked S Hemsley to explain what Sheffield is doing to engage in difficult circumstances during the lockdown. S Hemsley acknowledged that engagement and feedback is more difficult as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. There are no public meetings but the neighbourhood policing teams are using technology such as Neighbourhood Alerts and social media to engage. It is acknowledged that this does not reach everyone and articles are also being provided to free community magazines. Face to face (covid-safe) engagement is taking place whilst officers and PCSOs are on patrol.

The Commissioner enquired about the Independent Advisory Group. The development of this group is ongoing and is being taken forward by the Neighbourhood Chief Inspector. Meetings are being undertaken virtually. S Hemsley highlighted that this is an important forum and is used to look at the use of stop and search, hate crime and the use of the Covid-19 legislation.

The Commissioner highlighted a meeting he had with residents from Handsworth, Stradbrook and Woodhouse. This was held virtually and had been attended by Chief Inspector Lewis. S Hemsley confirmed that Sheffield District has also been using Facebook for virtual meetings. This was a different and positive way to engage with local residents.

The success of the Armed Crime Team (ACT) was discussed. The ACT work closely with the Sheffield District Fortify teams and the local neighbourhood teams. The ACT is leading on two significant investigations into firearm discharges that took place in June and July 2020 in Arbourthorne. These are targeted attacks between groups involved in the supply of controlled drugs. Several arrests have been made and the number and frequency of discharges has slowed.

The ACT is also investigating firearms discharges that took place between July and September 2020 in Abbeydale and Nether Edge. This has resulted in 15 arrests.

The Commissioner highlighted that incidents like these can be alarming for the public. S Hemsley confirmed that these incidents were between rival groups and rarely involve members of the public.

T Forber reassured the Commissioner that the Force is very proactive in relation to serious violent crime. He highlighted a recent case where one member of an organised crime gang was sentenced to 27 and a half years following a two and a half year investigation targeting firearms and drugs led by the Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU) in partnership with South Yorkshire Police and the National Crime Agency.

The Commissioner enquired about what preventative work had been taking place around fraud. The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau lead nationally on fraud. Preventative messages are circulated around the community using Neighbourhood Alerts. Neighbourhood policing teams do provide support to victims of fraud. The Commissioner enquired if the Force worked with Trading Standards. S Hemsley confirmed that they are one of the partners the Force can work with.

The Commissioner highlighted telephone devices which block calls. S Baldwin confirmed that a number of call blocking devices had been funded by the Commissioner in 2018/19. The Commissioner enquired if these are still available. S Baldwin agreed to look into this.

The concern around domestic abuse during lockdown was highlighted. The Commissioner enquired about the training provided to officers. S Hemsley confirmed that the Force had engaged with the Violence Reduction Unit to provide Domestic Abuse Matters training. Frontline staff started to receive training in October 2020. The training is being delivered in conjunction with Safelives and helps officers establish how to best support victims and keep them safe.

The Commissioner highlighted the Domestic Abuse Bill which is currently on its second reading in the House of Lords. S Hemsley confirmed that she was particularly looking forward to the expansion to Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders. These will give the police the opportunity to protect more victims.

The Commissioner referred to Sheffield accounting for 90% of South Yorkshire County Lines criminality. He acknowledged the workload and enquired what was happening during lockdown. S Hemsley confirmed this is about exploiting young people by getting them to transport drugs in and out of the county. This is still taking place during lockdown. There is a reduction in intelligence now that schools are closed. Officers are trained to spot the signs and review incidents involving young people missing from home.

The Commissioner enquired about the impact of Covid-19 on people with mental health issues during the Christmas period. S Hemsley only had accurate data up to September 2020. However, it did appear that there had been an increase in the number of people detained under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act because they appear to present a danger to themselves or other members of the public. This is believed to be linked to Covid-19 and the lockdown.

The Commissioner enquired about the amount of public support that is provided to the police in relation to Organised Crime Groups (OCGs). S Hemsley confirmed that there is a large neighbourhood footprint, 15 Sergeant led teams, and it is part of their role to gain intelligence. The Commissioner enquired if Sheffield's neighbourhood policing staffing was now complete. S Hemsley confirmed that this is still continuing to develop.

T Forber confirmed that as a result of the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) review there had been an increase in the number of police officers posts in the neighbourhood policing teams. The final 40 officers will be in place across the Force by 1 February 2021. The aim of these teams will be to consistently undertake structured engagement at a local level, address issues and provide feedback.

The Commissioner commented that he is receiving less complaints about rough sleepers in the City Centre. S Hemsley confirmed that dedicated problem solving plans are in place to manage rough sleepers. PCSO Steve Hart is particularly dedicated to this work and he works in partnership with the local authority and other agencies to address this.

Bringing offenders to justice was highlighted and the need to increase the number of staff dealing with specific crime types. The Commissioner commented that whilst the Force is recruiting additional officers these officers will not be up and running as soon as they are appointed and not all new officers would be visible, for example, detectives.

T Forber highlighted that all forces are aggressively recruiting police officers. The Force is pleased with the calibre of students being appointed. Nationally, forces now use the Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) to train police officers. This enables police officers to obtain a professional qualification whether they join as an apprentice or at degree-holder entry.

A fast track detective programme, Detective Now is also being introduced. T Forber highlighted the national 'fast track' programme Sergeant Tom Bright is on. This is a very demanding and exclusive programme. These are the chief officers of the future.

The Commissioner highlighted the fall in reported hate crime from October to November 2020. He commented that people would not believe this. S Hemsley confirmed that there had been a reduction during lockdown and this needed to be understood. The Neighbourhood Chief Inspector is the lead for hate crime and will be looking into this. Sheffield has also seen an improvement in victim satisfaction following the introduction of a new Hate Crime Coordinator.

**It was agreed that:**

- **S Baldwin would look into whether telephone devices which block calls are still available**

11 FORCE PERFORMANCE REPORT AGAINST THE POLICE AND CRIME PLAN 2017 - 2019 (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' 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 about the Force Organisational Risk Assessment (ORA) and whether this is used by all forces. T Forber confirmed that all forces will use something. The ORA looks at a range of data to predict what demand will look like in the future. This will enable the Force to establish which areas and roles new officers need to go into. He highlighted earlier discussions around domestic abuse and serious violence which need specialist officers. The Commissioner enquired if it is possible to compare forces. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) try to draw comparisons in the Value for Money Statements but every force is different. This links to the HMICFRS Force Management Statements which have to be published. The Force has invested in a neighbourhood policing model which is supported by response and investigation officers.

The Commissioner highlighted the Agile Working project. T Forber confirmed that the Force had already taken the decision to look at smarter ways of working prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Laptops and smart phones which can access Force systems via 4G and apps are being provided to frontline staff. This will enable the workforce to work more effectively. Business benefits are currently being monitored. Post Covid-19 the Force will concentrate on support staff including departments such as HR, Finance and Estates becoming agile. Buildings will also be considered in the long term.

The Commissioner mentioned the wider criminal justice system. He informed the Board that the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) was meeting with His Honour Judge Richardson later in the week. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and SYP are supporting the LCJB to help the courts by modelling the court processes. T Forber highlighted that the Force do not operate in isolation. The Force has key relationships with the Courts and Crown Prosecution Service to bring offenders to justice in a timely manner. The Covid-19 pandemic introduced significant challenges including a backlog in the courts. The backlog particularly in Crown Court has reduced but this is more difficult in the Magistrates Court.

The Commissioner commented that residential burglary is an issue that the public continue to contact him about. He highlighted the meeting he had attended in Handsworth, Stradbroke and Woodhouse where residential burglary had been mentioned. He enquired if Operation Shield, used in the marking of property to increase awareness of crime prevention and deter offending within local hotspot areas was still being rolled out. T Forber confirmed that this has been delayed

because of the Covid-19 restrictions and the need to go into people's homes to implement this.

T Forber acknowledged that burglary is a crime that has a real impact on the victim. He offered reassurance to the Commissioner and the public that the neighbourhood teams are working really hard to reduce offending. Outstanding suspects and the deployment of forensic teams are being monitored.

The Force is also working with Lancaster University to develop bespoke problem solving plans to tackle specific problems including burglary in 16 selected areas across the Force. This has seen a 31% reduction in crime compared with a reduction of 20% in other areas.

The Commissioner enquired about integrated offender management. T Forber confirmed that this involves the Force work with the Probation Service and other agencies to support prolific or offenders at risk of becoming prolific by putting services in place to support them. This aims to provide stability to help them move forward. The Force has seen some success.

The Commissioner highlighted the bitesize videos being used to deliver continuous learning and suggested Victim Support may be able to contribute. T Forber confirmed the videos are intended to improve the standard of investigation and services provided to victims by offering condensed reference points to officers. He confirmed that he absolutely wanted to get partners involved.

T Forber re-emphasised the importance of neighbourhood policing. This will provide preventative problem solving police service which the Force and public can have pride in. Neighbourhood policing will be ring fenced.

## 12 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND BUDGET SETTING 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.

M Buttery reminded the Board that this had been a standing item at the last few Public Accountability Boards. The purpose of the strategic planning process is twin track; to set the budget and ensure the Chief Constable's policing needs meets the financial envelope.

Last year, the Process was different - the PCC elections due to be held in May 2020 were postponed to 7 May 2021, as a result of the global Coronavirus pandemic and this government's response to it. As a result, the PCC reviewed his Police and Crime Plan and, in May 2020, he reaffirmed that the priorities of the Police and Crime Plan should remain until the 2021 PCC elections.

M Buttery highlighted the current position.

- The PCC has received from the Chief Constable his assessment of policing need in South Yorkshire for next year and beyond, the Chief Constable's budget requirement, and his plans for growth and savings.

- The PCC and Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (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 South Yorkshire Police 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.
- On 17 December 2020, the Chancellor's settlement announcement was received.

The finalised budget position and precept proposal for 2021/22, will be presented to the Police and Crime Panel for consideration on 3 February 2021.

S Abbott highlighted that the government's spending review announcement was for a one-year period only. The following key points were highlighted:

- The announcement of a public sector pay freeze, except for employees earning less than £24k p.a. who will gain an additional £250 in pay award, and NHS doctors and nurses who are exempt from the pay freeze.
- The continuation of the police 'Uplift' programme, with £400 million additional funding available nationally to continue the recruitment of 20,000 extra police officers across England & Wales by 2023, leading to an additional 6,000 officers in 2021/22.

S Abbott confirmed that more detail on the settlement had now been received. South Yorkshire has received a £270m cash settlement which is an increase of 4.9%. Once the uplift and inflation have been deducted this is a flat cash settlement and in real terms a reduction.

The settlement gives PCCs in England flexibility to increase funding in 2021/22, through increases in the council tax precept. There is a maximum limit on a PCC's ability to increase the council tax precept in their area - £15 on a Band D property (this equates to approximately a 7% increase in South Yorkshire).

The Home Office has assumed that the South Yorkshire precept will be set at £15 on a Band D. Even if this is the precept increase, there will still be a gap of £2.1m as the Home Office has not taken into account the reduction in the council tax base. Further funding may be received to cover some of this loss of income – around £1.7m, which leaves a £1/2m loss.

The Force and OPCC are working through the figures and further internal meetings are planned for January.

The Commissioner commented that this would be a tight year.

F Topliss highlighted the online policing priorities survey which is currently under way. Over 1500 responses have already been received. Interim results show that 65% of people surveyed are in favour of paying an increase of up to £15 and the top three priorities are visible policing, resources to tackle serious violent crime and neighbourhood crime. The survey will close on 18 January 2021. A virtual meeting with the PCC is also being planned.

The Commissioner enquired if there is a free text box for people to submit comments. F Topliss confirmed that there is and comments will be analysed and reported once the survey is closed.

### 13 JIAC EXCEPTION REPORT

S Wragg presented the Joint Independent Audit Committee's (JIAC) exception report. The following points were highlighted:

- JIAC received updates from both the PCC and Force.
- Information on the strategic concerns and how these were being managed had been provided.
- The Annual Governance Statements (AGS) Action Plans are on track.
- Assurance was received in relation to the arrangements for producing next year's AGSs.
- An update on the budget was received, although the settlement had not been received at that point.
- Reports were received from both Internal and External Audit and both the Force and OPCC are working well with the Auditors.
- The Government has not yet set the statutory timescales for completion of the audit next year. It may be as early as September or as late as November. Grant Thornton (External Auditors) will aim to do the audit as early as possible.

### 14 IEP EXCEPTION REPORT

A Macskill presented the Independent Ethics Panel (IEP) exception report.

This was the first meeting with a number of new members and these members are still going through an induction programme.

The main item on the agenda was hate crime. The Panel received a detailed report from Chief Superintendent S Poolman. The Panel noted that this was the first time the Crime Survey for England and Wales had similar hate crime figures to the Home Office. Previously, there had been more hate crime reported in the crime survey than to the police. This suggests more crimes are being reported to the police.

The Panel welcomed the amount of work being undertaken locally which has resulted in an increase in victim satisfaction. Nationally, hate crime victim satisfaction sits approximately 15% below that of all crime victim satisfaction. A year-on-year comparison shows a 13% improvement, which is 4-5% below the all crime victim satisfaction rate.

The Panel had expressed concern in the 30% increase in assaults on police officers, this equates to 16 officers being assaulted each week. The Panel is considering the long term effects of this on officers.

T Forber endorsed the comments made in relation to the increase in assaults on officers. South Yorkshire Police is not unique. The Force has robust procedures in

place to support officers who have been assaulted. He emphasised that these assaults will be investigated and offenders will be taken to court.

The Commissioner enquired if the new members were embedding well. A Macaskill confirmed that they were. Meetings are taking place virtually and lead member areas are being reviewed.

15 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.

The Commissioner referred to paragraph 4.2.1 which shows a list of organisations which are benefiting from funding obtained through proceeds of crime. He thanked the Force for getting the money back.

16 PAB WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was noted.

M Buttery reiterated that this was an iterative process and was reviewed and revised as and when required.

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

There was no any other business.

18 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING - 9 FEBRUARY 2021 AT 10AM

CHAIR

