**OFFICE OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR GWENT**

**STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD**

**7th JUNE 2023**

**Present:** **Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)**

Mr J Cuthbert -Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

Ms E Thomas – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC)

Mrs S Curley – Chief Executive (CEx)

Mr D Garwood-Pask – Chief Finance Officer (CFO)

Mrs J Regan – Head of Assurance and Compliance (HoAC)

Mr S Slater – Head of Strategy (HoS)

Mr R Guest – Head of Communications and Engagement (HoCE)

**Office of the Chief Constable (OCC)**

Ms P Kelly – Chief Constable (CC)

Ms R Williams – Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)

Mr A Hobrough – Assistant Chief Constable (ACC)

Mr N Stephens – Assistant Chief Officer, Resources (ACOR)

Mrs N Brennan - Assistant Director, Head of Joint Legal Service (HoJLS)

Mrs N Brain - Det/Ch/Superintendent, Head of Protective Services (HoPS)

Mrs V Townsend – Chief Superintendent, Head of Continuous Improvement (HoCI)

Mr C Williams – Chief Superintendent, Local Policing Area East and First Point of Contact (Ch.Supt.LPA East&FPOC)

Mr S Payne – Superintendent, Head of Professional Standards - (HoPSD)

Ms A Quartermaine – Head of Human Resources, Operations (HoHR)

Ms L Paget – Inspector, Staff Officer (SO)

**Staff Associations**

Ms J Everson – Unison (JE)

Mr M Candy – Police Federation (MC)

The meeting commenced at 10:00am at the new Police Headquarters and online via Teams.

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| 1. **APOLOGIES** | **Action** |
| Apologies for absence were received from Mr N Mclain – Chief Superintendent, Local Policing Area West and Specialist Operations, Ms E Lionel – Principal Finance and Commissioning Manager and Mrs N Warren – Governance Officer. |  |
| 1. **MINUTES** |  |
| We received and confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 8th March 2023.  We noted they were a correct record of the meeting and no amendments were required.  The PCC advised that he did not want to duplicate any information that would be discussed later on the agenda. However, he requested during the finance sections of the agenda, that the ACOR provided further details regarding the underspend, especially in light of the current pause in the apprenticeship programme.  It was noted that a report on the strip searching of children had been provided to the PCC and DPCC but they had not yet had chance to review it. The PCC requested that a briefing was planned, involving key partners, so there was an understanding by all regarding the current position in Gwent. We noted that all Welsh PCCs had also committed to providing this information to the Welsh Government so they had a full picture of the position across Wales | **Action**  **CC** |
| **The PCC advised that items 3a Organisational Performance Report, 3b Force Delivery Plan Annual Report and 3g HMICFRS PEEL Inspection Report, would be taken together with the PEEL Inspection Report taken first.** |  |
| 1. **HMICFRS PEEL INSPECTION REPORT, INCLUDING THE ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE REPORT AGAINST THE POLICE AND CRIME PLAN PRIORITIES AND THE FORCE DELIVERY PLAN ANNUAL REPORT** |  |
| We received the reports mentioned above and also noted that the DCC would be referring to an additional document, the Victim Service Assessment (VSA) Dashboard, which would show the progress made in relation to feedback from the recent Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) Inspection report. The DCC confirmed that further reports on progress would be presented to future SPB meetings.  The DCC reminded us that Gwent had been graded as ‘good’ at ‘Preventing Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour’ and ‘Managing Offenders and Suspects’, ‘adequate’ at ‘Engaging with and Treating the Public with Fairness and Respect’, ‘Building Supporting and Protecting the Workforce’, and ‘Strategic Planning, Organisational Management and Value for Money’. She indicated that the areas of focus for this meeting would be in relation to those areas that ‘required improvement’, ‘Investigating Crime’ and ‘Protecting Vulnerable People’ as well as the ‘Inadequate’ grading for ‘Responding to the Public’.  We were advised that the force was fully aware of the progress required in these areas and that a more structured triage process was needed to consider the needs of the victim. They also needed to improve processes around risk and the assessments to identify vulnerability and repeat victims. It was imperative that work was also undertaken on providing crime prevention and scene preservation advice at first point of contact.  The VSA Dashboard showed a snapshot of performance over the past 24 hours. The average time taken to answer 999 calls was shown as 10 seconds compared to 12 seconds. Similarly, there was an average wait time of 5 minutes and 5 seconds for 101 compared to a previous wait time of 5 minutes and 29 seconds. The DCC advised that it was important to note that the abandonment rate for 101 calls had also reduced from 41.5% to 28.5%.  Completed THRIVE scripts (these were the scripts recording the vulnerability of people calling) had improved to 76.2% from 49.4% which we were advised was a significant and sustained improvement. We also noted that the number of aborted THRIVE scripts had reduced from 38% to 16% and where there was no script recorded was down by half to 8.5% from the original 16.4%.  In terms of the emergency response rate (arrival within 15 minutes), this currently stood at 49.6% up from 45.7%. The DCC stated that this fluctuated daily but the force was now achieving over 50% compliance on a more frequent basis. The DCC stated that priority response (arrival within 60 minutes) had increased from 30.8% to 35.6% but that this was not good enough and that she was committed to reaching more calls within the published timescales. Officers and staff had been made aware of these published timescales and clarification provided that the time they had to respond to a call started on receipt of the call and not the time of deployment, as this had been misunderstood.  We noted that crimes recorded in 24 hours stood at 90.7% which was within target although the DCC acknowledged there was more work to be done in this area. We were informed that there had not been improvement in the level of information officers were including in their Niche reports but it was planned for improvement to be driven via supervisory reviews. The DCC stated that these supervisory reviews were of particular importance due to Gwent having a ‘young in service’ workforce; the coaching and mentoring of these officers and staff was therefore key.  We noted that the applications for Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DPVNs) had increased from an average of 8 to 22 which was a large improvement and correlated with the preventative work around the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) framework.  There had been a marked improvement in investigation length which had reduced from 55 days to 23 days which was positive for victims but also for the workforce as it shows that demand and workload was being considered and managed.  The final target on the VSA Dashboard related to positive outcome rates which had improved from 8.6% to 10.5%. Overall, the DCC believed the Dashboard evidenced improvement in key areas and was being used daily by leaders throughout the organisation. It was also provided to His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to evidence the work being undertaken to address the area highlighted as a cause for concern in the inspection.  The PCC queried what the most important area of focus was for the force going forward. The DCC advised that all metrics on the dashboard were important and, combined, they reflected the quality of service the force provided to the public; it was this overarching area that would be a key focus for the force.  The PCC then queried whether the DCC was confident that the improvements outlined would lead to an increase in public confidence and how that would be measured. The DCC stated that it was important to recognise that each of our communities was slightly different in their needs and what their expectations were of policing which was why they utilised the neighbourhood model. This model tried to take into account local concerns as well as crimes of a general concern. It was important that the force invested in this model and that work strands such as the ‘We Don’t Buy Crime’ team became incorporated into business as usual activity. We were advised that this team was currently being reviewed. The DCC also stated that we needed to do more to inform the public when performance is good. This also needed to be done on a more consistent and frequent basis with our partners and other stakeholders too. She was confident that performance was going in the right direction and that the cause for concern would be addressed as there was dedication from senior officers to continue moving this forward. The PCC was pleased that he would be able to inform the Police and Crime Panel that he had been assured that the force was on track to improve the areas of concern identified within the PEEL inspection report.  The CC thanked the DCC for her summary of the work ongoing to improve the areas of concern and stated that the force was working with HMICFRS to also provide the same reassurance to them. She also stated it was now key that assurances were also provided to the public and that a communications strategy would be developed that could be shared with the OPCC, in order to ensure this was done correctly and to rebuild public confidence.  The CFO queried how the improvements had been made and if they were sustainable within the finite resource available. The DCC explained that they had looked at people, processes, systems and culture and considered how they can be made more straightforward. They also considered how more emphasis was placed on areas that were important to the public rather than those areas identified in an inspection a number of years ago, for example. The force was using best practice and applying those principles where possible in Gwent.  The DPCC stated it was imperative that we continue to focus on the wellbeing of staff in the Force Contact Centre (FCC) room as well as considering the culture around victims. The CC advised that in terms of length of service we had the second youngest workforce in England and Wales and that presented both opportunities and challenges when it came to wellbeing and culture. She provided assurance that the force was focussed on these areas. She advised that various pieces of work had been commissioned to understand how people were feeling within the organisation and that data from this work would be considered at a leadership day at the end of June.  The CC stated that difficult decisions would need to be made during the year if focus was to remain on areas such as the FCC. She stated that it was important that resources were provided to those areas that served the public to the best effect.  The PCC agreed that there would be difficult decisions to be made but requested that improvements were reported back to the OPCC frequently rather than only providing updates at quarterly SPB meetings.  Organisational Performance  We were advised that overall crime levels in 2022/23 ranged from 14,911 to 15,905 on a quarterly basis but it was also important to note that positive outcomes also rose during that period which was a reflection of the work to improve crime data integrity.  The DCC stated that VAWG was an under reported area so an increase in reports must be taken as a positive and could be seen as a reflection of the work underway in this area.  The PCC was pleased to note that overall the performance picture in Gwent seemed to be reasonably positive although there were spikes in certain crime types such as shoplifting which needed to be addressed. He queried if there was any other work, aside from the We Don’t Buy Crime team, that was being undertaken and also asked if the force believed the increase in shoplifting was dependent on the current cost of living crisis that was affecting many of our communities in Gwent.  The DCC highlighted that the cost of living crisis and its impact was discussed throughout the Force Management Statement which was due to be submitted shortly. The local focus from neighbourhood policing teams also supported the work of the We Don’t Buy Crime initiative. One of the key areas being looked at was in relation to repeat offenders and repeat victims so the force was able to consider those areas that are frequently being targeted. The HoCI informed us that work had been undertaken recently that showed 77-79% of shoplifting impacted branded retail outfits as opposed to smaller, corner stores. The Ch.Supt.LPA East&FPOC stated that the partnership approach to this type of crime was critical and that this could not be seen as solely a policing issue. He advised that he had been working with the HoS to ensure there was a consistent force wide approach to community safety partnerships whilst also allowing an element of local flexibility.  The CC advised that she was concerned about crime relating to the cost of living crisis. She stated that a briefing was being arranged for her and the PCC on neighbourhood policing and understanding what community priorities were in areas within Gwent and whether certain crime types were linked to deprived areas. She stated that she wanted officers to be able to signpost vulnerable members of the public to support services such as foodbanks, as well as them undertaking their main role of upholding the law.  The CFO queried if there was any evidence from the performance information that highlighted concerns that the services we were commissioning to try and reduce certain crime types were not providing value for money. The HoCI advised she would discuss this with the OPCC at a future commissioning meeting.  In relation to Professional Standards performance, the HoPSD advised us that the number of allegations received during 2022/23 had been steady. The increase in non-schedule 3 complaints in quarter 4 was as a result of data cleansing and had no impact on the service provided to complainants. We noted that the time taken to deal with both non schedule 3 and schedule 3 complaints had decreased compared to the same period last year and was also lower than the national average.  We were advised that there had been an increase in vetting refusals due to financial vulnerabilities but were assured that where this was a concern, even though the person was not offered a role within the force, support was still given. The CEx also asked for assurance that existing staff going through the re-vetting process were also offered support if any vulnerabilities were found. We were advised that there were a number of options available to the force through which support could be offered.  We noted that the number of misconduct cases had increased significantly in quarter 4. Work had been undertaken to understand the reasons for this increase and it was determined that there was an increase in less serious and very serious misconduct matters which evidenced that difficult decisions were being taken and suspensions were happening when required. The CEx stated it would be useful to understand if the increase in cases related to historic or recent events. The HoPSD agreed to feedback outside of the meeting as this was an area they were working to understand in more detail.  MC stated that there were a number of officers suspended and a backlog of misconduct cases which had not reduced in the past 9 months. He noted that improvements had started to be made and would be grateful if this could be continued. The CC thanked the staff in PSD for their ongoing work in difficult situations. She stated that historic cases that take a long time to resolve undermined public confidence in policing and this need to be a focus and that it was important to deal with matters fairly and quickly. She advised that accelerated misconduct hearings that she had recently chaired were as a result of people coming forward and that public communications regarding the outcomes had been released to support the rebuilding of public confidence.  **The HoPSD left the meeting at 11.05am**  Force Delivery Plan  The HoCI informed us of the change in report format and stated that future updates would also contain measures and a prediction as to whether or not the force were on track to achieve those measures.  We noted that today’s discussion would focus on the three areas that had been rated ‘red’ by the force. There were 3 areas under ‘Support Victims and Protect the Vulnerable’ and 1 area under ‘Drive Sustainable Policing’.  The first commitment related to introducing a dedicated team to enhance investigations and file quality. The File Management Unit was now live and we noted that the Investigation Hub went live on 1st June. The Virtual Response Team (VRT) were also now embedded within the FCC. We were advised that this area remained ‘red’ as the force wanted to ensure that what they were predicting would be embedded and sustained. The baseline figures being used on the VSA presented earlier would now start from 1st June so the performance of the Investigation Hub could be assessed.  The second commitment related to supervisory levels. We noted that the force now monitored completion of supervisor updates. The HoCI informed us that this area would never be 100% compliant as supervisors were not expected to update every linked occurrence with the same update as the force were trying to reduce bureaucracy and add value only where it was necessary.  The third commitment was providing crime prevention advice at first point of contact. The HoCI advised us that the Joint Scientific Investigation Unit (JSIU) had visited the FCC and updated the training packages and a new website had been established that was provided to the public which contained crime prevention information. This commitment would remain ‘red’ until HMICFRS were satisfied that the actions implemented were sufficient to meet the cause for concern flagged in this area during the inspection.  The fourth commitment related to sustainable policing and included the monitoring and reduction of absence rates. The force had invested heavily in wellbeing provision and had improved force processes so that managers were able to view and understand abstractions in their team which then supported them to make operational decisions.  The DPCC requested that further conversations took place outside of this meeting to ensure the activity and more of the large, transformational areas of work were included as this was not always clear in the updates. Two further queries were also raised, the first ensuring that we have the right level of oversight on some of the areas of concern and secondly, how the force will ensure culture as a whole will be considered.  In relation to the first three commitments discussed and ensuring oversight of these areas, the HoCI informed us that work was ongoing to develop dashboards that sat above these areas with further information for monitoring purposes. The HoCI also stated that if there was any particular area of concern from the OPCC, then scrutiny could be applied. The HoCI would discuss with the CEx how this report and any dashboards developed, could be used to monitor Police and Crime Plan Priorities, the CC’s Force Delivery Plan and areas of improvement highlighted by HMICFRS.  The DCC responded to the culture query and advised us that the force had now agreed the wording for the legitimacy and culture risk that was raised by the Joint Audit Committee (JAC) and that this had been shared for feedback. She advised that leaders had challenged themselves on what they could do to make a difference in this area to ensure that the focus was wider than just professional standards. She also highlighted the work the force was undertaking with the University of South Wales to understand culture and stated that they were also utilising feedback from the staff survey as well. This feedback would provide guidance on areas where cultural work was needed and also the type of work that was required. The DCC advised any support the OPCC could offer would be appreciated and would be happy to discuss further in a separate meeting.  The PCC thanked everyone for the presentation of these reports and advised that bringing them together for discussion on the agenda was the correct decision as the overlap between them was clear. He stated that it was important for the public to understand the work being done on culture and that it was becoming clear that the cultural issues we were tackling were prevalent in all public and private sector organisations and that we were likely to be leading the way regarding change in this area. | **DCC**  **Action**  **Action**  **CC**  **Action**  **DCC**  **CC**  **Action**  **HoCI**  **HoPSD**  **Action**  **HoCI**  **Action** |
| 1. **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS INCLUDING THE END OF YEAR FINANCIAL REPORT 2022/23** |  |
| We received an update on progress with the Statement of Accounts and the Year End Financial Report 2022/23.  The ACOR explained that we were not currently in a position to finalise the accounts and that they had been delayed by 4 weeks. However, the year end financial report was the management accounting position that would be reflected in the accounts, and this would be discussed in detail.  The ACOR stated that there was an underspend of £3.5 million at year end. We were aware that there was going to be an underspend relating to police officer recruitment but acknowledged that this has been offset by a significant overspend relating to police staff and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) which was an area that needed to be controlled during the current financial year.  A further problematic area and one that we discussed a number of times during the last financial year was the issue of overtime. During 2022/23 there was significant overspend on overtime of £1.7 million. We noted that £285,000 of the overall cost related to one off toil payments for hours officers and staff had worked that were more than three months old and that had not been claimed as overtime. We were advised that a review of overtime was taking place to ensure it was appropriate and proportionate. The ACC informed us that from 1st May 2023 a new system was brought in whereby all spontaneous overtime needed to be approved by the Silver Commander who was now based in the FCC 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, as on review it had become apparent that there was not always an explainable reason for overtime to have been required although we were assured that operational demand would always take precedence in decision making. We noted that the new system was still embedding but that a reduction was being seen as well as a true narrative for the reasons overtime was required.  There had also been significant inflationary pressures during 2022/23, both on pay and non-pay areas, such as an increase in fuel costs as well as an overspend of £1 million on premises although this had been offset by underspends in other supplies and services areas. However, we needed to manage the areas of overspend better during the 2023/24 financial year.  The ACOR shared the positive news that the management of debtors and creditors was now working well and the force were performing within the compliance boundaries. This was a significant improvement as this had previously been an area of concerns for the JAC.  We also noted that the investments we held generated an extra £500,000 that had not been expected.  The Efficiency Working Group was currently reviewing opportunities across the force to determine where expenditure could be delayed or reduced. The areas identified resulted in Project Initiation Documents (PIDs) being presented to the Service Improvement Board for review and to determine if a business case was needed. However, any savings these may generate would not be deliverable until late 2023/24. In order to generate savings immediately, we were advised the force had delayed the start of certain programmes such as police officer recruitment and the apprenticeship scheme and were also holding on to vacancies, where appropriate, for longer in order to determine if the vacancy was essential or if demand could be absorbed. The ACOR acknowledged the importance of the apprenticeship scheme to the PCC and the CC. He stated that the original cohort had now finished the scheme and that it had been successful in certain areas of the organisation but that he needed to ensure resources were focussed in areas to achieve the best for the organisation and the public.  The ACOR advised that with the savings generated in 2022/23 the PCC now held £30 million of reserves, however this would reduce significantly in 2023/24 as £8 million would be spent on the new Joint Firearms range and a further £6 million spent on the new police station in Abergavenny. We also needed to factor in the fleet and technological replacement programmes as well as the maintenance of the estate.  The CFO stated that it was important the force understood the sustainability of the decivilianisation of roles and its impact on the organisation. The PCC requested a briefing outside of this meeting so he had a robust understanding of the financial position, including this matter. He reiterated his commitment to the apprenticeship scheme and looked forward to the time when the scheme could be resumed in the near future. The DCC confirmed that arrangements were already being made for a meeting to discuss the financial position and provided assurance that all elements discussed today would be included.  The CC stated that it was now essential that we were clear on the savings plan and the key milestones in achieving that plan and that this needed to be communicated more broadly throughout the organisation to avoid confusion and uncertainty. She also requested that early discussion took place with the Police and Crime Panel regarding the budget and where our gaps were. The DPCC advised that there was a meeting with the subgroup on 16th June that both the DPCC and the DCC had been invited to so that conversations regarding areas of concern could start to be articulated. The CFO also advised that an updated Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) would be presented at the meeting on the 16th June and also to the full meeting of the Police and Crime Panel on 23rd June.  The CC also raised concern that she had not received the detail, both timescales and financial, in relation to the Gwent Police Operational Facility (GPOF). She would like to be presented with summary costs for both GPOF and the refurbishment of Newport Custody Unit so they could be reviewed and enable the correct decisions to be made to support operational policing need.  The PCC stated that we needed to expect greater scrutiny from the public as funding for policing service in Gwent approached a 50/50 split with central government contributing half of the cost and the public of Gwent contributing half. | **Action**  **Action**  **ACOR**  **ACOR** |
| 1. **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN VERBAL UPDATE** |  |
| We received a verbal update on the MTFP from the ACOR and were informed that the document was due to be update in readiness for the Police and Crime Panel meeting on 16th June. We noted that the cost pressures identified currently amounted to more than the savings identified.  The most significant cost pressure currently related to PCSOs and the ongoing conversations with the Welsh Government. We were reminded that there were already significant savings required in the current MTFP, increasing from £3 million to £5 million to £7 million so the sooner cost reductions could be made the better.  The ACOR highlighted that the force appetite was not to have redundancies and that it was important Unison understood this. If a post was disestablished then the preference was for staff to move into alternative roles as this would avoid redundancy costs and benefit the business if they had skills that could be used elsewhere. We were advised some of the redundancy costs incurred over the last 12 months had been significant and we could not afford for them to continue although he added that it was important to ensure people were treated fairly as changes are introduced.  Unison stated that they were in a difficult position as over the last decade the force had given staff the opportunity to take redundancy and at one stage actively encouraged it. People who had worked for the organisation for a number of years therefore believed that the new policy which was currently out for consultation, meant that they were now being treated differently to their colleagues.  The DPCC asked for clarity in relation to the approval stage of the new policy and was assured by the Head of HR that it was currently out for consultation. She stated that the force had not changed the requirement for people to consider alternative roles although this had become more explicit in the new draft. They were also focussing on providing support and helping staff to identify roles in order to try and limit redundancies. The DCC stated that as this was an ongoing discussion between the force and Unison, it would be inappropriate to discuss further at this meeting. | **Action** |
| **The meeting was paused at 12noon for 5 minutes. The Ch.Supt.LPA East&FPOC left the meeting.** |  |
| 1. **PROCUREMENT STRATEGY ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23** |  |
| We received the Procurement Strategy Annual Report 2022/23.  We were informed that there were two outstanding issues with the report. Figures from Dyfed Powys Police had not yet been received so an estimate had been included and information from Blue Light Commercial had not yet been received.  In 2022/23 the three Southern Wales forces spent £104 million on goods, services and works, of which 78% was spent collaboratively. Significant savings were achieved across the three areas totalling £7,529,880, of which £6,998,886 were cashable savings.  The ACOR advised that progress had been made in relation to modern day slavery and that the force was continuing to work with suppliers to tackle this area. Requirements relating to modern day slavery had also been added to contract to ensure the force worked with the right suppliers.  In relation to the real living wage action that was raised at this meeting in September 2022, the Head of HR confirmed that after discussions, it was agreed that although the force was not an accredited real living wage organisation at this stage, they would follow the principles. As a result, two pay scale points had been removed to reflect this commitment.  The PCC queried if the force were actively engaging with Blue Light Commercial. The ACOR advised they were linking in with them on new contracts and that engagement was positive. | **Action** |
| 1. **INFORMATION MANAGEMENT COMPLIANCE ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23** |  |
| We received the Information Services and Governance Annual Report 2022/2023.  The disclosure performance areas were summarised within the report with a supporting explanation and an analysis of detailed performance at Annex 1 for Subject Access Requests (SAR) and Freedom of Information (FOI).  The ACOR advised that the force had seen an increase in demand for FOI requests relating to PSD which he anticipated would continue into the future. There was currently a backlog of requests with PSD but overall force performance, although under the 90% required by the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO), was in line with other forces.  We noted that during 2022/23, there were no significant data breaches that needed reporting to the ICO.  We noted the update in the report on Firearms Licencing and agreed that a detailed update would be provided later on the agenda where there was a specific report on the work undertaken within the Firearms Licencing department. The ACOR advised that new statutory guidance had been published during 2022/23 that had been implemented. The performance of the department had also been based around these new requirements.  In relation to Information Security, we noted the annex which set out the work undertaken in this area to ensure there were controls and checks in place to keep the organisation safe and that incidents could be managed appropriately. We were advised that this was scrutinised by the JAC and that the JAC lead member for Information Technology, attended meetings with the ACOR in relation to this area.  The PCC noted that the FOI department was now at full establishment and that they were working with PSD to publish some data sets to try and assist with demand. For 2023/24, he queried if the ACOR anticipated an increase in the FOI compliance rate. The ACOR advised that they did now have appropriate resources to manage demand and confirmed that he did have assurance that they would be able to comply with requests in future. However, he caveated that statement by explaining that many of the requests the force now received were more complex and that the majority of the demand was spread across two force areas, those being PSD and the Performance Analysts. The force would try and manage demand in these areas by being proactive with the publication of information via the Publication Scheme. We agreed that proactive publication of information was positive and as well as assisting in reducing demand for PSD, could also reduce demand across all other force departments. | **Action** |
| **The HoPS left the meeting at 12.25pm** |  |
| 1. **COLLABORATION UPDATE – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF OPERATIONAL AREAS** |  |
| We received an update on the Executive Summary of Operational areas prepared by the Police Collaboration Wales team for the All Wales Collaboration Board and the Welsh Chief Officer Group.  The ACOR stated that the OPCC was actively engaged in the work being undertaken in relation to the Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs). We noted that a significant amount of progress had been made although we acknowledged the challenges in this area. We agreed that we were all committed to ensuring the right service model was implemented by the dates specified.  The DPCC advised that the work on the SARCs was part of a wider transformational programme called the Wales Sexual Assault Services Programme where conversations were taking place regarding the future police governance relating to that programme. She advised that a meeting should take place separately to SPB in order to discuss further.  The DPCC also highlighted the excellent work of Chief Inspector Sedgebeer who was the lead for the three southern Welsh forces. She stated that his work had been exceptional and he was resolving complex challenges with partners. The CC thanked the DPCC for the feedback and ensured it would be passed on.  We noted the work being undertaken on data and analytics to support performance reporting across the four Welsh forces. The ACOR informed us that he was working towards implementing a new provision to replace the current global data store.  We were advised that the all Wales Sustainability Strategy considered the introduction of electric vehicles. Its aim was to ensure consistency of approach across the four Welsh forces in the charging policies implemented and to achieve economies of scale in terms of procurement. | **DPCC**  **CC** |
| 1. **ESTATE ACCESSIBILITY – ORAL UPDATE** | **Action** |
| We received an oral update from the ACOR on the accessibility of the Gwent Police Estate.  We were advised that if there were officers working in police stations then the phrase used previously ‘If we’re in, we’re open’ still applied. The ACOR stated however that there would be fewer officers using police stations for work as the aim was for them to work remotely across Gwent to increase visibility. We requested that this message was communicated to all officers.  A PID was being developed to review front counter services as there had been additional demand in Blackwood. It was important that the force understood this demand and ensured the appropriate model was in place to support staff and the public.  JE reminded us that the force had previously undertaken a review of front counter staff and that this had been very difficult. If the force were reviewing the service provided further, she asked that it was undertaken with sensitivity and that it was well communicated. The DCC assured us that lessons had been learnt from the last process and the force were ensuring they were embedded during this process. The HoCI also advised that this review had been initiated from feedback given by front counter staff on areas for improvement. We were also advised that a PID did not mean this work would definitely take place but was used to explore the options available for improved ways of working.  The ACOR advised that the force, after discussions with the IAG, were looking at how they could improve front entrance provision at Newport Central. A piece of work had been scoped which looked at different models for the front entrance redesign with options of bronze, silver and gold, each level providing a different, improved experience. This was currently being costed and would not be insignificant. The ACOR had also requested another tier of minimum work that could be undertaken to still achieve the brief but at a reduced cost. We were informed this minimum level was likely to cost in the region of £75,000 and that the bronze, silver and gold designs would be higher still. The outcome of this work would be discussed at an Estates Implementation Group to agree a way forward with feedback then provided to the IAG.  The DPCC stated that we had been on a significant journey in order to make our buildings more accessible and that had provided the principles we needed to follow when developing the new headquarters. Although we had achieved a lot it was still useful to continue those conversations on accessibility and how we can enable people to use the environment that we had to the best of their abilities. We need to ensure our workforce understood inclusion, diversity and accessibility which linked to the work the force was undertaking on culture. We agreed that when we were redesigning buildings it was important to engage our staff and communities in the development of those plans in order to ensure they were as accessible as possible. | **ACOR**  **Action** |
| 1. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC** |  |
| The information contained in the report(s) below has been subjected to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 2018 and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent’s public interest test and is deemed to be exempt from publication under section 7. |  |
| 1. **JOINT STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER** |  |
| We received the Joint Risk Register.  The CEx assured us that she attended the DCC’s Scrutiny Executive Board where the risk register was discussed in detail and was assured that careful attention was being paid to the risks and their management.  The DCC advised that a new process had been implemented to highlight those risks that had not been updated one week before the SEB to senior officers who can then chase that update. No risks had increased in rating over the last period.  The PCC requested an update on the Welsh language provision at reception. The HoHR informed us that despite undertaking positive action and advertising a recent vacancy for Reception in relevant places, the force had been unable to appoint a Welsh speaker to this role. The Head of Estates was therefore working with training providers to ensure they can offer the required minimum level of Welsh language at reception before referring to a Welsh speaking member of staff to assist further. |  |
| **Mrs N Gilbert, Information Services Manager, joined the meeting.** |  |
| 1. **FIREARMS LICENSING UPDATE REPORT** |  |
| We received the firearms licensing update report.  The ACOR advised that the report was an update on changes and progress made to the oversight and governance of the firearms licencing department as a result of the Plymouth shootings in August 2021.  There were a number of areas that the report provided an update on. The first related to the joint work undertaken with SWP to align procedures, which was started in January 2021. This allowed the force to manage threat, risk and harm and share information with SWP. A daily meeting was also introduced to monitor risks and updates from incidents.  The other areas related to the actions the force undertook subsequent to the shootings such as the performance of the firearms licensing team, an update relating to the new statutory guidance and the updated Authorised Professional Practice (APP), which provided a consistent direction of travel for all forces.  After the Plymouth shootings additional staff were recruited on a temporary basis to assist with more detailed vetting checks on existing and new licence holders that needed to be completed.  A decision was taken to focus on the renewals of existing licences so firearms did not need to be withdrawn while the process was undertaken. This ensured the force also dealt with existing risk first as previous checks on existing licence holders had not been as robust as was now required. During COVID the issuing of new licences was suspended across the country as home visits could not be undertaken. The ACOR advised that all outstanding submissions from 2021 had been completed but there were still some outstanding for 2022. The Information Services Manager informed us that there were 182 applications currently awaiting processing from 2022 and 2023, with approximately 30 additional requests received each month. She re-iterated that the force focus was on those certificate holders that were already in possession of firearms as they were deemed to be the greatest risk.  Due to the additional checks that need to be undertaken on all licence holders, the time taken to make a decision had significantly increased. The demand pressure within the team, even after the departmental review finalised in November 2022, was likely to continue and would need to be monitored.  The ACC stated that he now made all decisions regarding the revocation of a licence and advised that there was strict criteria to follow; we noted that support was also provided by JLS. The decisions made were not without challenge and could result in court proceedings brought by the licence holder.  The DCC stated that the costs paid by licence holders did not cover the costs incurred by the force to issue the licence and requested support in raising that issue nationally. The PCC advised that he had previously written to the APCC on this matter and would determine how he could assist in raising the matter further.  The PCC queried the process regarding false declarations made by licence holders. The Information Services Manager advised that a Police Constable post was now embedded within the team and that they were responsible for reviewing applications subject to false declaration and would assist with the police process surrounding that application. The ACC confirmed that this information was then passed to him as it was part of the criteria he considered when making a decision on revocation. | **Action**  **PCC** |
| **Mrs N Gilbert, Information Services Manager, left the meeting.** | **Action** |
| 1. **MANCHESTER ARENA TRAGEDY AND RESILIENCE FORUMS UPDATE** |  |
| We received an update on the Manchester Arena Tragedy and Resilience Forums from the ACC.  The ACC advised us that 149 recommendations for policing and partners had been identified in the report that had been released as a result of the tragic incident in Manchester. The force had produced an action plan, rated by the risk of the recommendation, and were working to ensure compliance with these areas.  The CC advised that a significant amount of work was being undertaken to keep our communities safe and that policing was continually reviewing and learning from incidents. |  |
| 1. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS** |  |
| We discussed recent developments regarding the Home Office use of hotels for asylum seekers and the press attention this had received in neighbouring force areas. We agreed that this would be discussed further at the Policing in Wales meeting. |  |
| 1. **TO IDENTIFY ANY RISKS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING** |  |
| There were no risks identified during the meeting. |  |
| **The meeting concluded at 13.20** |  |