



OFFICE OF CHIEF CONSTABLE – Chief Constable’s Update	
REPORT TO:	Strategy and Performance Board
DATE OF MEETING:	3 rd September 2020
REPORT OF:	Chief Constable Kelly
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PURPOSE:	To update members of the Strategy and Performance Board of significant events and work that has taken place since the previous update in June 2020.

1. Senior Leadership

Over the last two months we have seen changes in our leadership structure with the force advertising both internally and externally for senior roles. As a result, I am pleased to welcome the following colleagues; all of whom bring with them a wealth of experience in a variety of fields:

- Chief Superintendent Mark Hobrough, who joins us from South Wales Police as Commander of the West Local Policing Area (Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen);
- Chief Superintendent Tom Harding, who joins us from West Mercia Police as Commander of the East Local Policing Area (Newport and Monmouthshire) and;
- Sandra Connolly who joins Gwent Police as Head of People Services after many years of senior leadership experience with Panasonic.

2. Covid-19

Our response to the pandemic remains a significant commitment and the force is working hard to ensure that staff have the right personal protective equipment and support available to them in order to keep our communities safe. Strategic Command Groups remain in a state of readiness and are closely monitoring any potential increase in infections as the autumn and winter approach. Strong links continue with partners, local leaders and Government in order to ensure we are fully prepared. A ‘learning the lessons’ assessment of our business activities during the lockdown period has been conducted in order to refine processes and build on improvements.

We continue to see the return of our investment in digital technology that took place long before the pandemic which has allowed staff to continue to work from home with

greater ease. The force remains committed to ensuring that the right levels of supervision and support are in place for colleagues who are working in this more remote way. Sickness levels remain low, with most absent staff being under the self-isolation criteria and who are continuing to work from home.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our staff and partners who have worked tirelessly to help save lives. Furthermore, I would like to extend my continued gratitude to the communities of Gwent in supporting the national effort to reduce the spread of the virus and keep people safe.

The force remains aware of the on-going threat to our staff and communities and we continue to take proactive measures to reduce this risk, for example, by:

- Dividing up core teams into smaller groups across the estate, for example, our force control room and some Criminal Investigation resources.
- Ensuring effective supply chains of personal protective equipment.
- Adapting our working environments, for example, by installing sanitising stations and screens.
- Implementing centralised sickness reporting to ensure those still able to work from home are allocated appropriate and meaningful tasks.
- Continuing to interview new recruits and deliver initial training through digital means to maintain our recruitment plans.

3. Volunteers

I am extremely grateful to our dedicated Special Constabulary who have volunteered significant hours during this challenging and uncertain time. Over the past five months, Special Constables in Gwent have contributed 13,859 hours of service, equating to over 1831 shifts. The average hours contributed per month is currently 28 which is 12 hours over the minimum expectation. I have written to our Specials to extend my sincere appreciation for their commitment at this difficult time. The training of a new cohort of Special Constables has also continued during the pandemic; delivered by way of a virtual training programme.

Our Volunteer Police Cadets have also continued to learn and develop through online interactions. Our Cadets have also written letters to vulnerable people within our communities and hospitals through a 'pen friends' initiative. This has been well received with several hospital wards and sheltered homes becoming involved. The Cadets have also recorded various 'stay safe' COVID messages for young people and have shared these using social media platforms. This engagement with our communities has positively promoted the Cadets; with 104 young people recently applying to be part of the programme.

4. First Point of Contact (Force Control Room)

Our Control Room is a busy and often challenging environment. As the lockdown eases we have seen demand from both 101 and 999 calls increase by almost 20% during August 2020 when compared with August 2019. On one recent occasion levels exceeded those experienced on New Year's Eve 2019. The department has recently formed a staff-led wellbeing group to consider innovative ways for colleagues to support each other. The team often have the very first interaction with some of the

most vulnerable members of our communities and I am extremely proud of the empathy, care and professionalism demonstrated by all our call takers which was recently encapsulated in feedback from a victim who was reporting domestic abuse by her ex-husband:

“The 101-call handler was so supportive. He listened and helped me to report the issue. He took me seriously”.

Other recent good work includes the exemplary communication skills of a call taker who was able to manage a vulnerable male who was making threats to harm people with weapons - this resulted in a swift police deployment and the mitigation of harm to him and others. Further feedback praised the work of a colleague who also undertakes the role of ‘Hate Crime Support Officer’ and the sensitive way with which she handled a complaint of harassment made against a family’s autistic son.

Among the department’s other responsibilities is crime recording, which is crucial in to understanding the challenges faced by our communities and to deploy resources to the greatest effect. Our June ‘National Crime Recording Standards’ audit recorded an improvement on previous inspections, with an 82% compliance rate. We have also created an internal ‘Crime Data Integrity Working Group’ consisting of frontline staff to understand how we can continually improve and deliver efficiencies in this area.

5. Operational Good Work

5.1 West Local Policing Area

- Officers in the West of the force have been proactively developing intelligence to locate and arrest those who pose significant harm to our most vulnerable victims. Recent examples include the arrest of a male in relation to a stalking offence which resulted in a recall to prison being activated in partnership with the Probation Service. Officers also arrested a male who had evaded police and posed a risk of harm in relation to a Breach of Restraining Order and Damage.
- Acting on intelligence, officers in Blaenau Gwent have been carrying out warrants to tackle cannabis production – two recent warrants located 170 and 28 cannabis plants respectively, with persons arrested at both addresses.
- Operation Harley (our force-wide response for dealing with off road bikes) continues and is led by an Inspector in our West Local Policing Area. Since the pandemic we have continued to experience an increase in this type of activity. Work initially focussed on the Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly areas, however activity has since been carried out in Wentwood Forest and is also planned for the Abergavenny area in partnership with the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. We are determined to act robustly and deal with this issue that causes distress for so many communities. Our response has included continued media coverage, intelligence work to identify offenders, enhanced training for force control room staff and promoting a ‘problem solving approach’, for example, by using legislation to target vehicles that transport bikes before they can arrive at affected areas.

5.2 East Local Policing Area

- Since my last update in June, our Area Support Unit have seized over 200 vehicles across the east Local Policing Area. Seizures have taken place for a variety of

reasons including Anti-Social Behaviour and drugs supply offences. Huge quantities of Class A drugs have been seized in parallel with this activity.

- New partnership arrangements have been established in Pillgwenlly to respond more effectively to community concerns in the area. The 'Safer Pill' group is made up of representatives from a wide range of partners including, Police, Fire Service, Local Authority and the Local Health board and will report into the existing Community Safety Partnership governance. This group will be focussed on tackling the issues that impact most on residents' quality of life and will coordinate emergency services, public services and third sector organisations to tackle these matters. A Community Steering Group has also been established in Pill which will set strategic direction for police and partners and scrutinise their delivery. Both groups have met during July and August where key priorities have been set. Several arrests have already been made for drug offences and numerous vehicles seized for causing nuisance behaviour.
- Officers in Monmouthshire have conducted an operation to target burglary in the south of the county. This operation made use of the force's Rural Crime Team and utilised high visibility patrols, covert tactics and crime prevention advice to communities. The month-long operation was successful in identifying suspects who are now awaiting trial.

6. Operational Support

This update period has seen a busy time for our Operational Support team who are responsible for planning significant events and operations. The team have supported over five major and regional crime operations in the last three months, alongside their day to day management of our COVID logistical response.

The death of George Floyd saw protests around the world in support of the Black Lives Matter movement: Operation Fernbank was Gwent Police's response to such protests which presented a challenging balance due the lockdown restrictions. By working closely with partners, I am pleased to report that all seven protests held in Gwent passed peacefully with no arrests made. Indeed, in the largest event, (seen in Newport), the organisers publicly praised Gwent Police at the gathering.

The team are also responsible for Operation Sunrise, the force's response to Unlicensed Music Events (raves). Significant events of this nature have been seen in neighbouring forces and recent positive action by Gwent Police prevented the escalation of one such event in our force area, with music equipment and vehicles seized.

Under the leadership of a Superintendent the department are also responsible for specialist uniformed resources such as police dogs. During June / July our police dogs located drugs to a value in excess of £1m. They were also involved in over 100 arrests and located 14 vulnerable missing people, in one incident locating a vulnerable female moments before a suicide attempt.

Gwent Police also has a firm commitment to preventing harm on our roads, part of which is delivered through the Wales Road Casualty Reduction Partnership. My officers within Gwent have been promoting:

- National seat belt campaign – with several operations conducted incorporating partnership working to educate and where necessary take enforcement action.
- Community Speed Watch which has now re-started in a COVID-secure manner.
- Under a new initiative, media college students will be producing road safety videos aimed at 16-24-year olds with the first being created by the end of 2020.
- A webinar will be held during 'Project Edward week' in September, (European Day Without a Road Death), and will focus on victims and families involved in incidents of death or serious injury in Gwent. The week will also feature a wide range of engagement and enforcement activity with partners.
- GoSafe officers have also recently used social media platforms to identify and arrest two drivers seen using the M4 at over 150 MPH - case files are currently with the Crown Prosecution Service.

7. Organised Crime

Our determination to respond to serious and organised crime in our area has led to several recent operations as a result of which 43 persons are currently on remand awaiting trial with 5 already sentenced. Recent cases include:

- Operation Draco - 4 suspects charged and remanded in relation to a drugs supply conspiracy. Over £15,000 in cash recovered along with evidence of 3 encrypted mobile phones. Furthermore, Cocaine to the value of £6000, 9 vehicles and 3 luxury watches were seized.
- Operation Firgrove & Frenshnam - a multi-kilo drugs operation with 1 suspect charged and remanded and £145,000 frozen in bank accounts
- Operation Solar - 18 suspects arrested targeting the supply of class A drugs in Newport - 5 remain on remand awaiting sentencing.
- Operation Atom / Beechway - which saw multiple offenders arrested and significant amounts of cash and Class A drugs seized.

8. Financial Crime

Linked closely to the above, our Financial Crime Unit has been working tirelessly in its vital role of denying offenders access to their criminal gains. Since my last update the unit has used the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 to apply for:

- 3 x Asset Restraining Orders totalling **£122,200** (*which prevent criminals from dissipating their assets in advance of a Confiscation Order being made*).
- 4 x Confiscation Orders totalling **£58,933.15** (*which are made post-conviction and are intended to recover the monetary benefit from a defendant's crimes - if there is victim attached to the crime then a compensation order will be applied for also*).

The unit has also used civil powers (which do not rely on criminal convictions), under the same act to secure:

- 36 x Cash Detention Orders totalling **£441,074** (*an order that applies to cash over £1000 seized whilst an investigation takes place - these often lead to the money being forfeited*).

- 6 x Account Freezing Orders totalling **£279,444** (*monies in bank accounts over £1000 frozen whilst an investigation takes place - these also often lead to the money being forfeited*)
- 1 x Listed Asset Detention Order for **£32,500** (*which relate to valuable items e.g. jewellery - this is the first use of this relatively new power by Gwent Police, which in this case related to a Rolex watch*).
- 3 x Forfeiture Orders totalling **£12,916.00**.

The unit also has a responsibility for financial safeguarding with 145 vulnerable victims having been identified and safeguarded since my last update, and £186,166 recovered that would otherwise have been lost to fraudsters.

9. Public Protection and Crime Investigation

Our Public Protection Unit has recently achieved several positive outcomes to protect the most vulnerable in our communities, including:

- An investigation into a 30-year-old male who travelled from London to meet a 12-year-old girl from Caerphilly and engaged in sex with her at a hotel - the suspect was charged with rape of a girl under 13.
- A suspect is awaiting trial following being charged with 19 counts of historic child sexual abuse and neglect.
- A male sports coach who has been convicted for a series of offences relating to 'sexual communication with a child'.

Work also continues to progress co-located safeguarding hubs in each of the Gwent local authority areas which will increase our capability to share information and effectively safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

A Detective Inspector is now in post in the preventative role of 'Heroin and Crack Cocaine Co-ordinator' and will work with the Drug Steering Group and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner around the planning for the future Substance Misuse Contract.

I am passionate about putting the needs of victims at the heart of everything that we do. The professionalism and empathy of our officers was recently demonstrated in the good work of our Criminal Investigation Department in Newport, who sensitively and professionally investigated allegations of rape and sexual assault that took place against a victim almost 20 years ago, when he was a child. The defendant, now 68, was recently convicted and sentenced to 12 years in prison.

Our Police Online Investigation Team continue to undertake proactive enquiries to target those who use the internet as a space to exploit children and the vulnerable. Across June, July and August, the team commenced 25 investigations with 20 warrants carried out. This resulted in 11 arrests, the seizure of 185 electronic devices and the safeguarding of 28 children linked to the addresses and suspects. 3 children were also proactively identified and safeguarded after having been found to upload self-generated images to social media platforms. Work is also on-going to develop an enhanced strategy with Social Services to promote early intervention and safeguarding of children assessed to be at risk of harm online.

10. Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking

Gwent Police's Modern-Day Slavery team continues to proactively identify persons who may be at risk of such harm in our area. The team has been undertaking intelligence led visits to premises such as car washes, massage parlours and care homes in partnership with colleagues from the Immigration Service. This work has been particularly important during the last few months to ensure the welfare of vulnerable persons whose whereabouts may have been unknown or have changed whilst such premises were closed during the lockdown period.

Under the umbrella of Operation Aidant, the team also continue to support several serious and complex investigations including offences of servitude, sexual and labour related exploitation.

The team have recently produced a training session for new officers and police staff investigators. The success of this session will soon see it rolled out to partner organisations across Gwent and the region. Targeted awareness raising also continues, for example, with educational leaflet distribution to haulage companies in relation to organised immigration crime.

11. People Services update

Gwent Police is committed to the recruitment, development and retention of its workforce, with a critical eye on equality, diversity and inclusion. I look forward to working with Sandra Connolly as we drive forwards some ambitious plans further deliver in this area. Recent updates from the department include:

11.1 Recruitment

- 28 student officers will commence in June 2020 with a further 28 in Sept 2020.
- All police officer second interviews have been maintained over the last 3 months using Microsoft Teams.
- 11 Detective Now candidates have been given a conditional offer of employment.
- 10 constables will start in Summer 2021 on the Police Now Leadership programme.
- 5 transferees from other forces are due to start in September (1 x PS, 3 x DC and 1 x PC).
- A large response was received to our recent Community Support Officer campaign with 463 people starting an application. 99 applicants were successful at shortlisting with the highest number of candidates ever seen from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.
- Positive Action work continues with online awareness sessions run for the recent Community Support Officer campaign and now arranged for the September Police Officer and Special Constable campaigns.

11.2 Occupational Health and Wellbeing

- A force 'Welfare Officer' took up post during July 2020. Part of their role is to manage 6 'Welfare Support Officers' across the force who will provide direct support to officers and staff who have been exposed to trauma, or who may be subject of investigation. The force has also recently recruited a further 17 'Trauma Resilience Practitioners' offering peer-support to colleagues following exposure to distressing incidents.

- A Wellbeing App - 'Backup Buddy' is due for launch in August 2020 in addition to the existing monthly Online Wellbeing Chats.
- A Dyslexia Support Group has been set up with online screening tests for dyslexia launched.
- The Occupational Health Unit continues to support officers through the COVID pandemic, particularly vulnerable staff members and those shielding.
- Plans are underway to ensure the seasonal flu vaccination is available to as many staff as possible this winter in order to assist our workforce resilience as the COVID crisis continues.

12. Diversity & Inclusion

Our Diversity & Inclusion team have been driving a continued programme of work to develop our strategies and plans in this important area; this to ensure we have a representative workforce and that the needs of our communities are understood.

We have recently recruited 4 new members to our Independent Advisory Group with interviews shortly being held for another 10 / 15 prospective members. Work is also underway to develop additional tiers of the Independent Advisory Group, such as a Community Cohesion Group and a Youth Community Cohesion Group.

We are also continuing to grow our Chaplaincy service with 2 new Chaplains joining us recently making a total of 6 representing different faiths: Christian, Muslim and Bahai with of course an overarching aim to welcome Chaplains from all faiths. We are currently developing the way staff access the Chaplains and will soon be refreshing the promotion of their services to the workforce.

The team have also been working in partnership with our 'Nxt Gen' Department to promote a Hate Crime Mentor initiative which will see school children participating in lessons, projects and activities to learn more about prejudice and discrimination.

Other up-coming work includes:

- Working with Women Connect First to create a cookery competition in our diverse communities.
- A project in Newport to develop a Community Cohesion Football tournament.
- Developing a Community Cohesion Cricket Project in partnership with Cricket Wales.

13. Corporate Communications

Our Corporate Communications Team continue to be instrumental in sharing internal and external messages during this challenging time, particularly in relation to COVID regulations, policies and procedures and I am extremely grateful for their hard work and dedication.

With less physical engagement taking place, conversations with staff and our communities have relied heavily on digital methods with the team supporting initiatives such as:

- Facilitating the first online discussion with community representatives regarding issues of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (a key element to support Gwent Police's on-going work to develop its approach in this area).
- Contributing to the first Gwent Police online discussion with staff.
- Facilitating the first virtual Gwent Police Awards 2020 as we were unable to host our event in March.

Furthermore, the department have promoted recent staff surveys which have included:

- 'Chwarae Teg' - a benchmarking survey internally commissioned around gender equality.
- An internal equality and diversity survey.
- Covid-19 and Operation Uplift surveys - (nationally led).

14. Digital Services Division

Gwent Police through the joint Digital Services Division (with South Wales Police) were already equipped with mobile phones and laptop devices for all field and flexible workers and so were able to mobilise the agile capability of the workforce quickly during lockdown.

In addition, the Digital Services Division has coordinated and supported the following developments:

- Enhanced implementation of Microsoft 365 as part of the National Enabling Programme within Gwent. It is intended to migrate all staff across by late Autumn.
- By working with operational policing and criminal justice leads the department developed an application to allow for the completion and submission of COVID 'fixed penalty notices' on both mobile devices and laptops which significantly reduced bureaucracy.
- Working with criminal justice colleagues, the department has implemented online remand hearings from custody units and a system to allow solicitors to act for suspects remotely.
- A bespoke application called 'Notify-x' was developed to support digital messaging to individual colleagues, groups or the whole force during the COVID period.
- Knife crime and mental health applications have been launched during the COVID period. A cell check app has also been developed which allows custody staff to record the status of detainees electronically and enter this directly into our custody system.

We continue to strive for Gwent Police to be one of the most innovative and digital forces in the UK to drive efficiencies and improve our service to the public.