



<b>OFFICE OF CHIEF CONSTABLE – Chief Constable’s Update</b>	
<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Strategy and Performance Board
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2020
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Chief Constable Kelly
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	Inspector Shane Underwood
<b>PURPOSE:</b>	To update members of the Strategy and Performance Board of significant events and work that has taken place since the previous update in March 2020.

## **1. Covid-19**

Without question, the biggest challenge for Gwent Police in the last few months has been our policing response to the ongoing Corona Virus (Covid-19) pandemic, which has been unprecedented.

From the outset Gwent Police adopted a proactive approach to understand how the virus would affect policing in Gwent, and what was required to effectively deal with the situation.

The Assistant Chief Constable, Jon Edwards – implemented a multi-agency strategic coordination group and our internal ‘Gold Groups’ to ensure shared situational awareness, clear communication (both internally and externally), and a cohesive response.

There were initial significant challenges for Gwent Police which included, maintaining our existing policing services whilst keeping our staff safe. The previous investment in laptop technology has paid dividends and our workforce have adapted as necessary. We have maximised the use of agile working where appropriate to do so and frontline services have the necessary personal protective equipment they require to operate safely.

In terms of policing tone and style we continue to follow the national policing guidance of Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce and have issued fixed penalty notices, only where necessary to do so, for breaches of the Welsh Corona Virus Regulations. The Corporate Communications Department have provided a series of excellent internal and external messaging to keep the public and our staff informed.

As we continue working through this national crisis is important to capture ‘Learning the Lessons’ hence we have created an evolving document which covers five distinct areas. These include:

Wellbeing and Welfare  
Effective Communication  
Community Engagement and First Point of Contact  
Support Services  
Organisational Efficiency and Effectiveness

This information is fed back into the National Police Chief's Council to improve the national policing response to Covid-19.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our key partners' who have also worked tirelessly to help protect and save lives. Furthermore, I would like to thank the communities of Gwent, who have supported the huge national effort in reducing the spread of the virus and playing their part to help protect and save lives.

I am immensely proud of our policing response to the pandemic. A tremendous amount of critical work has been completed which has placed Gwent 'ahead of the curve' in comparison with other force areas which has been recognised locally, regionally and nationally, including the Home Secretary, who personally congratulated the force.

However, challenges remain as the long-term picture is still not clear as to how society will, reintegrate into the new norm. I can reassure you that Gwent Police will continue take a proactive approach to this situation and we will adapt as necessary to ensure we keep the communities of Gwent safe and informed.

## **2. Police Sergeant Carl Blanks**

On 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020, PS Carl Blanks was on duty and after attending a report of a disturbance at an address in the Newport area was severely injured by an edged weapon. The offender has subsequently been arrested and has been charged with the attempted murder of PS Blanks who is still recovering from surgery. As this matter is sub judice I am unable to provide the specific details. The messages of support from the public have been overwhelming.

## **3. Operating Model Review**

We are currently in the process of reviewing our operational policing model, which is being led by Assistant Chief Constable, Jon Edwards, supported by Superintendent Jason White. Our existing model was originally designed to deliver the best possible policing service based on the inclusive data at the height of austerity. Our policing establishment since 2015 has increased and it is anticipated we will receive an additional 165 police officers and staff due to Operation Uplift (Government initiative of increasing 20,000 officers in the United Kingdom).

It is therefore an appropriate time to critically review our existing arrangements and make any changes as required to ensure that we are maximising the effectiveness and efficiency of every resource within Gwent. We have already established there is a requirement for additional police sergeants to provide consistency of staffing ratios throughout all areas of the force, and this will assist in improving overall force performance. These additional resources will be partly funded using monies from Operation Uplift. I am cognisant of protecting police constable numbers and will ensure work towards maintaining front line constable numbers in line with our projected planning. At the conclusion of the review and prior to the implementation of any necessary changes, we will engage with key stakeholders.

#### **4. Chief Superintendent Process**

Chief Superintendent Rhiannon Kirk and Chief Superintendent Emma Ackland were recently successful in their Assistant Chief Constable applications at Gloucestershire Police and Dyfed Powys Police respectively. This is a great achievement for them, and for Gwent Police, and I wish them all the very best. As a result of their successes we are currently advertising internally and externally for Chief Superintendents positions.

#### **5. Proceeds of Crime**

The following list contains the recovery of criminal funds since achieved since 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 by using the powers available to us under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (as amended).

- Confiscation Orders: 8 orders with a combined total of **£63,165.76**
- Cash Forfeiture Orders: 11 orders with a combined total of **£71,623.35**
- Account Freezing Orders: 2 orders with a combined total of **£28,800.48**
- Cash Detentions Orders: 5 orders with a combined total of **£85,192.00**

Explanatory Notes:

1. Confiscation orders are imposed by the Crown Court post-conviction and a default term of imprisonment is set if the orders are not paid within the time set.
2. 50% of (paid) Confiscation Orders is returned under the Assets Recovery Incentivisation Scheme (ARIS funding), shared with Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) – Policing receives 16% of the order amount back.
3. Cash forfeitures are a civil process. As no other agency is involved in cash forfeitures, policing receives the full 50% back under ARIS.

4. The Account Freezing Orders and Cash Detention Orders are civil processes for monies held whilst their origin and intended use are investigated. Most generally lead to Forfeiture Orders.

Our Financial Crime Unit also assist victims of fraud, where possible, to refund their lost monies by liaising directly with banks. Since 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 the team has successfully refunded £250,000 to victims of crime through the banking arrangements.

## **6. First Point of Contact**

The following relates to good work performed by the First Point of Contact team:

Operator Helen Bishop assisted one of our new call takers with a serious incident involving a male who had injured another male with a knife. By supervising and guiding the call taker, they were able to ask pertinent questions thereby ensuring the caller was safe. Furthermore, by keeping the informant on the line for live updates and arranging appropriate resourcing to attend, these actions contributed to the offender being arrested, and a successful conclusion to this frightening incident.

Operator June Ellaway was recognised by Detective Chief Superintendent Brain for the care and compassion shown to a family of a missing person following contact from the family praising June's handling of the call. June epitomised our force values when dealing with the family – showing care, professionalism and responsiveness which has clearly enhanced public confidence.

The flexibility of the Force Communication Suite to deal with Covid-19 has been exceptional and has included working from different locations, changes of shift patterns, and adapting to working from home (including the Crime Management Unit, Timeliness, and Social Media Desk teams). Furthermore, we are the first force in the country to introduce 101 call handling from home (for those call handlers needing to self-isolate), which demonstrates innovation, technical capability and maximises the use of resources.

## **7. Operational Good Work**

There has been on going work throughout the Gwent Police area as regards drug activity throughout the force. Whilst police have traditionally focussed on the enforcement element of drug related crime there has been a move to support this through a more holistic approach. This seeks to focus on a '4P' approach to policing and ensure that not only are offenders brought to justice, but that the most vulnerable are protected and communities are also diverted away from such criminality in the first place. The four P approach, has four elements:

PURSUE – Prosecute and disrupting serious and organised criminality  
PREVENT – preventing people from engaging in serious and organised crime  
PROTECT – Increasing protection against serious and organised crime  
PREPARE – reducing the impact of serious and organised crime

Within the East Local Policing Area (LPA), which includes Newport, there has been significant work to address drug activity in the area. This has included the appointment of a Chief Inspector Serious Organised (SOC) Crime Partnerships, who seeks to engage with partners to ensure that there is a partnership approach to tackling drug issues within the area and to identify which agency is best place to take the lead as regards specific issues raised. This has resulted in the formation a Drug Threat Group meeting that comprises of partner agencies and which helps identify drug patterns and wider issues from a multi-agency perspective and devise possible solutions to identified issues.

In terms of recent enforcement within the Newport area, the East LPA has a designated proactive team, which investigates drug crimes throughout the policing area. This is supported by the force's Organised Crime Team, who carry out several large-scale drug supply investigations throughout the force. Examples of recent successes in the East LPA, Newport, as regards drug activity and those associated criminals are as follows:

- Following intelligence being received that a known drug supplier was in possession of a taser. A firearms warrant was executed and a taser recovered. This resulted in two males being arrested and dealt with for firearms offences. They were also arrested in connection with assaults upon police and an emergency worker. The investigation team identified that other family members relating to these offenders were also implicated in the supply of controlled drugs and money laundering. Warrants were issued for that address and £15,000 was recovered from an outbuilding. The family member was also subsequently arrested, and the money sent for forensic examination. A number of other members of this organised crime group have been detained by police and searched and in the last three months, which have resulted in seizure of £50,000 in cash and high value items being recovered by police.

- Other significant drugs seizures have also taken place as regards some previously unknown drug suppliers. Police in Newport conducted the stop search of two young people (one of whom was not known to police at that time) both were

found to be in possession of a small amount of drugs. Following arrest searches of their homes were undertaken, where 15+ 'ballers' of cocaine were located (weight = £12,500 worth), £1600 pounds on cash, £25,000 worth of designer clothing and a BMW vehicle, which his parents did not know he owned. Police also recovered drug paraphernalia, a number of phones and a Patek Philippe watch, which if authenticated is worth £60,000. It is believed that this individual has linked to a large Organised Crime Group.

- In this same time period, the East LPA have secured a further conviction in relation to Operation Washington. This was a large-scale drug supply operation and with this further member of the OCG pleading guilty means that none out of eleven defendants have been convicted. One defendant is currently awaiting re-trial.

- The proactive approach in tackling drug crime is also being undertaken by the Area Support Teams, who undertake proactive mobile patrols. From their work, they gathered intelligence surrounding a Newport based couple and noted that they were visiting Birmingham three times a week. They built an intelligence picture which supported the probability the couple were involved in the supply of controlled drugs and so organised a warrant. This yielded the following seizure: £15,000 in an extractor fan, £25,000 in the gas meter, a £6,000 Rolex and an £11,000 Audi Q3, which was recovered.

In the West of the force we have developed a dedicated Serious and Organised Crime Team and since the instigation of the team (from September 2019) we have recovered:

- i) Drug Seizures: £540, 195 (approximate street value of drugs – all classes)
- ii) Cash Seizures: £38,655
- iii) Other assets including, vehicles, paintings, designer clothing, watches, hydraulic press and a motorhome.

I would like to thank the following partners who have contributed to this success, which include, Royal Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), Social Services, Local Authority Licencing and Planning departments, Future 4 Diversion Scheme (18-25), Supportive People, Driver Vehicle Licencing Association (DVLA) and Wilsons Auctioneers. In April alone 7 individuals linked to Serious Organised Crime have been arrested for drug trafficking criminality in the West of the force area.

Operation Harley is the force wide response for dealing with off road bikes. Since the Corona Virus pandemic all areas of the force have experienced an increase in this type of activity and therefore, our response to this issue has increased. A successful operation in March resulted in the seizure of 7 vehicles which featured in the BBC news. A re-launch of this initiative is planned for 1st June with media and

partners. Looking forward, we are considering the option of purchasing off road bikes, which would potentially significantly increase our enforcement capability, however, this option will need to be carefully considered.

Operation Bill, a high visibility operation conducted in the Pillgwenlly area during March 2020 which yielded the following results:

4 x persons arrested as a direct result of intelligence led stop searches

16 x persons arrested comprising of the following offences:

2 x Attempt robbery

2 x Recalls to prison

2 x Possession with intent to supply class A (Heroin)

1 x Possession with intent to supply class B (Cannabis)

1 x Possession of class C drug (Pregablin)

2 x Driving whilst unfit through drugs

2 x Section 5 Public Order Act

1 x No Bail Warrant

1 x Multiple shoplifting offences

1 x Non-dwelling burglary

1 x Domestic violence offence

5 x house searches conducted whereby Class A & B controlled drugs and cash was seized.

### **Other Newport Activity**

Partnership Operations:

Waste Enforcement and Gwent Police Operational Support Unit targeted waste carriers, scrap metal collectors and fly tipping; over 50 vehicles checked resulting in six vehicles being seized. All business addresses attended on Commercial Road and Alexandra Road and follow up visits arranged for those not complying with regulations

Youth Outreach:

Officers conducted after dark patrols with Early Intervention Team in order to divert local youths to appropriate services and offer support and advice.

Exploited Females:

During a two-week period, officers patrolled with partner organisation SEASS to offer ongoing support and assistance to exploited females on Commercial Road.

Housing:

We assisted Charter Housing to rehouse and safeguard a vulnerable tenant whose house had been taken over by drug users/exploited females.