

**OFFICE OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR GWENT
EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE STRATEGY AND
PERFORMANCE BOARD
11th MARCH 2019**

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)
Ms J Robinson – Head of Strategy (HoS)
Mrs J Regan – Head of Assurance and Compliance (HoAC)
Mrs N Warren – Governance Officer (GO)

Office of the Chief Constable (OCC)
Mr J Williams – Chief Constable (CC)
Mrs P Kelly – Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)
Mrs R Kirk –Assistant Chief Constable (ACC)
Mr M Budden –Chief Superintendent, Head of Strategy Performance
and Change (HoSPC)

The meeting commenced at 4.00pm.

**ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE REPORT AGAINST THE POLICE
AND CRIME PLAN PRIORITIES**

Action

1. We received the force's organisational performance report and noted that this meeting had been convened due to the information being unavailable in time for the meeting on 6th March.

We acknowledged that the quality of the organisational performance report had improved and noted that it would be incorporated within the force governance structure. The PCC re-iterated the importance of evidencing how the priorities within the Police and Crime Plan were met within the performance report as the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) scrutinised the report to ensure the PCC was holding the force to account.

Concerns were raised with regard to the lack of narrative contained within the report. Facts and figures were not provided and on occasion conclusive outcomes were not provided. We highlighted the narrative explaining the performance on Dwelling and Non-Dwelling Burglaries as a good example of what should be presented throughout the report. We agreed that the HoSP&C and the HoS would review the performance report next week in order to make the required amendments.

**HoSP&C/
HoS**

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Our attention was drawn to Crime Prevention and Crime Data Integrity and we were advised that the force was 96% compliant in Crime Data Recording as opposed to 77% in the previous year. The increase indicated that more crime was being reported and significant progress had been made in terms of compliance with recording standards. We were informed that a key element of force focus had been in relation to domestic abuse. The increase in recorded crime was linked to violence and domestic abuse in alignment with national trends.

Action

The CC requested confirmation that the PCC was happy with the proposals in relation to the compilation of the Performance Report going forward. It was agreed that three or four questions would be addressed for each data set within the report such as a description of the data, force activity, the impact of the activity and any future plans in order to demonstrate that the force were meeting the priorities within the Police and Crime Plan.

The PCC re-iterated the importance of evidencing the good work of the force and advised us that the PCP had also raised concerns that the good work of the force was often underrepresented.

The CC pointed out that a large amount of the content within the Chief Constable's Update report was duplicated within the Performance Report. The CEx advised that the Chief Constable's Update report was intended to identify areas of work that the CC felt we should be made aware of as opposed to performance information.

Our attention was drawn to the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA) data. We were advised there had been an increase in the number of sex and violent offenders being managed, which had amounted to 793 this quarter. We were informed that risk assessments were 85% compliant and the relevant safety measures and processes were in place in order to safeguard the public. We discussed the sensitive nature of the information and agreed that disclosing this type of information publicly could concern the public but equally it would highlight the good work of the force and how well they managed sex offenders. It was agreed that the publication of this kind of information would need to be managed.

We were advised that the Home Office Counting Rules had changed resulting in an increase in Public Order Offences and decrease in ASB. Surges in crime had been linked to events in the media, issues raised on television and other areas not directly linked to police activity. There had been a rise in the number of rapes recorded which was in line with national figures. 20% of those recorded were over 12 months old and some victims may have

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reported multiple rapes. There had been increased pressure on resources within the Public Protection Unit (PPU) and Criminal Investigation Department (CID) as identified within the Chief Constable's Precept Bid where further resources had been requested in these areas.

Action

Detective Chief Inspectors from the PPU had been deployed in East and West policing areas to provide scrutiny around rape crimes. We were assured that rape cases were being well managed at approximately 4 cases per officer.

The PCC acknowledged that knife crime in Gwent was not at the level of other force areas and requested an update in relation to the matter. We were advised that Gwent Police ranked 41st out of 43 forces in England and Wales, in relation to levels of knife crime; the force had seen the lowest percentage increase of knife offences in Wales at 20%.

ACC

Our attention was drawn to the recent BBC News coverage where Gwent Police figures were shown to be higher due to the percentages incorporating all knife related offences. This included offences when a knife had not actually been used but mentioned within the report. The HoSP&C agreed to supply the knife crime figures to the PCC.

HoSP&C

We were informed that 'Operation Sceptre', Stop and Search, the knife amnesty and work undertaken with the area of organised crime, had a positive impact on knife crime. Officers had undergone confidence training in 'Stop and Search'.

We queried whether there was a communication strategy in place to provide reassurance to the public in light of knife crime being highlighted in the media. We were informed the communication strategy formed part of Operation Sceptre and a balanced approach was being taken as to what was communicated to the public. We agreed that it would be beneficial for the force to link in with the PCC when he presented a statement to press to provide further reassurance.

ACC

A victim satisfaction survey had been undertaken resulting on 87% of victims being satisfied with action taken by the police and 90% satisfied with the overall service. We were advised there had been a significant amount of investment within the area of domestic abuse and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) had acknowledged that Gwent Police had the ability to identify victims at risk of domestic abuse.

We were informed that drug operations such as Operation Finch and

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partnership working had a significant positive impact on the local community, where drug offenders had received long custodial sentences.

Action

We queried why the level of drug offences had remained stable when operationally a vast amount of progress had been made in the area. We were informed that the drug offence numbers do not reflect the severity level of the crime. We were advised that the report did not identify the magnitude of some of the crimes and the level of work that had been undertaken in order to apprehend the offenders.

Our attention was drawn to the substantial progress made by the Serious Organised Crime Co-ordinator who had been working with partnership agencies in order to prevent vulnerable youths being drawn into organised crime. Ten children at risk of being drawn into organised crime had been identified and were being assisted by the force and St Giles' Trust to try to deter them from a life of crime.

In terms of Serious Acquisitive Crime, there had been a decrease in both burglary dwelling and robbery. We were pleased there had been a decrease in non-dwelling burglary in Newport and noted that the force figures had decreased and were now aligned with national figures.

We were advised that youth offending arrest rates had dropped by 36% resulting in fewer youths in custody; there had also been a reduction in repeat youth offenders.

We agreed that it would be beneficial to discuss the impact the Adverse Child Experiences (ACEs) project was having on vulnerable children at the next meeting.

ACC

We noted there were areas for improvement and were assured that the force met regularly with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to address the issues around quality of disclosure, sharing of evidence and case files.

We queried what the figure of 28% referred to within the CPS table and received confirmation that it was in relation to the number of files submitted to the CPS containing an error, such as a missing form. We acknowledged that although the time to get the cases to court was short, there was a possible training requirement for the newer officers in relation to the quality of cases submitted to the CPS.

We acknowledged that domestic abuse, sexual violence and sexual offences and victim rape were consistent with the national average

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and referred to figures in Quarter three and four where domestic abuse stood at 80%, rape 59.4% and sexual offences almost 80%.

Action

We queried why Gwent had a poorer rate of rape convictions than that of domestic abuse and sexual offences. We were advised that obtaining a rape conviction was sometimes difficult, particularly in relation to historical and stranger rapes which could be very complex cases. In the majority of domestic abuse cases, although complex, it was sometimes easier to prove the offence had occurred, as the perpetrator was usually known to the victim.

We were informed that further improvement was required in the use of Community Resolutions, although there had been a slight increase in its use during this period. A new Restorative Justice Co-ordinator had joined the organisation so further use of resolutions was expected. We queried the level of increase within the report and received confirmation that the use of Community Resolutions had increased slightly from 96 to 108.

The ACC advised us that victims of domestic abuse had been reporting more crime in quarter three, although approximately 50% of domestic abuse victims withdrew from the process for various reasons, which was not dissimilar to other forces. We noted crisis workers had been embedded within the force control room to provide the victims with appropriate advice and support.

We discussed the level of support provided by the Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) Service to high risk victims through the court process. The HoS agreed to discuss this further with the regional IDVA advisor.

HoS

We sought clarification in reference to the term 'the suspect was identified but the prosecution time limit was expired'. We were advised there could be many reasons, one being that the victim may be reporting old offences that had been reported after 6 months and would be statute barred. The CC reassured us that the more serious cases such as child sexual abuse did not have an expiry date. We noted the number of statute barred cases was very low.

Our attention was drawn to Repeat victims of crime and Hate Crime data and we noted that victims in Gwent experience fewer repeat incidents and crime.

We thanked the force for their comprehensive figures in relation to repeat victims of hate crime in the report and suggested further explanation could be provided in the next report in relation to other vulnerable victims who have been subject to repeat incidents. We were advised there had been an increase in Multi-Agency risk

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Assessment Conference (MARAC) referrals which had captured some of those repeat victims and the appropriate safeguarding processes had prevented further incidents occurring.

**Action
HoSP&C**

We reiterated the importance of articulating within the report the good work that had been undertaken by the force in order to achieve the implementation of Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPN) and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPO) which had been a priority for the force.

Our attention was drawn to the substantial amount of work that had been undertaken in relation to the wellbeing of staff and officers. Although absence rates had decreased since the last quarter, it was acknowledged that there was still significant improvement required to reduce the level of absence and we were advised the Head of People Services had been scrutinising the absence figures over the past three months.

A wellbeing officer had been working within the force for the past 12 months and various other wellbeing initiatives had been implemented within the force, however, these changes had not reduced the levels of sickness absence. We were advised that the PCP had requested a 'Deep Dive' on the subject of absence management but they had also noted the force had undertaken a considerable amount of work to combat the issue in comparison to other organisations.

We were disappointed that absence levels were poor compared to other forces, particularly when the number of resources had increased and a significant amount of work had been undertaken to reduce the level of absence.

We noted there had been issues in the past when recording levels of absence which may have had an impact on the figures. In future, supervisors would be closely monitoring members of staff on sickness absence in order to provide the necessary support and also to identify if there were individual trends within teams that required addressing.

We were informed that the number of hate crime incidents had remained stable. Court outcome rates in relation to hate crime were above the Welsh and national averages as indicated in the previous HMICFRS Inspection. We queried why the level was set at six repeat incidents before a victim was classed as a repeat victim. We were informed that were cases assessed against Threat, Risk and Harm and if the level was less than six, the demand would be too high. We noted that Community Support Officers (CSOs) had also been trained in crime recording for Public Order and ASB to ensure

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the incidents were being recorded appropriately.

Action

In terms of effective policing and service impact, Operation Veritas was used across the force to capture workload demand.

The custody suite in Ystrad Mynach had been re-opened to provide further capacity.

The Police Education Quality Framework PEQF had been introduced.

In order to free up officer and staff time, there had also been the fixed, field and flexible FFF rollout where laptops, mobile phones and body worn cameras had been distributed throughout the force.

The CC pointed out that the recommended level of operational utilisation rate for police constables working within the police response work stream stood at 85% which had clearly been exceeded in Newport West at 97.9%. We noted that this may possibly be linked to sickness levels in that area and suggested utilisation rate was further analysed in order to highlight any concerns in this area.

CC

We queried why 25% of staff members and officers had completed the staff survey as opposed to between 50% and 60% in previous years and whether it was in relation to changing to the Durham survey. We were informed that the survey was still statistically relevant and the findings were quite positive in comparison to past surveys. The survey also provided the opportunity to compare responses with other forces. We noted that officers undertake numerous surveys and their completion was not always a priority.

We discussed whether it would be beneficial for the force Communications Manager to attend the SPB and the PCP in order to provide progress updates to the public during the meetings. We agreed that it would help to reassure the public that the CC was being held to account by the PCC and the priorities within the Police and Crime Plan were being met.

DCC

The meeting concluded at 17:10pm