

Monthly Assurance Meeting June 2018 – Meeting Notes

Date: Tuesday 26 June 2018 @ 10:30
 Chair: John Campion
 Notes: Jackie Irvin, Policy Officer, OPCC
 Venue: Lecture Theatre – Hindlip

	Name:	Capacity:
Attendance:	John Campion	Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
	Tracey Onslow	Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC)
	Anthony Bangham	Chief Constable (CC)
	Amanda Blakeman	Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)

Apologies:

1	<p>PUBLIC SESSION</p> <p>To respond to questions submitted to the public in advance of the meeting</p>
1.1	<p>Richard (location unknown)</p> <p>What are the police doing to address the theft of equipment and livestock from rural villages?</p> <p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Mercia is predominantly a rural force • there are 2 types of rural crime the force deal with. The first is specific to rural areas such as agricultural or livestock crime; there are well trained officers to deal with these specific crimes. The second is all other crime that occurs, which happens to be in a rural area such as criminal damage or burglary. • The force has recently reissued local policing team details, including mobile phone numbers, and they can be contacted to discuss very local issues. • The PCC asked the CC to explain how he knows whether the force is good at dealing with rural crimes and whether there are any specific measures. The CC responded that feedback from communities directly affected is important, it is a priority on the force website, the force also uses surveys and has a network of dedicated officers. • Some of the work being done is around the 'We Don't Buy Crime' (WDBC) initiative, which is not just used for dwelling house burglaries, but across rural areas, as it's important to break the cycle of particular houses being targeted. There is a

	<p>focus on watch schemes and associated activity providing intelligence for officers to act on information and pursue those targeting rural communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PCC commented that both he and his predecessor had invested in the rural element of WDBC and asked for assurance that best practice is being applied. The DCC responded that Warwick University had provided assistance for the fore to assess the impact and the reductions seen. The lead for WDBC has been looking at new ways of working and new opportunities to develop it across West Mercia. • There is a rural and business officer in each local policing area, who can do property and tack marking and people are encouraged to contact them.
<p>1.2</p>	<p>Kath from Shifnal, James from Kidderminster and Sue from Redditch</p> <p>All three have concerns regarding ASB occurring in their local areas, including vandalism, threatening behaviour, cannabis smoking and nuisance vehicles racing at night, and do not feel there is any visible police presence to stop it.</p> <p>What are the police doing to engage with local communities to understand their concerns?</p> <p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the responsibility of local policing teams to deal with ASB, low level drug dealing, minor damage and general nuisance that can have a significant impact on local areas. These teams should be working with local communities and partners to identify local issues which will vary, publicise them and tackle them jointly. • Cannabis is subject to a lot of national debate, but at present it is still a controlled drug which the force try and deal with carefully, fairly and proportionately. They don't want to criminalise young people, but do want to address the organised criminality around drugs. • The DPCC asked what preventative work the police get involved in with young people and was told that there are a range of schemes, from PCSO involved in with local schools through to the police cadet scheme. Both the force and the PCC are involved in prevention work; encouraging young people to take the right path and stop low level criminality growing into something more serious. • PCSO's play have an important role in engaging with communities and young people and providing a visible presence and reassurance. The force has recently advertised PSCO roles to reach full establishment levels.
<p>1.3</p>	<p>Keith from Bromsgrove, Bex in Shrewsbury and Nat in Wem</p> <p>Are concerned about the amount of drug dealing in their area and want to know: What are the police doing to address drug dealing?</p> <p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PCC asked the CC to explain what the force did to tackle the supply of drugs into the force area and was told that county lines; the movement of drugs from urban areas, often through vulnerable young people affects West Mercia. The force works overtly and covertly with partner agencies to understand what's going on in the market, how drugs are being used and how they are being sold to prevent access to local communities and stop movement of drugs from urban

	<p>areas into more rural communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PCC referred to the recent HMICFRS findings into serious and organised crime, which includes county lines and asked the CC to explain what he saw as the core elements to the improvements he wants to see. The CC responded that the first step is to develop a local profile to understand what’s going on in local communities, then map it and use this to work out the links between organised crime groups, disrupt the movements between groups with an aim to cut off the supply. The police cannot solve this alone, and partners need to help as it is a social and partnership problem. • The PCC commented that West Mercia is often quoted as being a safe area and queried how worried people should be with the HMICFRS findings. The CC responded that people should not be worried, but be aware of potential issues and understand the police have to prioritise resources and make choices between some of the low level criminality and the serious organised crime that occurs.
<p>1.4</p>	<p>Roy (location unknown)</p> <p>Why after initial contact do the police rarely follow up with the outcome of an investigation so that people know whether the investigation was successful or not?</p> <p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is an important point, the police are an emergency service and very good at the initial response. If a person is a victim then they may need police contact over weeks and months, but the officers dealing with them will pick other work in the same time period and don’t always get the contact right. The CC and DCC are committed to ensure victims are well supported right through to the final outcome whatever that is. • The DPCC asked if the availability of mobile technology would help and was told that it would help, but not solve the problem. All PC’s need to understand that they have to keep victims up to date and carry out their day to day role. The force is also looking at ways victims and member of the public can self-serve information rather than be reliant on officer contact, however this technology is not currently available in West Mercia and is some way off at present. • The PCC has been to some chief officer sessions with staff and witnessed a focus on a customer centred service which is welcomed.
<p>1.5</p>	<p>Michael from Telford:</p> <p>His daughter posted a picture on Facebook of someone breaking into a car, and within hours knew who one of the people was. It seems that asking for information days or even weeks after an event cannot match the potential help that social media provides</p> <p>Why are the police, in general, not using social media as a way of gathering intelligence and information?</p> <p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CC acknowledged that the force is not at the forefront of new technology but has started to use dash cam evidence and body worn video and technology to

	<p>access and transfer information around. The force is constrained by evidential and procedural rules in using social media as the public would like. The force can do better, but needs staff who can better understand the new technology and have the right skill sets for this.</p>
<p>1.6</p>	<p>Steve and Linda (locations unknown):</p> <p>Both want to know:</p> <p>Why do the police appear to delay attending incidents or don't attend at all and provide a crime number instead?</p> <p>The PCC added that this is a common mailbag issue into his office, and asked the CC to put this into context with how the force manages the 10,500 calls for service received every week. The DPCC suggested that a question from Janet from Bridgnorth and Gail from Kidderminster on resources for domestic burglary could also be addressed within this response.</p> <p>Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an issue in matching public expectations to what the force actually do, and the force may need to better explain that a person is not getting any less a service through over the phone, than by the deployment of an officer. • The DCC explained that the force aims to answer 999 calls within 10 seconds and to attend within 10 minutes in urban areas and 20 in rural. Performance is generally good and maintained. • Non-emergency 101 call are high volume. These calls are assessed in terms of threat, harm and risk and on occasion the decision will be made to complete a crime report over the phone and leave it in an officers 'basket' for immediate investigation. This prevents people waiting to see an officer and is just as effective and efficient. It also allows for a proper assessment and for available officer resources to be prioritised for emergencies and for responding to people in a vulnerable situation. • Domestic burglaries can have a big impact and work has been done to review and improve how the force responds to this crime type. An assessment of forensic evidence is made and priority given to it. The approach is subject to continuous review. • A lot of work has been done to develop a fit for purpose facility and a command and control system for the future, tracking calls to understand where the force doesn't give the best service, and work out how to manage demand with the resources, prioritising emergencies and vulnerable people. There is also a need to educate people to think about the purpose and the need for their call to 101. • The PCC commented that from a public point of view it often appears that a call goes into the organisation and then nothing happens; this is reflected in public satisfaction figures where follow up is consistently low. He asked the CC to explain what was being done around follow up. • The DCC gave the example of burglary and explained that the majority of burglaries are committed by a small number of individuals, who are usually managed through integrated offender management teams. These individuals often lead chaotic lifestyles with a range of issues. Rather than giving each burglary to any available officers at the time, the approach is to put them together

	<p>as this gives the best opportunity to put all the evidence together and prioritise activity against the individual offender rather than the individual crimes. This approach means that the most skilled and trained officers can deal with these investigations. This may be hard for the public to follow, therefore work has been done with policing teams around follow up to make sure they identify how a person wants to be kept informed about what's happening.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PCC asked the CC to assess how well the force is doing on follow up at the moment and what the aspiration is. The DCC responded that follow up has been an issue, and that they were looking to make incremental gains with the staff. There is the start of an uplift in performance. • The PCC referred to the change in the policing model earlier in the year and asked what the impact has been, a question raised by Richard in Hereford. The CC responded that it's just a few months in and the force is just starting to understand whether it's had the desired impact allowing for a few early teething problems. • Two key factors for the changes were to better protect the safer neighbourhood teams; to dedicate them to problem solving and working with partners and communities. A part of the change was to issue out contact details and ensure posts are filled, the work to fill posts is still going on. The second factor was around aligning response shifts so they fit better with times of greater demand. The early findings are that this has improved, but some further local adjustments will be made. • The DPCC commented that one thing often said to her and the PCC was that people never see a police officer, and asked if these changes would address this. The CC responded that with such a large geographical force area it's hard to achieve, but through a different approach to visibility where people know who their local officers are and contacting them is made easier, then physically seeing them should be less important, if people are confident they can contact them when needed. Also PCSOs spend 80% of their shift out in communities and should be very visible. The PCC welcomed the increase in use of social media engagement by local police over the last few months, which is another way to be visible. • The DCC mentioned the 'Whilst you are asleep' campaign which aims to identify all the activity going on during the evening and overnight which people won't be aware of and highlight it on social media.
<p>1.7</p>	<p>Karen (location unknown)</p> <p>What is the justification for the creation of a new shared ACC post and salary for West Mercia and Warwickshire salary, why not have more PC's?</p> <p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The force are doing both, actively recruiting for PCSO's and PC's as well as strengthening the leadership. West Mercia Police is a complex multi-million pound organisation and needs people who are effective at leading. • The ACC post will be shared with Warwickshire, which in turn means the costs are shared. It will mean that there is a dedicated ACC for local policing and a shared ACC for protective services, the more complex area of major crime.
<p>1.8</p>	<p>Peter from Hagley and David (location unknown):</p>

	<p>Why don't the police use their powers to remove illegal encampments every time they occur as soon as they occur?</p> <p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way the legislation is written means it should not be used every time, it needs be used sensitively and proportionately, balancing the rights of all sorts of individuals and communities. It is a complex area and the police often end up in the middle trying to satisfy different people on different side of communities who do not see the other point of view. Priority is given to some areas such as play parks or public open space. The police do use the legislation when it is appropriate to do so. • One of the consequences of the legislation is that it means moving people on. The police have to work with landowners and local authorities to move people on, but this often means just moving the problem somewhere else and the police have to continue to police. The legislation is there and it has been used effectively in West Mercia. • The PCC commented that it is not a consistent picture across West Mercia, it is stark that it is more of a problem in Worcestershire and he offered support to partners as it needs a whole system approach 	
<p>2</p>	<p>HOLDING TO ACCOUNT</p> <p>Performance against the safer West Mercia plan</p>	<p>PCC</p>
<p>2.1</p>	<p>OCC Performance</p> <p>999 performance is a priority for the PCC and the force. An action plan for improvement is currently in place following a number of performance pressures effecting the OCC.</p> <p><i>Can the CC provide an update on the steps being taken as part of this action plan?</i></p> <p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important as an emergency service to have the ability to react to 999 calls and most are answered within seconds and anything outside the acceptable norm is scrutinised carefully. It is different for 101 calls, which are the greater volume and if there is any strain in the system 999 calls are always prioritised over 101 calls. • The police has a reduced level of resources but demand remains high, so they need to get the right people with the right skills who can work efficiently to triage properly, risk assess properly and despatch officers accordingly, this is scrutinised daily. • The PCC commented that during May there had been 11368 calls made to the 999 system and 78% of these were answered within 10 seconds; the aspiration is the answer 90% within this timescale. He asked the DCC to outline what difference the new OCC would make to performance. The DCC responded that all calls come into the current control room at Hindlip. This is not fit for purpose, both in terms of space or systems. Systems need replacing so that more accurate assessments can be made, utilising intelligence systems in a better way so that the operators have all the information in one place rather than 	

	<p>searching across different systems. This should make it more efficient and effective for anyone ringing in.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The building work has been completed and work is now underway to upgrade and replace all the telephony across the force, so that when a person rings in and wishes to speak to an officer the call can go straight to the officer, rather than via a call handler. • The staff in the OCC do a difficult job in difficult circumstances day in day out and have been instrumental in designing the new systems and OCC. All the changes are happening whilst they carry on working. • The DPCC said she was aware that the public are concerned about the number of inappropriate calls made to the emergency services and asked what the force do to educate callers. The DCC said that without embarrassing the caller they try to educate them. Where some people call in a multiple times then works goes on behind the scenes to try and manage this. The 101 system is not a queue system, so the plea to the public is to think what they are ringing about, always call if it's an emergency, but be patient if it's not an emergency. Callers should also try and avoid peak times if it's a non-emergency. 	
<p>2.2</p>	<p>Cyber crime</p> <p>The latest performance report shows a continued reduction in the use of the cybercrime marker. This contrasts with the latest six monthly data from the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau, which shows an increase in cyber-enabled offences reported to Action Fraud in West Mercia.</p> <p><i>Is the CC satisfied that the volume of cyber offences recorded by the force accurately reflects the scale of cybercrime in our communities?</i></p> <p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is indicative of a confusion over what cyber enabled crime means. Originally a marker was created to record this type of crime as it was unusual, but now so much crime is cyber enabled, from bullying to more serious crimes the marker is not being applied accurately. The national figures will be more accurate. Some work is being done to assess the use of the cyber marker in force. • The DPCC commented that there is some public confusion as to what to report to the police, for example if a credit card is cloned, should this be reported to the police, to the bank or both? The DCC said that if a person is uncertain then they should ring the police, as they can always signpost to the right place and also work closely with Action Fraud. 	
<p>2.3</p>	<p>Health and Wellbeing</p> <p>There has been a generally increasing trend in staff/ officer sickness since 2016/17.</p> <p><i>a. Is the CC satisfied that the force has sufficient understanding of the drivers of sickness?</i></p>	

	<p><i>b. What prevention and early intervention activity is in place to improve the wellbeing of the workforce?</i></p> <p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a priority for the CC and there is a health and wellbeing board to provide support across the organisation. • There has been a shift in culture and people are more able to talk about issues. For example getting injured through assault whilst working as a PC use to be accepted part of the job, this is no longer the case. Assaulting a police officer is never acceptable and they are now treated as a victim and provided internally with wrap around support to deal with physical injury and the longer term mental impact. • Mental health and general health and wellbeing are also important. Officers and staff are in high stress, high tempo challenging roles with intense scrutiny and over a long career it can affect them. This is talked about in in a much more open way and support provided. • The PCC commented that when he launched his #behind the badge campaign a radio presenter suggested that getting injured is part of the job, and acceptable. The CC responded that police officers do understand that they may have to take some knocks or get assaulted as part of the job. This does not make it acceptable and the consequences of assaulting a police officer are severe. • The DPCC asked about assaults on police animals and the CC responded that on a practical level a police dog and handler are one unit so if the dog is injured then the unit cannot function. However, the bravery of the animals and the emotional attachment the handlers and their families have is very important and should not be under estimated. Police dogs do get injured and they too need to be protected and legislation is changing to help this. 	
<p>2.4</p>	<p>Shoplifting There was a significant increase in shoplifting offences in May.</p> <p><i>How does the force work collaboratively with local businesses to address such issues when they arise?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PCC commented that it is not a high policing priority in terms of threat, harm, risk, but can be very damaging to the business community and is a high volume crime. The DCC responded that the most prolific offenders are responsible for the majority of crime and as well as crimes such as burglaries are often are responsible for shoplifting, so it is important to respond to the scale of the criminality they are involved in so that they can be effectively pursued and brought to justice, whilst also being given rehabilitative opportunities. The first response is to look at the offender rather than individual crime types • There has been an increase in shoplifting, particularly in North Worcestershire where a lot of work has been done with businesses to understand why and which stores are vulnerable and to work with retailers to design out opportunities. • Shopwatch is also well supported, enabling the police to better 	

	<p>understand who is out and about in town centres.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other legislative opportunities such as Criminal Prevention Orders are being used more. • The PCC commented that he had committed funding for CCTV, but asked if there were other opportunities where he could lend his support or whether there were other things the police could be doing. A long term view is being taken to shoplifting, carrying on the good work local policing are doing, understanding prolific offenders and preventing them from taking opportunities, so there is probably nothing more the PCC can give in terms of support. 	
3	<p>SOCIAL MEDIA To respond to any questions submitted via social media during the course of the meeting.</p>	
3.1	<p>Jane from Wyre Forest : How are these officers expected to deal with the rising numbers of incidents and demands on their time? There is a sense that there is no point in reporting when there are fewer officers and fewer resources do deal with it. How are you working to encourage reporting?</p> <p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wyre Forest has dedicated local policing teams, run by a good Inspector. Each local team is supported by 24 hour a day by response officers, plus local investigators to support more serious crime. Additional support resources are also available from police headquarters and specialist teams. • There is always a need to prioritise and balance resources to demand. This can sometimes lead to a backlog, but it does get addressed. • Local policing team contact details are available on the West Mercia Police website. 	
3.2	<p>Phil (location unknown) asked: Can you please provide reassurance that it is being treated as much of a priority as crime in towns?</p> <p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Mercia includes more urban areas where its borders with Birmingham through to very rural areas where it borders Wales. All areas have to be policed and there are dedicated local policing teams for all areas, working locally. 	
3.3	<p>John from Evesham (submitted in advance): At weekends and Bank Holidays, Fish Hill near Broadway is a dangerous road to be on as high powered motorcycles are been ridden at excessive speed up and down the hill Have you given up on roads policing, excessive speed, dangerous parking, dangerous driving etc?</p> <p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CC is the National Police Chief Council's (NPCC) lead for roads policing and it's a personal and professional priority for him. • The force haven't given up on roads policing as it is a sad fact that too many people are killed or seriously injured on West Mercia's roads. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The force do carry out speed enforcement activity, but it is hard to target speeding and uses a lot of police resources. Speed enforcement has taken place in the Fish Hill area and this showed that many drivers, although driving within the limit were driving too fast for the road conditions. The long term solution to this maybe a fixed camera as police resources cannot be there all the time, but it is also important to look at other measures to slow down road users. 	
END OF PUBLIC SESSION		
4	<p>Outstanding matters / matters arising Action arising from the March 2018 meeting: Action arising: A written update to be provided on unresourced incidents</p> <p>Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A written update had been prepared, but was too tactical and would be rewritten. The performance data shows the difference between different policing areas in being able to manage unresourced incidents. The World Cup hasn't had any impact so far, this may change once England play in the last 16. <p>Actions arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unresourced incidents to be deferred until the July 2018 holding to account meeting. The written paper to be circulated at least a week in advance of the meeting. The outstanding Q & A's from the April 2018 meeting to be sent to the PCC. 	CC CC
5	<p>HMICFRS inspection programme / Matters arising from the Service Improvement Board (SIB)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DCC is the Chair of SIB for the alliance and has agreed with the DCC from Warwickshire that moving forward each force will make their own meeting arrangements. SIB will be retained in West Mercia, with an initial focus on HMICFRS inspections. <p>Action arising: The PCC to attend a future SIB meeting.</p>	PCC
6.	<p>OPERATIONAL AND REPUTATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A rape trial of a serving West Mercia officer had concluded with him being cleared of all charges. The outcome had received a lot of local media coverage. The officer had previously returned to work and is being supported. It is the responsibility of the Head of Professional Standards to be aware of all officers in court for whatever reason. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The investigation into the murder of an individual in Telford is ongoing • The PCC had asked for reassurance around a perceived increase in the use of knives and was told that some work had been done to look at this about 18 months ago and it had not been an issue. There may have been some increase since then, but not to the extent that other parts of the country have experienced and it is not seen as a problem. Social media is having an influence, implying that there are more knives about. <p>Actions arising: CC to provide an update on knife crime to the July holding to account meeting.</p>	CC
7.	CHIEF OFFICER MEETING / EXECUTIVE BOARD - UPDATE	
	A paper on the creation of tasking teams was discussed and agreed at Executive Board.	
8.	AOB None	
9.	CONFIRMATION OF NEXT MEETING TYPE / DATE / TIME / VENUE: Thematic on HMICFRS inspections, with a focus on PEEL Effectiveness Tuesday 31 July 2018, Room 1.38 Hindlip	