

Monthly Assurance Meeting September 2018 – Meeting Notes

Date: Tuesday 25 September @ 10:00
 Chair: John Campion
 Minutes: Jackie Irvin, Policy Officer, OPCC
 Venue Meeting Room 1.38 – 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)
	Natasha Noorbakhsh	Policy Officer, OPCC (NN)

Apologies: Andy Champness Chief Executive for the Police and Crime Commissioner (CEX)

1.1	OUTSTANDING MATTERS / ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD	ACTION
	There were none.	
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HOLDING TO ACCOUNT 	
2.1	<p>Performance against the Safer West Mercia Plan:</p> <p>1. <u>Workforce attraction and recruitment</u></p> <p>Current recruitment activity</p> <p>The plans outlining how the CC would achieve the new force establishment numbers had been explained to the PCC at a chief officers meeting the previous day.</p> <p>The PCC asked whether the CC was confident that the current Learning and Development resourcing model has sufficient capacity to train the new cohort of recruits to the required standards. In response the CC / DCC commented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A decision had been taken a few months earlier to transition to a non diploma model, following the approach of West Midlands Police. The CC had provided assurance to any current students in the system, this 	

would not apply to them and they would still be eligible to receive a diploma.

- The approach will be to potentially overfill courses so that on day one of a course all the places are filled, this will allow for successful applicants choosing not to start as incoming officers are now able to dictate when they start, which can make planning numbers difficult. The force will moving be to a more directive approach to try and counter this by giving a start date and moving an applicant back down the system if they choose not to accept it.
- More needs to be done by recruitment to attract recruits to West Mercia. Where possible adverts will become more geographically specific, by county, rather than force or alliance area. The name West Mercia doesn't get picked up on recruitment sites as it isn't a recognised geographic area and may be reducing the number of applicants as a result.

Specialist posts

The PCC stated that there are currently 26 authorised firearms officer (AFO) vacancies and a further 13 officers are not accredited to carry firearms in West Mercia and asked whether the CC believed increasing Warwickshire's contribution to the alliance AFO posts would help mitigate some of the challenges in relation to vacancies and demand?

- The CC explained that the shortage of AFOs is a national issue and one faced by many forces, however there is an issue unique to the alliance in that all the AFOs in the taskforce are West Mercia officers.
- The DCC said the 13 officers who are not accredited would include officers on recuperative duties or had a grievance case against them, but she would review the number with the Head of Force Operations.
- The training for AFOs is much more challenging than in the past, it is much longer and now requires officers to have the mind-set of an active shooter. Officers with previous military experience pick this up quicker, but for some long standing AFOs it has led to them failing the course. When this happens the DCC can underwrite the risk and allow them to carry on using firearms on the basis that they pass the training at a future date.
- Retention of AFOs is an issue and the force suffers from officers attracted to forces such as the West Midlands when the role of an AFO is 100% firearms, compared to West Mercia where they carry out other functions. There also known officers who transferred out, but now want to come back as they miss the investigative side and how this can be achieved is being reviewed by the Firearms Policy Group.
- The recent introduction of a 12 hour, 4 days on 4 days off shift pattern

	<p>has had a very positive response from the AFOs.</p> <p>The PCC said he had anecdotal feedback from West Mercia AFOs that they were having to cover Warwickshire jobs and asked the CC if he was confident that the force can robustly monitor the use of AFO resources across the alliance. The CC responded that it is right and correct that they work as a team, but if officers from one base are covering regularly another then it needs to be addressed.</p> <p>The PCC asked if the CC was confident that the activity implemented to date will effectively address the number of vacancies and associated risks and was told that there is appropriate oversight and governance in place. Risks are being managed and the level of vacancies is not putting the public at risk of harm. Vacancies need to be filled and AFO and ARV resources used effectively.</p> <p>Representation</p> <p>The PCC explained that he had met with the staff associations prior to the meeting who had provided feedback to inform this meeting.</p> <p>The DPCC asked if the force has a proactive and long term strategy to target a diverse pool of candidates. The CC responded that as Chair of the Strategic Diversity Group (SDG) he had set out a clear vision to be a fully representative police service, and a target had been set to achieve this by 2025. Two action groups had been established, one internal focused and one external in support.</p> <p>The PCC said that some of the staff associations had been quite pointed in their views of recruitment opportunities. The CC replied that their members are not always representative of everyone and that the associations are engaged with the two action groups mentioned earlier. If people feel that they are not been listened to or represented then this should be picked up at SDG. The networks can be helpful but they need to provide constructive challenge through the right channels. The CC agreed to take the issue back to the SDG to ensure the associations are sufficiently engaged.</p> <p>Action: CC to raise staff association engagement at SDG</p> <p>Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF)</p> <p>The PCC asked if there was sufficient organisational buy in from the workforce in relation to the wider PEQF programme. The CC responded that there wasn't buy in from the workforce but it was more about the future of policing and providing a vocational approach that will lead to a degree. Externally higher education isn't making it clear that you don't need a degree to be a police officer.</p>	<p>CC</p>
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	<p>2. <u>Workforce management information</u></p> <p>The PCC questioned whether the CC was content that he and his command team have access the accurate and timely management information to effectively match resources to demand. The CC acknowledged that incorrect management information either centrally or locally can have an impact which is why the current work on ‘Services to Policing’ and the new senior post of Business Service Director will help, but it is a challenge that until now hasn’t been fixed.</p> <p>The PCC asked the CC to indicate how the work being done would change access to information comparing 12 months from now with today. The CC said that on a scale of 1 to 10 he felt the current level was around 1 -3, but would expect if everything is done as required it would be 7 – 8 in 12 months time.</p> <p>The DCC is to chair the Workforce Management Group until the Business Service Director is in place and this will help remove any blockages in understanding resources into the alliance and ensure that the 100 new officers are used effectively for West Mercia.</p> <p>Abstraction rates</p> <p>The PCC questioned whether high abstraction rates had placed pressure on the new policing model and what had been done to reduce rates in those teams most affected. The CC acknowledged that there were pockets of real pressure, with a particular issue around sergeants but work was now underway to make some changes to the model.</p>	
	<p>3. <u>Professional development of the workforce</u></p> <p>Proposed learning and development operating model</p> <p>The PCC questioned why the CC has decided not to implement changes to the duration of the driver training course which had been recommended by the learning and development training review. The CC responded that the proposal had been submitted to the Executive Board without any pre consideration at the chief officers meeting. In addition as the national lead for roads policing he would have expected to have been consulted, especially as some of the proposals were contrary to the national direction. As a consequence he had asked for it to be paused.</p> <p>The PCC challenged the CC to explain how he had not been sighted on the proposals and was told that the ACC had been fully sighted, but not the CC, nor the national lead on training.</p> <p>The PCC asked if the CC was confident that the force has the right balance between prioritising operational requirements with the professional development of its staff and officers. The DPCC responded that the force was moving towards having locally based CPD trainers who will be able to provide bespoke training, for example with officers</p>	

identifies as struggling with file quality. The CPD officers will be focused locally but feed in centrally. Local CPD will be driven by the local continuous improvement teams, with oversight from the Strategic Training Panel.

The PCC said that the force's current leadership strategy focuses on the development at the most senior level and queried what support was available for more junior leads and was told that the CPD training officers will be in place to do this.

The PCC asked if the CC was satisfied with the PDR completion rates for officers and staff. The CC replied that everyone should have an annual meeting, but that not everyone would have had the formal evaluation and he was comfortable with the numbers that had completed a PDR. He conceded that the figures had been higher in the past but it had made a difference, however he does expect them to be higher in 12 months.

There does appear to be a dis connect between talent management mapping and PDRs, and the DCC provided assurance that this would be addressed through the Workforce Management Group.

Promotion, temporary and acting opportunities

The PCC asked the CC to confirm that the force had a process to demonstrate procedural fairness for the selection of candidates for acting and temporary promotion. In response the CC and DCC stated:

- Acting is different from a temporary. The governance around acting is not governed by strong procedures and there is a reliance on local leadership to identify the right person to do the role. A temporary promotion is an actual promotion has more governance.
- The pool of suitable people decreases at higher ranks but at higher levels where people are with training and experience is easier to know.
- At the recent Chief Inspector interviews all the candidates were suitable for the promotion opportunity, but a number had not performed at interview. Others who had not been put forward for interview should have been told why it was felt they were not suitable at this time.
- The CC is always concerned by genuine issues, and gave an example of a member of staff contacting the DCC directly. The CC said the issue is not that they complained but that they had to contact the DCC direct, which showed a lack of management.

4. Health and wellbeing

Attendance management

The DPCC asked whether the CC was confident that the force has robust systems and processes in place to understand the underlying issues leading to increases in sickness. The CC responded that there are systems in place and that the issue is responding to changing trends. The current strain on sergeants is a big issue, they are a key rank and need to be good local supervisors. There is a correlation between the new shift pattern and the increase in sickness and changes are being made to address this.

The PCC asked if the CC was confident that support mechanisms in place are delivering the anticipated outcomes and was told that the mechanisms are in place, but that people aren't using them. It is recognised that the organisation needs to be more proactive in preventing people being in a position where need the mechanisms.

Staff survey results

The PCC commented that recent results from the Federation Pay and Morale Survey and the Staff Survey conducted by Durham University suggest that improvements could be made in respect of morale, emotional energy and perceptions of fairness and asked for assurance that the underlying drivers behind the survey results are understood. The CC responded:

- Both West Mercia and Warwickshire are placed together in the survey results so there must be something that the two forces are collectively doing to impact on the results.
- The CC has discussed the Federation survey results with local Federation representatives and it is apparent that there are certain geographical areas and more senior ranks who are most dissatisfied.
- The low morale issue needs to be fixed. The implementation of Athena and the changes to the shift patterns are two drivers, but there are other issues.
- The DCC had posted a blog on the force intranet which had resulted in around 60 responses, both public and private in which people had outlined their concerns. The DCC had followed up with a second blog providing a themed response to the issues raised.
- The DCC will be addressing issues in a structured way through a West Mercia Health and Wellbeing Board which was to be held that afternoon.

Staff associations

The PCC commented that the Staff Associations had been

	complementary around the focus the retiring Director of Enabling Services had brought to their networks and were concerned that this would be lost with him going. The CC conceded that there would be a gap, but that it is important that they raise issues and identify any resources needed and that he would be happy to listen to them.	
2.2	HMICFRS inspection programme / Matters arising from the Service Improvement Board (SIB) No items.	
3	OPERATIONAL AND REPUTATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CC informed the PCC that the investigation into a missing person in Worcester was ongoing. 	
4	CHIEF OFFICER MEETING / EXECUTIVE BOARD - UPDATE	
	None	
5	AOB None	
6	CONFIRMATION OF NEXT MEETING TYPE / DATE / TIME / VENUE: Friday 26 October at 09:30 am, Room 1.38, thematic on Demand, Channel Shift and Visibility.	