

Monthly Assurance Meeting August 2019 – Meeting Notes

Date: Tuesday 27th August 2019 @ 10:00
 Chair: John Campion
 Minutes: Charity Pearce, Assistant Policy Officer, OPCC
 Venue Meeting Room 1.38 – Hindlip

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

Apologies: Tracey Onslow Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC)

| 1. | OUTSTANDING MATTERS / ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD | ACTION |
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| 1.1 | <p>Action arising from the May 2019 meeting:</p> <p>Serious and organised crime (SOC) The CC to clarify the position with the SOC performance report.</p> <p>Update: The PCC highlighted that he didn't feel he was receiving adequate SOC performance reports. He reiterated that he doesn't want a new product produced but wants to make use of an existing report. The DCC acknowledged that the information is available but over a number of different documents and this needs to be pulled together.</p> <p>ACTION: DCC to seek further clarity from ACC Wessell regarding the force performance reporting and understand the performance products that can be shared with the PCC.</p> | DCC |
| 2. | HOLDING TO ACCOUNT | |
| 2.1 | <p>Workforce</p> <p>1. Leadership and culture</p> <p><u>Leadership, Governance and accountability</u></p> <p>The PCC asked for reassurance that Chief Officers have the right</p> | |

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| | <p>oversight in place to identify and respond to significant organisational changes. The CC and DCC responded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some meetings had not taken place either because they had been alliance meetings or had a small attendance. They would be reinstated after the transition process. • A new meetings structure has developed for the transition period which will allow for greater oversight and scrutiny • Post transition workforce oversight will have improved <p>The PCC commented that significant investment had been made into human and technological resources and sought reassurance that this investment had led to improved outcomes. The CC responded that he isn't confident that the most is being made of the investment to improve the learning and development opportunities; there is a strategy in place but it is not always clear that this drives the investment.</p> | |
| | <p><u>2. Attraction and Recruitment</u></p> <p><u>Representation in the workforce</u></p> <p>The PCC commented that diversity at the applicant stage appears good but not so in those who successfully become police officers. The CC responded that there is an opportunity with increased recruitment and through those leaving the organisation (i.e. retiring) to increase diversity in the organisation. He also highlighted that proportionate diversity can be achieved based on the position the force are currently in and that he is confident increased diversity is still achievable.</p> <p>The PCC highlighted that vetting seems to be an area where BAME applicants are less successful. The CC said that he disagrees that those from a BAME background are more likely to have criminal associations and instead challenges the vetting process. The DCC added that the vetting's appeal panel has been opened up to the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) to challenge how things are done and try and mitigate issues that arise, such as criminal association risks.</p> <p>The PCC questioned whether the positive action resource the force has implemented will help to increase diversity. The CC and DCC responded that the resource is not currently being used in the right way and candidates are being identified that will permanently undertake the work to ensure visible commitment and tangible action on the ground. The CC has challenged how applicants are attracted to the force and whether this impacts how successful they are through the recruitment process.</p> | |

3. Retention and progression

Effectiveness of professional development tools including MAX, PDR and talent management

The PCC sought assurance that supervisors are equipped with the skills and support to effectively implement the full range of professional development tools available. The CC replied that the force are already going through the process of offering leadership opportunities to people and they identify the need to make sure those promoted have the right attributes.

The PCC asked the CC to rate the position the force are in today versus the position they aspire to be in post organisational transition. The CC said he was confident that this is the best opportunity the force have had to highlight where changes can be made and appoint the people with the right vision and qualities for leadership opportunities.

The PCC sought reassurance that there is the sufficient oversight and scrutiny to have meaningful impact on officer/staff progression. The CC and DCC said:

- It was disappointing to hear that officers and staff feel they don't have enough time to complete the development tools available to them.
- Professional development tools have been used to inform current promotion processes.
- There is an ongoing project to reduce demand on the force, benefits have already been seen that will alleviate time pressures and allow for staff development.

The PCC highlighted that when a development tool is developed there appears to be a breakdown between the strategic and central function. It is not clear how tools are linked or when they should be followed up.

The CC said that there needs to be more grip from the central function on how and when performance development tools should be used. A lack of understanding from the workforce in how the tools are best implemented is possibly what contributes to the breakdown.

The PCC sought reassurance that there is enough organisational focus to allow demand reducing activity to happen. The CC responded that he is confident things are getting better and it is important that results of current demand reducing activity is not lost once it has commenced. Both the CC and DCC highlighted examples when supervisors have failed to make changes to help the workforce. They identify that evidence is needed to support promotion opportunities to ensure individuals have demonstrated the ideal qualities.

Progression and development opportunities for police staff / underrepresented groups

The PCC acknowledged that good steps have been taken regarding officer and staff development but have been affected as a result of the alliance changes. He sought reassurance that activity doesn't stop and that work around officer and staff development will continue. The CC replied that:

- The force rarely stop doing what they need to and that it is important that officers and staff are nurtured and supported.
- He hopes new officers with up to date training and knowledge may spark current officers to refresh their training.

Retention and progression for underrepresented groups

In preparation for the previous Workforce assurance meeting held in September 2018 the OPCC held a focus group with the representatives from a number of the staff networks. This time a small survey was sent around to understand any further views.

The PCC highlighted that other forces have robust, active networks and asked if West Mercia staff networks have sufficient support.

The CC replied:

- A new West Mercia People Strategy board will allow staff networks to seek support.
- The force have identified best practice from other forces regarding how to better support networks.
- In order to sufficiently support networks, the networks themselves need to know what they want to achieve.

Following on, the PCC asked if the force aspire to have strong staff networks. The CC said the aspiration is that all staff have the right support from the organisation regardless of any personal characteristics. The organisation recognises networks need more structure and dedicated time but the force needs to understand what outcomes will arise from having protected time.

The DCC added that the networks provide useful challenge, advice and positive relationships. It is acknowledged that for some people the networks and agenda items may be useful but they also need to be productive for the organisation.

4. Health and Wellbeing

Staff Survey Results

The PCC asked whether the CC was concerned that the force do not have the raw data from the Durham Survey completed by officers and staff in January 2018 and that efforts to listen to the workforce are not being understood.

The DCC responded that this area will be revisited during an annual review. The raw data was requested to prevent survey fatigue within the workforce but that data was not provided due to confidentiality is now out of date.

The PCC asked if the CC was aware that when asked staff networks didn't know that their staff surveys were represented at the Health and Wellbeing board. The CC stated that it is not exclusively represented at this meeting but he wants to find multiple access points for staff networks to feed into so they can help shape the workforce.

As a result of the alliance changes the PCC suggested that there appears to be some confusion amongst the staff networks about how they structure themselves and where to seek support. The DCC said that staff networks should have already split from being alliance based to West Mercia only and added that they don't want to tell staff networks what to do and it is for the network to set out what they want to achieve.

The PCC sought assurance that staff survey results are analysed to inform workforce issues as the surveys have good response rates and highlight strategic issues. The CC responded that this is already picked up in an existing role within the organisation.

The West Mercia Year of Wellbeing

The PCC highlighted that 2019 is the year of Wellbeing, given the organisational changes there has been some scepticism about the authenticity of the wellbeing agenda. He asked the CC to address how he will manage the scepticism.

The CC and DCC said that:

- There is an opportunity in October to gather staff networks to find out what can be done.
- The force have an aspiration to be an employer of choice.
- The staff networks are not always representative of the frontline and at times may exclude people with differing characteristics.

The PCC provided anecdotal evidence that some officers have the view that all officers should be Taser trained.

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| | <p>The CC and DCC responded that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The current threat assessment doesn't support all officers being Taser trained. - A piece of work is currently being undertaken to understand how the officers currently Taser trained are best placed as relocations occurred but were not welcomed by officers. - Supervisors want to be empowered and this requires them to make decisions which sometimes includes relocating officers to ensure the local area is efficiently covered with a Taser trained officer. | |
| <p>2.2</p> | <p>HMICFRS inspection programme / Matters arising from the Service Improvement Board (SIB)</p> <p>The CC was to provide an update on progress to implement the recommendations for all forces outlined in the HMICFRS inspection report, <i>Policing and Mental Health picking up the pieces</i> contained 5 recommendations, three of which were for the police force specific.</p> <p>The CC believed the answers had already been provided at another meeting.</p> <p>ACTION: PCC to revisit in a month to understand whether the answers have already been provided.</p> | <p>PCC</p> |
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| <p>3</p> | <p>AOB No items</p> | |
| | <p>CONFIRMATION OF NEXT MEETING TYPE / DATE / TIME / VENUE: Local Policing Tuesday 24th September 2019.</p> | |