

Monthly Assurance Meeting September 2020 – Meeting Notes

Date: Tuesday 29th September, 9 am
 Chair: John Campion
 Minutes: Jackie Irvin Senior Policy Manager, OPCC
 Venue PCC conference room

| | Name: | Capacity: |
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| Attendance: | John Campion | Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) |
| | Tracey Onslow | Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC) |
| | Jackie Irvin | Senior Policy Manager (SPM) |
| | Anthony Bangham | Chief Constable (CC) |
| | Rachel Jones | Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) |
| | Jack Taylor | Staff Officer (SO) |

| 1. | HOLDING TO ACCOUNT – PUBLIC CONTACT | ACTION |
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| 1.1. | <p>Current Position</p> <p>The CC acknowledge that performance is not where it should be and the ACC outlined the following issues affecting the Operational Control Centre (OCC).</p> <p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are having to familiarise themselves with a new incident recording system (SAFE). • Abstraction levels caused by sickness are high, this is a mix of both general sickness and Covid 19 related. • There is a legacy issue causing an imbalance in teams • There had been a delay in enabling front counter staff to use SAFE and provide support to help manage 101 demand. • Internal demand caused by officers and staff diverting their mobile phones to the OCC and not using their phones. | |

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| | <p>Demand</p> <p>It is recognised that peaks in demand result in a reduction in performance but this has seen an improvement in the last week. The ACC emphasised that the staff are very professional and trying to do their best.</p> <p>SAAB SAFE</p> <p>The force moved from its old incident recording system onto SAAB Safe (SAFE) in July 2020; the new system went live at the minimum viable level.</p> <p>SAFE creates a log for every contact, which increases call time by approximately 2 minutes per call. The benefit is that when an incident needs to be created from a call it provides a much richer picture of information for the creation of any thrive reports and it also helps better understand demand. To turn off the functionality would cost around £100k.</p> <p>The SAFE system comes with an App that should have been available within 6 weeks, this will now be live in March 2021. The CITRIX network won't support the App and other options are being explored. The DCC as Senior Responsible Officer would be hold a meeting the following day.</p> <p>The CC acknowledged that the issues encountered with SAFE meant that officers and staff were losing confidence in the system, but that staff do feel SAFE will be better than IOS when fully implemented.</p> <p>The PCC questioned why CITRIX had caused a problem when it is well established and asked how he could have confidence that the lessons learnt from the implementation of systems such as Athena had been utilised. The ACC responded that there appears to have been a disconnect between digital service and the SAAB SAFE implementation team. She has now brought the two teams together to start seeking solutions; the CC added that they should have been working together earlier.</p> <p>The DPCC commented that the force is not the first to have SAFE or Athena and asked why West Mercia didn't learn from other forces. The ACC responded that they were in regular contact with other forces and were looking to establish a user group. The force had engaged with Cheshire police on SAFE, however Cheshire don't measure their 101 response and West Mercia do.</p> | |
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| 1.2 | <p>Transition to the new command system – impact on performance and reliability</p> <p>The PCC said he had been restrained on publicly commenting on current call handling performance. 999 performance had seen a sustained improvement following a period of poor performance a few years ago, and 101s had mostly been stable, but performance in both had fallen away. The public would need an explanation and he challenged whether there had been an impact on the public and if service failure was occurring.</p> | |

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| | <p>The ACC responded that activity was ensuring 999 and 101 performance and service to the public is maintained. She added that management information in SAFE is not available and work is ongoing to address this and ascertain the true impact on the public. It is recognised that some of the uplift seen in 999 calls and in abandonment rates for 101 calls may be as a result of people redialling 999 as they cannot get through on 101.</p> <p>The PCC said that it was his assessment that the force does not understand performance or demand and therefore questioned what could he tell the public. The ACC said that 999 performance was improving and nearly there, but that there was a challenge to understand the impact of performance on 101.</p> <p>The CC said that before SAFE came in performance has been stable for a period of time and that it was important to do demand planning as well as putting out messages to encourage the public to make non urgent calls at quieter times. The ACC added that duties are planned around demand and that a message informing people of where they are in the queue would be introduced.</p> <p>The PCC reiterated that he would need reassurance of the force's understanding of the impact on the public and he would need to understand the plan to fix it.</p> | |
| <p>1.3</p> | <p>Post implementation</p> <p>The PCC queried if the contact management strategy launched in 2017 was still in place as the outcome and benefits outlined within it were good. The CC and ACC replied that it had been an alliance strategy which needed to be refreshed, renewed and rebadged. As the force is moving to a digital desk by June 2021 which will enable it to answer calls from social media platforms the refresh would be delayed until closer to this date.</p> <p>The DPCC asked if demand was rising, how much was driven by the police picking up calls for other agencies, and commented she had been told SAFE would reduce this, enabling the OCC to record non police calls and divert them to other agencies. The ACC responded that it was not possible to extract this information at present but that the contact log system was providing a richer picture.</p> <p>The PCC commented that there appears to be a lot of internal demand on the OCC and asked the CC if he is confident that internal phone records are correct, whether supervisors check and whether SNTs were giving out the right numbers for parish notice boards etc. The ACC responded that internal demand had been scrutinised as part of a Critical Incident Management Meeting (CIMM) established for the OCC. As a result internal messaging had gone out and checks and balances were taking place to ensure it is happening. The PCC questioned who was doing the checking and was told it was supervisors. The ACC added that they had</p> | |

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| | <p>also looked to identify which departments are doing what to create demand in the OCC.</p> <p>The CC referred to the poor external phones sited outside police stations, which do not provide the public with a good service. They generate over a 1000 calls a month and needs better management. Research has previously been done on interactive digital information boards, with a proposal to site old phone boxes outside the stations with the board inside, but this had not progressed. He felt that the police station public contact work may have taken a backward step.</p> <p>The PCC commented that the external station phones diverting to the OCC was adding to the demand and emphasised that West Mercia Police is there to serve the public, people need to take ownership.</p> <p>The PCC stated he wants to see immediate improvements and asked where he would get the confidence that the force had gripped the situation. The CC responded that it needed more short term push and that something should be piloted at one station.</p> | |
| 1.4 | <p>Resources</p> <p>The PCC questioned why the OCC was an outlier for sickness. The ACC responded that stress had increased around go live for SAFE but that it was more settled now.</p> <p>The PCC said he was interested in promoting the work of the OCC and helping to tell their story.</p> | |
| 1.5 | <p>The PCC concluded the meeting by saying that he needs the narrative about what has been done and to have the confidence that there will be a change.</p> | |
| 1.6 | <p>Date and time of next meeting</p> <p>Following the conclusion of this meeting the PCC requested a follow up meeting. This takes place on Monday 12 October 2020.</p> | |