

Monthly Assurance Meeting October 2020 – Meeting Notes

Date: Wednesday 28th October, 10 am
 Chair: John Campion
 Minutes: Ellie Giles Policy and Commissioning Intern, OPCC
 Venue: Allsop meeting room

	Name:	Capacity:
Attendance:	John Campion	Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
	Tracey Onslow	Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC)
	Natasha Noorbakhsh	Policy Officer (PO)
	Anthony Bangham	Chief Constable (CC)
	Julian Moss	Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)
	Catherine Allsopp	Staff Officer (SO)

1.	Outstanding Matters / Matters arising	ACTION
	N/A	
2.	Holding to account – Impact of Budget Investment	
2.1	<p>Impact and outcomes associated with investment in additional officers.</p> <p>The PCC began by acknowledging the quality of the briefing note.</p> <p>The PCC set out the context and timescales of the uplift campaign and asked the asked the CC to provide his assessment of the force’s response to the uplift in officers and how it was progressing.</p> <p>The CC explained there had been issues including anxiety to release officers early due to the current volume of new officers which meant they had started steadily. Through the first part of the year the uplifts in the investigative and roads policing models have only been partly implemented and the problem solving uplift hasn’t been implemented at all. The CC is now confident that the targets for officer numbers will be achieved by the end of the financial year.</p> <p>The PCC suggested that some of the plan felt hurried and that currently the ‘West Mercia way’ appears to be more about rescuing projects rather</p>	

than looking to succeed from the outset. Reassurance was sought regarding the timescales for delivering the uplift and lessons learned through the year thus far.

The CC was clear that it was never the intention of Chief Officers to devolve the plan and move the uplift to the next financial year. Following the last People's Strategy Board, (chaired by the CC), a lot of work was undertaken to get the plan back on track. The CC was confident that the force would be able work through existing issues to ensure the uplift would be fully realised by the end of March 2021.

The DCC felt that sufficient analysis and planning had not been undertaken after the initial ambition was set out. Once this analysis was undertaken, concerns were rapidly escalated and appropriate governance was put in place. Appetite for risk was also cited as a learning point. At an executive level the risk profile has been re-balanced and the challenge is for leaders to be more comfortable with risks.

Discussion took place regarding the variation in recruiting into the uplift across the LPAs.

The PCC commented that only Telford had officers uplifted into the investigative model and questioned how reassurance can be given to all communities that resources are being used to the maximum. The DCC replied that there is a clear plan in place right across West Mercia. The CC commented that there are now the right people in place to drive this activity and the plan is back on track. Superintendents have also been reassured that it is right to allow officers to move.

The CC felt that some LPAs were more cautious because of the potential risks involved. In order to mitigate the variation frequently seen across LPAs, the selection process for the Local Policing Chief Superintendent role emphasised the need to ensure consistency across the 5 LPAs. Alongside disparity at a local level, the DCC also observed that from a central perspective, HR did not have complete oversight of new officers coming into the organisation, in part due to the lack of structure and planning at the time. There is a new head of People & Organisational Development now in post who has a good grip on the uplift plan.

Since the briefing note for this meeting was issued a further 9 detectives are in place, providing reassurance that work to address the gaps in recruitment are ongoing

The PCC acknowledged that there had been some progress in recruiting into the investigative and roads models but was disappointed that the problem solving model has been slower to develop. The PCC questioned how he could get reassurance of the longevity of the Problem Solving roles and the force's approach to problem solving policing as opposed to solely reactive policing.

	<p>The CC felt there was appropriate reasoning as to why there hasn't been progression; problem solving hubs had been trialled on a small scale and were expanded in all areas, hence the need to uplift resources. The CC accepted it has taken too long to define roles and that more clarity was still required regarding the roles and how they might differ across LPAs to reflect different needs. Despite this, the CC reiterated that the numbers will be achieved by the end of March 2021.</p> <p>The PCC and CC shared their disappointment in the low number of internal expressions of interest for the various roles. The PCC questioned if this was reflective of the position in West Mercia as a whole and if there are opportunities to use the uplift to enhance diversity, inclusion and equality. The CC didn't believe this was the position in West Mercia as a whole but recounted a recent experience that raised concerns that conversations, decisions and opinions within the organisation may be discouraging people to apply for certain specialisms.</p> <p>The PCC questioned again the force's aspirations for diversity. The CC responded that roles should be attractive for all and the organisation should be representative throughout. The DCC commented that this was an opportunity to smash barriers and was impressed with the work of the Women of West Mercia (WoW) staff network. The CC set out that there is no guarantee that there would be fully representative teams for each area of policing but hoped that following the uplift, the look and feel of teams would be more diverse.</p> <p>The DPCC was aware that the CC wanted more targeted recruitment campaigns and asked if this has happened. The CC said improvements had been made but being more diverse will only work if there are the right people in the right posts. There were concerns that in the future diversity will be seen at constable level, but without the right qualifications and education, leadership positions would be unattainable.</p> <p>The PO shared observations that previous uplifts had not been fully utilised to improve diversity, inclusion equality and that this hadn't been robustly monitored. This uplift campaign is a good opportunity for the positive action resource to encourage underrepresented groups to develop into the specialist posts.</p> <p>ACTION: DCC took away an action to explore opportunity further and tackle perceptions about roles within the uplift.</p>	
<p>2.2</p>	<p>Impact and outcomes of investment in systems / infrastructure.</p> <p>The PCC highlighted the lack of a West Mercia-specific business case before SAAB implementation and questioned whether in hindsight this was the right decision.</p> <p>The CC responded that once the Alliance separated, the West Mercia team focussed on developing SAAB. Both the CC and DCC agreed a</p>	

	<p>standalone case should have been produced.</p> <p>Without the redefined business case the PCC queried how the efficiencies around SAAB will improve public service. The PCC referenced how long it took for Athena to be fully utilised and asked how this won't be a theme with SAAB.</p> <p>The CC was clear that even though there is no new business case, the non-cashable benefits outlined in the previous iteration would remain the same for West Mercia and the force is committed to delivering them. The CC acknowledged that SAAB was brought in because the old system was no longer serviceable but the new system would also improve productivity. The DCC commented that some of the cashable benefits would have been entwined with the Alliance but what was more important was now having ownership and management of SAAB. There was some learning around the sharing of information and communicating with stakeholders at an executive level.</p> <p>The PCC observed there appears to be a lack of continuity of ownership through various projects that means benefit realisation is not fully monitored or exploited. The DCC's perceptions was that the Alliance made it difficult to get things moving forward and delayed projects meaning there would be inevitable turnover of those involved with the programme. This would no longer be an issue. There has also been improvements in documenting projects making handovers easier.</p> <p>The DCC acknowledged there were small issues at the start but sees SAAB as a success story. The PCC's CEO sits on the transformation board so will have a clear picture of how the second phase is progressing and is able to challenge the project and its efficiencies. Investments that have been made in new staff should also give assurance.</p> <p>The DPCC raised concerns around the confidence partners have in the ability to carry out projects. In some partnership meetings officers have expressed their feelings towards management of projects and implementation. A reduction in data sharing following implementation of new force systems was a key partnership concern.</p> <p>The CC responded that it is disappointing when people talk down the organisation they work for but there isn't much that can be done to change behaviour. What should be done by officers and staff is engagement with partners to understand issues. Often the information needed by partners will still be available but it may require more work and effort to extract. The DCC commented that lessons have been learned around stakeholder engagement and that any issues have been escalated where necessary.</p> <p>The DPCC raised a question around cyber-crime. Previously to report cyber-crime activity you would contact action fraud but there was no record kept in West Mercia. The DPCC questioned if this would still be the</p>	
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	<p>case following the introduction of SAAB.</p> <p>The DCC responded that at a national level Action Fraud was not effective. SAAB now creates a record every time someone rings the force meaning West Mercia now have more information to allow quicker response and better support for victims. The PCC asked if it would now be possible to track the criminal justice (CJ) outcomes of cyber investigations. The DCC said that while a complete link up between action fraud, West Mercia Police and CJS is unlikely to be automated it may be possible on a case by case basis. This links back to a service improvement metric agreed as part of the 2020/21 budget. The PO clarified that the specific metric related to investigations owned by West Mercia Police and not those being managed by Action Fraud.</p>	
<p>2.3</p>	<p>Utilisation of PCC funding.</p> <p>The CC set out that there isn't sufficient oversight and understanding of broader PCC funding at Chief Officer level and queried if the PCC's office and Chief's office are fully aligned. The part time Neighbourhood Watch post was highlighted as something that is monitored from the PCC's side but not from a force perspective. The PCC commented that this Holding to Account session is a good way to start the conversation and commissioning would benefit from greater force oversight.</p> <p>ACTION: DCC and the PCC's CEO to discuss commissioning as part of their regular catch up meetings.</p> <p>The PCC raised concerns that for certain projects the focus is on the front-facing person driving the work and if this person moves on, the agenda and project may lose importance. The CC referred to the PCC elections and how it is important for the force to have input and oversight of commissioning to ensure projects don't get lost or discontinued regardless of who the PCC is. The CC also felt some projects are too niche and by taking a broader West Mercia approach, the responsibility and focus is less likely to fall onto a single person. The DCC agreed that it is a risk but it is known and will be picked up by the new Chief Supt for local policing.</p> <p>EG queried the promotion of funding available from the PCC's office and asked whether what was available is widely known. The DCC agreed that this is something that can be built in to discussions with the PCC's CEO to provide greater strategic oversight. The CC also commented that roles of Superintendents maybe redefined in terms of supporting the commissioning process.</p>	
<p>2.4</p>	<p>Performance Management.</p> <p>The PCC questioned whether the performance metrics that have been set against investments are well known outside of the Executive and if there</p>	

	<p>is any learning required to provide greater awareness to others at a more local level.</p> <p>The CC acknowledged that the visibility of some of the metrics and the reinforcement of them had dropped off but most metrics are included in everyday activity and are easily recognisable. The DCC commented that metrics have been built into the relevant performance framework and products so that the necessary people have sight of them. As such, a separate performance framework / report for the budget metrics hasn't been developed.</p> <p>The PCC questioned how he is given the reassurance that measures are met. The PCC used the example of non-urgent appointments being met within 2 days or by agreement. The CC confirmed that SPI were given responsibility of capturing and monitoring these measures and data for metrics should be easy to obtain.</p> <p>ACTION: DCC to review diary appointments metric for inclusion within the performance management framework.</p> <p>The PCC agreed it would take time to embed the force's new Performance Management Framework and balanced scorecards and understood why it has taken so long to develop this new approach.</p> <p>The PCC explained how within the next budget setting there is likely to be a further increase in officers. The PCC questioned if the CC was confident that the process of setting service improvement metrics as part of the budget would be easier this year. The CC was confident that the embedded framework, effort and learning throughout the year will translate into a more sophisticated approach to budget setting / business planning regardless of who is in post from a Chief Officer and PCC perspective</p>	
3.	<p>HMICFRS inspection programme / Matters arising from the Service Improvement Board (SIB)</p> <p>HMICFRS are virtually visiting and the visit coincides with the next holding to account thematic which was welcomed.</p>	
4.	<p>AOB</p>	
	<p>None</p>	
5.	<p>Confirmation of next meeting type / date / time / venue:</p> <p>Thematic on Covid-19</p> <p>Thursday 26th November 2020</p>	

