

Monthly Assurance Meeting March 2021– Meeting Notes

Date: Tuesday 23rd March, 10:30 am
 Chair: John Campion
 Minutes: Charity Pearce, Assistant Policy Officer, OPCC
 Venue: Virtual

	Name:	Capacity:
Attendance:	John Campion	Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
	Natasha Noorbakhsh	Policy Officer (PO)
	Charity Pearce	Policy Assistant (PA)
	Anthony Bangham	Chief Constable (CC)
	Geoff Wessell	Assistant Chief Constable (ACC)
	Jack Taylor	Staff Officer (SO)

No.	Item	
1.	Outstanding Matters / Matters arising N/A	
2.	<p>AOB</p> <p>The PCC opened the meeting by seeing reassurance that violence towards women or fear of it was being actioned by the force in light of the Sarah Everard case.</p> <p>The CC responded that the Executive Team were looking at the consequential effect locally and were including it as part of the policing plans for lockdown easing. Further discussions were taking place at the national policing meeting. The force want the community to feel safe wherever they go so will be targeting hotspot areas.</p> <p>The PCC added that anything implemented needed to be long term fix and not a short term reaction to the event. There is an opportunity to be proactive and work with partners as needed.</p> <p>ACTION: Provide plans for easing of lockdown including the night time economy and fear or and violence towards women and girls.</p>	CC

<p>3.</p>	<p>Holding to account – Serious and Organised Crime (SOC)</p>	
	<p>Working with partners to understand and respond to SOC threats</p> <p><u>Understanding the threat and scale of SOC</u></p> <p>The PCC acknowledged the journey the force have been on with SOC over the years and asked the CC about the sustainability and the effect of the changes. He also sought reassurance that the voice of the executive was strong enough in the briefing note.</p> <p>The CC and ACC responded that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a positive story, the force need to ensure they use lessons learnt but meeting research has highlighted areas that need more grip. • SOC is now business as usual with outcomes in place, things raised by HMICFRS 2 years ago are now no longer relevant. • Voice of the executive is represented but not as strongly as they would like. <p>Currently in place is a pilot analyst post funded by the PCC. The PCC sought reassurance that the force has sufficient analytical resource to understand the threat and scale of SOC once the pilot ends. The ACC responded that he is confident they will. The post will be mainstreamed into the force budget following initial period of funding by the PCC.</p> <p>The PCC highlighted that the Community Profiles are supposed to direct activity to target SOC but anecdotal feedback suggests they are underutilised and sometimes not shared with key stakeholders. He asked the CC how he would ensure these comprehensive intelligence products are better used going forward. The CC acknowledged that this should have been picked up before the meeting and it exposed a gap. This has now been rectified and the profiles are shared with partners.</p> <p>The PCC sought reassurance that these profiles were also used at quarterly review meetings with policing area command teams. The CC responded that he would expect something in the process as it is important.</p> <p><u>Maturity of local partnership arrangements</u></p> <p>The PCC highlighted the lack of meetings in some areas, a disconnect between strategic and tactical groups, and the under use of the community profiles. He asked the CC to provide his overall assessment of current SOCJAG arrangements. The CC said that SOCJAGS are now in a better place, at their origin partners needed to be persuaded to engage. They are seeking independent chairs but the force need to ensure they support them.</p>	

	<p>The PCC acknowledged the aspiration to have independent chairs and asked what support would be in place for partners who take on this role. The CC responded that the policing area Superintendents need to be able to spot which chairs need support, they don't want to be seen as dumping this role on people. The ACC added that there is two aspects: administration and the intel product. The force need to ensure the chairs are aware of the product and how to use it.</p> <p>The PCC added that anecdotal feedback from partners in Worcestershire and Telford had concerns that SOCJAGs do not provide sufficient direction to the tactical groups. He asked if the CC was satisfied with the oversight of partnership arrangements to ensure they are operating as per the terms of reference. The CC and ACC responded that the SOCJAG response is at different stages across the areas, the direction needs to meet local need and development. The delivery mechanism underneath is down to the strategic SOCJAG apart from Worcestershire who work the opposite way.</p> <p>The PCC added that as a number of the issues have existed for a period of time, could the Crime Reduction Board (CRB) be better utilised to grip issues at an earlier stage. The CC and ACC said that there is an issue with the feedback they are receiving. Some of the groups dropped away during COVID unnecessarily but the reality testing needs to improve to identify issues earlier.</p>	
<p>1.1</p>	<p>Organised Crime Group (OCG) management</p> <p><u>Leadership, governance and accountability</u></p> <p>The PCC sought reassurance that following significant changes in senior leadership the progress made by the OCGMU will continue. The CC said that there is a strong legacy that is embedded and that he doesn't think the focus will drift</p>	
<p>1.2</p>	<p>Resources to tackle SOC</p> <p><u>Appointment, support and development for LROs</u></p> <p>The PCC acknowledged that LROs play a critical role in tackling SOC, however the actions in the SOC delivery plan related to training are limited. He asked the CC if he thought the action relating to CPD days is sufficient to support and develop LROs in their role. The ACC said that it isn't. The new LROs have low level localised training but they need to use and encourage use of facilities in the force including the best practice database.</p> <p>The PCC added that disruptions are heavily pursue focussed and asked if the CC was satisfied the force had achieved the right balance across the 4P's. The ACC responded that the force are heading in the right direction but are not where they need to be. Problem solving activity isn't always recognised as linking into SOC so isn't recorded.</p>	

	<p>The PCC followed up by asking if he were to revisit in 6 months where would the force want to see a greater focus. The ACC said that he would want no reduction in the volume of pursuits but the whole strategy is prevent focussed so he would want to see that become a priority.</p> <p>ACTION: Revisit in 6 months to see how SOC activity across the 4P's is balanced.</p> <p><u>Effective utilisation of local resources to support delivery of the West Mercia SOC strategy</u></p> <p>The PCC asked the CC if he was satisfied that the force had achieved the right balance between dedicated and non-dedicated resource to tackle SOC. The CC said that he was satisfied the resources were in the right place, but it needs to be tweaked. Everything is centrally led but locally delivered as part of the control strategy, they need to enforce that it is everyone's responsibility.</p> <p>The PCC acknowledged he had previously been given reassurances that clear plans are in place to recruit into the LPPT vacancies from April 2021 but sought confirmation the plans were still on track. The CC confirmed the plans were on track and that any vacancies were created by themselves. The team were originally a local policing resource but unofficially became a tasking team so have been returned to the OPU to fill uplift roles.</p> <p>ACTION: PCC to revisit LPPT teams to check against original agreement for resource.</p> <p><u>Effective utilisation of regional resources to support delivery of the West Mercia SOC strategy</u></p> <p>The PCC highlighted that there are negative perceptions related to the ROCU and as a result this can be a barrier preventing officers from requesting operational support. The PCC sought reassurance that ROCU resources were being promoted effectively to benefit local communities. The CC and ACC responded that there had been a recent increase in activity, there was a period of time where a national operation used up regional resource. They would always like more but the applications and support is now much better.</p>	
<p>1.3</p>	<p>Prevention and early intervention to reduce offending</p> <p><u>Prevention and early intervention (to include utilisation of PCC funding)</u></p> <p>The PCC acknowledged that the force have utilised a number of posts funded by his office focused on prevention and early intervention. Funding has also been provided for a SOC analyst. The PCC highlighted that there had been 7 months of delays in filling the role and asked if there</p>	

	<p>were any tangible benefits associated with his investment so far. The ACC was unable to explain the difficulties over filling the post but said they need to show the outcomes to mainstream the post in to the budget. The start of the meeting highlighted that the problem profiles aren't being utilised so they need to identify outcomes.</p> <p>The PO added that staff turnover had been a main factor in delays in recruiting into the role. The CC agreed and acknowledged he was aware of the same problem in other areas.</p> <p>The PCC highlighted that the force have set an intention to become a more trauma informed organisation, with a greater focus on prevention. However, there does not appear to be a clear and cohesive strategy underpinning this. Acknowledging that this is a priority for the force, the PCC asked if the CC was satisfied with the progress. The CC and ACC said that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DCC wanted to ensure the force recognise trauma to inform strategies and plans. It is included as part of the People Strategy Consultation and its associated delivery plans. • It is represented in the National Vulnerability Action Plan and has informed problem solving approaches. <p><u>Offender management (to include use of orders, IOM, MARSOC etc.)</u></p> <p>The briefing note sets out future commissioning intentions in relation to SOC offenders. The PCC asked if these intentions are aligned to unmet needs and demands identified locally and nationally. The CC and ACC responded that there is nothing to indicate they are not, awareness and use of orders are better now than they were. There is still some work to do to upskill officers but it is being looked at locally.</p>	
<p>1.4</p>	<p>Understanding the impact of disruption activity</p> <p><u>Evidencing activity across the 4Ps (to include performance reporting)</u></p> <p>The PCC acknowledged good practice and operational success as set out in the briefing note. He asked if the CC was confident that current performance metrics enable the force to demonstrate the impact and value of its activity around SOC to communities. The CC said the force are in a fundamentally different position to where they were with everything properly recorded. This features in the gold performance scorecard and there is a desire to cover it at the Force Delivery Group. The ACC added that they have the metrics they just need to maximise performance within it.</p> <p>The PCC recognised that whilst the force have built a repository of OCG plans and data, in its current state, the system is clunky and requires additional analysis to enable true organisational learning. He sought</p>	

	<p>reassurance that the force will continue to develop the approach to organisational learning and ensure best practice can be evidenced and embedded. The CC and ACC responded that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The force are committed to reality testing and sharing best practice, they are better networked within the organisation to ensure it is recognised. • Recent staff changes provide the opportunity to redirect focus and address this. <p>The PCC highlighted that public communications for SOC have improved over the last 12 months but it is still very reactive. The CC agreed and said that it was disappointing to read in the briefing note about the misunderstanding of the 'protect' branding post alliance termination. The direction is to be proactive.</p> <p>The PCC added that he is keen to see aspirations around prevention to get to where communities benefit the most, targeted comms with partners is key. The ACC gave some examples around courier fraud where preventative comms was used but wasn't branded as 'protect'.</p> <p>It was agreed that all issues had been discussed and the PCC ended the meeting by ensuring feedback would be provided to partners.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Confirmation of next meeting type / date / time / venue:</p> <p>Performance of Review of the year 2021</p> <p>27 April 2021 at 14:00pm</p>	