

Extraordinary Assurance Meeting May 2021– Meeting Notes

Date: Tuesday 18th May, 14:30 pm
 Chair: John Campion
 Minutes: Natasha Noorbakhsh Policy Officer, OPCC
 Venue PCC's Office

	Name:	Capacity:
Attendance:	John Campion	Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
	Natasha Noorbakhsh	Policy Officer (PO)
	Rachel Jones	Assistant Chief Constable (ACC)
	Grant Wills	Superintendent, Public Contact (GW)

1.	Holding to account – Response to calls for service	
	<p>This extraordinary meeting was called in response to a virtual holding to account (HTA) submission sent by the PCC to the Chief Constable (CC) on 6th May 2021. The virtual HTA set out current performance in respect of 101 call handling performance and unresourced incidents, and the PCC requested a briefing on plans to improve the service to the public.</p> <p>The 999 & 101 Performance Plan, and the Demand Reduction Plan were shared with the PCC in advance of the meeting.</p>	
1.1	<p>101 Call Handling</p> <p>The force had set an aspiration to answer 80% of 101 calls within 30 seconds by March 2021. Performance was on the right trajectory until December 2020, after which time a no. of factors significantly impacted call handling, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-related track and trace abstractions; • Staff vacancies; • ICT outages; and • Access to limited management information (MI). <p>The ACC accepted that the PCC should have been made aware that the force would not achieve the 80% target sooner. The PCC queried why the 999 & 101 performance plan was not refreshed until intervention from the governance. The ACC stated that the plan was still live and being worked too, however there were a number of different iterations which caused</p>	

confusion. However, there is now one updated plan, taking into account changes in legislation and current performance. This was shared with the PCC for scrutiny ahead of the meeting. The ACC provided reassurance that the refreshed plan will remain on the agenda of the Executive, and would be subject to regular review and scrutiny through the Local Policing & Operations Board.

The new Supt (GW) has been in post since February and has driven improvements in call handling performance. The immediate focus for GW was prioritising and stabilising 999 call handling performance. 999 performance is now above the force aspiration of 90% of calls answered within 10 seconds.

Whilst improvements have been made, they have been limited due to issues with the existing infrastructure. The recent process interventions have been manual, time-consuming and intrusive; and it is felt that technology is the biggest risk to the performance plan being successful. The PCC asked how the force would mitigate these risks. Digital Services have been asked to identify the expertise in-force to undertake the work required, and commitments have been made in terms of investing capacity. The ACC has requested that this is pulled into a clear plan. The importance of this work is understood and supported by the Director of Business Services.

It was confirmed that internal demand remains a continual pressure on the Operations and Communications Centre (OCC) and requires consistent focus. Combating internal demand is central to a number of the activities set out in the 999 & 101 Performance Plan however it is dependent on cultural shift. There is more compliance across the organisation and a lot of work has been done around the internal directory and switchboard. Where there is failure demand (e.g. officers not providing victims with direct contact details) feedback is being provided to supervisors.

Linked to the above, the PCC queried whether all SNTs had appropriate automated emails responses which provided team contact details rather than directing members of the public to 101. The ACC was confident this was now in place and would like to provide a future briefing to the PCC on the development of the Local Policing Charter and associated metrics which would provide further reassurance.

Whilst there has been an increase in online demand via the Single Online Home (SOH), this hasn't reduced call handling demand. Further developments in regard to channels for reporting were discussed and it was confirmed that the 'digital desk' will go live in June. This will enable the reporting of offences through social media.

The force are addressing the vacancies in the OCC, however current projections are that the department will not reach establishment until

	<p>December 2021. It would be at this point that the force would expect to reach the aspiration of answering 80% of 101 calls within 30 seconds. Once this is achieved, the force would like to enrich the understanding and monitoring of call handling performance by way of more nuanced MI. The PCC would be open to a broader set of metrics, however existing MI issues would need to be resolved first.</p> <p>It was noted that whilst SAAB Safe offered new functionality, there was a loss of some MI following implementation. It was acknowledged that key performance indicators such as emergency response times were no longer available and that resolving MI issues hadn't been prioritised due to competing demands (some of which had financial consequences). This is now in hand with the Strategy, Planning & Insight (SPI) team.</p> <p>Phase 2 of the SAAB programme was discussed, and the ACC suggested that there had not been sufficient operational input within the programme delivery. GW is currently reviewing but early indications are that the force will not realise the 11 FTE savings originally envisaged. An update on the review is due to go to Change & Transformation Board in June, and will then be escalated to the West Mercia Governance Board.</p> <p>The PCC queried how he would get reassurance that the force were on track to achieve improved performance by December 2021 and resolve the issues in respect of MI. The ACC committed to providing the PCC with quarterly briefings on these matters, the first of which will be submitted in July 2021.</p> <p>Action: The ACC to provide the PCC with quarterly briefings on progress against the 999 & 101 Performance Plan.</p>	<p>ACC</p>
<p>1.2</p>	<p>Unresourced Incidents</p> <p>Unresourced incident data is included in the weekly, monthly and quarterly performance reports. However, current performance reporting is limited in regards to understanding of risk vs resource, and demand across different categories, e.g. grade 2 incidents, scheduled appointments and diary car appointments. Linked to this, the ACC wants to revisit use of the diary car to ensure it is being used appropriately, particularly in respect of domestic abuse (DA).</p> <p>The Demand Reduction Plan was shared with the PCC ahead of the briefing. The plan is a work in progress and requires engagement and buy in across the local policing areas (LPAs). A series of deployment principles have also been developed to support the plan. LPAs are currently being consulted and working through the details.</p> <p>The PCC asked for reassurance that the Executive are driving and leading the work around demand reduction. The ACC acknowledged that the organisation was not operating as efficiently as it could be, and in part this was due to cultural issues. There needed to be a shift towards a "task</p>	

<p>not ask” culture, such that the centre was able to control and direct resource. Part of the plan is to build on the PCC’s investment across teams and specialisms (including the investigative model), to deploy the most appropriate resource straight away.</p> <p>Current performance reporting of unresourced sets out an upper limit, and ‘an area of concern’ in respect to volume. The ACC needed more clarity as to the acceptable parameters, based on a better understanding of the risk being managed by the force. As such, improved MI needed to be prioritised. This was accepted by the PCC. However, unresourced was a useful indicator for monitoring the response to the public and volumes appeared to be increasing. As such, the PCC queried whether the significant investments being made in the force were being utilised to best effect for the public. The PCC also queried how the ACC could be certain that the delivery plan would drive improvements.</p> <p>Assurance was given that OCC Inspectors actively manage all unresourced incidents including review of diary appointments. The Inspectors have a better understand of risk vs resource than can be gleaned from the MI. The OCC Inspectors are proactive, and work with the LPAs when volumes hit the relevant thresholds.</p> <p>The ACC felt that the variation in relationships between dispatch and the LPAs was a contributory factor to current performance. As such, the first step to deliver the plan was to finalise the deployment principles; setting out the organisation’s expectations. There would then need to be an education piece with officers.</p> <p>The ACC set out that wider force initiatives / approaches would also impact on the success of the plan, including delivery of the Local Policing Community Charter and early intervention and prevention training. Feedback from officers who have received the early intervention and prevention training was that they would have found it useful when working in response. The PCC confirmed that prevention and early intervention would feature heavily in the new Police and Crime Plan.</p> <p>It was agreed that progress against the Demand Reduction Plan would be included in the ACCs quarterly briefings to the PCC.</p> <p>Action: The ACC to provide the PCC with quarterly briefings on progress against the Demand Reduction Plan.</p> <p>The PCC asked what he can do to support in this area. As the MI develops, the ACC would find it useful to understand what information is required to support the PCC’s function. The PCC challenged the force to be aspirational in respect of MI and the information that is needed, before identifying what is available. The PCC wants to see a clear trajectory of improved service provision across a suite of measures, rather than a focus on arbitrary targets and milestones. This was supported by GW who felt that the focus shouldn’t be on the target, but should be on the service</p>	<p>ACC</p>
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	<p>being provided to the public. Once the MI is improved, the PCC is happy to engage with the force to broaden and develop performance metrics.</p> <p>GW set out that he was confident that the force could deliver the improvements set out in both plans. The PCC thanked the ACC and GW for the briefing and closed the meeting.</p>	
3.	AOB	
	N/A	
4.	<p>Confirmation of next meeting type / date / time / venue:</p> <p>Performance against the Safer West Mercia Plan.</p> <p>04 June 2021 at 1430.</p>	