

Monthly Assurance Meeting December 2021– Meeting Notes

Date: Monday 20th December, 2:30 pm
 Chair: John Campion
 Minutes: Jackie Irvin, Senior Policy Manager, OPCC
 Venue: West Mercia Police HQ

	Name:	Capacity:
Attendance:	John Campion	Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
	Tracey Onslow	Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC)
	Jackie Irvin	Senior Policy Manager (SPM)
	Pippa Mills	Chief Constable (CC)
	Julian Moss	Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)
	Beth Bridges	Chief Superintendent Operations (ChSupt)

No.	Item	
1.	Outstanding Matters / Matters arising There were none.	
2.	<p>Holding to account – Force Operations</p> <p>The CC had provided the PCC with a briefing document on Force Operations (Operations) prior to the meeting and this formed the basis of the CC’s presentation at the meeting.</p> <p>As background, the CC explained that the Operations department comprises of a number of different business areas, providing a policing response that is able to flex to support the needs of both the force and the community. It is a professional department with a high level of specialist and accredited training. People working in the department volunteer for the posts and few leave their roles during service, indicating the staff feel supported and wellbeing is good.</p> <p>The CC confirmed that the department understands how it contributes towards supporting policing priorities and the Local Policing Community Charter.</p> <p>Acknowledging the low turnover in staff, the PCC asked from a diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) perspective whether the</p>	

	<p>department is representative of the wider workforce and was told that it isn't at the moment, but more will be done to understand any DEI barriers, real or perceived.</p>	
<p>2.1</p>	<p>Current Service Delivery</p>	
	<p>Roads policing</p> <p>The uplift in officer numbers within the force has led to an additional 2 sergeant and 17 officer posts in roads policing. This has resulted in a more consistent service to the public as well as reducing demand on local policing officers. The roads policing team carry out daily operations in support the Local Policing Community Charter and Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs). This needs to be built on so that SNTs are able to provide a broader update on police activity at neighbourhood meetings.</p> <p>A bespoke support services for victims of road traffic collisions (RTCs) is now in place. While the newness of the service and numbers accessing it to date make it difficult to evaluate, it has received very positive feedback from service users.</p> <p>A more resilient staffing model has led to the formation of a Motorcycle Traffic Support Team. This increases police visibility as well as being able to support mutual aid both regionally and nationally.</p> <p>Learning and Development and the Driver Training Unit have worked together to ensure demand is met and a plan is in place to address a number of improvement areas identified in a national review of driver training.</p> <p>Oversight of roads policing is by a Roads Policing Partnership Group chaired by an Assistant Chief Constable. The CC emphasised that the team is not just dealing with incidents on the road, but also actively targeting criminality. At the moment this work is not very visible but is consistently monitored.</p> <p>The PCC asked if there were plans in place to maximise exposure of the teams work to the wider public and was told that feedback from the public is improving, but there is an opportunity to be more proactive with the media.</p> <p>The PCC asked how active the team was on the force's Facebook pages. The ChSupt replied that the team was active on Twitter, but did not have access to the force Facebook account.</p> <p>The PCC commented that roads related issues were often the top issue for postbag items to his office and questioned whether there was an opportunity to use more social media, for example by publishing dashcam footage. The CC replied that getting the communications plan right was important and the DCC added that it was on the agenda</p>	

for a Chief Officer planning day in January.

The PCC asked how the forces roads policing team worked with neighbouring forces and whether the force was missing anything from not being part of the Central Motorway Patrol Group (CMPG). The ChSupt provided reassurance that the force works closely with other forces, along with day to day contact there are also regular quarterly meetings with regional colleagues. Day to day roads policing activity works across the strategic roads network and the withdrawal from CMPG has not had an impact on this.

Roads policing received investment in the budget and the PCC asked how the force captured the difference this is making. The CC replied that while killed and serious injury (KSI) figures feature in gold performance scorecards, there is more work needed to capture the outcomes of the wider prevention work and activity taking place.

The PCC referred to a recent visit the Bromsgrove where it was clear officers had a clear set of priorities and asked where this governance comes from. In response the ChSupt stated that tasking meetings were used to set a clear direction for officers.

Road safety Team

The CC outlined the work the road safety team undertakes with partners to reduce casualties and make West Mercia's roads safer. This is focused around enforcement, education and engineering.

The PCC commented that many 'postbag' items were linked to people's perceptions of speed, particularly at key times. From his meetings with local policing area (LPA) Superintendents (Supts) it appeared there was inconsistency in approach as some referred issues to SNTs and other to the Safer Roads team and the public need to know issues are addressed with the right team. The CC responded that she was unsighted on this inconsistency and would seek to understand what was happening.

Assessment and evaluation of education programmes does take place, with the ChSupt commenting was that some of the positives from schemes like Die to Drive, which is run in partnership with the fire service, is young people taking the message home to their families.

Armed policing

The CC outlined the armed policing strategic assessment (APSTRA) which identifies 4 key risks, including vacancies. The level of vacancies is not unique to West Mercia and forces are sharing knowledge to try and improve attrition rates. She added that Discovery Sessions had been used to counter some of the negative perceptions of the unit. Other risks include the firearms training facilities, which

need improvement, and the shift pattern of firearms officers, who currently work 12 hour shifts which leave officers fatigued. This is reverting to back to a 5 shift pattern in September 2022. The APSTRA has received positive feedback from HMICFRS and is recognised as a good document.

The PCC queried how it was possible to measure the response times for armed response vehicles (ARVs) so accurately while there remains an issue for extracting data from the incident recording system. The response was that all ARV attendance is managed through Chronicle, a different system from the more general incident recording.

The PCC sought assurance that as some of the facility changes and shift patterns won't be coming into effect until September 2022 that welfare and support is in place for officers. The CC responded that West Mercia is not the only force with a 12 hour shift pattern for armed response officers (AFOs). At the start of each shift the AFOs have to declare themselves fit and this is signed off by a supervisor. It is hoped that more potential AFOs will be added to April training cohort.

Public order

The CC outlined the public order function including:

- the force's ability to meet mutual aid deployments for Cop 26 and the G7 summit, while maintaining local resilience level demonstrated that the right number of officers were public order trained. While there will always be a need for LPA based officers to be trained, officers in other functions such as CID had also been offered the opportunity.
- A new triage process is in place for all events, protests, mass gatherings etc.
- There are a small number of open recommendations relating to a recent HMICFRS national inspection into the policing of public protests, these should be closed by the end of the financial year.
- Protestor tactics are changing and capabilities are being looked at to address this.

The PCC referred to an internal survey that had been conducted to understand the barriers that may exist for officers considering public order training and asked what the outcome had been. In response he was told that the survey hadn't provided the insight hoped for and that more work is need to understand any barriers.

The PCC asked if there had been a good uptake of West Mercia personnel to attend Cop 26. The ChSupt said yes and these were all volunteers. While there had been some challenges, the success was that BAU continued in force, with planned abstractions across the force.

The DPCC queried if the triage approach for protests was something

	<p>all forces were doing and was told that it was a local solution, which was providing better oversight and governance of how many events are or aren't policed. This is leading to a consistent approach.</p> <p>Taskforce</p> <p>Not all forces have a taskforce capability. This business area has seen an increase in roles undertaken, with Force Tasking overseeing what work is done, including providing support to LPAs when pre planned deployments are cancelled. 36% of their time is spent in training.</p> <p>The PCC questioned whether the force had achieved the right balance between locally led tasking and regionally (ROCU) led and was told that while the ROCU may say the force isn't asking for resources, it is also told its not meeting the threshold for them. The PCC asked for assurance that the systems in place at a regional level are sufficient and was told that they are and that there is good communication and oversight in place.</p> <p>Dogs</p> <p>The organisational structure of the dog section has recently been changed and the impact will be reviewed in 6 and 12 months' time. The unit includes 3 victim recovery dogs, working across the force area and recently the dogs have started using doggy body armour which gained a lot of publicity.</p> <p>Action: findings of the organisational review to be shared with the PCC</p> <p>Duties</p> <p>The CC explained this is a transactional business area for all officers and staff, requiring an understanding of police regulations and a need to liaise closely with the Business Operations Centre.</p> <p>A new process was introduced in summer 2021 around authorising leave to maintain preferred staffing levels with the aim mitigating the impact on areas of business such as SNTs. The PCC asked if resources from Force Operations were being used to support SNTs. The CC responded that from September onwards there will be a wider spread of abstractions.</p> <p>The PCC commented that SNTs appear to be the first port of call when backfilling officers and challenged if this was the case. In response the ChSupt said she was confident this mind set was changed.</p> <p>Fleet management</p> <p>The reduction in the cost of police vehicle damage demonstrates a</p>	
--	---	--

	<p>clear leadership intervention that has worked. While there will always be some damage because of the tactics used the levels are now felt to be right. Once telematics are in place there will be data to drive future improvements.</p>	
2.2	<p>Safer West Mercia Plan</p> <p>The work of the Force Operations department had been mapped against the Safer West Mercia plan in the briefing note shared at the meeting.</p> <p>The PCC made reference to the briefing note stating that Operations are supporting the crime and vulnerability department around domestic abuse (DA) to alleviate demand challenges and to expose them to aspects of DA that they wouldn't already be aware of and asked the CC to explain what the organisational benefits of this were. The CC replied that it was important that they didn't just work in their specialist areas and had a better understanding of how Operations support contributes to other policing functions.</p> <p>The DPCC commented that this section of the briefing note made reference to legislative changes affecting firearms deployment and queried what the changes were.</p> <p>Action: ChSupt to clarify what the legislation changes are</p>	
2.3	<p>Equality and human rights</p> <p>The PCC commented that 12 hour shifts don't suit everyone and asked what was being done to attract female recruits and other under represented groups into this business area. As an example the CC said that a compact motorbike is being sourced for a female road safety officer to undertake motorbike training. The force's first female AFO Sgt has also been appointed and any female should feel there is an opportunity for them to try out armed policing.</p> <p>The PCC asked what has been done to attract other under represented groups. The ChSupt replied that gender is the one theme that consistently comes up on the discovery days, which is why it has been a focus, but that Force Ops is open to all and gave an example of the chair of the LGBT+ group agreeing to support the department.</p>	
2.4	<p>Future work</p> <p>Drones</p> <p>The PCC asked if the force had established the cost benefit of establishing its own drone capability instead of partnership arrangements with the fire and rescue service and was told that a business case was to be produced in 2022.</p>	

	<p>Roads policing equipment</p> <p>The PCC asked for assurance that the force had learnt lessons from previous investment in equipment and was told the force is in a much better position.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>AOB</p> <p>N/A.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Confirmation of next meeting type / date / time / venue:</p> <p>Wednesday 12th January 2022 at 6pm</p> <p>Public – Budget proposals</p>	