

Monthly Assurance Meeting January 2022– Meeting Notes

Date: Monday 31st January, 2:00 pm
 Chair: John Campion
 Minutes: Charity Pearce, Assistant Policy Officer, 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 (JI)
	Pippa Mills	Chief Constable (CC)
	Julian Moss	Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)
	Damian Barrett	T/Assistant Chief Constable (DB)
	Mel Crowther	T/Ch. Supt Crime and Vulnerability (MC)

No.	Item	
1.	Outstanding Matters / Matters arising There were none.	
2.	<p>Holding to account – Homicide performance</p> <p><u>Homicide data and trends</u></p> <p>The CC provided the PCC with a briefing document on Homicide performance prior to the meeting and this formed the basis of the CC's presentation at the meeting.</p> <p>The PCC highlighted the investment into the major investigations within the budget for the upcoming financial year and asked for the CC's opinion of performance. The CC apologised for some data errors within the report as a result of using a mixture of local and national data.</p> <p>As a result of the highlighted data errors, the PCC sought reassurance that there was enough focus on performance data to ensure he can have confidence in the report. DB said that other forces have similar issues but this is being taken into account as part of the forces future planning. There are a number of complex issues around recording homicide offences.</p>	

The PCC said that reassuring communities that the force understand drivers behind homicides was more important than comparing levels to other forces. The CC agreed but highlighted that it was important to recognise the points.

The PCC is comfortable with the force being an outlier if the reasons behind it are understood.

Homicides can impact public confidence, the PCC asked whether the force understand if there has been any impact on public confidence. The DCC responded that the number of homicides in West Mercia are so small it is hard to predict the impact. The force are working with partners to mitigate impact on drivers behind offences namely, mental health, domestic abuse and drugs. However it is hard to measure how activity has prevented a murder from taking place.

Anecdotally, knife related crime is perceived to be as a result of county lines/gang related, however data does not support this. The PCC asked whether the forces understanding of the data allows for targeted intervention activity. DB responded that the drivers behind homicides are clear, the factors in existence across all knife crime are related but the communication of this needs to be clearer.

Following a change in offending age, the PCC asked whether there were any gaps in commissioned service or if any additional support could be provided by his office. The DCC said that there is support from OPCC to understand where the gaps are against an agreed framework but that the force are willing to further understand how gaps in services are analysed.

The PCC sought assurance that there is confidence to invest in the right interventions locally and asked for an assessment of prevention activity. The CC and DCC responded that national framework will help determine the interventions needed with support from academic resources. There are wider societal issues resulting in homicide. It is hoped that the serious violence duty will help to drive activity with other partners.

The PCC acknowledged that the solution to prevention activity cannot be by asking someone else to do something and requires partners to work in coalition. MC highlighted the various vulnerability strands and the impact on partners if actioned individually. The force are looking at ways to combine and ask meaningful questions.

Many of the victims and suspects involved in homicide offences are previously known to the force. The DPCC asked how the force work with partners to safeguard vulnerable people. The CC is confident that where a vulnerability is identified the correct referrals are made into partners. DB added that the force are working to understand how the

	<p>data can be further analysed to make data more meaningful for local policing.</p> <p>Various data was provided in the briefing note. JI asked what further data is provided to local policing teams. The DCC said that there is a limit to anonymised data and what it can explain, the holistic picture of the individual is more likely to be successful over time.</p> <p>The force are working with OPCC to understand if there are any gaps in commissioned services.</p> <p>There was a discussion about how the PCC and CC engage council leaders to identify priorities and discuss a long term strategic approach.</p> <p>Data within the report shows homicides by policing area and shows that Telford had a disproportionate amount. The PCC asked if there were any characteristics of drivers affecting the rate of offending. The CC said that there is such a small number of offences, if a clear pattern or driver was identified it would be picked up but it hasn't been in this case. DB added that Telford is unique as there are a number of locally based organised criminal groups.</p>	
<p>2.1</p>	<p><u>Current Investigative demand</u></p> <p>It was acknowledged that the current investigative demand is high and despite upcoming investment into local investigations both locally and nationally there are concerns around a shortage of investigators. The PCC asked if the CC was confident the local uplift could be achieved in a timely manner. The CC is satisfied it can be achieved and the delivery of uplift has been considered at force planning.</p> <p>A recent review was undertaken to look at cases where no suspect is charged. The PCC asked whether this level of robust scrutiny is business as usual to maintain the appropriate oversight. The CC is satisfied with the scrutiny in place but data recording poses a significant challenge. DB highlighted a number of issues relating to CPS disclosure guidance and forensic pathology.</p>	
<p>2.2</p>	<p><u>Data quality</u></p> <p>The DPCC highlighted a number of data errors in the report and sought to understand why that was the case if the numbers of homicides were low locally. DB said that the system crimes are recorded on gets interpreted differently, there are ongoing discussions around a system upgrade to hopefully overcome this.</p> <p>A multi-agency response to serious violence should be informed by partnership data. The PCC asked whether the right data sharing</p>	

	<p>agreements are in place between the force and partners to inform a response. DB responded that existing data sharing arrangements need to be refreshed due to GDPR. This is currently being worked on to ensure compliance and determine where data sharing will be most effective.</p> <p>Within the report it was referenced that Telford currently have access to some additional accident and emergency data around knife crime. The PCC asked whether there were any tangible benefits from using this data. The force acknowledged anecdotal evidence supporting the data source and would like to see this replicated across other policing areas. Nationally, accident and emergency data is recognised as being useful.</p>	
2.3	<p><u>Governance arrangements</u></p> <p>The PCC sought reassurance around the current mechanisms in place to ensure sufficient oversight and scrutiny of activity and lessons learnt. The DCC said that there is a new meeting set up to capture organisational learning across a number of areas. This fits in with existing governance arrangements.</p> <p>The above meeting structure was not set out in the briefing note provided before the meeting. The PCC clarified that in his governance role he needs to be clear on the existing governance structure in the force.</p>	
2.4	<p><u>DA/VAWG</u></p> <p>Data shows that half of domestic related homicides relate to parent and child relationships. The PCC asked if the forces response to domestic abuse reflected patterns of offending as shown in the data. The CC said that there is significantly increased risk around partner violence but risk assessment that take place ensure a consistent response. Current training encourages officer to have curiosity about the situation presented.</p>	
2.5	<p><u>Mental health</u></p> <p>The force are developing a mental health strategy. The PCC sought assurance that the strategy will effect change and driver partnership working. The force provided reassurance that there is a wider changing picture around mental health that needs to be recognised. Other forces followed the NPCC strategy and have since had to make changes. Locally the force are now in a better position to set new arrangements with partners.</p>	
2.6	<p><u>Next steps</u></p>	

	<p>The force have recently developed a homicide action plan. The PCC sought reassurance that this new approach will lead to a more impactful and coordinated response. The CC said that this will allow force level actions, they are constantly reviewing against the emerging picture nationally.</p> <p>The action plan has clear governance structures in place including processes to ensure the PCC receives appropriate reassurance.</p> <p>Homicides can have significant impact on public confidence, the PCC wanted to understand how the force reassure communities affected. The CC said that community impact is considered during initial stages of an investigation, moving forward the force will use proactive comms at key points.</p>	
3.	<p>AOB</p> <p>N/A.</p>	
4.	<p>Confirmation of next meeting type / date / time / venue:</p> <p>Friday 11th March</p> <p>Performance</p>	