

Monthly Assurance Meeting September 2022– Meeting Notes

Date: Tuesday 4th October, 10:30am
 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)
	Natasha Noorbakhsh	Acting Senior Policy Officer (NN)
	Charity Pearce	Assistant Policy Officer (CP)
	Pippa Mills	Chief Constable (CC)
	Alex Murray	Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)
	Rachel Jones	Assistant Chief Constable (ACC)
	Rachel Hartland-Lane	Director of Business Services (RHL)

No.	Item	
1.	Outstanding Matters / Matters arising N/A	
2.	Holding to account – Diversity, Equality & Inclusion. Prior to the meeting the CC provided the PCC setting out the forces position and approach to Diversity, Equality & Inclusion and this formed the basis of the questions asked. Introduction Inclusion is one of the forces values. The PCC asked the CC if she had reflected on the impact this has had during her first 12 months in post. The CC responded that the values were launched nearly 6 months ago with roadshows around the force for staff and officers to embed them. Attendees were asked to make a commitment around the inclusion value and this will be followed up imminently. Initial feedback is positive. An example given was that at the recent Worcester Pride event it wasn't just recruitment or pride network officers attending, SNT and response teams wanted to be there and were engaging with the community.	

	<p>The briefing note highlights two governance boards that are tackling issues related to data. The PCC acknowledged that there have been previous attempts to revolve data and asked if this focus will translate into tangible outcomes for communities and staff. The CC said their understanding of communities is being developed, activity has to be based on fact not assumption. RHL added that some things are new that haven't been looked at before, such as disproportionality in vetting.</p> <p>The force has a number of internal and external priorities around inclusion as well as comprehensive national plans to deliver. The PCC sought assurance that resources were in place to support delivery of the commitments. The CC said there are cross cutting themes but inclusion is everybody's responsibility and this is reflected in individual PDRs.</p> <p>The PCC asked how activity undertaken by the Operational Inclusion Board was informed by local engagement to address the needs of diverse communities. ACC Jones said that the IAG group helped inform around access to policing. Stop and Search scrutiny panel helps inform and advise on operational matters.</p> <p>The PCC sought further reassurance as to how this local engagement included communities that may not be involved in existing networks. The CC responded that community charter work feeds in, there is specific activity going on across policing areas to engaging with those seldom heard.</p> <p>Next steps identified include embedding the new governance structures.</p>	
2.1	<p>Our Communities</p> <p><i>Understanding our communities</i></p> <p>When setting the terms of reference for this meeting, the PCC wanted to understand the inequalities across crime types. This information was absent from the briefing document and the PCC sought to understand why. The DCC said it is referenced that the force doesn't have the data maturity to pull out demographic data. This is to be explored as part of the Strategic Governance Board.</p> <p>The briefing notes sets out that as part of the budget planning process the force wanted to commission some specialist engagement work. When asked for clarity around anticipated outcomes of this work, the force said they want to recognise groups of seldom heard communities with a targeted focus. This work will be based on evidence to ensure engagement model is suitable.</p> <p>Next steps are delivery of recommendations from Local Policing</p>	

Charter review and investment into the workforce to upskill and direct work.

Confidence

It is recognised that national events will have some impact on public confidence, the PCC asked what action can be taken locally to enhance levels. The CC said she recognised that confidence levels were dropping nationally and tasked the previous deputy the chair the Confidence Board which looks at improving confidence.

The PCC sought additional reassurance around the local impact. The CC gets reassurance through strategies, performance reporting and at meetings. The DCC added that the evidence supporting high confidence is strong, police officer contact is key driver. Confidence erodes after contact with the police and this is a key focus of the board.

The PCC highlighted that this is not a quick fix but with an increasing amount of resources, they collectively need to show communities improvements. The CC acknowledged the satisfaction with the level of resourcing measure from the confidence survey and said it could be that public want more officers or don't feel the impact of current investment.

The PCC followed up by asking how the force can be more efficient with current resources. The CC responded that it is everyone's responsibility, she doesn't want it to feel that it is just for SNT's to engage with communities.

A new confidence strategy board has recently been established, the PCC wanted to understand how the board will drive behavioural and cultural change across the organisation to improve confidence levels. The CC said this activity would sit with the Operational Inclusion Board, the confidence board would only look at elements.

Next steps include developing the confidence board with the focus driven by new DCC, truly understanding survey results and reviewing survey questions.

Engagement and good relations

The PCC asked whether the force have a clear structured strategy for engaging with communities, particularly those who are seldom heard. The CC said the community charter was the model for engagement. Recent review recommendation was to engage more with seldom heard communities but this needs to be publicised more so people know.

NN added that central consultation and engagement team are not

involved in the charter process and sought clarity whether their aims and objectives aligned with those of the CC. RHL said that this has been recognised and the intention is to shift their focus.

The insights and learning from community groups to identify trends and inform strategic decision making are fed in mainly through the Operational Inclusion Board but do feature through Confidence Board.

Next steps include delivering the community charter review recommendations, adapting their current offer and creating a digital solution to capture feedback and concerns.

Stop and Search

The Strategic Stop and Search Group has not met since March 22. The PCC sought reassurance that there has been sufficient oversight in its absence. ACC Jones said that strategy and data has been developing with a strategic lead in place. The CC added that the meeting hasn't met but it doesn't indicate absence of work.

Ethnicity data is missing from 14% of Stop and Search records. The PCC asked if CPD and training will address data gaps. The CC said that leadership element is critical, people don't regularly complete and additional scrutiny needs to be implemented.

The PCC followed up by asking if he were to revisit in a years' time what would the percentage look like then. The CC said that the expectation is that in 12 months' time, 100% of cases would have full data picture, supported by a technical solution in place.

Anecdotally, the force suggest that disproportionality is driven by travelling criminality. The PCC highlighted that we are not the only force with this issue but are the most disproportionate in the country and asked whether the CC was satisfied that this was the driver behind levels of disproportionality rather than bias within the organisation. The CC was unable to give a confident answer as the data isn't there to support. ACC Jones added that they are exploring the data to understand if this hypothesis is supported. There is evidence it is being used lawfully just disproportionately.

The PCC added that data uncertainty undermines issues.

The PCC welcomed the enhanced scrutiny of stop and search usage, the PCC asked for clarity that this was actively in place across all policing areas. ACC Jones confirmed that it was. The Stop and Search Strategy was being finalised and data to support is expected in 6 months.

Next steps include implementation of the stop and search strategy, making sure the strategic group meets more often, CPD

	<p>for officers and seek to understand why ethnicity isn't commonly filled in.</p> <p><i>Use of force</i></p> <p>West Mercia were previously not compliant with Home Office recording requirements for 5 years. Improvements have been made more recently but the PCC sought reassurance that further update in April will remedy this and allow for sufficient scrutiny of data. The CC was reassured that update will fill any data gaps.</p> <p>Next steps include building a full data set, understanding what it means and feeding back through L&D to develop the workforce. The DCC added that procedural justice builds legitimacy.</p> <p><i>Custody</i></p> <p>The briefing report identified a recurring issue with poor data quality across key areas. A number of explanations were given in the report, the PCC asked if the CC was satisfied activity will ensure tangible benefits. The CC said yes.</p> <p>The PCC asked for clarity around the timeline for when the new digital strategy will be finalised. The CC said that its priority is being re-established.</p> <p>Next steps include data analysis, understanding and getting buy in from custody sergeants to support data improvement.</p>	
2.2	<p>Our Organisation</p> <p><i>Learning and Development</i></p> <p>The PCC sought reassurance that the force has the right balance between a dedicated and centralised resource to drive the level of activity required. RHL said that they have recently launched the ambassador scheme to ensure they have greater traction behind certain things such as recruitment and uplift. The CC added that academic work focuses on diversity and inclusion, the value is in the local context.</p> <p>There are potentially some leadership changes in this area.</p> <p>Next steps include realising additional benefit of investment into L&D.</p> <p><i>Understanding our workforce</i></p>	

	<p>There has been a 2% increase in the number of ethnic minority officers at constable rank. The PCC asked if the CC was satisfied with this proportion over three years of uplift. The CC said this is not where the force would want to be, census data is likely to change, increasing the diversity required. They need to ensure their aspiration matches new levels and that force are representative.</p> <p>The PCC asked if the effort involved in the recruitment process has been as effective. The CC said it had, not just on recruitment but on retention and progression as well. RHL added that focus of the most recent campaign has been on inclusion. In regards to retention a number of campaigns have been launched internally such as the female leadership programme and PALS.</p> <p>West Mercia has been identified as having one of the lowest rolling 12-month female joiner rates nationally. The CC said that the force is looking at direct entry to detective and police now offers as they are more likely to attract females.</p> <p>The PCC sought reassurance that HR and recruitment implement best practice in attracting and recruiting diverse staff. The CC said she is in the process of reassuring herself, she is currently leading on a promotion process and is setting the standards for all levels. The application processes are not blind due to the requirement to apply through line management. They are working to eradicate perception of the need to have temporary or acting experience.</p> <p>RHL added that the promotions process review cuts through all of the issues and is going to the Exec Board once finalised. Previously processes were not formalised in a policy but this has now been rectified.</p> <p>Next steps to include better data, scrutiny and oversight and to drive recruitment.</p> <p><i>Positive Action</i></p> <p>The positive action team undertake a number of activities. The PCC asked if the learning and initiatives identified are being embedded into business as usual processes for recruitment and retention. The CC confirmed that the team support candidates externally and for promotions to make it a fair level for everyone.</p> <p>The PCC asked if there were any outcomes from their work. The CC said that there is a budget proposal to change rank within the team, there are a number of unintended benefits such as confidence but it is hard to quantify.</p> <p>NN highlighted that there has been some churn in the team, previously there have been processes to monitor activity but have been lost once</p>	
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	<p>staff have moved on. She sought reassurance that what and how they are doing is identified. RHL said she is confident activity is being done but recognises the need to retain corporate knowledge, they are formalising action plans.</p> <p>Next steps include continuing current activity and looking at evidence base to support.</p> <p><i>Ambassadors</i></p> <p>The PCC welcomed the new ambassador scheme. He asked how the force will measure the impact this scheme is having on applications. The force will not link back activity direct to an individual ambassador but work collectively will be reviewed at the uplift meeting. Part of being an inclusive organisation is people want to get involved and support activity.</p> <p>Next steps include understanding how Ambassadors can be used even more to support other activity.</p> <p><i>Speak Up</i></p> <p>The force is looking to revitalise their 'Speak Up' campaign. The PCC asked what the rationale was for the campaign and any intended outcomes from the focus. The CC said that this is a policy that underpins culture, she wants to see it improve. RHL added that when originally established the 'Speak Up' programme generated activity, they want to revitalise to check back that nothing has been missed.</p> <p>NN sought clarity around how this work fits in with the existing Fairness, Standards and Policy board that has similar workstreams. RHL said this has changed over time it was originally a programme to hear what staff were saying but they now need to re establish what is wanted from it.</p>	
2.3	<p>Our Partners</p> <p><i>Understanding the partnership landscape</i></p> <p>The PCC asked if there were further opportunities for him to champion diversity with criminal justice partners and increase the forces exposure to diverse communities. The CC highlighted a discussion that was had at West Mercia Governance Board around how the OPCC and force can work together more effectively including data sharing, particularly around the LCJB.</p> <p>Conversations have already started between force and OPCC commissioning lead around commissioning intentions.</p> <p>Overall next steps include renewed focus and vigour and</p>	

	ensuring inclusion value remains central. The development of data and to improve their understanding around it.	
3.	AOB N/A.	
4.	Confirmation of next meeting type / date / time / venue: Tuesday 2 nd November Thematic – Impact of budget investment	