

**POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR BEDFORDSHIRE  
STRATEGIC BOARD MINUTES**

**26<sup>th</sup> August 2021**

<b>Attending:</b>	<b>Festus Akinbusoye, Police and Crime Commissioner (FA)</b>
	<b>Clare Kelly, Chief Executive (CK)</b>
	<b>Garry Forsyth, Chief Constable (GF)</b>
	<b>Trevor Rodenhurst, Deputy Chief Constable (TR)</b>
	<b>Gavin Chambers, CFO for the OPCC (GC)</b>
	<b>Sharn Basra, Assistant Chief Constable (SB)</b>
	<b>Madelyn Doggrell, Staff Officer DCC (MD)</b>
	<b>Rachel Glendenning, Staff Officer (RG)</b>
	<b>Katie Beaumont, Transparency Manager (KB)</b>

**PUBLIC SECTION**

PCC welcomed all to the Public Section of the meeting.

**ITEM 9: OPCC UPDATES**

**9.1 OPCC to update Bedfordshire Police on Police and Crime Plan Launch and Delivery.**

FA explained that the Police and Crime Plan was presented to the Police and Crime Panel on the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2021 and the OPCC is awaiting a paper from the Police and Crime Panel, which include their thoughts on the plan and any recommendations they may have. The PCC explained he attended panel and was there for approximately two and a half hours and got to discuss more details about the police and crime plan and the consultation that took place.

The PCC stated that he and the office are quite confident that we can begin on this. There are aspects within the plan surrounding community policing, around the retention and recruitment of Police Officers. The plan also looks at some of the services which will be able to tackle the causes of serious violence in our communities.

The PCC wanted to go on record to thank Garry, Trevor and all the officers in Bedfordshire Police for their support around the 'Summer of fun', the Boxing and Martial Arts sessions for the public and police officers have got involved. Their support has been absolutely fantastic.

The CC thanked the PCC and the OPCC in the engagement with the Force, in preparation for the Police and Crime Plan, he believes the product is really good and will enable us to have some really effective activity over the next three years and believes we are in a really good place with it. The CC thanked the PCC for his comments surrounding summer of fun and will feed this back to the officers.

**ITEM 10: COMMUNITY POLICING**

**10.1 Community Policing Model - Establishment update**

SB stated that this relates to the community policing hubs that the Force have got across the three CSP areas for Bedfordshire and the establishment for PC roles is at 67 and at current strengths it is at 59, which is a shortfall of eight. SB stated that he is aware that four are going to be in post next week and recruitment is ongoing to fill the other four and SB believes we are in a really healthy space. SB stated to put some support around that, those hubs are supported by

PCSOs and we have 45 out of 47. SB informed all that further recruitment will be taking place for PCSOs in the autumn. There are 53 Special Constables also working with the Community Hubs.

CK asked a question surrounding the 59 PCs. In the report the 59 states it includes acting sergeants, are they counted in the 59 or are they counted elsewhere? RG confirmed they are within the 59. CK stated that presently we have 56 then not 59. SB confirmed this is correct. Discussions were had surrounding numbers and numbers within Police Now that are also included here. CK confirmed then that 9 Police Now officers and 3 Sgts were included in the total number so the actual number is 47 not 59.

The PCC asked in terms of focussed proactive community policing, is the plan that once these officers are in place they will remain in community policing. The PCC stated that he is aware that there will be operational aspects which will lead to officers being put elsewhere, but their focus will be for them to be primarily focussed on community policing.

The CC confirmed 'absolutely', however there is always a caveat, the plan is that the community policing resource should be focussed on local priorities, local initiatives, local problem-solving solutions. There will always be the case if something 'big' happens then the officers would have to be diverted to other operational activity however the focus should be local priorities.

The PCC stated that he has seen some recent fantastic social media posts, from our community policing teams, when they have been doing foot patrols. Specifically there was one that was reviewed in Bedford, the officer did a video over a weekend of him patrolling and by him physically patrolling the area over the weekend, a lot of the trouble such as ASB have moved away and on the comment section on social media, a member of the public had thanked the officer and he had seen the impact of the foot patrols, the visible presence of the officer and the PCC asked for more of that?

The CC stated that it is a brilliant example of how community policing should work, a community team should be plugged into their local community and what their concerns are and what solutions are in place to deliver against the community priorities. The CC stated that will normally be around visibility and around anti-social behaviour, nuisance behaviour and the police officers are empowered to support them and additional resource through the priorities. If this is what the community has said this is what they wanted, the community officers are there to deliver exactly that.

The social media aspect to it, is an important part to it as well in terms of visibility and what we are doing and wants to review approach and best practice and spread that in a systematic way across the Forces community teams in a social media academy. The PCC stated he would volunteer his enthusiastic expertise in terms of the social media academy

## **ITEM 11: EFFECTIVENESS**

### **11.1 Victims Needs Analysis Update**

CK stated that the Force and OPCC stated they would deliver on the findings, the OPCC has 29 areas identified, which the OPCC only has six left to complete, so CK explained that we are well on target to achieve the actions within the financial year which was always the aim, so this is great and CK thanked the Force for working with the OPCC. CK stated there is one core area which are been problematic which we cannot finish off, which is the 'Victim Journey Mapping Work', CK stated she is aware the Force has started it and its near completion however the OPCC has not had sight of it, because it's based on sharepoint. CK stated if we could get that it would really help the OPCC to complete the Commissioners last six sections. The CC confirmed that this could be facilitated.

**ACTION: Exec Team to send CK the 'Victim Journey Mapping Work' to ensure the OPCC has oversight with the last parts of the VNA and recommendations.**

### **11.2 Signpost Update**

CK stated that the paper this month was slightly different and an offering to the Exec to show the capacity of Signpost, what we are doing and what the opportunity is moving forward. This is in response to the Force looking into their own Victim Hub. CK stated that the OPCC did attend the meeting however decisions seem to have been made prior to

looking at options, so CK has stated that she does not want to be involved in that, but confirmed that the OPCC will provide all the information that the Force will need, which is why the OPCC has written and provided this paper, so the exec know the capacity and what the OPCC is looking at in Signpost. CK stated she has concerns about moving to something else without knowing and understanding fully the problem, is a bit of a problem for CK and this brings us into 11.3, which was really understanding the issues surrounding victim care.

### **11.3 Victim Satisfaction in Force (VCOP Dissatisfaction/Complaints):**

CK understands that we do not understand it fully as the survey is not up and running but the procurement process is complete and there is going to be the build of the system. CK stated that she would suggest that the Force would want to wait, and look at what our victims are telling us before we move to a model, but CK understands it is the Forces decision to take.

CK stated that she is not going to focus on numbers (which are down), as we did have this massive movement which is really appreciated, both through the emerald team and the signpost team. The numbers increased and were high, however they have started to come down and CK does not believe it is a change in culture in officers not wanting to do it. CK believes its about the process and how tricky it is to do it with the system, so the OPCC is going to continue getting into as many spaces to re-explain the process to aid the culture and process piece.

CK asked if the Force had any questions or comments?

SB stated that he would like to look at 11.3 in regards to victim satisfaction and explain that a provider has been identified to provide that IT solution for victim satisfaction and as discussed previously the Force Exec will ensure that representation from the OPCC is involved in terms of that 'build'. SB stated that this will provide a bespoke product for the Force in terms of those questions that we are seeking to resolve. It will work across many different types of IT, such as phone, laptop, email etc. So that individuals have that instant access to reply. SB stated that CK is right, it does take time to build so in the meantime, by the end of this week, we should have a bespoke plan to show what victim satisfaction looks like for us in that interim period. SB stated that it may be that the Force focuses on thematic or geography, as our resources for that work is limited. But we just say 'for this month' we will focus on victims of crime from a certain area, crime type, so we can get a better sample to make decisions upon. SB stated what the Force has been able to in terms of transition of our customer services team and looking at dissatisfaction linked to VCOP and again for July we focussed on DA and we identified two cases of dissatisfaction, by victims of crime. Both were of the same nature, and they highlighted the officer's compassion, which is good and bad, because what it does do, it does fall in line with our identity as an organisation. This links on the work the Force has been doing in regards to 'be compassionate'. In regards to the two dissatisfactions, the two officers have been spoken with, by their supervising officers and signposted appropriately to what our identity means and what that means to victims of crime.

### **11.4 Police Data trends including stop and search breakdown:**

SB stated that he would like to focus on just two areas briefly, we won't talk about Stop and Search on this occasion as we talk about that quarterly. The two areas I would like to highlight, one that we have already talked about is our Force Contacts Centre (FCC) and the demand that comes through there. In July the Force had over 10,500 calls to 999. SB stated that is the most we have had over the last year. That is a huge amount of calls which are coming into the system, they have to be answered, assessed, and that has a knock-on effect to responding as some of those will require deployment. Just to repeat that is the greatest number we have had in the last year. Similarly, 101 calls have been the highest since October. SB stated that identifies the trend of calling in to policing, but as the CC mentioned earlier, we are not alone there, this is the national picture for emergency services, they are experiencing the same demand. FA what is the number for 101s? SB stated that for the same month it was 17,000 for 101. The PCC asked what the approximate wait time is for people calling 101.

SB stated that 999 calls has a national target of 10 seconds however the 101s is not actually set and differs from Force to Force. SB stated that we are unable to make comparisons. FA stated it is not for comparison purposes. SB stated that 101s are normally answered within 30 seconds.

The CC stated that our average wait time for 101s is about three and half minutes and for 999s, 80% are answered within the 10 seconds. The CC stated that the exec can get the exact figures for this.

**ACTION: Exec Team to provide exact average wait times for 999s and 101s calls for next Strategic Board.**

CK stated that it is probably worth noting that in the previous session for Strategic Board the Exec and OPCC spent a significant amount of time on control room and have worked through the detail.

SB stated the only other area that he would like to discuss is custody, it is not normally an area that we talk about, however it highlights the demand in specific areas and what the Force is facing but also, the productiveness of our front line cops. In July we saw the highest number of custody throughput, for both Luton and Kempston over the last year. When this is broken down, some of the real concerns surround children that have been detained. SB stated that we saw high numbers of children detained in June and July, and the number of children detained overnight was also high. SB stated he would like to give reassurance to the PCC, that each one of those is reviewed, throughout the course of the evening and night. So out of all of those that have been detained overnight, there were no children that had been remanded in custody. Again that is down to necessity and proportionality of that individual. The PCC asked what these detainees would be detained for? SB stated that children detained would be held for the most serious offences, that's why he has explained proportionality and necessity, because if a child is brought into custody for a low level crime, the Force will seek alternative arrangements, however there are cases in which children (16/17 year old) have committed serious offences and there is a need to bring them into custody and SB stated in June one of the detainees was in custody for murder.

FA asked SB as he got the figures around Burglary. SB stated that Burglary for the Force is a good news story. So in terms of number of offences which have been committed that has seen further months of reduction and this year to date we have seen 252 fewer victims for residential burglary and the positive outcome rate for Burglary is also very strong and we see this nationally in terms of that solved rate. SB explained that it is in part due to the dedicated response the Force has 'Op Maze' but also in terms of that prevention etc and community teams still have a great focus of residential burglary, we know that this offence type really has an impact on our victims.

The PCC stated that he would like to thank the Force in the work being completed to get the figures down in terms of Burglary, as there was a belief that once the lockdown was lifted, it would go up, so it is really good to see that it is not happening.

The CC stated that he would like to take this opportunity to raise that with students going to university, this historically shows an increase in terms of burglary, with student accommodation in particular, so if anyone is watching with friends going to university, or family members, just to reiterate the safety messages around take care of your valuables, make sure you lock your rooms, close your windows when you are going out. The CC stated that individuals can link in to the community teams if they need additional advice about property marking, things we can do to keep burglary down.

### **11.5 Recruitment and Retention (attrition) figures with protected characteristic breakdown for Officers, Staff and Specials.**

PW stated that he wished to bring a few statistics to the attention of the PCC. PW stated that the Force has been trying to get a format of reporting that comes to this board, Chief Constable Board and Police and Crime Panel. So the information is static for all three forums. In terms of figures, our target for Police Officers for 2021 – 22 is a headcount of 1384 and we need to achieve that to maximise the level of uplift grant from the government. Our forecast at the moment sits at 1453, which is 69 over what we need to be, which is really positive, it does mean that we will have an overspend on our pay budget, but as reported previously, in the private section, we will be underspent as a Force. We are

expecting for 2022/23 to have a target of 72 increase, sent to us by the government. If we end up with 69 over this year, we are near the target from day one, which is a really positive place to be. PW stated that it fits in with the PCC Police and Crime Plan very neatly, and also allows us to reduce the number of student officers we put through the new national scheme PEQF – Qualifications Framework, which allows us to understand that process a lot better.

Two days ago we had our most recent intake, the Detective Constable Programme which is our direct review to detective constables and we saw 17 coming in, a very high number of the intake are female. PW stated he believes however would clarify, he believes 16 out of the 17 are female, which is a really interesting statistic.

We have six intakes remaining, looking to bring in another 118 officers over those intakes, which will get us to the position which was mentioned earlier. We have a pool of around 400, of which 42% of those are female and 15% are visible black, Asian and from minority ethnic backgrounds. FA asked if those were detectives as well or other? PW confirmed that 40 of the 118, will be detectives and our pool sits at 100 for those. PW stated that he has mentioned the new qualifications framework and the Force is running a pilot for two intakes this year, it is causing us a bit of concern at the moment, there's areas we need to dig into, but there is a lot of interest around it which is really positive. But we have not seen people fulfil their application, we have seen them start the process but not finish it. So the force is looking into why that may be. We are also seeing those that are being submitted, a high level of rejection is coming back from the universities. So we are working with the universities to see why this is happening. PW stated that he still believes that the full intake will be achieved on that course. PW would like to raise a few key points here. Overall our officers in terms of our Black, South Asian and from minority ethnic backgrounds sits at about 10% of representation and it has hovered around that for some time. PW is conscious that we are not making headway on that, we are looking to increase from 10% upwards. We are seeing some issues around occupational health in terms of capability and capacity to deal with the number of recruits coming through, so we are looking at addressing that. This is having an impact on our visible Black, South Asian and from minority ethnic backgrounds levels, just because we are seeing a greater number around BMI from our are visible Black, South Asian and from minority ethnic backgrounds capacity and they are not getting through the process quickly, which is currently being reviewed. PW stated this has happened before so it needs to be addressed.

PW said in terms of attrition the Force is seeing an average of seven to eight per month leave the organisation, which is positive as we were forecasting to lose ten or eleven a month. Losing staff is not a positive but the figures show improvement and this information is a contributor to why we believe we will be by year end in terms of over establishment.

PW stated that the figures are for April to July and the exec will be bringing the preceding months data.

FA asked how many officers have left in July?

CK stated six officers, eighteen staff and one special for July. FA stated so 25 for the month of July. CK asked if there was a particular issue as staff leaving isn't normally that high, was there a particular event? As if you look at the resignations the figures are not there. A discussion was had, could not find information. PW stated that he would come back to the PCC in regards to Police Staff and the figures.

**ACTION: PW to provide police staff leaver numbers to PCC and CK and reasoning why it is so high for the month of July.**

PW stated in terms of officer numbers the attrition has been six in April, five in May, ten in June and seven in July. CK asked how the exit interviews go for the officers that were leaving the organisation. CK asked if there was a theme?

PW stated the reasons for leaving are there in terms of whether it was resignation however the detail is not there as it was agreed that we would bring that information January 2021 Strategic Board. PW confirmed in January the detail will be brought back to this meeting to review the detail. CK stated she is aware that the full paper is being brought back in January, she just wondered if anything had been highlighted.

The CC stated that there very similar themes that have come up previously, such as didn't understand the job, didn't understand what it involved. CK stated so are they new student officers leaving? The CC he believes it is the student officers.

FA asked of those that have left in May, June, July, what is the percentage that actually get an exit interview? He is aware that all get offered one, however how many take it up?

The CC stated that student officers will have bespoke intervention from the student development team where they sit down with them, even before, if it looks like they are going to submit a resignation, they will try and address these issues early on. Then we will try and proactively get an exit interview with all of them, however we don't always achieve that. FA asked to do we know roughly a figure regarding exit interviews? The CC confirmed he would get this.

FA stated that he is aware that the Force cant make people talk if they do not want to, however it would be nice to have an idea of the figure of how many take up the offer, how many don't and why?

**ACTION: FA asked the exec team to provide him with the figures around exit interviews for Police Officers, staff and specials. How many take up exit interviews and how many do not and why?**

FA also stated for the specials do they have exit interviews as well? PW stated that they are similar to officers, they are offered an exit interview and the force can get this information. This is reflected in the above action.

CK asked who does those interviews? AS CK stated the ones that have contacted us have not had them. The CC stated he is not sure but believes it will be Suzie Carr. SB confirmed they will be completed by Susie Carr or Mark Farrant under the new structure. CK stated that ones that have left previously prior to the new structure may not have been offered but now they are being offered. This was confirmed as correct.

FA stated that an essential part of the Police and Crime Plan is the improvement on the retention rate for the Force and obviously with these many officers coming in, it would be so much better to keep more of them and FA wants us to keep an eye on this. The CC confirmed he agrees fully with him and stated it is worth noting as an organisation we have the highest level of proportion of workforce with less than three years' service, currently at 35%. Then when you look at the national trend we recognise that the vast majority of turnover in policing comes within the first three years, so we are going to have a legacy for a period of time of a higher level of leavers, because of the proportion of our work force being less than three years' service. The CC stated that it will appear high however it will be consistent with other forces in terms of their levels.

FA asked for the exec to provide him with some assurance that as a force we are putting everything we can into this. The CC confirmed that the Force are.

FA stated that he has met the new recruits and they are all very enthusiastic and ready to go out for their first shifts and FA feels that it is quite sad that for reasons, that we do not fully understand, they just leave. The CC stated the force have put a huge amount of effort since we identified the trend of leavers going through their student period, we have implemented student development officers and teams to support them, we have the interventions going in sooner, so we are losing fewer people going off with Reg 13 and resignations. The CC stated we were at the start of uplift concerned at the number of people we were losing, we are still concerned in terms of numbers but actually we are in proportion to everyone else. We will keep making those interventions with the student development officers and team that we have got.

FA stated that it will really useful to see the trend in January so we can see a downward trend.

## **12: VOICE OF THE PUBLIC**

### **12.1 Issues raised to the PCC**

FA explained this is the section where he can raise issues that have been raised with him. The first being parking at Luton Police Station. He has tried to find a space to park however there isn't any. FA stated that it's a good problem to have as it shows we have more officers and personnel coming into our buildings, but the capacity is an issue and he would like this to be an aspect of the ten-year estate review which is being undertaken as well. FA asked if there are any plans to mitigate this a little bit, is it that we have to work with the Local Authority a little bit more? The CC stated parking is a long-standing issue, which doesn't just include us but every police force. Parking isn't a right for officers and staff, but we do recognise due to the hours that they work and they risk they face, we would like to be in a position to provide parking. We have spoken about the budget previously, any parking to be provided above what we already have is likely to come with some sort of cost, as our local authority partners are not in a position to provide free space for nothing. The CC stated we entered into discussions previously with partners and the results would have given pressure to the budget, so we had to step away. The CC is aware that parking is an issue for our staff because it gets raised with us at every 'ask the exec' and when we are walking around speaking to people particularly in Luton. We are looking into this, building in provision, however this will need some investment, we will always be committed to engaging with partners if there is any availability, but realistically it is a challenge.

PW stated that Superintendent Taylor has spoken to Luton Borough Council and NCP, just to see what they can do, he has received some costings. The exec has requested that he drafts a paper so that the detail can be reviewed and the revenue cost that will be. PW stated that they are expecting a paper shortly and it will need to be reviewed in the overall financial context. CK stated that she completely gets it however believes that we need to look at value in terms of cops spending an hour at the end of their shift moving cars to get out isn't good in terms of value. CK stated she understands that is brought up via 'ask the exec' but it comes up to the OPCC wherever we go.

The PCC stated that he has one other thing that he would like to raise. The PCC stated that he is aware that this was discussed in the closed session however believes it will be beneficial to reiterate to those that are watching around Business and Retail Crime and the Forces position, on how we police and provide support.

The CC stated that there is a misconception, that we will not attend shop lifters. There are pressures on our resource and we have to prioritise the allocation of that resource. So if it is a single occasion, low level shoplifter, it may lead to the crime being reported and filed without further enquiries. As we do not have someone available to attend. The other end of that is that there have been multiple occasions, from a gang of people, targeting your business premises and stealing things on a regular occasion, we would look for our community teams to support the business with a problem solving approach in regards to prevention and enforcement. An example was given earlier where we have a retail area currently within the town which is a high priority for the Force and we have force resource dealing with the issues there.

The Force must assess each crime against the Threat, Harm and Risk. So if something is of a significant threat, significant harm and greater or significant risk, then we will prioritise and result in a higher response. We do attend shoplifters however against the Threat Harm and Risk Model.

The PCC asked if a shop owner was to have CCTV Footage of a crime taking place, they have the face in full view, by the time they have called, the individual has fled, how would they be able to provide that intel to the police or do they have to wait for the officers to turn up to collect the information.

The CC stated there are ways to submit evidence online through our portal, they are used mostly for road traffic collisions (RTC) and dashcam submissions at the moment, but the Force do have some software in development called 'DAMS', which at present we do not have a finalisation date for. Another way is for the officers to attend and secure the imagery on their body worn video in the first instance, if people are reluctant to give us the equipment, if we need to download off of a hard drive or other piece of equipment. The CC confirmed the Force can secure the imagery in a majority of different ways.

FA asked in the situation that the force has received evidence is there a feedback function, either by text or email to be able to provide that victim of crime with updates whilst it is being investigated? The CC stated the investigating officer should be in a position to link in with the victim and certainly with the conclusion of the investigation.

### **13: VERU**

#### **13.1 VERU Monthly Performance**

SB stated that the paper has been submitted and rather than going through the paper, he would like to highlight that we spoke last month, as a result of the tragic incident in Luton, that in June referrals went up, so in May the referrals into VERU were at 12, however in June the referrals went up to 21. This is positive, as people are reaching out, speaking and seeking that support. That has remained in July as we saw 20 referrals coming into VERU. The team has been very active and it has been an opportunity for the community to intervene and divert our young. Throughout July and in to August (summer holidays) the VERU has continued their great work and full paper has been submitted.

The PCC stated he wanted to thank SB and his team in VERU, for the often-unseen work that they do in our communities. He stated he knows it is an uphill task, but they do a good job and he wanted to thank them. FA stated in an ideal world he would like to guarantee the funding for the VERU for the next four or five years but he is unable to do so. The PCC wants to go on record, that when he attended Downing Street a couple of weeks ago this issue did come up about how crucial the longer-term funding arrangements for this type of intervention/programme. We can't continue to do this on a yearly cycle as its disruptive.

SB stated that the PCC will be aware that the VERU team has had the independent evaluation from the university of Cambridge and he would like to share two sentences that come out of the review and their evaluation. First of all 'they were universally well regarded by all parties', we appreciate that they work in a real tricky environment, between the police and between the community. The second part was they were so impressed and saw the passion that they had and it spreads to all they come into contact with.

### **ITEM 14 NEXT AGENDA**

#### **Items for Next Meeting:**

- Witness Care report. Current service levels, risks and gaps

CK stated that the following is what the OPCC is requesting for the next meeting. We would like to look at witness care in terms of the gap that has been caused by the court back log, we don't understand the impact yet, from talking to officers with open cases waiting for long periods of time, they haven't seen people drop yet, but they are predicting that it will happen. So its about getting in as early as we can to look at, what is the provision we have got? Is there anything in the pipeline that the Force is doing? Before the OPCC review and have a look on ways forward. So CK would like the early work to be completed please.

### **ITEM 15 – INFORMATION**

Within previous Strategic Boards we agreed on information agreement/schedule. CK stated we are there in style and how we are going to do it. We will be putting this information out every month unless it is stated to be released quarterly. CK confirmed a lot of the quarterly information will be released next month and will be on our website, so the public has easier access to the information. Some of the information was already out in various ways, it was just difficult to obtain and understand.

In regards to this it would be a lot easier if the force fills in the template and the OPCC will upload it every month. We can fill it in however we need to be careful about what goes out and CK suggests the former is better. There is an issue

with the varying times that stuff comes out however CK would like the Force to give it a go for next time. The CC stated that we will continue to work together on it.

FA thanked all for attending.

Date of Next Meeting – 26<sup>th</sup> August 2021.