



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

**Recorded 19th May 2020**

<b>Confirmed with</b>	<b>Kathryn Holloway, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) <i>Chair</i></b>
	<b>Garry Forsyth, Chief Constable (GF)</b>
	<b>Trevor Rodenhurst, Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)</b>
	<b>Phil Wells, Assistant Chief Officer (ACO)</b>
	<b>Clare Kelly, Chief Executive, OPCC (CK)</b>
	<b>Gavin Hughes-Rowland, Staff Officer (GHR)</b>
	<b>Rachel Glendenning, Staff Officer (RG)</b>
	<b>Victoria Roberts, Executive Assistant to the PCC (VR) (Minutes)</b>
	<b>Sharn Basra, Assistant Chief Constable (ACC)</b>

<b><u>ITEM 1 - WELCOME &amp; MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AND FOR AGREEMENT AND MATTERS ARISING</u></b>
<p><b>1.1 Minutes from March &amp; April 2020</b>          Minor changes were requested for March &amp; April 2020 minutes. These are to be completed by VR and circulated to all for final review and approval. The redacted minutes will then be uploaded onto the OPCC website for public viewing.</p>
<p><b>1.2 Actions from previous meetings:</b>          Updates were updated directly on the linked action log.</p>
<b><u>ITEM 2 - COVID-19</u></b>
<p>STANDING ITEM:          2.1: Overview of the Force response and current position.</p> <p>The DCC provided an update on what has been done with the scientific data that has been received with regards to BAME individuals within the NHS and wider society and how we have applied this to our officers and staff. The general demand from Covid-19 recently reduced down to approximately 17% of overall calls for service. Absence levels have remained very low. Meetings around change activities have recommenced, with some 'new' business as usual activities starting.</p> <p>2.2 Requested from the April Board – detail of plans for recovery</p> <p>The DCC stated that we are not now in a 'recovery' phase, as it was felt there was nothing to recover from. The Force has adapted to the situation and set up a recovery group called 'Our Evolution'. This group will look into how we will do our business differently and more effectively in the future, which will include a review of remote working and use of new technology. Wellbeing, learning and innovation will also be looked at by this group and will also work with our partners and how we communicate with them.</p>



Karena Thomas and her team will be contacting each of the 175 officers and staff that fall within that category. A risk assessment will be carried out on an individual basis. These will be conducted inhouse as opposed to HR carrying out these assessments.

PCC requested for the purpose of the minutes, that it be noted our thoughts and reasons behind PPE being issued to frontline officers under all circumstances, where they are out in public against a backdrop where we are aware that certain forces have broken ranks and have bought their own PPE and said to their frontline staff that they are to decide when they want to wear it. This has not been subject to NPCC having any oversight over supply or quality. The CC confirmed this has been discussed with the DCC and the PCC in detail outside of this meeting. The CC confirmed we have had a carefully constructed position on PPE, led through NPCC on the basis of their health advice from Public Health England and also the guidance from the Health & Safety Executive. We will continue to rely on the advice and evidence from these agencies as they specifically apply to policing. Our position should always be a risk-based approach.

### **2.3: Communications strategy for Covid-19 with a specific focus on how we are working with our communities both with communications and the community teams**

CK provided an update on the comms plan that had been supplied by David Old. The document received indicated that there has been an evaluation of the comms strategy, but it is not currently available to view. The document only covers communication and does not include any information on engagement. CK suggested information on RG's work with the FPN group would be useful to have sight of. IAG have raised some concerns around comms. CK would like to know how far this has been progressed.

The CC advised he had not seen the engagement document until this meeting and will follow up with CK outside the meeting. ACC confirmed that a lot of community engagement had taken place and should be included in this document. An updated report will be drawn up and issued to PCC. PCC requested that each of the Community Hub teams work with the Executive Team to get comms out to the relevant town councils to keep them informed of our activities.

#### **Action: Force to supply an update on engagement to the OPCC**

The PCC advised the Board that she had written to the SCG again to reiterate her offer to assist them. The PCC has not received any direct communications from the SCG about their recovery plans. The PCC would like to receive formal communications from SCG to explain what the recovery process will be. DCC confirmed a meeting with the BLRF will be taking place on 1<sup>st</sup> June and will be able to give PCC a comprehensive update after this meeting. The DCC also has weekly calls with the Chair of the SCG and can therefore give the PCC an update with an SCG focus. ACC is doing a peer review of the SCG and current support cells in place.

The PCC requested for the minutes that she is still incredulous that the SCG turned down the offer of assistance given PCC's vast experience sitting at the National Planning table over strategy moving forward and past crisis communications experience around mass fatalities events. The public would find it difficult to understand why this offer was turned down, given the person has such a degree of specialism and also offered this assistance at no cost.



### **ITEM 3 - OPCC UPDATES OR FORMAL REQUESTS TO THE FORCE**

#### 3.1 Police Bids to the OPCC

CK gave an update. The Bids were reviewed and agreed with Audrey Campbell in advance of sharing with the Force Executive. Two bids were linked to conditional cautions which caused CK some concern. CK would like You-turn to do an educational piece with younger in-service officers about the importance of conditional cautions and the long terms benefits of this. The Force agreed.

#### 3.2 Criminal Justice Overview during the pandemic

The ACC confirmed he has weekly catch ups with the Criminal Justice partners and regional colleagues from the Thames Valley area.

- 1) Early release plan – it is important to distinguish those who are being released as planned through expiration of sentencing and those who are release early. Three early releases have occurred in Bedfordshire, with a further 8 in next cohort. ACC assured the Board there is strict criteria that must be fulfilled in order for an early release to be granted and strict management thereafter. This is not applicable to violent crime and DA offenders.
- 2) Victims and witnesses – with cases being adjourned / pushed back, there was a fear that we would lose victims and witnesses, in terms of when those cases were resurrected. ACC has been assured that we have regular contact with all victims and witnesses and at present, there are no victims or witnesses who have said they are going to withdraw their services.
- 3) Courts – there have been no first hearings held at Luton Magistrates Court, which has caused a backlog of 297 cases. Virtual remands are being heard. Hertfordshire do not have this facility, these are also being held at Luton Magistrates Court. Of the 297 backlog cases, 35 have been deemed priority cases and will be prioritised for week commencing 26<sup>th</sup> May, when first hearings will recommence at Luton. The victims and witnesses for Bedfordshire related are being contacted with the option to attend virtually or in person.

PCC enquired whether there has been an increased usage of video enabled justice at Luton Magistrates Court. The ACC confirmed the facilities are there and have been used for up to four court hearings per day, ensuring capacity keeps in-line with social distancing guidelines.

**ACTION – ACC to provide an update at the next Strategic Board on the backlog of hearings at Luton Magistrates Court and also what we are doing to drive up the capacity over video enabled justice.**

CK advised there has been some problems with the live link system administration due to the removal of the Criminal Justice admin team a year ago. Where ownership of the equipment has slipped and it has been difficult to find someone to take responsibility for it is not clear who should be looking after it. This should be owned by Policing and Partners not policing alone. There had been a misunderstanding between Witness Care and the Force, with how to ensure people are aware they can use it. Someone needs to be made responsible for the equipment and who will supervise when the equipment is being used. Phil McCarthy in the OPCC is working on options for this and will send to the ACC when it is ready for the ACC to look into ownership.



**ACTION - CK to ask Phil McCarthy to send his findings on live-link to ACC Basra for his further work on being ready for video enabled justice**

**ACTION – ACC to establish ownership of live-link using the OPCC research**

STANDING ITEM:

3.3: Innovation (added to agenda following March mtg)

The PCC formally welcomed back ACC Sharn Basa to the Bedfordshire Executive Force team. RG gave an update on new posts.

**ACTION - RG to send new organisation chart to the OPCC**

Jenny McIntyre-Smith is in post in Work Force Development, which will cover the student development team.

RG informed the Board that Karena Thomas has been doing a brilliant job using technological innovation when it comes to recruitment in terms of Q&A sessions and engagement evenings for Specials and regular uplifts.

The intern process has changed. Students have been asked to submit a video application which has worked very well and will be used again in the future.

There have been online challenges and ongoing engagement to retain our Cadets. Cadets and Cohesion Cadets have been incorporated and the age span has been increased to 13 – 17 years old.

Community watch schemes have been paused due to Covid-19, but contact has been maintained throughout the pandemic.

PCC informed the Board that Simon Powell and Val Ross have joined the OPCC team this week. Simon Powell from the Met Police will be Head of Victim Care and will be working very closely with Dee and the ACC.

**ACTION - CK to link Simon Powell to the Force and to introduce the idea of looking at Bebit through Signpost.**

CK informed the Board that Val Ross will be taking on the role of Delivery Manager and will help with the communication between the OPCC, Force and Partners and will be getting involved in project work as this has increased with the PCC's 5<sup>th</sup> year plan and ambitions. CK will share contact details with the Executive Team.

**3.4 Requests for June:**

A: Strategic Analysis Cyber product (From Feb Board)

B: Reward and Recognition

Karena Thomas to provide a paper for the June Strat meeting on what the Force would like the OPCC to support moving forward.



<p><b>C: Victim Care</b>  A paper/update on the Force's commitment to Victim Care. The Force has already sent through requests to CK to take on other aspects of victim care since it was announced the OPCC were taking Governance of Signpost. CK advised that the entirety of Victim Care should not sit with OPCC, it should just be Signpost. The update needs to cover at the minimum Clare's Law, Budget allocation, victim feedback, Training, VCOP.</p> <p><b>D: Communication Legislation change</b>  RG advised the legislation change will be finalised at the end of December. An update can be provided at June Board, but it will not be the final report. CK accepted that but asked for an update as the Force has been using this coming change as a reason for not actioning some things in communications for some time now.</p>
<p><b><u>ITEM 4 - CC UPDATE</u></b></p>
<p><b>STANDING ITEM:</b>  Verbal update from the Chief on items he wishes to formally notify the OPCC of.</p> <p>PCC enquired whether a presentation/report can be pulled together to show the HMICFRS all our operational successes and gains throughout Covid-19. The ACC is keen for them to see 'Our Evolution' work as well and will bring this to the Peel Governance Board, to encourage HMICFRS to visit us to see what we have done or connect virtually.</p> <p><b>Action: For the Force to prepare a presentation for the HMICFRS on successes during Covid-19</b></p>
<p><b><u>ITEM 5 – EFFICIENCY</u></b></p>
<p><b>STANDING ITEM:</b>  5.1: Data Protection</p> <p>The DCC confirmed there has been no significant breaches. A few assets have gone missing and to rectify this the comms will come from the DCC as opposed to Kevin Sharpe.</p>
<p><b>STANDING ITEM:</b>  5.2: Estates Update</p> <p>The ACO gave an update on delegated powers for the custody application. The committee have delegated to the officers to make the decisions. They are due to meet on the 25<sup>th</sup> May. The ACO advised that he anticipates there will be no issues with them making a decision in our favour on custody. The PCC enquired whether the recent report that indicated there is a population of Crested Newts and Water Voles that has suddenly appeared on this site will impact the decision. The ACO informed the Board that the Survey cannot confirm or deny that we have Water Voles, therefore they have to determine whether we do have a population of Water Voles. Another survey will need to be conducted and if Water Voles are found, they will be removed from our site. This would just cause a delay on the work for the new custody facility entrance.</p> <p>The ACO gave an update on Greyfriars. A meeting was held with the planners and a plan of action has been created around the interim road works that are due to be carried out. ACO will be submitting this plan to Bedford Borough. It will be explained to them that as we are taking on these works, these will be included as an extraordinary expenditure on our viability assessment. The result of this is that we would expect, in terms of affordable housing, the ratio to be</p>



reduced downwards to provide for the developer to pay for those costs. We will also suggest, due to the viability of the scheme, the developer provides a contribution to the borough for affordable housing and they use this contribution to build affordable housing elsewhere.

The PCC raised a query on the decommissioning project as to whether an architectural salvage firm or firms are booked to visit the site. The ACO will double check on this and report back to PCC. PCC can recommend a firm to ACO if this has not been done.

**ACTION – ACO to ensure an architectural salvage firm has inspected Greyfriars and report back to PCC**

**STANDING ITEM:**

5.3: Paper from consultant re 106

The ACO advised that in order to apply for a section 106, we must have an infrastructure plan in place that shows we have conducted research around the requirements on our community policing element of our force as a result of ongoing developments in the local plans. This plan has been completed and have evidenced very clearly that we have used as much of our own resources to deal with the demand as possible. We still have a deficit; therefore, we are going to the local planners stating we require 106 contributions for any housing developments that are within their plan. Central Bedfordshire already give us section 106 contributions. The ACO has had an initial meeting with Bedford Borough and will be meeting with Central Bedfordshire on the 20<sup>th</sup> May and Luton the following week. The section 106's will need to be inputted into their infrastructure plans and have them agreed by their planning committees. Once this has been done, we can claim for every development that has an impact on community policing. There has been some resistance from the authorities against the claims for recruitment and training within the force.

**ITEM 6 – EFFECTIVENESS**

**STANDING ITEM:**

6.1: Crime performance figures and comparisons

The ACC gave an update on the Covid-19 impact and end of year performance. 999 calls have gone down nationally at 22% compared with Bedfordshire which has gone down at 37%. 101 calls have gone down nationally at 13%, whereas Bedfordshire has gone up 44%. The majority of these calls (30%) are Covid-19 related.

Crime peak rate went down 26%, currently it stands at 20% year to date. This had a huge impact on allocation for our frontline staff. Custody footfall has increased to 23 detainees per day, prior to COVID the rolling rate was approx. 17 per day, of which the majority are proactive arrests. The work load for our frontline officers in relation to Crime has been reduced by 20% and we have taken down outstanding suspects. This has had a positive impact on the wellbeing of our staff. Focus can now be applied to those cases where we can make a meaningful difference.

The ACC informed the Board that Domestic Abuse incidents nationally have gone up by 1%, whilst Bedfordshire has seen a reduction of 4%. Domestic Abuse crime nationally has increased approx. 4%, Bedfordshire has only just started to increase slightly. The 2019/2020 end of year report showed Domestic Abuse crime figures were at 22.4 per day, we currently at 22.94. The majority of these Domestic Abuse crimes are new victims or offenders, and not repeat offenders. We are mindful that may see a further increase, in particular repeat victims and offenders as time goes on.



CK raised a question as she attends gold and the DA levels are reported as increasing at this forum.

The PCC informed the Board that there has been an argument among the National DA charities who have raised concerns about the level of calls to their helplines has increased dramatically. However, PCC's have reported that referrals back to local services have been maintained or shown a slight reduction.

CK notified the Board that there is evidence from Refuge on the level of calls they are receiving. There could be some level of disgruntlement from the local services as they are funded locally and the national organisations are getting funds from the Home Office. CK has investigated this further following a conversation at the DA Strategic Leaders Board, where concerns were raised as the Local Authorities had already been received by the Home Office. The Local Authorities have advised CK that the funding is for the full Covid-19 response and will not be allocated to DA. This is more of a local choice as opposed to a Government direction. CK raised a concern around the statistics that are not increasing but the national figures for support are increasing, there could be a problem with victims feeling confident enough to report.

PCC reiterated to the Board of the £60k fund from the OPCC for DA accommodation. The ACC confirmed this message will continued to be promoted to our frontline staff.

**STANDING ITEM:**

**6.2: VERU and Serious Violence Fund**

The PCC requested clarification on serious knife crime showing a long-term increase against the knife crime admissions to hospital plateauing and sharp instrument injuries going down. The ACC advised the PCC they are unable to go into further detail on this as due to the sequencing, the data presented is last month's end of year data. The ACC will dig deeper into this to get clarification. The CC confirmed this will be addressed at Performance Board as well.

The ACC confirmed that his priorities will be, in addition to core crimes, stop and search and victim satisfaction for this year. The PCC advised that there is also a push for outstanding warrants and prison recalls from the Policing Minister and Martin Hewitt. The CC and ACO confirmed the new Warrant Officer is currently going through the selection process.

The ACO confirmed there is a £40k underspend, which was due to two posts being slightly delayed. This has not caused an issue with the Home Office. The funding for the forthcoming year is £908k. ACO will share these details with CK.

**ITEM 7 - LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE**

**STANDING ITEM:**

**7.1: Chief Constable Complaints**

No updates on existing complaint and no new CC complaints.

**STANDING ITEM:**

**7.2: Reviews from march 2020**



No items to raise.

7.3: Bi monthly culture update

CC confirmed there was no update to present to the Board at this meeting.

### **ITEM 8 - QUARTERLY REPORTING**

8.1 - 2019/20 Revenue, TM & Capital Outturn

In setting the 20/21 budget the PCC was mindful of the predicted £2.5M overspend in 2019/20, due to the spend on Guns and Gangs demand, and the forecasted shortfall on the Medium Term Financial Plan. Whilst the Special Grant at that time had been agreed, the amount wasn't confirmed. To ensure prudence and maintain a going concern the PCC agreed to transfer £500K from the Road Safety Reserve into the Budget Reserve to ensure that she could be confident in balancing the ensuing two years' budgets. This was also done in the knowledge that once the Special Grant was received, estimated at £3M, then the £500K would be put back into the Road Safety Reserve, as the impact on the Medium Term from the 2019/20 overspend would be eradicated.

The Special Grant was agreed at £2.975M and this along with variances brought about via the maximising of Surge funding, an increase in POCA income, an increase in mutual aid income and other variances, totalling £0.622M, has resulted in the overall outturn position being one that amounts to an underspend of £1.097M. This was comprised of an OPCC underspend of £0.094M, of which it was agreed £0.017M would be carried forward into 20/21 to assist with the Community Safety Fund, and a Force underspend of £1.003M of which it was agreed all would be transferred to reserves.

This final outturn position therefore not only allows the PCC to replenish the Road Safety Reserve by £0.5M but also to increase the budget reserve by a further £0.580M thus providing a stronger financial position for the Medium Term, or, depending on the level of grant received from the Home Office for the extraordinary spend on COVID related activity, a greater ability to support these costs in 20/21.

The PCC informed the Board that it is anticipated that the OPCC will increase in size to accommodate the needs of the PCC and also for any future PCC.

The ACO confirmed that a medium-term plan will be presented to the July Strat Board, with a further update in November and a draft budget will be presented to PCC in December. PCC requested that this starts with Estates.

The CC stated for the minutes that we do believe we are part of a continuing arrangement for special grant as a result of the correspondence that we have had.

### **ITEM 9 – AOB**

The ACO confirmed they are planning to submit a special grant for guns and gangs. A draft of this has been sent to the CC and PCC for review and is due to be sent for 1st June. PCC stated this has been received and is currently being worked on. Thanks was given for it being submitted early to PCC Duncan Young by PCC. PCC requested the data on plateauing and knife crime and sharp instrument injuries and admissions to A&E so that this can be included in the report.





**ACTION – ACC to provide data on plateauing and knife crime and sharp instrument injuries and admissions to A&E so that this can be included in the special grant report for guns and gangs.**

**Next Meeting:** 25<sup>th</sup> June, 13:00 – 15:00