



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

**24 May 2021**

<b>Confirmed with</b>	<b>Festus Akinbusoye, Police and Crime Commissioner (FA)</b>
	<b>Clare Kelly, Chief Executive, OPCC (CK)</b>
	<b>Trevor Rodenhurst, DCC (TR)</b>
	<b>Gavin Chambers, CFO for the OPCC (GC)</b>
	<b>Phil Wells, ACO for the Force (PW)</b>
	<b>Sophia Bartlett, Staff Officer DCC (SB)</b>
	<b>Katie Beaumont, Transparency Manager (KB) – Official Log</b>

<b><u>ITEM 1 - WELCOME &amp; MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AND FOR AGREEMENT AND MATTERS ARISING</u></b>
<p>FA welcomed the board members to the May Strategic Board meeting, the first strategic board meeting with him as PCC.</p> <p>Minutes were agreed as accurate. The PCC mentioned that the minutes were very clear, for himself coming in as PCC this was important.</p>
<b><u>ITEM 2 – ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS</u></b>
<p>STANDING ITEM:</p> <p>Please see the Strategic Board action log. The action log was updated accordingly.</p>
<b><u>RESTRICTED SECTION AND NOT LIVE STREAMED – NOT TO BE PUBLISHED AS A RECORDING</u></b>
<b><u>ITEM 3 – PERFORMANCE FOCUS</u></b>
<b>3.1 Crime performance figures with restricted detail</b>
<p>The DCC stated that the paper which has been passed to the OPCC contains a lot of data and he has drawn up a few slides to review the pressing elements.</p> <p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slight dip in recorded crime over the past month and a drop in the solved rate of 1% and so at the moment TR is not concerned but will continue to monitor.</li> <li>• Intel submissions remain significantly higher than last year, from officers and public. Backlog continues to rise and there is now evidence that delays in processing have led to missed opportunities. The challenge is capacity and if we received a special grant this will be able to rectify this and assist with pressure.</li> <li>• Continued increase in the solved rate for DA &amp; DA Repeats – this is a good news story</li> </ul>



- Low volume of CN / CSE reported crime being monitored – we expected to see more than we did in the last period and work is being completed on this.
- Continued rise in SYV: biggest increase in Bedford.

Management:

- Slight drop in crime rate in the last month, but higher than last year (as we come out of lockdown) TR stated it is really difficult to compare last year to this year, as last year we were locking down and now we are opening up.
- Solved rate dropped to 11.7% in Apr having climbed for the past 2mths

Demand:

FCC:

- 999 and 101 demand remaining steady with last month's figures
- Service levels for 101 are stable with last month (68%), but there is a further dip in service level for 999 (86.4%)

TR explained that Bedfordshire Police try to answer all 999 calls within 10 seconds. However, this does highlight that the FCC is under a significant amount of pressure. TR informed all that there currently is a full review underway for FCC and Bedfordshire Police is looking at improvements that can be made. A presentation was made to the Chief Officer Group (COG) last week where they agreed a number of intermediate changes to be made. FA requested the number of seconds the Force aim to answer 101 calls. TR confirmed 30 seconds..

The force is trying to signpost individuals to the online portal to try and ease some of the pressure however, calls remain high along with online submissions. CK stated it seems to have shown that there is a new audience that makes calls to the Force. TR explained that the FCC is the heartbeat of the organisation and the Force need to look at improvements. TR explained the review needs to be consider in line with the demand curve against shift patterns etc. FA requested the timescale for this review to be completed. PW confirmed that the review should be completed by July 2021. TR explained that one of the considerations is to put some officers into the FCC that are currently on restricted duties, this is seen as a significant step to bolster the numbers and to help with calls there and then. FA asked how many officers will be going in there? TR confirmed that he believed the number to be quite small however this is being explored at the moment.

CK stated that although numbers are as low as three or four they could make a significant impact, as they would be able to triage straight away. CK stated that it is quite concerning that from January the service level shows a decrease, is this due to flexible working or is there something else do we think?

TR stated that the omnicompetent role for FCC hasn't quite landed as expected. As in one day you will be taking 999 calls which is a skill in itself and then the next you will be logging crimes working on a different system. Each member of staff has their preference to which part of the role they prefer. TR explained that there is a higher turnover of staff than they would want, however there is a focus on well being in there and it is fair to say that the Executive are assured by the comprehensive review which is being completed, called FQUIP. TR stated we do not have to wait to implement things until the end of the review with things such as flexible working. TR said there are a number of things such as ICT with the review that can be done earlier.



CK asked who is leading the review. TR confirmed that [REDACTED] and her team will be supporting [REDACTED]. CK stated that [REDACTED] has been the lead throughout the whole time that we have been having the issues. TR stated that he has concentrated on that aspect however TR believes that a full review needs to be completed again. TR stated that he doesn't believe it is fair to say it has happened on [REDACTED] watch he believes it to be a gradual issue over a long period of time.

Intel

- Continued high volume of intel submissions (average 108 per day)
- Intel backlog cause for concern (as at 15 May, 1,125)

TR stated that we want intel submissions to be up however there is cause for concern that there is a backlog. TR stated his concern is that an address may be involved in County Lines and that Bedfordshire Police hasn't got to it due to a backlog. TR confirmed that this is going to be discussed in four days and he will make any decisions which are needed surrounding this.

FA asked whether the backlog was due to resources alone? TR confirmed this to be the case and that the volume is greater than the capacity in there. FA asked how much capacity do we need and how many people are we short by? TR stated they he would not like to disclose a figure and that he will wait and see what they come back with after the review. TR explained that at the last PBB proposal they asked for an additional 4 to 5 people which would have led to an enhanced service level and TR would not be surprised if this is the sort of numbers allocated.

FA asked for a clear indication to what the Force is short by in terms of Intel capacity, as we want to keep the public confidence high that the Force is listening to their concerns and that intel is being collected. TR stated that the Force will know more next month when we hear about the special grant and the grant will indicate a fixable solution. If we get the grant that the Force anticipates TR confirmed they will be able to fix it. TR asked for the Commissioner to let the Force get to that point to access. FA confirmed he would allow this. TR stated that the Executive may make a small interim action to help before a bigger plan is set.

Control Strategy:

Domestic Abuse:

TR confirmed that the below is a positive headline.

- DA and DA Repeat crimes remain higher than previous two years – however TR stated Bedfordshire Police expected them to be higher due to the lockdown.
- Solved rate continues to climb – strong cross team efforts resulted in 13% solved rate for DA in Apr (was 7.7 % in Feb) and 18.1% for DA Repeats (was 9% in Feb). TR confirmed there has been a real focus in this area and it has been improving, month on month increase. TR is confident that the figures are going in the right direction and has faith it will get better month on month.
- Continue to engage with teams to ensure signs of potential CN are identified and reported

TR confirmed that a lot is being done surrounding Child Neglect at the moment with local teams to ensure we are reaching everybody.



#### Neighbourhood Crime:

- Personal Robbery has risen over the past two months – TR explained that this is expected when coming out of lockdown.
- Continued low solved rates for Robbery and Burglary (both residential and other) as these have been positively affected by Covid-19.
- Hate crime beginning to drop having climbed for the past 3 months, but solved rate at its lowest over the past 12 months. TR explained that this was an area of concern for the Force, however he likes to think that now the Neighbourhood Policing teams are no longer tied up with Covid-19 Patrols, there will be a good focus on this aspect.
- Theft from Motor Vehicles continues to drop.

FA asked whether or not TR expects the crime types to continue to rise with the ending of lockdown? TR stated that the Force would expect with an opening up society, you would anticipate that burglary and personal robbery to increase with members of the public going out and about. FA asked if the Force has any contingencies which are being worked through before the 21<sup>st</sup> June where individuals will start to go on holidays etc. TR confirmed there is a plan in boosting resources where we believe the demand is expected to go, it will always be a challenge and TR confirmed he will come on to this in the next item.

#### Serious Youth Violence - SYV

- Continued overall increase in SYV: biggest increase in Bedford, slight drop in Luton although there were two gun related crimes.
- Solved rate for the past month (22.7%) consistent with average for 20/21
- 200hrs of SPARKLER (one of the tactics that the Force deploy for this type of crime) patrols completed in Apr 21 (increase of 50hrs from Mar 21). Majority has been in the South (Luton), but more pulse patrols in the North (Bedford) to combat increased activity

FA asked why Bedfordshire Police believe they have seen a spike in Bedford. TR stated we are opening up so more freedom for individuals however there have been challenges in Bedford related to gang activity, drugs lines, county lines and Bedford has its own challenges. TR stated that we did see a spike in Luton so we focussed the efforts there and are now seeing a reduction and a spike in Bedford, so TR explained that the force needs to re-evaluate. FA asked if there is a specific area in Bedford that the Force is seeing this activity? CK stated in the detail it shows Queens Park where there were a number of robberies being completed with electric scooters being taken from the victims, that's what it looks like has shot it up. TR stated there are nuances in data which need to be drawn out.

#### Knife Crime

- Crime rates dropped over the past month, but higher than last year. Solved rate of 20.5%.

#### Drug Crime

- Drop in recorded possession and trafficking of drugs over the past three months.



TR explained that when we are at capacity you normally see this figure go up as it is a proactive activity and as demand goes up, our resources are doing other things which has been shown in this drop. TR isn't concerned about this.

SOC Disruptions have been added in as it does not ordinarily show up on the performance dashboard which TR wants to change. As a Force we did more disruptions to Organised Crime in the east of England which is really significant.

- Regularly top at disruptions compared to rest of Region
- Fantastic last 12mths (Q4 traditionally lower for all Forces)

TR explained that he hopes that the descriptions that were given were helpful instead of going into each point on the dashboard and that it has given the flavour of priorities and which areas have our focus.

FA stated that he has some concerns surrounding resource having to be moved to Bedford due to a flashpoint, are we aware of, have the intel on what is the next area which may need our attention? Or are we dealing with it as soon as it arises. TR confirmed that Force have the intel that is received that gives us the information, however this normally happens in regular hotspots and now that we are aware that our Neighbourhood teams are in a much healthier position they will be able to identify concerns and then bring in SPARKLER patrols and we will get on the front foot proactively putting us in a better position.

CK stated that her only concern is surrounding DA. Last year in March and April, we identified that there would be a spike around this time as we are aware that the process of gaining enough confidence to report can take up to 12 months, so we always knew that the figures were going to increase and CK doesn't believe that we are in a position to deal with it fully until a few months have passed. CK wondered whether or not a reassurance piece was needed with our partners around the point that we knew this was coming and we will have the resources, however we are not in that position yet. As there is a concern that people are reporting and not receiving any feedback, as CK has received feedback from partners from victims stating that they are not receiving any feedback. We know why and we also knew that this was going to happen, so a lot of our partners will question why we haven't increased our resource like they have. For example, CK is aware of partners increasing resource in call centres for March, we couldn't due to finances, so CK thinks we need to explain why we haven't and that we will in a few months and the reasons why because it will help with partner relationships.

**ACTION: TR to speak to [REDACTED] to ensure Bedfordshire Police are reaching out to DA partners to explain the future rise in DA resource, so partners can assure service users.**

TR agreed that partners need to be informed. CK stated that the last few months have been critical and if they do not receive the best service we will lose them. We need to ensure that partners are aware and that we give reassurance that we will be getting to your cases and supporting them and informing charities, people we commission of this so they are fully aware that support is coming.

FA stated that we need clear messaging and ensure that we connect the dots. TR confirmed that [REDACTED] will lead on this and ensure that partners are aware and VEOs are aware of the focus to Clare's Law etc. CK stated that it would be nice to have 'by this month we will have XX many VEOs, so please keep your service users engaged as we will be in a better place to support them and we do not want to lose them whilst we are transitioning and planning'.

FA stated we will eventually have to consider the back log in the court system which is out of our control, if we have good communication with our partners this will be key. CK stated that this is in the first year plan where we are going to



be looking at witness care review, I think that will give us focus. In the earlier stages we are focussing on VEOs, but on the longer term plan we need to review how to deliver victim care in a BCH way.

## **ITEM 4 – CC Update**

### **4.1 Verbal opportunity for the CC to raise anything to the PCC/ OPCC**

TR stated that he will be presenting today.

#### **1. Covid and where we are as a county**

In terms of cases – Bedford has 124 per 100,000, Central has 33 per 100,000 and Luton has 42 per 100,000. National average is 22. TR stated he will inform the PCC of the focus specifically in Bedford but there are things which are being completed across the board. Principal Ages infected is 11 to 24 year olds, the identified hot spots are Kingsbrook, Wixams and Cauldwell. We have increased testing – 4 mobile sites. We have started home delivery test kits. TR stated we have a good supply of the vaccine which is positive. We have not seen an increase on hospital pressures or an increase in deaths. In Luton we have one quarantine hotel (Holiday Inn at Luton Airport) and there are no issues at the moment.

FA asked how Covid is affecting our work force? TR confirmed at the moment we have really small numbers, single figures. TR stated that in the early days we believed that as a force we would struggle but that hasn't happened. Several Hundred Officers have been vaccinated. The only concern is when half a shift couldn't work due to an adverse reaction to the vaccine. CK asked whether or not this action has been recent because in the last Covid Gold it was still quite low. PW stated that it was approximately 400 officers, CK stated that she was pleased that this has doubled. TR confirmed this also did include JPS but numbers are Beds Officers. CK explained to the PCC that there was a concern, as Beds Force is a young Force and that individuals were not going to be called up for the vaccine but is pleased with the update. FA asked whether there was any reluctance from officers. It was confirmed that there has been no reluctance.

#### **2. Significant pressures this summer – in previous minutes**

TR explained that this summer is going to very busy. Items were disclosed in April's minutes. FA asked for specific numbers of officers dedicated to summer commitments. TR stated that it surrounds specialism however cannot give exact numbers at this time.

FA stated in terms of events, we have the anniversary of George Floyd's death tomorrow and queried has any intel been submitted to highlight any potential protests or unrest? TR confirmed that the Force are not aware of anything. CK stated that the Force and OPCC have had sight of the cohesion report and they did not highlight any concerns.

TR stated that the Chief Constable will be making a statement tomorrow, but nothing is anticipated. CK asked if the statement been sense checked with the IAG and TR confirmed this has been done this morning.

FA stated that he has two interviews, BBC tomorrow and News night in regards to this also.

## **ITEM 5 – LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE**

### **5.1 Chief Constable Complaints**



CK confirmed that no new CC complaints have been received, however the outstanding complaint which was with the IOPC has been closed as not enough grounds to continue with the investigation.

## 5.2 Reviews

We have had 4 reviews since the last Strategic Board.

1 has been completed and has been deemed not valid as the review was requested outside of the timeframe. There are 3 outstanding however these have only been received in the last week, so no concerns or trends to highlight.

## ITEM 6 – Quarterly Reporting Efficiency

### 6.1 Strategic Projects Update (part of finance)

PW explained that the following projects were ongoing:

- FQIP review on Offender Management
- FQIP review on Comms
- PBB – JPS – 21/22 savings

3 big projects surrounding efficiency are:

- Custody Build - estate
- Windows Project which will influence our carbon reduction and heating costs
- SMART working program which is around the mix of agile/homeworking and office base working

PW will give a full update surrounding these at the next meeting.

### 6.2 2020/21 Revenue, Capital & Treasury Management Outturn Report

PW presented the paper to the PCC and explained that he would focus on the high level detail and if the PCC required a meeting outside of this meeting he would gladly go in more detail.

We were reporting a breakeven position against budget and expecting to come in on target. We have a 2.1 million grant for Costello which is 20/21 money but we can carry forward to 21/22. We have been allocated £164,000 from red routes from Luton airport which can be carried over to 21/22. We have also been given 0.5 Million in Covid Funding which is a S31 grant, can be used for our own purposes in 21/22. This has resulted in a 2.773 Million underspend as a result of the grants received in February. We have detailed how we will use this money later on in the report, an example is 8 Victim Engagement Officers.

FA stated that if we have that amount of underspend should we consider our reserves? PW stated that there will need to be a discussion had surrounding this and the general and capital reserves, as we are funding a lot at the moment through capital receipts and we have no revenue in there. The discussion will be had after June, the above is outturn for revenue.

In terms of capital the report highlights what we are planning to carry forward however, the report does show the progress with custody. We had to borrow more in 20/21, profile and payments but this is because we have pressed forward and is on plan for completion in February 2021.



PW explained that there is an underspend of ICT, however this is because it has moved to the ESN project which keeps being delayed, but will continue to carry it forward until the time we need it. FA asked if this will be this year? PW stated that there will be work this year however this will surround infrastructure and a review will have to take place of core services and non-core services and the overall cost of assets. PW explained when we hit that point this year to resource it, we will be using our full capital expenditure reserve, so at that point to fund our CAP programme we will have to use capital programme grant. We want to try and reduce external borrowing now as we have done this a lot with the new build. The financing of the capital programme is based this year upon minimising the amount of borrowing taken by the PCC. When the draft capital budget for 2021-22 was agreed in February it was done so on the basis that £11.3M would be borrowed in 2020-21. We have managed to reduce this figure to £8M by funding part of the programme from revenue contributions and by carrying out "internal borrowing", meaning that we are using some of our balances to finance part of the programme. This method will save the Organisation money as the cost of borrowing is higher than any investment income we may receive. This can only be seen as a temporary measure and further use of revenue funding may be considered in the future in order to keep borrowing to a minimum. The use of the capital receipts reserve must be limited to funding capital expenditure and any not used in this financial year must be carried forward to the following year for the same purpose. The PCC is keen to ensure that these receipts are used in a way that can be clearly linked to improving the Bedfordshire Police Service and receipts used this year will contribute to the funding of the HQ redevelopment.

In utilising the above funds to finance the 2020/21 Capital expenditure while we have kept our borrowing to a minimum, it should be recognised that, unless there is an increase in the level of annual capital grant, as part of the Finance Settlement, future programmes will be funded by a mixture of external & internal borrowing, revenue contributions and capital receipts.

FA asked if we are thinking about or have we started considering how the budget may be changing in the next year or two? FA is aware of capital reserves etc however should he be made aware of any future shock which may come our way.

PW stated the process is that finance bring the medium financial plan to the July meeting and this will provide you with a clearer picture and we have updates on special grants and outturn there.

GC stated that the report is very clear and comprehensive. GC stated he had one question surrounding the largest capital programme item, great to hear that the custody suite is being delivered, however is it on budget? PW confirmed that it was on budget and on time.

FA asked whether the Force was ok with him making a public statement stating that the Force is on Budget and on time? CK stated are we sure we want to put that into the public eye, just in case something goes wrong and that we have to hold the force to account? FA stated that the statement would be reassuring to let the public know that we are reviewing the finances and the Force is efficient.

PW stated that the caveats need to be in place that 'at this time' or 'at this present time' we are on time and in budget.

## **ITEM 7. COLLABORATION**

### **7.1 Risks and any key updates from the Force to OPCC if any**

TR raised that is a concern surrounding JPS board and stated that it is worth noting that Cambridge continue to look at AOJ, Cambridge get a really good service, with high demand in serious crime and roads policing however



numbers/resourcing gaps need to be looked at. The numbers have been looked into in terms of area and how much Forces need to fund and:

7 from Beds, 5 Herts and 18 Cambs.

TR also mentioned the ongoing review of AOJ and that Cambs have pulled out of this arrangement/custody. TR stated he believes this is because Cambs are in a different CPS area which was agreed by the Board. CK stated she believed this concern was raised previously in terms of numbers as Beds was in a deficit for a while. TR confirmed this was the case however have worked at this and right now is the right time.

ERSOU uplift – SOC element is 800 over 9 regions which only means about 3 cops for Beds, and ERSOU will grow by 34 but next year we will be looking 80.

TR also raised that within the 7 Force Collaboration there have been a lot of changes, 1 new chief , 3 new PCCs and he wanted to raise that he wasn't aware if this would have an effect but we should consider it, if there was going to be any dynamic changes. CK stated that she didn't believe there would be as the 7 Chief Execs have got together and discussed and do not believe there will be any major pulls or pushes or desire to do anything different.

FA stated he doesn't think there will be any issues, nothing has been brought to his attention. The only interaction he has had is with Herts PCC and have listened to his concerns.

#### **ITEM 8. AOB**

##### **8.1 Information Management Updates**

CK stated that there are no concerns surrounding this report.

**Next Meeting:** 01 July 2021



