



POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR BEDFORDSHIRE DELIVERY AND BEATING CRIME MINUTES – PART 1

30th June 2022

Attending:	Festus Akinbusoye, Police Crime Commissioner - OPCC (FA)
	Garry Forsyth, Chief Constable – Force (GF)
	Trevor Rodenhurst, Deputy Chief Constable - Force (TR)
	Sharn Basra, Assistant Chief Constable – Force (SB)
	Phil Wells, Chief Finance Officer – Force (PW)
	Anna Villette, Interim Chief Executive – OPCC (AC)
	Katie Beaumont, Transparency Manager - OPCC (KB)
	Rachel Glendenning, Staff Officer - Force (RG)
	Gavin Chambers, Chief Finance Officer – OPCC (GC)
	Leanne Friel, Communications Officer – OPCC (LF)
	Gemma McCormack, Executive Assistant – OPCC (GM)

ITEM 1 - WELCOME & MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AND FOR AGREEMENT AND MATTERS ARISING

FA welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from Wayne Humberstone. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

ITEM 2- OPCC QUESTIONS OR ITEMS TO RAISE

2.1 Actions from Previous Meeting

121, PW confirmed that information has been sent to GC and AV ahead of the Police and Crime Panel, Action to be closed.

124, KB advised that the meeting was held, all the documents and information has been provided this month. KB attended a Home Office and APCC event on the Specified Information Order and they have requested that certain information is presented in a different way, they would like more infographics and less text. KB and her team are currently undertaking a review of other OPCC's and will update SB and RG on how we move forward. FA asked if this meant a request for more information and more demands on the Force, are there resources in place to meet that. SB advised that their request is in line with the National Policing measures so should not mean more work is required.



2.2 Information Document

KB reported no concerns and advised that all information has been provided.

ITEM 3 – PERFORMANCE FOCUS

3.1 Crime Performance Figures with Restricted Details

SB updated in relation to the May data. Overall crime is up at nearly 14% this month which equates to an extra 584 crimes across all three local authority areas, this is still not as high as pre COVID times. We have seen, from April into May an increase in solved rate which has gone up from 8.5% to 10.2%, this is an additional 133 crimes that have been solved. In terms of the National picture, there is a digital crime and performance pack produced which shows trends both nationally and locally, the baseline they use is pre COVID. In relation to neighbourhood crime, we are seeing reductions on the baseline across the board and quite favourably against similar Forces.

There is some good news in relation to burglary, we see reductions in residential burglary, and we continue to see positive outcomes.

DA solved rate again has climbed in May compared to April and that has been replicated in the repeat DA rate so some positive action there.

One of the areas where we have seen increase again is personal robbery and most of that is around street robbery, the good news is that there has been little violence used or offered but the offences are increasing, and we are able to overlay those hotspots that we can provide additional resource to.

FA asked in terms of the overall performance figures and reporting solved rate, it is good that there has been a decline from 10.2 to 8.5 for the solved rates but the long term trend declined and is not as good. What plans are in place to reverse the solved rate? SB advised that the key part is the speediness of the investigation to make it that we gather and harness all of that evidence, but the most important part is the direction and guidance in terms of the supervisors. A number of our investigations sit within our response investigation team and with those Sargent's they have been supplemented by floater Sergeants both north and south of the County that support the day to day, and each has a buddy detective sergeant in order to enhance their skills in terms of crime investigation. FA asked, when do you expect this to start helping in improving the solved rates? SB explained that the more crime there is, then we need to increase the number of crimes that we solved in order to bring up that number of solved rates, if you look at the number of crimes and the number we have solved, the solved rate goes down. FA asked if the Force is confident with the buddying system that is in place and that it will help? SB agreed that they are confident that the processes in place will improve the level of investigation, quality of investigation and therefore increase the likelihood of us getting solved crimes.

SB reported that since October 2021 we have had the highest throughput in both custody suites and in conjunction with that, we have had the fewest refused detention. In Kempston we have seen continued reduction in the waiting times, and this has been



consistent from when the custody suite opened. In May we had more people coming in but fewer no further actions and no charges.

FA asked in terms of the numbers going up in custody, are we seeing the same for young people as well? SB reported nothing significant for May in terms of children in terms of detentions, over nighters or remands. Children in custody are discussed both in the morning and then again in the evening management meeting, as those who need to be kept in will be kept in, but we don't want to keep anyone unnecessarily in custody but children in particular, particularly overnight.

3.2 Update on FCR and public contact/customer services - performance data of quality of service

SB advised that at the moment, radio agents - out of 54 there are 17 vacancies, call handlers, there are 4 vacancies and 3 projected, crime recorders 4 vacancies and 2 projected. We made the decision to put Constables back into the room, we are not getting the volunteers, we set aside 12 spaces for Constables in the control room and at the moment there are 3 that are in there.

In customer support there are 5 vacancies and 2 projected which is which is close to 50% of the team. We are continuing to drive with the recruitment, we are using Crooton who are proving to be more attractive than other, and we do know that we have people in the pipeline. We are working with Vetting and our HR colleagues to make sure that these are prioritised and at the Gold Groups there is HR representation at the highest level. It is still a huge challenge in terms of the people there trying to do the job. Since the last meeting we have refreshed the leadership within the team, and we have gone with a new Superintendent – Graham Bates and we have supplemented the whole area with an additional Chief Inspector.

In May we saw an increase in 999 and 101 calls, the number of the 999 calls that were translated to immediate responses was the highest for this calendar year which puts added pressure on to our teams. In terms of the receipt to transfer in May there has been a slight increase in the time it has taken while it is in the control room area, in dispatch to attendance that has decreased slightly. The overall performance although it has gone down slightly, isn't that bad in terms of our average but the combined elements of resources and added numbers is really a challenge within there.

FA shared that he is becoming increasingly worried that getting people into the control room is not going to be an achievable target as people just do not want to do this job. GF advised we are looking at what we can change in relation to how we operate, how we can change use of technology – use of webchat etc which will reduce the requirement for officers and staff to be in there. It is important that we get people in and also once they are in, to keep them there.



SB agreed that we have never had a vacancy factor like we have at the moment but we are not alone, many forces and emergency services across the Country are also experiencing the same.

Victim Satisfaction – we have gone to our automated process where victims of crime are sent surveys either via email or SMS, and we are finding that email is the more popular. We are phasing out the sending out of these to make sure that we can ensure that the systems working and then manage the process. In May we received 31 feedback surveys completed, out of the 31 – 20 were very satisfied and 7 were not satisfied and 4 were average. These surveys have now been extended to personal robbery as well. All of those who replied for residential burglary were satisfied, we included a separate element to that to align with HMIC recommendations but where we are failing is advice on preserving evidence then crime prevention. The feedback is suggesting that we are not offering that. What we can do there is we can push for the Officers and staff who have contact with those victims of crime and making sure that we are offering advice on preserving evidence and crime prevention.

In terms of dissatisfaction, we have been focussing only on victim dissatisfaction. In May we had 41 victims who were dissatisfied which is a slight increase – 28 of those are open, 5 have been referred for further review by PSD and 8 of those have been closed. 32 out of the 41 were deliveries of duties and service, within that the most consistent one is people who are not happy with how it was dealt with, the progress or the outcome. Sometimes this is unavoidable as there are examples in there such as, criminal damage, there are no witnesses, no CCTV or evidence whatsoever but the person has reported that they are unhappy with the outcome, and we have to record that.

Tracy Kelly is the new Customer Support Team Manager, and she is now settled in, Tracy is looking at the rest and wider dissatisfaction so not just the victims and she has sent through a draft plan, this also includes recruitment into that team.

GF shared that every month for an hour he speaks to a high risk victim of domestic abuse and get their assessment of the service they have received into the system, this is something I choose to do, and it is something that is important for me.

3.3 Update on EDT

SB advised that we collate all the issues and concerns that we have, and we share them with our partners at the highest level. SB met with the new Central Bedfordshire Director of Children Services, who was going to meet with the other Directors from Bedford Borough and Luton Borough and the item on the agenda was EDT provision. GF agreed that we are still having issues with EDT and there have been a number of incidents where it has been the same as before, unacceptable and occasions where young children are at police stations overnight with Officers in attendance. GF was involved in the new appointment of



the Director and feels that the new Director will be a fantastic addition to their team which will hopefully help us enormously.

3.4 Estates Review Update

PW updated that following the last meeting where the strategy was agreed, we are asking the company to draw it up into a glossy document for this to be shared with the Police and Crime Panel.

We have just taken the keys of Lisander House to replace Biggleswade and PSD will be moving in there later this year after the works have been done. At the same time, we will have moved everyone out of Borough Hall. Henlow Officers will also move into Lisander House at some point.

Leighton Buzzard – there has been some confusion within the Force around what that is for, PW has spoken with Lorraine Chown about what has been agreed by FA and GF, Lorraine will take this forward, and PW will feedback with further updates.

We had the closure meeting yesterday on the new build, some remedial works are required at Luton Custody, and we might be able to use some of the underspend for the custody project to do that.

We have now had a site visit to London Road Depot with BBC, and we are just doing some work around the cost that this would involve to bring that building up to a suitable standard for our workshops and then we will see how we progress that which will lead into where we go with Halsey Road.

Discussions are still progressing around Greyfriars, we have sent back out detail on the 106 and the considerations. The only real one that is a sticking point is they are trying to put a timeframe on us which involves them doing a piece of work but they wont put a timeframe on when they are going to do a piece of work but we need to have this. We are trying to put a 2 year timeline on this which is reasonable for a developer.

ITEM 4 – CC UPDATES

4.1 Verbal Opportunity for CC to Raise Items to the OPCC

GF updated regarding the mass hare coursing event back in November during the funeral of one of Bedfordshire's prominent travellers. Our strategy at the time was to gather evidence and we were going to launch an investigation in the wake of those events and that is exactly what we did. I have to pay compliment to PC Stu Grant from our Wildlife and Rural Crime Team; he has done a superb job. A Court Case took place on the 16th of June and following 6 months of investigations and working with 10 other Police Forces across England and Scotland, and the National Wildlife Unit – 15 offenders have been identified. Most of those have been interviewed and we have summons 11 of those to Court for their attendance at that event. 6 out of the 11 turned up at Court last week and following some negotiations all 6 pleaded guilty. They were all given fines between £200 - £300 plus costs and a surcharge but more important than that, they all received criminal behaviour orders



covering 7 Counties and also the CPNW for hare coursing. There is another Court session on the 5th of September but this is a positive message that says we will not tolerate this behaviour and should provide reassurance for communities.

ITEM 5 – LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE

5.1 Chief Constable Complaints

KB updated that no concerns have been received.

5.2 Reviews

KB updated that no concerns have been received and we have not received any in the last month.

5.3 Cultural Update & 5.4 Support for Officers/Staff going through the Misconduct process

GF shared that the Force has a very good welfare pack which details the welfare provision, this is a BCH welfare pack from 2018 – it includes a forward from the DCC and the Head of Professional Standards in the introduction which provides a lot of information. This is a resource document for Managers as well as for the individual which details what they can expect. It covers the role of the Welfare Officer, their responsibilities and how they should do that, addresses the issues around confidentiality, support for the individual as well as the investigating officer, how communication needs to be facilitated, how to manage risk, it sets out the process, it also references all of the support networks and associations that are available for additional support, contact logs, explanations of all of the regulations and also final pieces around explaining to the individual the subject of the welfare provision and what they can expect. This is the approach we provide across BCH which is in addition to the support provided by Federation or Unison etc.

FA advised the main thing he would like to be sighted on is what the most common issues are in this process for those who are going through misconduct and are you satisfied that your teams are providing support for those Officers with those common needs? GF advised we will all have been subject to complaints at time or have knowledge of those who have been subject of complaints historically. Anecdotally a lot of those people will tell you they have not received very good support from the organisation but that does not mean that it has not been provided, on some occasions it is because they have chosen not to engage with it. The primary responsibility for welfare provision for someone who is going through an investigation is always with the line manager in the first instance, where it is more serious or escalated then we get to the appointment of a contact officer. TR advised that every month he will sit down with the Head of PSD and go through every single case that we have, specifically the high risk cases. Within those meetings we always consider the welfare of the Officer, and we identify where there is a risk and set up a Gold Group around it.



GF advised for the past 2 years as part of the culture piece we have pushed the importance of first line leaders and first line supervisors and the fact that they need to know their people and invest time in them.

ITEM 6 – QUARTERLY REPORTING EFFICIENCY

6.1 Update on Efficiencies

PW advised that in September/October we will have the outcomes of PBB and will report back at that meeting.

ITEM 7 – COLLABORATION

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

GF advised regarding the Metropolitan Police £5,000 financial incentive payment, which will be a risk to us depending on other Forces' response to this which could create a ripple for us.

The MPAS piece, due diligence was being done with both the West Midlands and the Met to take responsibility for lead Force for West Yorkshire from MPAS. West Midlands have now declared that they will not be prepared to do that, and the Met have said that they will not even consider this until the new Commissioner has been appointed. West Yorkshire Police have given 12 months' notice which they have now extended for a further period of 12 months but that will be an ongoing risk to the provision of air support until that is resolved.

ITEM 8 – AOB

8.1 Information Management Updates

KB confirmed there are no issues with the Information Report.

Vetting – FA asked regarding the current situation with vetting, and do we still have a backlog? TR shared the vetting department are under pressure, they were doing okay post Sarah Everard but following the changes to legislation their workload has increased. We are one of the largest Policing entities in the UK which means they have a sizeable workforce to vet. There are high risk roles which need to be prioritised along with people coming into the workforce of which they are coming in at a right that has never happened before. When you combine our need to deliver uplift with things like the FCC, it feels like there are many competing priorities for them. That being said, they are really receptive to use asking them to prioritise certain lists and Martin is doing a good job to re-collaborate their prioritisation and their approach to improve efficiency. There have been some additional resources that have gone in there, we are providing additional resource into Professional Standards. It is a pressure, but we are working collaboratively with them and



they are working with the resource they have got. TR has Vetting represented on the FCC Gold Group and uplift is clearly and absolute priority for them.

FA regarding Officers who are due for re-vetting but have not been re-vetted yet, they are still serving Officers, how are you managing this risk? TR agreed it is a risk, but we have to prioritise that based on the role they are in and what they get access to. TR is currently in the vetting process, completed the forms a long while ago, GF is also due to be re-vetted as well.

FA asked for the November meeting, in terms of the postings, how many of the officers are now in the right teams.

Action for November.

Next Meeting: 22nd September 2022