



POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR BEDFORDSHIRE
Delivery and Beating Crime Board
Thursday 22 September 2022

MINUTES – PART 2

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

WELCOME

FA welcomed everyone to the open section of the meeting.

FA announced that present at the meeting is:

- Deputy Chief Constable Trevor Rodenhurst, (Acting Chief Constable from the 26 September 2022)
- Dan Vajzovic (from ERSOU) (Temporary Chief Constable until a substantive Chief Constable is in place)

FA thanked the 42 Officers who were in attendance (mutual aid) supporting the funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. A huge asset to the operation and 2 of the Officers were part of the procession.

FA passed thanks to the remaining Officers that stayed behind to keep the Force manned and policed accordingly.

Apologies

- Wayne Humberstone (OPCC)
- Chief Constable Garry Forsyth (Last day on site and with his Officers)



ITEM 9 – UPDATES

9.1 Force Activity Against the Police and Crime Plan – Update ‘Spotlight - Priority 3’

TR agreed to map what the Force is doing alongside the Commissioners Police and Crime Plan.

TR went on to update against priority 3 of the Commissioners plan which is tackling the causes of crime and breaking the cycle of offending. TR explained that it is a lengthy report however will draw out the key headlines.

In essence we have our Annual Plan and Control Strategy. We have improved the management of offenders, reduced crime and protected people from harm which directly relates to the plan.

Managing Offenders – We use the Active Risk Management System and use the improved risk assessment tool. We also tackle high harm repeat offenders. We have people who are responsible for serious acquisitive crime and other significant crimes that harm communities and separate processes for domestic abuse and burglary.

We have a Gang Mapping Process, a 4P response (Prevent, Protect, Prepare and pursue Perpetrators) which we use in organised gang mapping.

In Bedfordshire, Integrated Offender Management, supported by You Turn Futures, (only Beds and Herts use the system) shows real improvement and sustained good performance in our end of year Integrated Offender Management Report.

TR referred to HMICFRS inspection into Bedfordshire Police, grading the Force outstanding in Managing Offenders (something the Force are pleased and proud of). There is only one other Force who have achieved this grading.

HMICFRS said Integrated Offender Management is reducing offending and its cost to society. Evidence demonstrates that the Forces approach to managing offenders is effective. Online child abuse investigations are timely and thorough, and these investigations are supported by impressive digital forensics capability.

The Force is effective at managing the risks posed by the most dangerous offenders and it uses technology effectively to support its management of registered sex offenders.

TR went on to say that it should be noted that the Commissioner has supported the Force and funded a mobile capability to examine those kinds of devices. There is a clear policy for addressing outstanding suspects and the Force prioritises domestic abuse suspects.

HMICFRS Good practice in how we risk assess patients with mental health conditions who are due to be released from hospital in the same way we do with individuals who are going to be released from prison through multi agency arrangements.



TR clarified offender management and demand of workforce assessment (whilst positive), offender management caseloads are notably high, and the national average is about 50 per officer, whereas we are 62.5 per officer.

This is an area of demand which TR believes will grow. We need to assess carefully regarding our ability to maintain these standards and the pressure that it puts on our staff who are managing high risk individuals. Demand is expected to increase (our own assessment). Currently out of an establishment of 39 officers we currently have 33 full time equivalents doing that work about 85% - 86%. This is a challenge and an area of focus.

Crime Prevention - We have a small team of three called DOCOs, Design Our Crime Officers. They provide links to the local community and businesses and put mitigations in place for locations. Local partnership collaborations which work on problem solving, appointed a dedicated DCI to lead strategic partnership work focused on independent case reviews, again to improve our joint work and information sharing which is greatly improved.

A bespoke cross agency training package is being prepared to build a consistent understanding across all workers in all sectors around vulnerability. We have increased our remit in our CSE teams, and they are now the Missing and Child Exploitation Team. In Bedfordshire we have a real focus on women in the criminal justice system.

We are piloting a diversion scheme to try and divert women before arrest to relevant partnership and third sector support as we have noticed females coming into the custody system and ending up with no outcome.

The managing of domestic abuse perpetrators process was set up as part of the multi-agency risk assessment and we are working with the local prison in several areas, particularly focusing on reducing drug use and reducing reoffending.

There is a section in the report on the VERU which has been covered before. We promote the fantastic work of the VERU. We have Kimberley Campbell-Lamb back from her attachment to the Home Office (HO) and I am confident we will take the VERU from strength to strength.

The Force have several products that help us understand risk, manage offenders and reduce crime. Violence against women and girls' assessment, neighbourhood crime, rape and serious sexual offences, domestic abuse, and serious crime (local profile).

With dedicated HO funding we have a Gangs and Gun Team to focus on high threat individuals in that area.

We have a funded dedicated team looking at the response to Operation Phonetic, the infiltrated EncroChat Network which exposed a lot of organised crime criminals across the country that policing previously did not know about. We had a disproportionate impact in



Bedfordshire and made the case successfully to have a dedicated team that had brilliant results. Recently made 'Team of The Year' at our awards.

Bedfordshire Police Force are fully committed and a pan Bedfordshire cross agency approach to the drugs strategy. Pan Bedfordshire governance has been set up, a competent and collective effort with a county wide approach to drugs.

The Force are working with Cambridge University (Centre for Evidence-Based Policing) on hotspot alarm tools. Analysis says that if you put visible policing 'out there' you will greatly reduce crime. National best practice based on academic research. We have Operation Rowan that puts visible policing in areas.

Neighbourhood Safeguarding - We are a pilot Force (one of 8 Forces), who are supporting Clear Hold Build, a military terminology for working in partnership. We are deploying that in the Dallow area of Luton, branded as Dallow Cares. Policing along with our partners have a significant role and is starting to look like a successful pilot which we are looking to expand out to Central Bedfordshire and Bedford.

Within Policing, the pilot made 11 arrests, seized over 1000 drug deals, over £2,500 in cash and a number of drug deal phones were taken. We have worked with the Mayor and other partners to deliver community engagement events on knife crime, drug crime and the diversion of young people away from crime. A positive initiative!

TR asked if there were any questions.

AV thanked TR for his report which covered a lot of the Commissioners questions.

AV asked TR to talk through maintaining high standards following the HMICFRS report and to explain how he would keep the grading that the Force received for 'managing offenders in the community'. AV "What are you doing to ensure that those really high standards are that are now national exemplars of best practise, what are you doing to maintain those?"

TR There are pressures across the organisation regarding resourcing and having the right people in the right places with the right skills. TR referred to SB who previously outlined how we change our response function. This provides a degree of upskilling of people in the early stages of the investigation. This makes some investigations more attractive so we will see more people going into the core crime areas.

Firstly, we draw resources into specialised units, such as offender management from those wider crime areas. There are foundations to ensure we have a talent pipeline for resources moving throughout the organisation.



Secondly, we focus on understanding our demand, constantly making sure we have the right resource in the right place.

We are about to embark on our priority-based budgeting. This is not about cuts but about service levels, again resources in the right places (starting next week). We will consider offender management within that. We have outlined some best practice, however, at the time of the HMICFRS visit there were still some things in their infancy.

We use a lie detector capability that helps us manage and determine the risk of offenders. It is embedded in the Force and a capability that we are using. We are not sitting back on our grading. In the future we will be able to make much better use of our data.

AV wanted to extend both the Commissioner's and her thanks to SB for helping with rearranging some of the governance in order that we can successfully implement the 10-year drug strategy. AV went on to say that it is complex with countywide initiatives and getting all partners on board.

TR flagged up that there is a correction to the paper. It says we made a bid to the Home Office (HO) in August. TR clarified (for the OPCC and the Public) that we have not made a bid to the HO in August around the 10-year drug strategy. However, we are looking at what a bid might look like if there is funding available. If there is an opportunity for funding, we will seek to take it.

ITEM 10 – COMMUNITY POLICING

10.1 Community Policing Report – Recent Changes / Action Taken (Moved to next month)

10.2 Community Policing Model Establishment Update

AV invited PW to give an update on the Community Policing Model.

PW kept the report brief as SB will give an update around the engagement and priority setting from our local public.

Numbers in Community Policing – currently we have 148 people, that includes Officers and PCSO's, 122 of those are in our 6 community hubs. We will try and maintain numbers in those community hubs at 95% establishment.

We are currently at 90%, however, we have 5 people coming into those roles over the next couple of months which will bring that up to 95%.

In terms of the majority vacancies, there are 2 Luton hubs. Central Bedfordshire hubs are at 98% establishment and Bedford Borough hub is at 95%. Vacancies at Luton - The 5 people coming in will be going to the Luton hub.

AV asked PW to remind people where the community hubs are situated. PW confirmed:

- Two in Bedford, one is rural, and one is in the town centre
- Two in Central Bedfordshire, one in the north and one in the south
- Two in Luton, one in Luton north and one Luton in the south

AV we will move the other report to the following meeting as the Commissioner has a lot of things he wants to cover.

ITEM 11 – VOICE OF THE PUBLIC

11.1 – Issues Raised to the PCC

Force Control Room - How long a caller has to wait when they go online / 101 calls / 999.

FA invited an update to understand what the Force are doing in answer to the above issue.

SB stated that our fundamental responsibilities to our Public are when they contact us in times of need, i.e., ringing 999 – we must pick up that phone. We have prioritised our Control Room as an area of concern. We have a Gold Group, (an internal mechanism) to ensure that we have the focus on the Control Room with support across the organisation.

Two challenges:

a. Recruitment and numbers within the team

We have vacancies across different sections and component parts across the Control Room. Previously we have had challenges filling those vacancies. We have put in place a new revised recruiting campaign which is gathering interest. There are planned 'Assessment Days' this month, followed by training. This will help to supplement numbers already in the Control Room. There are significant gaps and vacancies, however these are currently filled with 'overtime'.

b. Performance

Control Room. When there are gaps in resourcing, we have fewer people to meet demand. We have seen the highest number of 999 calls in the last two months than in the previous 12 months, and the highest number of 101 calls in the last two months, since October 2021.

SB to reassure the Commissioner and the Public, as a Force we are making month on month improvement in terms of answering calls, the call journey and responding to those



incidents. We acknowledge that we need to improve further to provide the best possible service.

Linked to the Control Room is our response to an incident. We are making subtle changes to that part of the business to ensure we are providing a holistic service to the public.

TR we have a healthy talented pipeline of people wanting to come into the Control Room. When we carry abstractions to bring people in to train them and put them alongside operators who are already under pressure, this needs to be sequenced and not all at the same time. This is managed by training and retaining those people.

We have made changes to the roles and role profiles in the Control Room so that people understand what their role is. There is more training and support, with a focus on roles and development opportunities and well-being.

Changes made to duty time (In negotiation with staff) and workforce is aligned to demand. This is supported by flexi and part time working.

Technical changes will provide a degree of automation which has not been there in the past. Bedfordshire is leading the way on this. We expect demand to grow so it will be a priority, therefore we will go over establishment if and where necessary to get the right number of people.

It is not an immediate fix to get those skills. With a focus on individuals in the Control Room and their well-being there is a tangible difference. This supports getting the right resource, and this will happen over time. We are going in the right direction. The problem is not unique to Bedfordshire, it is a national pressure in policing. Sometimes we are seen to be the last agency resort, whereas ordinarily we might not be the best place to receive those calls. We are prioritising, and equally the uplift of Officers this year.

FA asked for clarification regarding calls that are made to the Police, regarding Mental Health (999 / 101 calls).

TR explained that in July 13,000 and August 12,000 calls this year – a record number. Regarding Mental Health calls there is a rising demand on public services and since post COVID. That is a system challenge however, we do have a Mental Health Practitioner that sits in the Control Room to support. We are committed to Mental Health Street Triage, along with Mental Health Practitioners and the Ambulance service. There is a gap in Mental Health provision and this overflows to policing as the agency of last resort.

FA stated that a meeting is scheduled with the Local Authorities and London Health Foundation Trust regarding Mental Health provision and how to alleviate the burden on each other and to support the public who may have a mental health crisis. FA to update following the meeting.

FA what is the force doing about the retention of Officers?

SB stated that 310 Student Officers currently and looking to increase, moving forwards.



We have regular meetings and listen to the Student Officers. It is important that we provide a service with a system internally that supports them, in both their skills, experience and wellbeing.

We have made subtle changes to our operating model to bring together our Response Investigation Team and our Response Function and they will become patrol teams.

A student hub is starting on the 3rd October, with a focus on the students. The hub will be made up of dedicated resources including an Inspector, Sergeants, and Tutor Constables. Students will spend time in the hub and tutored in line with the patrol team along with the flexibility to gain skills and experience required.

Once out of that environment, students will join the patrol teams and spend the rest of their time in that area, other than shortened attachments which fall in line with their academic requirements. They will work within a patrol team and only leave to support their ongoing learning.

FA what duties will they be expected to do?

SB confirmed that this is similar to the patrol teams. Able to respond to incidents, investigate crime and get core skills in foot patrol and high harm hot spot areas. This will give them exposure to policing.

FA commented that he is looking forward to seeing how the student hub unfolds and the outcomes.

TR stated that with a force of 1400 officers, 400 are going to be students. That is a big proportion, so we have had to make this change to enable their journey into policing to be successful. There is an opportunity to increase visible policing in certain areas of our community where I suggest the community would welcome that. Other changes have been necessary to free up the resource, and hopefully this will help students to be successful as substantive officers in due course.

FA Exits the meeting and hands over the Chair to CE Anna Villette.

AV Agenda change – Move to 9.1 and move 10.1 to the next meeting with a brief update on 10.2.

12 – NEXT AGENDA:

AV Asked for Items for the October Meeting

- a) To update people on the Violence against Women and Girls action plan and the various strands of work within the Force and the OPCC and with our colleagues in our partner agencies.

b) A VCOP Compliance paper – SB confirms this as an agenda item.

Note - SB went on to say that the Force are raising awareness regarding male violence against women and girls. We would like to include this as an agenda item for next month. AV Suggested this is good to discuss and why this is so important to the Force, drawing on some of the data and case studies.

AV In part 1 of the meeting we proposed bringing everyone up to speed regarding the Race Action Plan. There has been a lot of work at National level with Force. Whilst we have a couple of questions, we can roll these forward to the next meeting.

c) Race Action Plan Update

AV explained that there is one final issue to reflect on – precept deliverables (which is included in the Published part of the Meeting). At this time of year, we look back and forwards. Points suggested for the October agenda that the Commissioner would like covered.

The increase in precept means that the PCC can secure funding for:

- *72 Additional police officers to strengthen the frontline*
- *Additional resources in the rural crime team*
- *Improving the way 101 and 999 calls are answered*
- *Continuing to prioritise drug-related serious organised crime*
- *Increasing our victim engagement officers to support victims of rape, sexual offences and domestic abuse*
- *Investment in the Professional Standards Department, to improve vetting and ensure the highest standards of professional behaviour*
- *Investment in the use of low and zero emission vehicles*

AOB

AV asked if there was any other business.

TR two things. Regarding the Control Room. The reason we wrestle with vacancies is that people who work in the Control Room leave to join the Police, which is a good thing.

TR went on to say that it is the Chief Constable Garry Forsyth's last day in the Force and it is important to reflect on and record formally his service that he has provided to Bedfordshire Police. It is a better place than when he started as Chief Constable 3 years ago. I am sure the Commissioner would want us to give thanks for his service to the Public of Bedfordshire. He will be sorely missed by Officers and Staff.

AV Agreed with TR and stated that the Commissioner will echo what has been said.

End of meeting.

