

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

30th SEPTEMBER 2021

Attending:	Festus Akinbusoye, Police Crime Commissioner (FA)
	Clare Kelly, Chief Executive (CK)
	Trevor Rodenhurst, Deputy Chief Constable (TR)
	Gavin Chambers, CFO for the OPCC (GC)
	Sharn Basra, Assistant Chief Constable (SB)
	Madelyn Doggrell, Staff Officer DCC (MD)
	Rachel Glendenning, Staff Officer (RG)
	Gemma McCormack, PA to PCC and Chief Executive (GMc)

PUBLIC SECTION

FA welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from the Chief Constable, Garry Forsyth. FA explained that the first part of this meeting was closed for confidentiality due to the nature of some of the subjects that were discussed and this part of the meeting is being live streamed for the public to view.

ITEM 9: OPCC UPDATES

Police and Crime Plan, 100-day summary and Year One plan:

FA discussed updates around the Police and Crime Plan. Some of the highlights for me from the last 100 days are some of the investments that have been put into the Cyber Team where they have been sent out to investigate cybercrimes using the dedicated vans, they have been doing a lot of good work in terms of clearing up the back log in terms of cyber related crimes. The Community Policing Plan which was established in May/June 2021, that is going really well and I am very pleased with the updates with the Community Policing Teams work right across the County. Overall there has been some really positive things happening; the Summer of Fun which we organised had about 500 young people taking part in the boxing and martial arts activities across Bedfordshire, there were 22 sessions held over a 3-week period and we have received some very positive feedback from parents.

CK updated that the PCC's plans for the next few months feature five key areas;

Funding model for 22/23 – that model is currently open and closes on the October 15th 2021. With that plan the Commissioner is going to close that gap on the postcode lottery that we have with domestic abuse services across the County, it will become a fair service for everyone. It also includes support for sexual abuse and counselling support. At this time in Bedfordshire there is a significant wait for any form of counselling service and we know that in terms of crime, that can be very detrimental if people don't get help early on.

Working with Community Policing Teams – They have opened up their Community Meetings with the OPCC and we go together and listen to priorities set by local people, we then go back on the Days of Action and we have 4 of those planned over the next two months.

Technological support for people to get access to their crimes – we are starting that work as well as engaging with the National programme that is ongoing in Policing.

Victim referrals – they have gone down and we know that we have the resource to support more people, we need to get this message out that there is support there for them.

Progress we are making with the Police Partnership Trust Charity – We have worked with the Local Authorities for a long time on getting the right level of support, we are now working with small Councils, Parish Councils and Wards on getting more established support.

ITEM 10: COMMUNITY POLICING

10.1 Community Policing Model Establishment Update:

SB updated that there is no change this month, which is a good news story as we are still at 63 Police Constables against the Establishment of 67, so we haven't lost any. The good news is that the recruitment for those outstanding posts is ongoing. FA asked for clarification on which areas the vacancies are in? SB advised that there are 2 in Luton, 1 in Leighton Buzzard but did not have the information on where the 4th vacancy is. CK advised that our only concern would be that we are still counting the PC's who are currently acting as Sergeants in those numbers which is 4, then the Police Now which is 9, is the reality different to that?

TR advised that we are treating the Police Now as part of our numbers, we can see how the Force is going to grow over and its sending reassuring messages to the public about where we are now and where we are going to be. That is something we can bring back in due course but at the moment we are considering the Police Now as the overall numbers and will continue to do so as they are part of the community teams.

FA asked when the Police Now Students finish their policing in the community how will that gap be filled? TR advised that we will replace with Police Now and not community numbers. FA advised that the reason for asking is to ensure that the numbers in the teams will no diminish if the Police Now students move on to other teams. TR advised that the Students do a 'fantastic job and are an incredible asset'. At the moment they are within those numbers in those teams and they are delivering community policing. TR confirmed that the CC is committed to maintaining those numbers and equally we have to balance that. We have maintained the same number and we are recruiting which is all going in the right direction. FA asked about the PCSO numbers, CK advised that they are included in it but suggested that it could be displayed differently. We answer to the Police and Crime Panel who will ask us for this information. TR advised that we could include Community Cohesion Resources as there are Officers in Specialist roles which would be important for the public to know.

FA asked in terms of employment and what the Community Teams focus on doing, what are they tasked with etc. How much of their time has been dedicated to community policing work? SB advised that the aspiration for the Community Teams is for them to know their area and that they are sighted as to what is happening in the area. They might not be able to tackle an OCG on their own but it is important for them to know that there is an OCG in that area.

SB shared about Operation Primrose and said that it is a huge success story in terms of community policing. Within the Bedford area Tavistock Street in particular was highlighted by residents and businesses that it was an area of concern for the local community. Through our internal mechanisms it came into the Force Tasking arena and together with Bedford Borough Council we had a combined wider approach at tackling that. It is still ongoing but we have had some huge success that we want to build upon and the latest update I have is 85% of businesses in that area have said Street drinking in the area has reduced and 71% said that begging

has reduced. Some did say however that they seem to have moved in and around the streets to after 7pm so we adjusted our response and patrol to counter balance that. From June to September 2020 – 93 calls were received in relation to street drinking and anti-social behaviour, that has reduced to 65% this year and again last year, 54 crimes were reported and this year there has been a 2% reduction. We have excellent support from our Partners and Charitable organisation who work with us.

TR advised that in terms of the community team working in those areas problem solving, if they can't resolve it on their own they are supported by the Force with other/additional resources.

FA expressed his thanks to all of the Officers and staff who have been involved in Operation Primrose.

FA –shared that Luton town centre has issues with aggressive begging, street drinking and drug use. Could this be replicated in that area. SB explained that at the moment, if the local Inspector for that area doesn't feel that can tackle these issues on their own they will link into Force Resource and Tasking to provide that support.

FA commended the extra visibility and presence across the county lately, this has been really positive to see the great feedback some of the residents and making in response to the Officers doing foot patrols. FA asked if we have any plans to expand this and improve this. TR advised that by using the social media academy this will help to amplify the awareness and is making residents aware. FA said that he'd had a meeting with some Councillors in Great Denham recently and they asked if the Parish and Town Councillors could be made aware of when Officers might be patrolling in their local areas so that if they wanted to help or share information that could be done. TR agreed that this is something we can ask the community teams to work on but sometimes we don't want to advertise that we are there but we can definitely pass that information on to them. SB advised that as part of our community reach we have 'Have Your Say Days' where the community teams will go door knocking on people's doors and asking them about some of their local priorities and concerns. Mohammed Yasin has joined the teams on a number of occasions to be part of that door knocking group. TR advised that we have a dedicated Chief Inspector in each Local Authority area and that conversation should be happening regularly.

Action Redesign the layout of the community numbers document to not include police now, and to include community cohesion in main paper.

ITEM 11: EFFECTIVENESS

11.1 Victims Needs Analysis:

CK advised that there are 20 main points of action that we needed to do with the Force around just improving our levels of victim care and she wanted to raise to the Board today around the wider culture piece under priority one. There was a culture board when this was first introduced and this has now gone, we just wanted to reconvey that the Force is still happy to be taking VNA actions amongst the work they are doing around culture and the importance around the focus on supporting the victim as well as having to do everything else that Officers have to juggle, managing risk, managing data, it is still up there as a priority.

TR advised that the victim and witness board should be looking at that and bringing any issues to the Force's attention. I don't think we need a Culture Board as we have already come a step forward from that. CK understood but still wanted commitment to the VNA which the Force gave.

11.2 Signpost Update:

CK advised that unfortunately we are back down to half capacity due to low referrals, how do we bridge that, they have been doing some great work and Officers have been going out with Signpost but the more that we can do in that area would be great.

TR advised that we need to be checking that we are completing our process, there are a lot of priorities but they just need to be reaffirmed particularly as the organisation has a high level of new people coming in and finding their way.

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

SB updated that due to staffing issues we could not conduct any surveys in August but advised that the automated service will start in the new year.

In August we had 26 reports of dissatisfaction and 3/26 were referred to our professional standards department for further review, 4/26 related to domestic abuse and each of those is picked up by DA Strategic Board but amongst those 26 reports of dissatisfaction the most common theme was 6 – 8 in terms of communication and language, this is going to be linked in to 'being compassionate' and listening to and understanding victims. SB advised that he will be reported on the monthly figures during each Strat Board.

CK advised that we are working with the Force regarding next steps on the VCOP dissatisfaction and we don't know the number, but we are working with the Force and we should hopefully start to see any issues or trends that come with it.

11.4 Police Data trends including stop and search breakdown:

SB explained that the data trends are in two parts, the first part we have covered in terms of the performance reporting, the second part is in relation to Stop and Search which is done quarterly so will have quarter two data at next month Strat Board.

11.5 & 11.6 Recruitment and Retention:

PW reported that the target for the Police uplift for 2021/2022 is 1,384 Officers, our forecast is at end of year will be 1,438, we are currently at 1,372. In terms of PCSO's we have an intake coming in at the end of October which will take us over our establishment and will take us through until the next intake in February/March 2022.

The Black and Minority Ethnic take up is currently at 16% but more work is needed to get it up to 20%, these are applicants who are currently going through pre-employment checks. FA advised that he has seen that there has been a massive drop in terms of vetting. PW advised that there is a lot of work going on to understand why this is the case. FA said that if there are any other reasons than the standard of the quality or calibre that we are aware of, I just want to be sure we are looking into this and trying to address it. PW shared that our head of workforce will have a monthly meeting with vetting and will look at all those people in vetting

Attrition, we have seen an improvement in the number of people leaving the organisation, particularly Officers, is less than in previous years. We are doing some work now with those on 2 – 5 years' service. In August the number of Officers who left is 15 which is really high - 8 retired, so that puts that number quite low.

In terms of Police staff we have seen a peak in July/August in terms of those who have left, what is encouraging is that we now know why they left and it is useful to know that the majority of those were around career aspiration and lifestyle changes. The issue we have around that is we haven't got a process to capture

that information centrally so it is ad-hoc information at the moment. FA asked are we still on track to have this data by January? PW confirmed we are.

CK queried regarding recruitment, we have some concerns around the data, I note the small change in percentage is low but in that area a small percentage means 20 – 30 people. In paper 11.5 it says that representation is currently just over 10% but at the end paper 15 says 9.3%. To get to 11% you would need 69 extra people coming in to meet that but in the August intake there is only 1, we would need 29 from BAME to get to 11% representation. How are we going to get to that 69 and why are we so confident about it? PW queried where it states 69 people. CK clarified from the report it reads 'we would need 69 people to be from a black/Asian/ethnic minority background to get to 11% representation overall. PW what we are saying is we are increasing our representation within the organisation. It says approximately 10% and we are 9.5% at the moment. In terms of the pool we have 4 intakes left, 16% which is 3 at each intake. Further work is required to get to the 20%. CK how do we change the 45? PW, the 45 will be the 45 and we will still have enough to include 3 in every intake. CK advised that we have achieved 11% in the past, PW advised that 10% is the target for year end. TR advised that the 11% is where it rounded up from 10.5%, when we get to April we are still going recruiting. CK explained that we would be starting from a lower number looking at the figures we have here, the overall rate would then be lower, the pool needs to be bigger now to have less of an impact later down the line. PW advised that this is the pool now, there will be another one for the intakes for the year 2022/2023. FA said that it would be good to see year on year that we are having some increments and I am interested in seeing the trajectory of our travel and that actively this is something we are trying to stay on top of. There is disparity in terms of retention rates, do we know why this is the case within the Force? PW advised that at the moment we are seeing disproportionate in terms of leavers. The general drive around leaving is the job itself, some are realising how demanding the job is and the NVQ on top of the job, there is some work going on that those who are having those issues and raising them early are being supported. FA asked if there are any differences on those leaving between the white British Officers and the non-white British, PW advised there are none that we are seeing at this time. All were in agreement that we want better representation across Bedfordshire.

12: VOICE OF THE PUBLIC

12.1 Issues Raised to the OPCC (File Quality, Tutors and Out of Court Disposals):

FA advised that he wanted to raise some of the areas that have been brought to his attention and file quality is one of them. I have founded recently that we have cases where case files have been returned by CPS to Bedfordshire Police for different reasons and I want to know what is being done to address this? Every time a case file has been returned it means that justice has been delayed for a victim of crime.

TR advised that there is caution with some of the data. We are going to be getting E-Guidance on what we measure so that it is more effective in assessing our performance across Policing. First triage, if there is a box not ticked that says not all of the witness statements are in the file, this then goes in the rejection category of that particular recording. Actually, maybe there is one witness statement missing that is fully articulated within the report with a narrative explaining this person was unwilling to co-operate however all of the information we need is actually included within the case file. On current measures that will not pass that test. Last month we recorded 9 which were returned which is very low compared to where we were in March 2021. We are about to put in place 10 staff in the file quality team in November 2021, that will give us a very good level of quality assurance. The recruitment process is ongoing.

PCC advised that in terms of Tutors, there are quite a lot of new intakes coming in which is great news. I am mindful that we are expecting a lot from our new recruits and I want to ensure the Tutors and new recruits are getting the right support. TR advised that they are all now attending 3 day refresher training. The current

plans for the future is we are looking at new tutors for the programme, Q&A sessions starting for all supervisors, early identification of the first intake and weekly drop in sessions for the tutors. FA asked how will this change with the PQF? TR advised that we have smaller numbers and therefore we can invest more time and support.

Out of Court Disposals – FA queried the next steps. SB updated that there are different elements to this, we have a dedicate co-ordinator who pulls all of this together and works within the File Reporting Team, we went live with a new process at the start of this month covering the different elements. We need to give time to embed and then we can report in the monthly performance framework. FA asked what is the overall objective? SB advised If we can avoid putting people through the criminal justice process the better. There are a number of cases where people come into the system and then there is no further action. A huge piece of work that is being led by DCS Dee Perkins is within the Criminal Justice System. TR said that a lot of these individuals have an issue in their life that they need support with such at drugs/alcohol addiction and with some help they won't have to go back into support services again. SB advised that so far this year there have been 48.

13: VERU

13.1 VERU Monthly Performance:

SB updated that in August there were only 8 referrals that came through to the VERU, 65 open cases for the unit, the focus is working with A&E staff and kickstarting the schools project.

FA thanked Officers who have been liaising with safeguarding staff at Denbigh school, the staff there have reported how well they have been supporting them.

ITEM 14 NEXT AGENDA

Item 15

No PSD data supplied

Action: DCC to work with PSD to supply the data for October

Items for Next Meeting:

Retention Piece

Response Teams

Date of Next Meeting:

21st October 2021