



**POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR BEDFORDSHIRE  
DELIVERY AND BEATING CRIME MINUTES – PART 2**

**25<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

<b>Attending:</b>	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)
	Leanne Friel, Communication Officer – OPCC (LF)
	Gemma McCormack, Executive Assistant – OPCC (GN)

<b>ITEM 9 – OPCC UPDATES</b>
<b>9.1 PCC Updates</b>
<p>FA welcomed everyone to the open section of the meeting and noted apologies from Gavin Chambers, OPCC and Madelyn Doggrell, Force.</p> <p>FA expressed everyone’s thoughts and prayers to the officer who is still in hospital following the incident last Thursday. GF updated that the officer is currently in Intensive Care in a serious condition, but he is stable. The Force is very closely aligned to his family at this moment in time and we are doing everything we can to support the officer’s family and colleagues and we will continue to do so.</p> <p>FA updated that there has been some very good news in terms of the HMIC inspection in that Bedfordshire Police is the first Police Force in the country to get an outstanding rating in terms of how well it is managing offenders. GF advised the full report is available online at the HMICFRS website. One of the things they talk about is that we very clearly understand and can demonstrate the cost saving interventions we make with prolific offenders and people who are repeat offenders in particular around burglary and domestic abuse, the cost saving to the wider criminal justice system is significant as a result of the work we do and has been a key contributory factor in then determining we are the first Force in the country to be outstanding.</p> <p>GF shared that the way HMIC have calculated the categorisation for outstanding is that they have looked at a range of different functions, so both sex offenders and our management of sex offenders through our process, but also our high risk and repeat offenders such as domestic abuse offenders,</p>



burglary offenders but also our utilisation of digital forensics which they describe as noticeable practise and for other Forces around the country to come and have a look at. With all of those combined go together to form the outstanding that we have received. FA advised that it is nice to see the journey the Force has been on over the past couple of years and gives a lot of credit to the Exec Team and the whole Force for the fantastic work they have been doing.

FA asked in regard to the areas that have stated 'Requires Improvements'? GF reiterated that whilst we do as a Force appreciate the recognition, it is genuine recognition for the officers and staff who have worked so hard over the years and it is satisfying as it is a sustained trajectory of continued improvement and we are confident that trajectory into the future with the right level of investment. There are two areas that require improvement, these are the areas however that we had told HMIC about when they came to visit about so we knew about them in advance and we already have work in place to address those. It is fair to say that there are very few Forces that wont have any areas of requiring improvement through the inspection cycle. It is not entirely unexpected and is a reflection of the challenges we have to constantly reassess the elements of change and varied demand that come in on a regular basis. We are alive to those issues and have work planned in both the supervisory investigation which is increasing our supervisors and being explicit with the requirements that we need them to do. In terms of the contact and call handling element, we have a detailed programme of improvement in place which we have had for some time now and are getting to the point where we have just finalised the final consultation, so will be getting to the point of implementation. It will take some time to work through, but we are confident we have got the right action in place to address those concerns.

FA updated regarding the Custody Suite, which is a £20 Million project and has now been completed on time and on budget. This is now open, the cells are in use and some teams have relocated to this building. GF agreed that it is a tremendous facility and has been in use since day one of it opening. This is not an extravagance but a necessary piece of expenditure to have for the facility to match the level of professionalism.

## **9.2 Force Activity Against the Police and Crime Plan**

TR shared that this has been discussed at the past few meetings for a baseline assessment to be shared today of our work against the Police and Crime Plan. TR provided a report which gives an honest and fair assessment of where we think we are. TR discussed the priority areas of the Police and Crime Plan;

### **Priority 1: Investment in community-based and community led policing for urban and rural areas.**

Organisational theme 1: Build upon existing partnerships and community relationships to keep Beds safe.

- The Force's community policing model comprises 67 constables who engage with communities, understand and respond to local concerns and priorities.
- The Force's Community Cohesion Team's engagement with extensive community contacts is recognised at national awards.



- The Community Cohesion Team's weekly force wide community tension summary is recognised as national good practice. As at February 2022 tensions for all recorded issues were graded as normal or near normal.
- Separate IAGs for Luton and Bedfordshire are consulted regularly to assess community tensions. An IAG member was actively involved in the Force's Covid-19 governance meetings, reporting on actual and potential community tensions related to the Pandemic.
- The HMICFRS PEEL inspection report published in April 2022 strongly recognised Force and partner engagement with local groups, scrutiny panels and IAGs.
- Social media-based engagement started during the Pandemic is continuing, alongside traditional engagement.
- 999 and 101 calls continue at high levels, with 999 service levels remaining below the local target to answer 90% within 10 seconds. Staff attrition in the Force Contact Centre remains high and liaison with Force investigators raises internal Contact Centre demands. The call back system is mitigating some call demands.
- Continuing performance issues with attendance time at immediate calls. Response officers are managing substantial demands from other teams. Capability limits (e.g. in response driver trained PCs) restrict response capacity. Assigned crimes and response abstractions are restricting response capacity.

## **Priority 2: Recruitment and retention of police officers**

Organisational theme 2: Operate a safe, fair and caring workplace that focusses on well-being and delivers a professional policing service.

- Engagement governance and programmes are well embedded and recognised in the HMICFRS PEEL inspection report published in April 2022. Be You expresses the Force commitment to its workforce.
- Culture workshops and focus groups engage substantial workforce numbers.
- Health and wellbeing services and programmes are provided through the Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator, two Health and Wellbeing Supporters, volunteer peer supporters (20 at January 2022) and the BCH Occupational Health Team.
- The nine-point plan, endorsed by the Chief Constable and local Police Federation and UNISON branches, ensures effective management of workforce assaults.
- Under Maggie's Law anyone assaulted while on duty is offered contact from a Force Executive member to check their welfare and offer necessary support.
- An officer and staff safety review panel reviews a sample of assaults every other month to extract learning, focusing on repeat victimisation.
- A BCH Health and Safety follow up internal audit (reported in November 2020) gave substantial assurance on the effectiveness of controls, noting effective governance, reporting, risk assessments, training and local boards.

Organisational theme 4: Attract, recruit, retain and develop a diverse and skilled workforce that is representative of our communities.

- The Force is delivering planned police officer recruitment, including Uplift, receiving positive



comment in the HMICFRS 2022 PEEL inspection report.

- 17.8% of officer recruitment cohorts in 2021/22 are from BAME backgrounds (10.3% in 2020/21).
- Workforce representation has improved. At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021, 10.2% of officers were BAME (local population of 23%), 37.9% female and 21.0% had a disability.
- The Exit Interview process captures some understanding of reasons for leaving.
- Retention discussions started in spring 2020 with student officers identified as at risk of leaving. These discussions help to retain some potential leavers.

The Force is seeking to improve its support across different workforce diversities and to fully understand current workforce skills and future capability requirements.

### **Priority 3 – Tackling the Causes of Crime and Breaking the Cycle of Re-Offending:**

Reduce crime and protect people from harm.

- The Force is seeking greater consistency and effectiveness in its established processes for risk assessing calls for service, identifying high demand callers and locations, and for identifying and safeguarding vulnerable and repeat victims.
- Operational objective 3: Improve the management of offenders.
- Offender management received an outstanding judgement in the 2022 PEEL inspection report.
- The Force uses nationally recognised risk assessment tools to manage high risk offenders.
- The year-end Integrated Offender Management report shows improved and sustained high performance.

### **Priority 4: Placing residents and victims at centre of policing priorities.**

Operational objective 2: Improve the victim experience.

- The HMICFRS 2022 PEEL inspection report highlights positive local confidence.
- Regular positive feedback is received from local authorities and community leaders on community policing outcomes and engagement.
- The Force's Community Cohesion Team's engagement with extensive community contacts is recognised at national awards.
- The Force is seeking to improve its understanding of the victim experience across all service areas, including through the Victim Care Team and 'Voice of the Victim'.
- Independent scrutiny panels for both Stop and Search and Use of Force comprising trained members of the public review Force processes, including viewing officers' body worn video footage. The HMICFRS PEEL inspection report records that the Force's approach to stop and search is open and effective and that the Force understands and improves the way it uses force.
- An independent scrutiny panel is in place to review the BCH Professional Standards Department.



## **Priority 5: Multi-agency approaches to community safety and crime reduction.**

Organisational theme 1: Build upon existing partnerships and community relationships to keep Beds safe.

- Extensive police and partnership community engagement meetings are running across Bedfordshire and in each local authority area.
- Community safety partnership representatives attend the Force's daily tasking meetings.
- Quarterly neighbourhood watch strategic meetings bring together the chairs for all three local authority areas to discuss crime prevention opportunities and practice.
- The Community Cohesion Team's weekly force wide community tension summary is recognised as national good practice. As at February 2022 tensions for all recorded issues were graded as normal or near normal.
- Separate IAGs for Luton and Bedfordshire are consulted regularly to assess community tensions.

Operational objective1: Reduce crime and protect people from harm.

- The HMICFRS 2022 PEEL inspection report give positive assessment of problem-solving initiatives.
- Community policing officers create Joint Action Groups with partners and community members to assist in multi-dimensional problem solving.
- Officers attend each local authority multi-agency safeguarding hub every day, ensuring multi-agency collaboration of those at most need of safeguarding.

The Force is seeking greater consistency and effectiveness in its established processes for identifying high demand callers and locations, and for identifying and safeguarding vulnerable and repeat victims.

## **Priority 6: Transparency and open communications.**

Organisational theme 5: Promote inclusivity through our 'Be You' culture, to support a policing service for all.

- The HMICFRS PEEL inspection report published in April 2022 commented positively on the Force's regular ongoing Be You messaging and communication.
- A programme of cultural intelligence training being delivered to senior leaders across the Force in recognition that Force culture (for example perception of institutional racism) needs to improve.
- All members of the workforce can provide feedback through regular 'Ask the Exec' and 'Your Voice Matters' engagement. Feedback is always requested during and after Senior Officer engagement events.
- The Your Voice Matters Engagement and Wellbeing Staff Survey completed in December 2020 found improved scores for both officers and staff for Perceived Organisational Support and Supportive Leadership.
- Regular Executive sessions are held on leadership and culture.
- Independent scrutiny panels for both Stop and Search and Use of Force comprising trained



members of the public review Force processes, including viewing officers' body worn video footage. The HMICFRS PEEL inspection report records that the Force's approach to stop and search is open and effective and that the Force understands and improves the way it uses force.

An independent scrutiny panel is in place to review the BCH Professional Standards Department.

### **Priority 7: National contributions.**

Organisational theme 1: Build upon existing partnerships and community relationships to keep Beds safe.

No additional headlines.

FA asked regarding Priority 1, what are the Execs thoughts in relation to the demand for this service? GF agreed that there is competing demand but also recognises that there needs to be a dedication from officer availability. SB advised out of 18 established posts covering this area, we currently have 14. There are enquiry offices which are open in Bedford and Luton, in other areas where there were enquiry offices, a lot of the time these would only see 2 customers per day and therefore was not financially viable. There have been days where we have had to temporarily close due to staff shortages, but we have filled these with officers to make sure we are not having to close these sites completely on the occasions where they are closed there is still an intercom facility. GF advised we are not looking to grow any front counter capability and that it will not be included as part of the estates review. GF explained having the enquiry office in the reasonably populated areas are more beneficial. There are lots of ways to communicate, in person, email, telephone and on the website. A lot of things done by the enquiry office can now be completed via Single Online at home. FA explained that he would want to see more locations across the county that people can walk up to but the costs for these need to be justified.

PW advised the Estates Review Report will be available for the next Delivery Board Meeting but will not be detailed right down to the enquiry office. PW shared that this will give information around the population changes, the economy etc so that we can use this information to determine whether there is a need for increase or not. FA asked if there is not a need for expansion of the enquiry desks would that be because the footfall is going down and people don't use it, what would be the reason for not expanding? GF updated that when the footfall has been assessed previously we were maintaining an office location with 2 two members of staff who dealt with two enquiries across the course of a whole day. That is not an efficient use of those resources and centering those in a reasonably populated location such as Kempston and Luton, these can still be easily accessed whether it is in person, online or via the telephone without having a local resource in each area. FA agreed he understands and the compelling argument is the footfall.



## **ITEM 10 – COMMUNITY POLICING**

### **10.1 Community Policing Model Establishment update**

FA agreed it is good to see the numbers maintained in this area and advised in the closed section we looked at the areas of the greatest demand. FA shared what was made clear was that community policing is one of the best resourced areas of Bedfordshire Police at the moment and they are carrying the least vacancies. FA asked in relation to the deployment of these officers what continues to be the main taskings that they have been given? GF shared that the main ethos is local officers understanding the main areas that they police and they are dealing with the problems that originate from the local communities. That is driven in part by the Force Tactical and Co-Ordination Process where we assess what the locality issues are and then are also driven by the Local Priority Setting Meetings which are attended by residents who express what their concerns are. We want our Neighbourhood Officers to work in a way that provides long term sustainable approaches and working in partnership with local agencies and partnerships areas that they Police, we want officers to work on long term sustainable problem solving processes. FA advised that not all teams have been adding their Priority Setting Meeting dates online. GF advised these meetings are planned at least 3 months in advance and will ensure that all teams are publishing these dates.

PW advised in regards to the community policing model, we will always look to hold a maximum 5% vacancy level on community policing which is around 3 – 4 Officers. The establishment is 66/67 with 1 vacancy being in Luton. There has been some fluctuation as some Officers have been released to the RPU (Roads Policing Unit) which has been an area of pressure but then we have employed others into the Community Policing Team.

PW updated in relation to PCSO's and advised that we are right on establishment at the moment.

TR confirmed that we are above National average at the moment in terms of our community officer functions.

**Action: Community Policing to be add to next Agenda.**

## **ITEM 11 – VOICE OF THE PUBLIC**

### **11.1 Issues Raised to the PCC:**

FA shared that this is the section where he raises questions to the Force Exec that he has received from members of the public.

FA advised that the Enquiry Office was temporarily closed last week and asked why this was? SB shared that this was due to a shortfall in staff on that particular day and officers dealing with an emergency situation so this was only temporary.



Is there an update on where we are with Greyfriars? PW updated that we were waiting from BBC to look at legal obligations before full planning permission can be granted. We had a meeting about this today and we have to make some small tweaks which will go back to them today, if they are content with those tweaks we should only be around 2 weeks away from having full planning consent. PW advised this will be included with the estates report for next month.

Police Staff and Officer numbers in the Force Control Room, where are we with that? SB advised in total the establishment within there is 180 staff and Officers, at the moment we have 32 vacancies. We have already had one officer started, another officer starts one week later and then another officer 4 weeks after that. In addition to that we have 7 staff members currently going through vetting and we have just recently completed our recruitment process that ran between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> April 2022 and that advert was seen by over 150,000 people, 186 have gone through to the recruitment company and are through to the next stage of recruitment.

FA asked how the new call handling system has been working? SB advised that despite the resourcing challenges that we have faced within there, since March we have seen improvements across the board. When people call in with an emergency we are focussing on 999 calls, we have seen improvements in receipt from the call coming in to the radio agent, significant improvement in radio agent to dispatch and then improvement in dispatch to attendance.

What is being done to deal with neighbourhood crime and is this something that is going up or down? SB advised neighbourhood crime includes personal robbery, residential burglary, theft from motor vehicle, theft of motor vehicle and theft from person. The baseline data pre COVID captured on a digital baseline the Home Office use is from July 2018 – June 2019 and what the Policing Minister wants to see is reductions in Neighbourhood crime. What is shown on the National Database is across all neighbourhood crime, in Bedfordshire over the last 12 months up to January 2022 there has been a 44% reduction across all neighbourhood crime. When this is broken down robbery has seen a 37% reduction, theft from person 46%, vehicle crime 39% and residential burglary 54%. This year compared to last year we saw 311 fewer victims of residential burglary, we have also seen improved performance in terms of investigations. We have a dedicated team who focus on this as this is one of those offences that our communities tell us cause them real harm. We have seen a real improvement in solved rate which sees us sitting 3<sup>rd</sup> Nationally. In terms of anti-social behaviour, this is part of our control strategy and our priorities going forward, we have always had this which is why our neighbourhood teams are so well resourced as they really focus on what is having an impact on their local communities.

How many do we have in the Special Constabulary and what is the plan to increase numbers? Is the CC still committed for the Specials to police their own communities? GF confirmed we are still recruiting Special Constables and is still committed to Specials policing their own communities. PW



confirmed we currently have 108 Special at the moment, which is 5 down from last month, unfortunately we had to let someone go, 1 has resigned and 3 were unable to commit to the role.

What is the Force Policy in terms of Transgender Officers completing strip search and if there are appropriate safeguards in place? For instance, if you have a female in Custody who does not want to be strip searched by a Transgender Officer what are the policies around that? GF advised that there is a really good NPCC policy which was published by the Lead DCC Julie Cook last year. TR shared that the Force policy has been updated to recognise the status of Transgender colleagues from the moment they transition to the point of which they present their gender for which they now identify. A transgender colleague's birth certificate or subjective discussions regarding how well their gender presentation matches their gender identity are not relevant to the equality protections enshrined in the Equality Act. So once a transgender colleague has transitioned, they will search persons of the same gender as their own lived gender.

However, it is recognised that some colleagues may have a gender identity that does not easily fit with the binary regime contemplated when PACE 1984 was enacted so in certain cases a discussion may be necessary with such a colleague to establish how they can participate in conducting searches and a conversation will be held sensitively at a suitably senior level, and, before the colleague is put in a position where they might be required to participate in searches.

FA asked does that mean a woman who is in custody with Bedfordshire Police and who is about to be strip searched by a transgender woman, can she say that she does not want to be strip searched by that officer? TR advised if someone made objections of that nature, then of course we would seek to comply with that person's wishes, it would not be any trouble for us to find a different person to do that if there is a good reason to do that. We are talking hypothetically as I don't believe we have any officers who are transgender, in a role where they could be doing this. FA stated that it may well be something that comes up at some point, and hopes the Force are ahead of the curve on that just in case it does happen.

## **12 – NEXT AGENDA:**

Estates Review and Greyfriars Update

Deep Dive into one of the Priority Areas.

**Next Meeting:** 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022