



\*\*\*Surrey Police Investigation Improvement Plan \*\*\*

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<b>AUTHOR:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	Alison Barlow
<b>Job Title:</b>	T/ACC Local Policing
<b>Telephone number:</b>	01483 632526
<b>Email address:</b>	Alison.barlow@surrey.pnn.police.uk



What are the Policing Principles?

- Accountability
- Fairness
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Leadership
- Objectivity
- Openness
- Respect
- Selflessness

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 As requested at the Police and Crime Panel in November 2020 this paper provides an overview of the strands of work being undertaken to improve the investigation of crime and solved rates in Surrey Police.

## 2. Background

- 2.1. Following his review of the Police and Crime Plan in May 2020, the PCC asked the Force to focus on three key areas one of which was that there were, "**more crimes solved**".
- 2.2. This is also reflected in the Commitments 2020/25 launched by the Chief Constable last year in which the Force has made a pledge to communities, not only to prevent crime and protect our communities, but to pursue offenders by completing "*high quality investigations to bring offenders to justice*".
- 2.3. Despite the challenges of the past year in dealing with the global pandemic and the impact on resourcing during the third wave of the virus, which has seen significantly increased numbers of staff testing positive or needing to self-isolate, the Force has continued in its efforts to improve the way it investigates and solves crime. The Force Performance Board, which is chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable (and attended by all senior leaders), is the governance structure which ensures that there is continual oversight of the Force's solved crime rate and that due focus is given where it is required.
- 2.4. Previous financial year to date performance (April 2020 – Mar 2021) shows that our overall solved rate (Total Notifiable Crime) was slightly higher than the same period the previous year with residential burglary, rape, robbery and adult abuse all showing performance improvement on last year.

## 3. Investigation Improvement Programme

- 3.1 Lead by a Detective Chief Superintendent and overseen by T/ACC Local Policing as Senior Responsible Officer, this is a comprehensive programme of work consisting of three separate projects all of which are interdependent; the introduction of an **Incident Review Team**, **Volume Crime Investigation Improvement Plan 2** and **Investigation Structure Review**.
- 3.2 **Incident Review Team** – following investment from Operation Uplift and precept funding the Force saw, on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020, the introduction of a new team of officers and staff into Contact Management who are responsible for dealing with/following up on slower time (grade 3) incidents over the phone or tasking them out for police attendance. Prior to the introduction of the Incident Review Team (IRT), all grade 3 incidents were directly tasked to Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) tying sergeants up for almost their entire shift as they reviewed each case making a decision as to whether further allocation to an officer was required or the incident should be filed. This hugely inefficient process meant that NPT sergeants were not undertaking their core role of supervising their team and NPT officers were often being unnecessarily tied up with an inappropriate workload.

The aspiration for the IRT was to deal more effectively with calls for service by the public and free up the capacity of NPT to focus more on their investigations and undertake proactive work and problem solving. Whilst early days, in that the team has only been in place for three months, the feedback from the frontline has been overwhelmingly positive. The IRT are now dealing with over 80% of the incidents which would ordinarily have been tasked to NPT and are identifying hidden crime. Whilst early days, and accepting that the country has been in lockdown since its implementation, the team have given NPT the increased capacity they need to give better focus to investigation and proactive tasks etc.

- 3.3 **Volume Crime Investigation Improvement 2** – this element of the overarching Investigation Improvement Plan is focussed on improving the capability of NPT staff when investigating volume crime and follows previous work undertaken in 2017. Whilst much progress has been made since then in terms of the knowledge and confidence of staff to investigate crimes, further work needs to be undertaken to embed this further. As part of Operation Uplift and precept investment a decision

has been made to introduce Neighbourhood Policing Investigation Teams (NPITs) on each of the three divisions who will be responsible for carrying an investigative workload, interviewing suspects in custody and completing court files. Consisting of a small group of dedicated PCs, Investigating Officers and lead by a Detective Sergeant the key strength of this team will be that officers from NPT will be seconded into NPITs on rotation for a given period of time so that they become proficient as investigators, interviewers and are able to produce court files of a high standard. This approach, based on best practice elsewhere, should see sustained improvement in volume crime investigative capability across the Force. The finer details of this piece of work remain in the planning phase with an aim to introduce NPITs in autumn 2021.

- 3.4 **Investigation Structure Review** – this project aims to ensure that the Force has the most appropriate workforce model to deal with more serious crime and specifically Adult Sexual Violence, Domestic Abuse and Stalking thereby giving the best possible service to victims. At the current time the Force has three Safeguarding Investigation Units (SIUs) who deal with medium and high risk domestic abuse, child abuse and offences involving vulnerable adults. For several years SIUs have faced significant challenges in detective numbers not meeting establishment along with heavy workloads often causing stress to the officers and staff working within them.

Following detailed analysis of demand, engagement with the workforce and scanning of practice in other forces a pilot testing a new concept of dedicated Child Abuse and Domestic Abuse teams with a separate CID team commenced on East Surrey on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021. This sees staff assigned to deal with the level of crime most appropriate to their skills, training and experience e.g. detectives dealing with child abuse and a mix of PCs, DCs and Investigating Officers dealing with Domestic Abuse. Early feedback thus far is that this new model is working well and rollout of the model to the remaining two divisions is planned for June 2021.

Other key pieces of work ongoing to support the commitment to improving the Force's investigative capability includes:

- 3.5 **Operation Spearhead** – a co-ordinated cross departmental/divisional operation overseen by T/ACC Local Policing with a tactical Crime Superintendent lead which focuses on residential burglary - both preventative activity and the targeting of offenders. With detailed data analysis undertaken by the Force's Problem Solving Team, bespoke, localised plans were put in place to address the seasonal spike in offences traditionally seen in the autumn/winter. Whilst the pandemic has clearly been a significant factor, this financial year we have seen a 43% reduction in residential burglary compared with the same period last year.
- 3.6 **Case File Quality** – improving the quality of cases going to court remains a focus for the Force and T/ACC Local Policing Chairs a joint Police/CPS File Quality Improvement Group which meets on a bi-monthly basis to improve the standard of court files – work which is supported by a detailed action plan. T/ACC Local Policing also chairs a recently established internal case file quality improvement group attended by Chief Inspectors across the Force which focuses on culture, training and supervision.

In the summer of 2020 the Criminal Justice Team underwent a change programme to introduce Case Review teams who provide an evidential file review pre-charge with the aim of improving performance and outcomes for victims at court. This along with a detailed performance scorecard allows managers to drill down to team and individual level providing good oversight of where development is required in the completion of case files. Whilst there is always work to do in this area, quality is improving with Surrey seeing its Magistrates Court conviction rate ranked 14<sup>th</sup> nationally (February 2021 data) with its Guilty Plea at first hearing rate ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>. In the Crown Court Surrey is ranked 12<sup>th</sup> nationally for its Crown Court conviction rate.

- 3.7 **Performance Inspectors** – Since the end of 2020 the three divisions have trialled a new post of a Performance Inspector responsible for driving volume crime investigation improvement within NPT teams. This includes providing one to one guidance to NPT sergeants on the supervision of crime and identifying areas needing specific focus. It has been agreed to fund these additional posts throughout the year 2021/22.

#### **4. Conclusion[s]**

Whilst the Force has faced unprecedented challenges over the last year with the Covid-19 pandemic it remains focussed on improving the rate of crimes it solves with significant work and investment underway in order to do so.

16

#### **5. Decision[s] Required**

**5.1.** None, this paper is for information only.