



SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

15 SEPTEMBER 2021

FEEDBACK ON PERFORMANCE MEETINGS BETWEEN THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER AND CHIEF CONSTABLE

INTRODUCTION

One of the main responsibilities of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is to hold the Chief Constable to account for delivery of the Police and Crime Plan. Lisa Townsend has set up a governance framework to discharge this duty. The main part of this framework is to hold six-weekly Performance Meetings where the Chief Constable reports on progress against the Police & Crime Plan and other strategic issues. This is supplemented by workshops and one to one discussions between the PCC and Chief Constable, and other senior officers, when required.

Every other performance meeting is webcast for the public and partners to view. The PCC chairs the meeting which is also attended by the Chief Executive and Treasurer from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). Other members of staff from the OPCC attend as required, depending on the agenda. The Chief Constable attends along with the Deputy Chief Constable and other force staff as required.

This report provides an update on the meetings that have been held and what has been discussed in order to demonstrate that arrangements for good governance and scrutiny are in place.

PERFORMANCE MEETINGS

Since the last report on performance meetings to the panel, one performance meeting has been held – 19th July 2021.

19 July 2021 - Private Meeting

Agenda items were:

- Performance Report
- Finance Report
- Police and Crime Plan Development
- National Policing Measures
- ICT Scrutiny
- Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls
- Covid Update

The Chief Constable (CC) presented the latest **performance report**. The CC reported that the force had shown great resilience during the pandemic, managing to keep resources whilst maintaining safe working practices. Self-isolation requirements were currently causing the force resource problems, specifically where there were clusters of isolation alerts and particularly impacting on response teams. Longer shifts had been brought in to assist with this. The PCC asked about the increase in referrals to Occupational Health. The CC advised that he sees this as a good thing as more people were reporting welfare concerns and seeking help.

In terms of public confidence, the latest survey showed Surrey at the 7th highest of police forces nationally. Whilst high, the CC aspired to be higher than this and was looking at the information to further understand and tackle local concerns.

In common with other forces, there had been an increase in 999 and non-emergency calls to the force. Average waiting times for 101 had increased to 4 minutes, due to volumes of demand and capacity to meet demand. Social media contact demand had also increased putting pressure on the same team of staff. There had also been an impact on response times where a police presence was required. The PCC requested a breakdown of days and time of day for 999 and 101 demand to understand the issue better. Victim satisfaction figures were remaining stable.

In terms of crime, the CC reported a reduction in burglary and knife crime offences. There had also been a reduction in reported child sexual abuse, coercive control stalking, however the CC felt this was a reduction in reporting rather than actual crime levels. The PCC asked about stalking in line with the continued rise in these figures and asked the CC whether enough support/resources were available for recording stalking offences. The CC remarked that there were now dedicated domestic abuse teams which meant more time was given to dealing with these offences. The CC advised that the force is in as good a position as they can be at the moment but if figures continue to rise then there could be a problem.

In terms of crimes solved, there was some good practice but solve rates weren't at the level the CC would like to see. Work was being done to recruit more detectives and to upskill neighbourhood investigation teams, which often have a young workforce. Surrey has one of the youngest police workforces, with an average age of 23.

The Force's Finance Director updated on the latest **Finance Report** for the year end. From a revenue perspective, there had been a £1.6m underspend for the year with the PCC already agreeing to the transfer of this to reserves. From a capital perspective, the force came in within budget, managed over a 2-year period. There were issues with slippage of ICT schemes and the new director of ICT had been tasked to look into this. Savings targets had been met and were planned to be met in 2021/22, but were expected to be at high required levels in future years to meet the budget gap. The PCC asked when all new officers and staff paid for from the precept would be in post and this information would be provided by the force. The total overtime for Covid was also requested by the Deputy PCC.

There was a discussion on the **Police and Crime Plan** which was planned to be sent to the the Police and Crime Panel in November for review. There is a lot more consultation to be done on this with the PCC not wanting to rush it and to ensure a wide range of views are reflected. There will be two phases of consultation; Phase 1 will see the PCC speaking with MPs and Deputy PCC meeting with local Councillors and other key stakeholders. The views of Victims' services and schools will also be sought and a series of thematic workshops held on subjects such as rural crime, sexual offences against women and mental health issues.

National Policing Measures have been introduced by the Government, with forces monitoring their local contribution. Regions are looking to apply some consistency around reporting and Surrey's lead analyst is from Hampshire. PCCs are also required to provide a narrative on the local contribution which will need to be put on the PCC website at the point at which the Police & Crime Plan is published.

A report was provided on the current **ICT strategy** and progress being made. The CC has introduced senior Police Officer leadership into this area and has a new ICT Director in place. In 2019/20 the Internal auditor gave the Force a limited audit opinion mainly due to issues arising out of IT audits. However due to steps taken to implement audit recommendations, the auditor has indicated that for 2020/21 a satisfactory audit opinion will be given. The new ICT Director was looking at the capacity required in ICT and will be developing a new ICT Strategy, which will link to the force's other strategies. The CC felt it was important that ICT assisted in the core business, such as detection of crime and customer relationships. The ICT strategy would come back to a future meeting.

Positive feedback had been received from the national inspection body regarding the force's work in tackling **Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)**. The CC reported that Surrey is one of the only forces nationally to have a VAWG strategy and is one of the highest in the country for the use of protection orders. The way Surrey are approaching coercive and controlling behaviours is ground-breaking with partners complimentary at all levels.

The continued impact of **Covid** on policing was discussed. The current operational impacts around resources for response and call handing had already been discussed. There was a wider impact on the Criminal Justice System as a whole, particularly court delays. This was impacting on demand in the Victim and Witness Care Unit and impacted on quality of evidence going to court as time goes on. The current levels of staff required to isolate was causing a stretch on resources and both the PCC and Chief took an action to speak to MPs about changing the requirements for police to isolate until rules changed on 16th August.

Planned future meetings are:

- 21 September - webcast meeting
- 16 November – private meeting
- 20 December – webcast meeting

RECOMMENDATION

That the Police and Crime Panel note the update on the PCC's Performance Meetings.

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