

SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

21 April 2022

PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY MEETINGS

1 SUMMARY

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 meetings where the Chief Constable formally 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 meeting is a private meeting to allow detailed scrutiny of resources and efficiency plans as well as sensitive performance issues. This is called a Resources and Efficiency Meeting.

Every other meeting is normally webcast for the public and partners to view and is focussed on performance and areas of particular public interest – called Accountability and Performance Meetings. The PCC chairs the meetings which are 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 to demonstrate that arrangements for good governance and scrutiny are in place.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Police and Crime Panel note the update on the Accountability Meetings.

3 DETAIL

Since the last report on performance meetings to the panel, one meeting has been held on 31 January 2022. As this latter meeting needed to be deferred due to staff absences, we are unable to report on outcomes to this panel meeting.

31 January 2022 – Public Accountability and Performance Meeting

This was the first meeting held by the PCC in the new style of accountability meetings. The meeting was shown live and available for viewing afterwards from the PCC's website. Shorter Youtube clips of the meeting covering specific topics were also made available for the public to view. The PCC focussed the meeting on asking questions of the Chief Constable of public interest, including some areas of scrutiny by residents in advance of the meetings.

The PCC is looking to continue this approach for public Accountability & Performance meetings, but make them more interactive (with the ability for the public to submit live questions) and with meetings being held during the evening when members of the public may be more likely to participate.

Agenda items were:

- Rural Crime
- Performance Report
- CCTV
- Surrey Police Budget
- Reducing Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy

The Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) provided an update on **rural crime** and the extra investment in policing resources. He highlighted three current trends of concern: theft of GPS systems from tractors by organised crime groups; livestock worrying; and poaching. Extra training has been given to call handlers to help with the response to these issues. There is also now a specialist rural Police and Crime Support Officer (PCSO) in each borough, who has enhanced training and works closely with local networks to tackle rural crime. They can be recognised by their green epaulettes. There are currently 2 specialist full time PCs, to be increased to 3 by Summer 2022, who are dedicated to rural crime in Surrey.

Under the item on **Performance**, the PCC asked about burglary detections as this was a concern raised in the media and by residents. The Chief Constable (CC) reported that Surrey continues to be the 4th safest county in England and Wales in terms of reported burglaries, and the safest county in the South East. There has been a marked decrease in reported incidents of burglary during the pandemic. However, work is underway to raise the current solve rate of 3.5%, through improving forensic and digital evidence gathering.

A new digital investigation support unit has been created to support officers in recovering digital evidence supporting investigative opportunities. The crime solved rate reflects the reduced opportunity during the pandemic for officers to visit and speak with perpetrators already in prison regarding further offences to be taken into consideration. Another factor is the low number of incidents making it more difficult to spot series and trends, which can lead to identification offenders. A force wide operation, Operation Falcon, is ongoing and it ensures closer scrutiny into investigative standards and principals, to constantly improve outcomes.

The PCC asked if an increase in residential burglary is expected as Covid restrictions reduce. The CC confirmed this is potentially the case, but officers continue to work extremely hard to target and arrest offenders and have seen a number of arrests

recently following a joint effort with surrounding forces. Practical steps residents can take to reduce their chances of becoming a victim of burglary include having a bin buddy, having a fully functioning burglar alarm and using automated home lighting when their home is empty. More information on this topic can be found on the Surrey Police website.

The PCC asked about **solve rates in knife crime** and the CC confirmed Surrey has the lowest rate of knife crime within the category of serious violent crimes in the South East, and that it is important to note that not every report of knife crime involves injury to the victim. The solve rate for knife crime is currently 1 in 5. Some knife crime is drug and County Lines related and Surrey Police specialist teams work with the Metropolitan Police to identify and arrest offenders. Surrey Police also works with Surrey County Council to reduce knife crime rates through preventative work in schools, to influence offenders and their peers.

In relation to **road casualties**, numbers were significantly reduced during the pandemic. However, the M25 remains one of Europe's most dangerous and busiest stretches of road and Surrey Police is working with the Highways Agency to tackle driving offences. Rural roads can also be extremely dangerous. In conjunction with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, the Surrey Police promotes "Safe Drive Stay Alive" and would encourage all residents, particularly new drivers, to follow this educational campaign.

The Surrey Police 5-year **CCTV strategy** will shortly be coming to an end and the PCC asked what will happen going forwards. The CC explained that CCTV was widely introduced in the 1990s and the level of system sophistication varies greatly throughout the County, as does the distribution of cameras. Town centre CCTV assists with the policing of events and the night-time economy as it allows resources to be directed to hotspots of crime quickly and provides critical evidence. Huge leaps in the technical range of CCTV makes this a good time to review and refresh the strategy to 2028 and beyond as next generation cameras will be able to carry out reactive and proactive facial recognition, and this is currently under discussion.

The CC presented the proposed **Surrey Police budget for 2022/23** and advised the last 10 years had seen significant financial pressure on police forces and levels of central government funding had not increased in that time scale. A recent survey conducted by the office of PCC showed that Surrey residents are broadly in favour of an increase in Council Tax for police to strengthen investigative resources and maintain neighbourhood and community policing teams. Over 50% of income Surrey Police currently receives comes from Council Tax and if the amount is not increased, Surrey residents may see a significant impact on service provided. The budget proposals formed part of the precept proposal which was going the Panel for its consideration.

The PCC asked about the force plans for **Reducing Violence Against Women and Girls** – an important part of the Police and Crime Plan. The CC confirmed Surrey Police is dedicated to delivering the 2-fold promise - to keep the county safe, and for it to feel safe. There are tools being introduced to help improve safety such as Safestreeets, a pilot service for the public to report areas in which they have felt unsafe due to a number of factors including environmental issues such as inadequate lighting, or physical issues such as being verbally abused.

Surrey Police has a unit dedicated to dealing with **high harm perpetrators** to reduce repeat offending, which has seen some success. A recent survey of survivors of domestic abuse shows confidence is currently at 89% satisfaction in police action.

Surrey is the **2nd safest county with regards to serious sexual offences**. Numbers of reported cases of coercive controlling behaviour and stalking are rising but this may in part be attributed to a new screening protocol for contact officers to more easily identify behaviour categorised as unwanted, fixated, escalating and repeated, and record it correctly.

The DCC reported that Surrey is one of the first forces to put in place a strategy around Violence against Women and Girls to try to address the wider loss of public confidence and put the victim at the centre of everything they do. Surrey Police have invested heavily in a specialist team of officers dealing with domestic abuse and team sizes will increase to keep pace with growing numbers of reports. The internal culture of Surrey Police is under constant scrutiny as Surrey Police recognises how officers and staff suspected of, or involved in, perpetrating crime are treated can be a barometer for the public. Investigation into any incidents involving Surrey officers or staff are robust and are all carried out and reviewed by independent teams.

Future meetings are in the diary as follows:

- 7th April 2022 – Private Resources and Efficiency meeting
- 16 May 2022 - Public Accountability and Performance Meeting
- 7 July 2022 - Private Resources and Efficiency Meeting
- 19 September 2022 - Public Accountability and Performance Meeting
- 8 November 2022 - Private Resources and Efficiency Meeting
- 20 December 2022 - Public Accountability and Performance Meeting

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