

SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**CORONAVIRUS****15 September 2020****INTRODUCTION**

The panel has asked for an update on Coronavirus, specifically:

- Financial implications
- Oversight and Scrutiny arrangements
- Commissioning/service funding
- Partnership arrangements

The panel is also interested in the operational policing and implications of the virus. To cover this element, a further item will be added to the informal panel meeting in October, which the Chief Constable will attend.

Financial Implications

Covid-19 has resulted in increased costs and lost income across the whole public sector. Surrey Police have not only incurred costs for PPE equipment but also additional staffing costs to cover overtime to assist with public compliance. Income from events, such as the Derby, has been lost as well as income from activities, such as dog training provided to other forces.

In total, up to the end of July, total direct costs of £1.7m have been incurred with lost income likely to be at least £0.5m.

In addition, Surrey, jointly with Sussex, agreed to participate in the national procurement of PPE so that forces across the country had access to the equipment they needed. This amounted to a further £2.275m of expenditure with the expectation that this cost would be covered by Government.

Whilst the Police received verbal assurances that all Covid costs would be met, it is only in the last few weeks that the actual reimbursement process has commenced. The Department of Health has agreed to reimburse all Police PPE costs, both local and national, but only if they are for “medical grade” PPE – a distinction that has only been made after the event. In addition, they have asked for invoices, contracts, delivery notes, orders, procurement documentation etc. to substantiate any claims. Needless to say, no money has actually been reimbursed at the time this paper was written and it is not clear when this will happen. No information has been forthcoming as to the mechanism for claiming other costs, or indeed future costs despite repeated requests to the Home Office.

In terms of income, it is likely that the Local Authority reimbursement scheme will be extended to Police Forces but again detailed guidance is awaited.

Hence it is difficult to quantify what the overall impact on the Force's budget for the year could be, but for planning purposes, a figure of £2.5m has been assumed.

Whilst not impacting the current financial year, the reduction in Council Tax collection and the tax base and the ongoing impact on the Collection Fund is a concern. A 4% fall in the collection fund would result in a £5m reduction in funding for the force which could have a real impact on services. Whilst it is welcomed that the Government is allowing the losses to be spread over 3 years, this will only be of benefit if the loss is temporary rather than a more permanent one. That said, this issue will impact all precepting bodies and no doubt will be addressed as part of the Spending Review.

Finally, in order to support voluntary organisations, the PCC approved expenditure of £500,000 from his Operational Reserve. Of this, £343,000 has been spent so far. More details are included later in this report

Oversight and Scrutiny

The PCC and the Office of the PCC have continued to work, mostly virtually, throughout the Covid-19 pandemic period. In general terms, all usual scrutiny arrangements have continued. This has included:

- The 6 monthly Performance Meetings at which the PCC holds the Chief Constable to account. The webcast meetings have continued to be publically accessible through recordings of Skype meetings
- Continued OPCC attendance at key force meetings such as the Force Performance Board and the Local Policing Board

In terms of Covid-19 specific oversight:

- Items on Covid-19 in each Performance Meeting with the Chief Constable since March 2020
- Involvement in the force operational meeting for Covid-19, Operation Apollo, as appropriate
- Involvement in force financial meetings for Covid-19 - attended by the OPCC's Chief Finance Officer
- Access to the force performance scorecard produced weekly for Operation Apollo, accompanied by OPCC briefing notes for the PCC
- Regular informal meetings between the PCC and Chief Constable, including briefings on areas with specific concerns
- PCC attendance at SCC-led Local Engagement and Outbreak Board
- Links to SCC-led recovery streams where appropriate

In addition, all major projects, such as Building the Future, Safer Streets Funding, Victim Service Commissioning, complaints etc have continued to function during this time.

Commissioned Support Services

The outbreak of Coronavirus has presented commissioned services with numerous challenges and the OPCC has been working closely with providers throughout, managing risk through our relationships and with a collaborative approach, ensuring the needs of service users are met.

Firstly, at the very start of the outbreak, the PCC recognised the need for emergency funding for services to put in place service adaptations. The PCC freed up £500,000 from his operational reserve and we reached out to all commissioned services to promote an opportunity to bid for funding. To date a total of £343,000 has been approved for 38 projects. These range from ensuring effective PPE supplies (the unexpected cost of this for voluntary services should not be under-estimated), through to increasing detached youth work, providing additional IT/equipment for homelessness projects and services working with those affected by domestic abuse. Together with our partners (Surrey County Council and Surrey Community Foundation) we have also established a brand new refuge for women and children fleeing domestic abuse. Further details of policy areas receiving funding can be found here:

<https://funding.surrey-pcc.gov.uk/funding-stats/>

In May 2020, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) secured £25m emergency funding which was part of a £76m government package of support to charities working with vulnerable people, including victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence. In Surrey, £404,000 of this funding was provisionally allocated to the PCC to work with local services to identify potential gaps in provision caused by Coronavirus. The opportunity for services to bid for the funding was heavily promoted by both the MoJ and the OPCC but it should be noted, this is short-term funding as the criteria meant the funding could only be used to cover costs from March to October 2020. It was also split into ring-fenced pots for commissioned and non-commissioned services. The PCC commissions all specialist providers of domestic abuse outreach and refuge support in Surrey, therefore this limited bidding potential.

That being said, Surrey PCC worked collaboratively with service providers to push the boundaries and maximise the potential, successfully securing £337,000 in funding. We have been able to fund new services, such as therapeutic sessions for children affected by domestic abuse at Viewpoint, which offers powerful horse-based interventions for young people. We have ensured current providers are equipped to engage with their clients in the best possible way, including the provision of individual play therapy boxes (to be Covid-safe) for children affected by sexual trauma, supported by statutory service provider, Surrey and Borders Partnership.

The full breakdown of recipients of the MoJ funding is shown below:

Supplier	Amount
Surrey & Borders Partnership	5,319.00
Rape and Sexual Assault Support Centre	11,529.00
Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum	9,894.00
Citizens Advice Elmbridge West (NSDAS)	41,327.05
YourSanctuary	60,851.96
Citizens Advice Waverley (SWSDA)	52,685.50
Surrey Drug & Alcohol	31,500.00
Crimestoppers	12,700.00
YMCA Downslink	4,700.00
East Surrey Domestic Abuse Service (ESDAS)	95,606.00
Viewpoint	4,800.00
The Counselling Partnership	6,580.00
	337,492.51

The OPCC has also been working with local partners to identify new ways to engage the community in assisting with problem solving and on 9 July 2020, Lisa Herrington, Head of Policy and Commissioning was a guest speaker for the Community Foundation for Surrey domestic abuse webinar, alongside ESDAS Chief Executive Michelle Blunsom MBE and DA survivor, Kerry. As a result of people listening to the importance of this support work provided by ESDAS and the other three specialist services in the county, a total of over £87,000 has been donated by the community for the services. A truly outstanding contribution.

There is now much discussion about recovery and renewal but in many ways this is too premature. Coronavirus is not a linear event and the adaptations we have put in place may need to persist for a very long time to come. What is needed now is long-term sustainable funding for vulnerable people who have been disadvantaged by Coronavirus. Lockdown has been extremely harmful for adults and children experiencing domestic abuse and their recovery will not happen without long-term specialist support.

Partnership working

At the outbreak of Coronavirus, Surrey PCC and partners recognised early on the increased risk for those experiencing domestic abuse and new governance structures were set up immediately, including the Domestic Abuse Executive, chaired by the late Dave Hill, SCC Director of Children's Services. Women's Aid Change That Lasts Pilot Coordinator (Surrey), Ann Lyttle, liaises with national Women's Aid colleagues across the country and reported back to partners that only Guernsey along with Surrey had responded so rapidly and effectively to domestic abuse – as previously mentioned, our response included the opening of a new refuge in our county.

Another area of spiking activity is anti-social behaviour. In response we and Surrey Police have done the following:

- Op Apollo have been producing hot spot maps which are sent to partners so that targeted action can be taken on repeat addresses/areas of ASB
- With partners, Joint Action Groups have been established for those hot spot areas to work in partnership to find ways of tackling the issues
- Borough Commanders are actively engaging with the community in areas of increased ASB and using social media to ensure messages around dispersal orders for example are shared
- The Police with partners have regularly used the ASB powers available to them, successfully using dispersal orders and closure orders to reduce ASB in hotspot areas or close properties being used for county lines and drug activity.
- Surrey Police have been working with the voluntary sector and Surrey Clubs for Young People who have been going out with the Neighbourhood Teams to engage with young people to discuss the lockdown rules, respect for the community and how they might access support. This was paid for through the PCC's Coronavirus funding.
- Other organisations such as East Surrey YMCA, The Matrix Trust and Eikon have been running online sessions and are starting to do face to face engagement but many of their staff have been furloughed. The PCC has funded youth organisations through the Community Safety Fund to run detached youth work.
- Surrey Mediation have shifted to online support for those experiencing ASB and have received funding from the PCC to increase their paid coaches in light of the increase in ASB. They have reported a significant increase in referrals in quarter one (61 in total) and these are generally more complicated and the disputes harder to resolve. They are predicting almost a 50% increase on last year's referrals for the ASB Support.
- Young people whilst not in education, employment or able to use traditional entertainment are also at risk of exploitation and harm and we are working with partners to raise these concerns through appropriate governance structures, including the Surrey Children's Safeguarding Executive and their recovery discussions.

The OPCC is a member of the Surrey Homelessness Multi Agency Group which has recently been recognised in a Local Government Association publication as good practice. The group was established to better support Surrey's homeless population during COVID-19 and in the longer term.

The group first met in April 2020 with an aim to:

- Support the health needs of newly accommodated rough sleepers
- Reduce the wider health impact of COVID-19 on people facing homelessness and reduce avoidable admissions to hospital and A+E
- Ensure outbreaks are reported and managed in line with regional PHE guidance
- Support partners during transition from lockdown so they are better positioned to provide the wrap around support needed to allow people to get and retain newly acquired accommodation

Surrey's Homeless Multi-Agency Group (MAG) has enabled oversight of the response to homelessness by all relevant support agencies. Issues concerning access to primary care, mental health or substance misuse were reviewed by the group so as to better identify how existing provision could provide a solution. The group also linked up to address resource gaps and joint issues, including around reporting and funding (enabling additional resources to be identified); managing discharge from hospitals, mental health care facilities and prison release; as well as complex situations (e.g. where individuals need high support accommodation, which requires additional resources).

The Homeless MAG enabled a homeless triaging pathway that has been sent to all district and borough housing teams and has also supported the development of the homelessness section of the Local Outbreak Plan. It worked collaboratively with housing managers across all 11 Boroughs and Districts to monitor number of cases of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases amongst this population, reduce transmission and ensure that any outbreaks are handled appropriately. This helped to identify and resource suitable units to ensure people were able to self-isolate as needed. It also offered a pathway to share learning from COVID-19 positive cases that arose.

Some key achievements of the Surrey Homeless MAG are:

- Simplification and acceleration of access to community substance misuse support
- People were better able to access crisis mental health support
- Enhanced understanding and use of GP and other primary care offers for homeless people
- Provision of assistance with practical help, including putting specialist security in place in potentially volatile emergency housing
- Enhanced understanding of services available through the third sector
- Provision of suitable land and pods to better enable individuals to appropriately self-isolate in the event of increased COVID-19 cases
- Supported an outreach proposal for the provision of the flu vaccine at suitable community locations to improve access for rough sleepers and those in emergency / temporary accommodation.

The PCC has also directed funding towards Surrey Police initiatives aimed at reducing speeding and vehicle noise nuisance, which has been identified as a community concern since the relaxation of lockdown.

We are also working with Criminal Justice partners to address the pressures that have arisen as a result of Covid-19. This includes working to minimise the significant impact of delays to justice due to court closures, which is putting a huge strain on the Surrey Police Victim and Witness Care Unit as it seeks to support those whose court cases are amongst the increasing backlog. In addition, we are looking to co-commission enhanced substance misuse support for those residents who have found it the most difficult to confront their offending and drug and alcohol misuse behaviour.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Police and Crime Panel note the report.

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