REPORT TO:	STRATEGIC SCRUTINY MEETING
DATE:	20th FEBUARY 2020
TITLE:	CONTACT MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT
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1. **Issue for Consideration**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update in relation to continued development and performance of the Contact Management Department of Lancashire Constabulary for the period October to December 2019.

2. **Recommendation**

The Commissioner is requested to review the report and make comments as appropriate.

3. **Background**

This report will provide an update on the latest call performance and significant organisational developments in Contact Management for the quarter October – December 2019.

Section 4 provides an update on significant programmes of work within the Force Control Room (FCR). This includes the status of the planned decant and refurbishment of the Control room 2020/21, details of the Transformation action plan and updates in relation to Police Communications Room Operator (PCRO) recruitment and job evaluation/progression.

Section 5 provides an update on the performance within the FCR across a number of key 999 and 101 call performance metrics.

Section 6 provides a brief overview of a number of other important, predominantly Information Communications Technology (ICT) work streams that will have significant current, or future impact on the FCR.

4. **Overview of Key Developments**

Refurbishment of the FCR during 2020/21

Since the last Strategic Scrutiny meeting, preparatory work has continued in order to decant and refurbish the FCR during 2020/21. The key developments during this quarter are as follows:

- The initial decant of Contact Management commenced in December with the Force Incident Managers, Intelligence and Systems Support decanting into Site B at HQ.

- Revised Decant Operating Models and Business Continuity plans have been finalised, approved and tested to ensure the resilience of Contact Management in decant.

- Finalisation of the extensive installation and testing of new ICT infrastructure at the Preston and Burnley decant locations. Due to the later handover of the Site B HQ decant location, readiness of Site B for decant remains a work in progress, albeit on track with the established decant plan.

- Comprehensive engagement has been completed with staff, Unison and BCUs to ensure the wellbeing of all staff and improved understanding of wider stakeholders.

- As highlighted in the previous scrutiny report Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Lawson has now assumed chair of the Decant Governance Board, reflecting the strategic importance of Contact Management and the impact of the FCR decant on wider Constabulary performance and quality of service. Following a comprehensive review of operational readiness, on the 13th January 2020 the Decant Governance Board approved the POD decant of the FCR in line with established timeline. This decision was taken in consultation with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).

- The FCR POD decant commenced on the 28th January 2020 with the South POD decanting over a phased three day period to the new control room at Preston. Following return to a refurbished FCR in 2021 the Preston control room will be retained as a force Silver Command Suite and 'Fall Back' location. Following a period of stable operation of the decanted South POD, the East POD decanted w/c 10th February to Preston and then Burnley decant locations. West POD will be the final POD to decant w/c 24th February, following the completion of ICT upgrades and User Acceptance Testing.

Contact Management Transformation Plan

To deliver continuous improvement across Contact Management and ensure the provision of a service which is both efficient and effective in delivering a high quality, cost effective FCR, a Contact Management Transformation Plan has been established, led by the Head of Contact Management with support from British Telecom Lancashire Services (BTLS) project management.

The transformation plan will review and improve all operating processes, work streams and performance, building on the newly established Contact Management Business Intelligence

(BI) products, enabling an in-depth understanding of efficiency and effectiveness within the FCR.

Key areas of focus include the following:

- Workforce Planning
- Communication Strategy
- Training, Progression and Recruitment
- Key Performance Indicators and Cost Ownership
- Operational Workflows
- Innovation and New Technology
- Staff Engagement and Wellbeing
- Continuous Improvement

Force Control Room PCRO Staffing / Training and Recruitment / Progression arrangements of Contact Management

The FCR continues to recruit PCROs to maintain a staff establishment of 345 PCRO Full-time Equivalent (FTE). The intake of 40 that were recruited in September started taking live calls mid-December, however it will take some time for them to build up knowledge and experience. The next intake of 30 PCRO's will start their training in April with future intakes planned for late 2020. This is set against an attrition rate of approximately 4 PCROs per month, which has been exacerbated by the current increase in police recruitment campaigns across the North West region. Integral to the FCR Transformation Plan is a comprehensive review of recruitment, career progression and training to ensure we are able to recruit and retain a diverse and high calibre PCRO workforce, now and in the future.

An initial review of the recruitment process for the April intake, including the introduction of psychometric testing for the first time and improved utilisation of social media, has resulted in the highest ever number of applications for the role of PCRO, with early feedback that the standard of application and interview being significantly improved. Future recruitment processes will explore further opportunities with targeted digital engagement to enhance workforce representation within Contact Management.

The Progression Arrangements for PCRO's has been completed during the quarter, subject to an ongoing appeal process. The new arrangements not only enhances the PCRO role but offers the required development opportunities and requisite progression and has been widely welcomed by staff.

5.   **Performance Update**

As previously reported there are a number of factors that can impact on the performance of the FCR in a reporting period. This quarter for both 999 and 101 has been no different; however positive interventions and forward planning are resulting in improved performance.

- Following the first stage of the upgrade to the Integrated Command and Control System (ICCS) system in September and October there have continued to be significant periods of technical instability within the FCR requiring repeated use of 'fall back' which inevitably affects FCR performance due to more time consuming processes. This has had a particular impact on both 999 and 101 call handling performance during October and November while the underlying causes of the instability was identified and remediated. December has witnessed greatly improved system stability as faults have been rectified, delivering improvements to call handling performance levels.

- The second phase of the system upgrade has now commenced and is anticipated to be complete by April 2020. It is expected that while the second upgrade will require limited periods of 'fall back', the impact on the FCR will be far less impactive than the initial upgrade. At the conclusion of the final upgrade, long term ICT resilience will be greatly enhanced due to the availability of parallel platforms at Preston and Hutton, negating the need for 'fall back'.

- As previously reported PCRO staffing levels in the FCR during this period have been challenging as the department was carrying a significant number of PCRO vacancies and the intake of 40 PCRO's were not operational in the room until mid-December. Owing to the increased size of the intake, training and mentoring the new recruits also necessitated further abstractions form the FCR to support the small training team. A robust plan is in place to monitor and review training and abstractions.

- The above predicted vacancies and abstractions have required the planned use of overtime to cover staffing gaps with overtime. Both PCRO and Police Officer overtime has seen a slight increase for this quarter. The development of a overtime Power BI product, coupled with enhanced performance management processes within the FCR will ensure efficient use of overtime, however it is expected that the use of overtime will continue to be a critical element of delivering acceptable levels of FCR performance.

- Preparing the department for decant in early 2020 has continued to create significant pressure on staffing levels as the department has needed to accelerate its programme of up skilling PCROs to undertake the radio dispatch and facilitator role. The main driver for this process being the need for each decant location to be self-sufficient in all the skill sets as the ability to move staff between the three PODs during a shift is not available during decant. To deliver the required skillsets in each POD a greatly enhanced training programme was implemented. Since the beginning of September 60 extra staff have completed the skills training. While this training is essential for the resilience of the PODs it requires abstractions from the FCR for experienced staff to mentor less experienced staff attaining new skillsets

- Given the continued ICCS stabilisation issues during the quarter it has been essential to provide robust testing of the systems and ICT infrastructure in the new decant locations. This has taken experienced staff out of their role to perform this function as it was crucial that this was completed by staff with the necessary skill and knowledge of the systems. The testing has been scheduled in lower demand times, however the impact has still been reflected in the performance of the room. Testing has now largely been completed and staff have now returned to their primary roles.

Call Performance – 999 Emergency Calls

Emergency calls remain a primary focus for the FCR. Whilst it is recognised that there is a correlation between 101-call performance and the demand on the 999 service, the FCR understandably continues to prioritise answering 999 emergency calls above any other type of demand.

Key Points: 999 demand and service levels

- Performance for 999 service levels (calls answered in less than 10 seconds) has improved in relation to the corresponding quarter in 2018, with 76.3% answered within target in 2019 versus 75.6% in 2018. This represents a 2% increase on the second quarter of 2019. For the third quarter the average time to answer a 999 is higher at 9.97 seconds in 2019 versus 8.63 seconds in 2018. This can be attributed to the ICT and staffing challenges experienced in October as average time to answer for this month was 13.1 seconds compared to 8.8 seconds in November and 7.5 seconds in December. This represents a continuing trend of improvement in call handling performance during the

third quarter of 2019.

- As the Commissioner will recall the Constabulary reported in previous Strategic Scrutiny meetings that Lancashire 999 demand continues to rise. This reflects anecdotal feedback that the same trend is being seen in many other police forces. This quarter has seen an 8.6% increase in 999 calls compared to the same period last year.

- At this time there appears to be no single underlying reason for this trend of increasing 999 demand. The collaborative 'Voice Analytics' work between Contact Management, Corporate Development and Hewlett Packard Enterprise, will assist with analysing this increase further. Further development of the Voice Analytics collaboration remains to be sequenced into the existing ICT programme of works planned for 2020/21.

- 999 abandonment rates were impacted during the quarter by the factors outlined above, particularly in October when the abandonment rate reached 2.7%. As the ICT issues were resolved this is reflected in a reduced abandonment rate with 0.9% for November and 0.5% for December.

Call Performance - Non-Emergency 101 Calls

Whilst 101 service levels during this quarter continue to be challenging there has been an improvement in performance. In addition to the issues affecting call handling already outlined above, the following are factors that have impacted on 101 performance during this quarter:

- PCRO experience levels – as was highlighted in the last report the levels of inexperience in the FCR remain a significant issue, with just under half of all PCROs having under three years' experience. Given the recent intake of 40 new PCROs and the loss of experienced staff from the FCR, predominantly to join the police, the comparative levels of inexperience in the FCR is currently increasing, although efforts are being made to offset this through the enhanced training plan. The operational need to constantly up skill new PCROs in facilitating and radio dispatch, to allow the FCR to deliver all of its critical functions is a resource intensive process in terms of the level of abstractions required during the training process for these highly skilled roles. Encouragingly PCRO's are progressing quicker through to the facilitating and dispatcher role, however this offsets again with the abstraction of experience staff to train and mentor through this process. A Power BI product is now supporting the detailed management of enhanced skillsets across PODs, within a structured departmental training plan to ensure future skills resilience.

- Command and Control logging system upgrade has been completed in the room with the introduction of SMARTSTORM. The training of all staff has been completed during quarter three. SMARTSTORM has an increased functionality and allows PCRO's to evidence Threat Harm Risk Investigation Vulnerability Engagement (THRIVE) risk assessments. The THRIVE assessment is stamped on the incident log and is a record of their decision-making process. The introduction of THRIVE is essential to deliver consistent and robust risk assessment, however this adds to the call time, which is currently compounded by staff becoming used to using the new risk model.

- POD Overflow – Since POD go-live in September 2018, 101 calls have been deliberately held within the geographic POD where the call originated. The intention being that a

localised service is provided to the caller, rather than the previous more generic approach. Following a period of evaluation, the current overflow time has been set at 7 minutes, i.e. if a 101 call is not answered within its originating POD within 7 minutes, it will then become available to the two other PODs. The FCR management team feel this is the optimum time to deliver a local service, whilst still providing the benefits of a centralised FCR. Clearly, at periods of high demand this approach will on occasion lead to an increase in 101 waiting times. POD overflow calls can now be tracked through Power BI and will form part of the monthly tactical tasking meetings. Encouragingly the FCR is now seeing month on month reductions in POD overflow levels, reflecting increased performance within individual PODs.

**Key Points: 101 demand and service levels**

- In this quarter the 101 service level (answering calls within 40 seconds) has seen improvements for Nov and December to the corresponding quarter in 2018. As demonstrated with the abandonment rates this performance is the most improved in the last two years (shown in below table)

Month	2018	2019
October	30%	30%
November	35%	37%
December	46%	47%

- The average time to answer 101 calls has also seen improvements this quarter at 214.7 seconds in 2019 vs 215.5 seconds in 2018.

- These improvements on 101 performance are despite the complexity of calls experienced, ICCS stability issues, THRIVE assessments and questions sets.

- Overall demand levels for 101 in this quarter slightly lower than the corresponding quarter in last year.   The total calls in 2019 being 181,614 compared to 198,721 in 2018. This represents a change of -8.6%

- The abandonment rate for 101 in this quarter has seen improvements consistently for each month to the corresponding quarter in 2018. These abandonment rates are at the lowest that they have been for two years. (shown in below table – lower percentage indicates better performance for abandonment rates)

Month	2018	2019
October	43%	42%
November	39%	35%
December	30%	26%

Online Demand
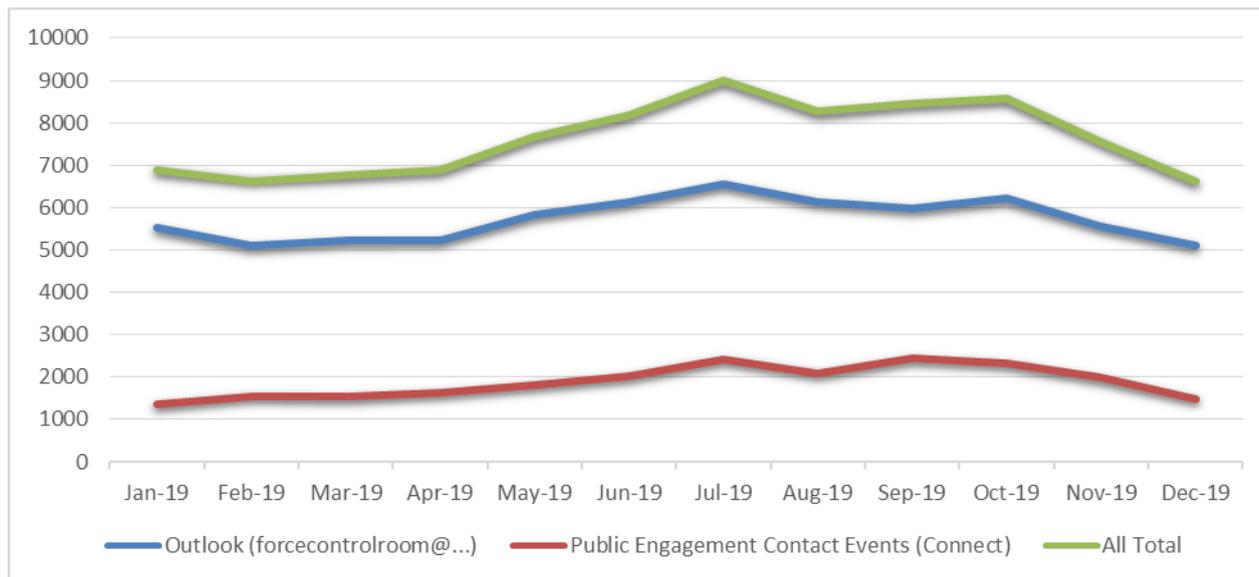
Key Points: On-line demand

The public of Lancashire can currently contact the FCR by digital means via the Force Control Mailbox, and the Public Engagement portal to report incidents to the FCR. There also exists the option to submit a crime or contact an officer by digital means. It must be noted that digital means of contact have only been publicised to the public living in the South policing area.

At this time the levels of digital demand into the FCR have risen steadily although there has been a slight decrease during November and December. Current forecasts based on existing digital provision predicts that if demand does not continue to rise it will not drop below 6,000 contacts a month. If current trends continue then it is forecasted that demand based on current digital provision could rise to 11000 contacts per month.

However, if we were to introduce further avenues of contact (Twitter/Facebook) then this would likely increase.

Previous reviews of digital demand and the experience of other forces is that digital demand does not replace traditional demand and that the trend is that digital brings extra demand into the FCR.

In 2019 92,000 digital contacts were received into the Control room, and as there is no budgeted role for managing this work, resourcing this is currently undertaken by PCRO's. This is a further abstraction to the room taking them away from their primary role of call-handling and dispatch.

To ensure that Contact Management can fully develop its digital strategy, a business case was developed outlining the necessity for a dedicated Digital Team. This proposal has been agreed, in principle, by Chief Officers and will see an increase of eighteen Digital PCROs.

The team itself will receive bespoke training and will provide a dedicated digital first point of contact for anyone wanting to report an incident or raise an enquiry using online services. The team will cover over a 24hr period and will work in line with current Contact Management rotas.

The objective of the Digital Team will be to provide a dedicated digital first point of contact for anyone wishing to report an incident or an enquiry to Lancashire Police via a digital avenue. Whilst we are able to predict their workload based on current contact online methods, we are expecting to see an

additional increase in contacts following planned media campaigns, and with the introduction of Twitter and Facebook interaction. The team will provide out of hours support to the Constabulary Media and Engagement Team for high profile social media cases as well as proactive social media postings and replies concerning live time events of concern to the public.

The development of digital functionality within the FCR will support:;
- The national roll out of the Single Online Home (SOH) police website, which the Constabulary is expecting to adopt during 2020/21.

- The National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) Policing Vision 2025, advocating increased digital policing capability and capacity

- The adoption of mandatory European Union legislation requiring police forces to accommodate the ability for members of the public to report emergency incidents via digital channels.

Subject to funding decisions, it is anticipated that the Digital Team will be established by April 2020.

6.   FCR key ICT work streams update

The FCR is now at a critical point in relation to a number of significant ICT updates that are required for decant or will enhance current working practices. The most significant updates are:

Preston fall back communications room / remedial work at Burnley and 'Old Southern' communications rooms

Work at Preston and Burnley communications rooms is now complete and ready for staff to move into week commenced 27th January and 10th February respectively. Work has commenced at "Old Southern" communication room, Site B, which is based at HQ and is also on track for West POD to move into at the end of February.

SMARTSTORM upgrade

As the POD project has progressed, the technology within the control rooms has been upgraded this includes, upgrading from Windows 7 to Windows 10, USB equipment installation and the transition from STORM to SMARTSTORM. The installation of SMARTSTORM is complete and improves the functionality of the system for PCRO's enabling staff to document clearly their decision making process through THRIVE. The old STORM will become obsolete within Contact Management from March 2020.

Capita ICCS (Integrated Command and Control System) upgrade

The full upgrade of the ICCS continues to be a major project for the FCR, with successful completion planned for April 2020. The delivery of the upgrade is a significant programme of work and is governed by the 'ICCS board'. The main benefits for the FCR and the public of Lancashire will be:

- Implementation of Interactive Voice Response (IVR) this allows 101 callers to know their place in the queue and estimated wait time. This is scheduled to be available in the first quarter of 2020.

- Ability for members of the public calling from outside Lancashire to select the geographic areas

their call relates too. This will then route the call to the relevant POD in the FCR.

- Improved stability and resilience of the ICCS and telephony system in the FCR on a day-to-day basis (this has been an issue in the FCR since the move to the new single contact centre in 2013). In addition there will be a fully mirrored hot standby ICCS at the force Disaster Recovery, significantly improving the current arrangements.

- The upgraded ICCS will allow the Constabulary to meet its national obligations around control room readiness for the transition from Airwave to the Emergency Services Network (ESN) that is scheduled to take place in the coming years (no date for the Lancs transition is available).

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