

NOTE OF THE STRATEGIC SCRUTINY MEETING

HELD ON THURSDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2020 COMMENCING AT 2 PM VIA TELECONFERENCE

Attendance

Mr C Grunshaw – Police and Crime Commissioner
Mr A Rhodes – Chief Constable

Mr T Woods – Deputy Chief Constable
Mr I Dawson – Chief Superintendent
Mr R Procter – Chief Superintendent
Mrs Z Mainey- Superintendent – Head of Professional Standards department
Mr S Freeman – Chief Finance Officer, Office of the police and Crime Commissioner
Mr D Rogers – Head of Finance
Mr I Dickinson – Governance and Policing Lead, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

It was noted that the Rape Profile undertaken by the Force Intelligence Unit's (FIU) had now been completed and a copy of the summary had been provided to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE

The Police and Crime Commissioner received a report setting out the Constabulary's in year performance for the financial year 2020/21.

The Chief Constable provided a detailed breakdown of the number of police officers. It was noted that the total officer Full Time Equivalent (FTE) (as of 31/03//2020) was 3036.73 and although just over 133 were recorded as being in "support roles", these include Force Command, Professional Standards and specialist Operations Training – including public order, firearms and training of new recruits, all of which require police officer knowledge and experience. The "other" category includes officers currently taking career breaks (27), maternity / paternity absence and suspensions.

The Commissioner noted the overwhelming response of individuals and groups through the Lancashire Volunteer Partnership to support those vulnerable people in need during the covid-19 pandemic.

It was reported that over the crisis LVP volunteers including those volunteering for the Constabulary had directly supported over 930 vulnerable people, made over 62,000 welfare calls to vulnerable people and contributed over 63,000 hours of volunteers.

The Chief Constable asked that his thanks for the work undertaken by Ian Sewart and Julie Sumner be placed on record.

The Chief Constable re-emphasised his observations from the last meeting that the pandemic had had a significant impact on Lancashire Constabulary and had been tracking the impact on demand and resourcing closely, through a dashboard developed by analysts in Corporate Development. It has also been possible to compare trends to the national picture via a product delivered weekly by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

During the period it was reported that whilst acquisitive crime had reduced the Constabulary had seen significant increases in Anti-Social Behaviour, and assaults on emergency workers.

The Commissioner was keen to understand the types of Anti-Social Behaviour incidents officers were attending during the pandemic particularly around nuisance, unlicensed music events, house parties and outdoor gatherings and the Chief Constable agreed to provide a breakdown of ASB during covid.

The Chief Constable re-enforced the Constabulary's position that officers would be responding to incidents where people were deliberately flouting government legislation and guidance.

The trends in homicide and the subsequent impact on force resources were raised by the Commissioner. In response the Chief Constable advised that to date, the number of reported homicides had remained in line with last year's figures and that that arrests had been made in relation to all investigations. The Chief Constable informed the Commissioner that a temporary Force Major Incident Team (FMIT) had been established and would be considered further during the forthcoming planning discussions. In the meantime, the Constabulary's intelligence analysts continued to closely monitor trends in homicide and the subsequent impact on force resources.

The Chief Constable provided an update in relation to Rape and Sexual Offences. It was noted that recorded "sexual offences" now showed a reduction year-on-year, particularly in relation to historic and repeat offences.

It was noted that the Constabulary had commenced recruitment of specialist roles from the uplift cohort – these being a Rape and Serious Sexual Offence (RASSO) Detective Inspector and 3 x RASSO Evidence Review Officers. These will focus on improving the quality of investigations in early stages along with ensuring evidential readiness for consideration by the Crown Prosecution Service at both the Early Investigative Advice and Charge Authority decision stages.

The Commissioner noted that the Constabulary continued to have a high conviction rate for those cases charged but a reduction in referral rates to the CPS had been noted. This was not necessarily a negative, as the quality of referrals is being closely monitored to drive improvement, and the focus was on reducing unnecessary 'churn' of incomplete cases through the system, which ultimately leads to a poor service for victims.

In noting the level of outcomes from court cases for RASSO the Commissioner enquired about the levels lost through CPS at triage. The Chief Constable agreed to provide this information at the next meeting.

FORCE CONTROL ROOM

The Commissioner received a report on the development and performance of the Contact Management Department of Lancashire Constabulary for the period April to June 2020.

It was noted that following the decant of staff from the force control room (FCR) during the end of 2019 and early 2020 the rebuild of the FCR remained on track for a return to a single room in May 2021.

The Chief Constable advised the Commissioner that the staffing levels for the FCR stood at 327 with a recent recruitment intake of 30 currently going through training.

Whilst it was noted that overtime was being used sickness levels and performance during the pandemic remained good.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS UPDATE

The Commissioner received a performance update in relation to the handling of complaints and conduct matters from the Head of Professional Standards.

It was noted that following recent changes to legislation the Professional Standards Department had seen an increase in the number of recorded complaints as the option of resolution by way of 'Service Recovery', which was the method of resolving dissatisfaction prior to formal complaint, has been removed.

The Head of Professional Standards informed the Commissioner that there had been a 31% increase (n=174) in public Complaint Cases in 2019/20 compared to the previous year. 731 Cases were recorded in 2019/20 compared to 557 Cases in 2018/19. The increase was limited to the last quarter of the period as a result of a change in the Regulations.

In Quarter 1 of 2020/21 there were 344 Complaint Cases recorded which was an 89% increase (n=162) on the average quarterly figure from 2019/20 (which was 182).

In Quarter 1 of 2020/21 there were 616 Complaint Allegations recorded which was a 117% increase on the average quarterly figure from 2019/20 (which was 284).

Over the past 12 months Complaint Cases remained relatively evenly distributed across the three divisional BCU's with 294 in West, 251 in South and 284 in East.

Despite changes in the way Complaints were handled, the Commissioner welcomed the substantial increase in performance with regards to the timeliness of recording. 98.8% of Cases have been recorded within 10 days during Q1 of 2020/21 (338 out of 342).

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE

The Commissioner was provided with an overview of the Constabulary's performance and progress in relation to information governance during 2019/20 from the Director of Resources.

A copy of the report is available on the Commissioners website.

VALUING DIFFERENCE AND INCLUSION

The Commissioner was provided with an update in relation to the continued development of the Constabulary's approach to Valuing Difference and Inclusion (VDI) from Chief Superintendent Dawson.

A copy of the report is available on the Commissioners website.

In providing the update it was noted that the Extended Leadership Team had taken ownership of the approach and that the staff networks were committed to a course of both independent and joint action with further joint events to be diarised through the next year.

The Commissioner welcomed the update and the work being undertaken by the Constabulary.

SATISFACTION SURVEYS, RESPONSE AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The Commissioner was provided with an overview of the Constabulary's performance and progress in relation to its approach to Satisfaction, Satisfaction surveys, the Constabulary response and Future developments from Chief Superintendent Dawson.

A copy of the report is available on the Commissioners website.

Angela Harrison
Director