

Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel

Planning and Performance Working Group held on 5 November 2018

Present:

Members of the Working Group

Councillor Nicola Davies
Councillor Neil Dirveiks
Bob Malloy (Chair)

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)

Neil Hewison, Chief Executive
David Patterson, Development and Policy Lead

Also Present

Tom McColgan, Democratic Services Officer

1 General

(1) Apologies

1.1 Andy Davis sent his apologies for the meeting.

(2) Disclosures of interest

1.2 There were none.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2018

1.3 In response to the Working Group, Officers stated:

- (I) The revised schedule for the Crime Data Integrity Audit would be circulated to the Panel
- (II) The whole performance report was being reviewed and forecasting would be reviewed as part of this process. Warwickshire Police had also developed a balanced scorecard for Call Handling and Domestic Abuse which would help to focus reviewing the areas.
- (III) The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) would relay the request made by the Panel at the last meeting to identify specially agricultural crime with in general 'rural crime' and to overlay the rural crime graph with urban crime data.

(4) Working Group Action Log

- 1.4 In response to the Working Group, the Chief Executive stated that the 2019/20 budget would present additional challenges due to the end of the strategic alliance arrangements on 9 October 2019; halfway through the financial year. Andy Davis had been working with the OPCC on developing the public consultation ahead of setting the budget and this work now had to effectively begin again in light of the new circumstances. The Chief Executive stated that he would bring a verbal update on progress to the next working group.
- 1.5 In response to Councillor Dirveiks, the Chief Executive stated that although there had been difficulties in recruiting, the overall number of officers had not declined. The OPCC received monthly updates on recruiting which they could share with the Working Group.

2 Complaints

- 2.1 The Development and Policy Lead introduced the report and stated that it was similar to reports seen by the Working Group previously with additional data from the Independent Office for Police Conduct. Warwickshire was broadly in line with national averages across all measures and there were no obvious outlying indicators in the data.
- 2.2 The Chair stated that he was pleased to see that the proportion of complaints resolved through local resolution in Warwickshire was higher than average and asked if the OPCC was looking for an increase in the proportion of complaints resolved through local investigation.
- 2.3 The Development and Policy Lead responded that local investigations tended to add little value to resolutions while delaying the process. He felt that local resolutions provided better outcomes to complainants.
- 2.4 In response to the Chair, the Chief Executive stated that the OPCC was not satisfied by the speed at which complaints were resolved but were reassured by the number of complaints being resolved by local resolution. The Professional Standards Department was under pressure but appeared to be stabilising and Warwickshire was not out of kilter with other similar forces in terms of recording and responding to complaints. The Professional Standards Department was a joint alliance department and so would face challenges as resources were split ahead of October 2019.
- 2.5 In response to the Chair, the Development and Policy Lead clarified that allegations were not the equivalent to complaints and were not spread evenly

through the Force. The figures were also not directly comparable with other forces as reporting practices varied.

3 Performance

- 3.1 The Development and Policy Lead introduced the performance reports and stated that the direction of travel across indicators was generally positive.
- 3.2 In response to the Chair, the Development and Policy Lead stated that recent data on public confidence showed that Warwickshire Police was 3rd in its comparison group of 8 similar forces which was an improving position. The level of confidence residents had in Warwickshire Police was also above the national average.
- 3.3 In response to the Chair, the Chief Executive stated that the independent consultant mentioned in the reports was an expert in surveys and had been brought in to ensure that good quality data was being collected for example stopping asking for feedback on follow up where the reported incident had not required a follow up. The consultant was also looking at collecting better quality data about the experiences of people with particular vulnerabilities which would tie in with the work the Force was doing on the Victims and Witnesses Charter.
- 3.4 In response to the Councillor Davies, the Development and Policy Lead stated that the Integrated Victim Management Unit was assessing repeat victims and could create actions plans for the most vulnerable individuals. The OPCC was pushing to ensure that Domestic and Sexual Violence forms were being submitted and that these were being picked up at the Victim Management Unit's daily briefings. The Chief Executive stated that the OPCC was working closely with the Victim Management Unit to develop an improved methodology to improve information sharing and reduce the need for victims to repeat their story to multiple support workers. This new methodology would be delivered by a new contract for Victims' Services.
- 3.5 Councillor Davies stated that it would be useful to invite the manager of the Victims' Service when it is commissioned to the full Panel in summer 2019 to describe the service and how it was integrated into the wider force.
- 3.6 In response to the Chair, the Chief Executive confirmed that a Domestic Violence Protection Notice could be issued by the Police Force during an investigation in order to prevent a suspect from living at the same address as the victim and was issued without the involvement of the courts. A Domestic Violence Protection Order was issued by the courts.

- 3.7 In response to the Chair, the Development and Policy Lead stated that while Athena had impacted the recording of outcomes he could not confirm how large the backlog of case outcomes to be recorded currently was and thus the impact this was having on the data.
- 3.8 The Chief Executive stated that the OPCC had challenged the Police on the recording of outcomes before and there had been some improvement but more progress was needed. The OPCC did not want to overwhelm the Chief Constable and had to prioritise the areas they challenged, the focus had been on public confidence but if this remained strong the focus would likely return to case outcomes.
- 3.9 The Chair stated that the Force's response to the OPCC's challenge on outcome reporting seemed to be focused on giving an overview of the process rather than identify any substantial issues in the processes.
- 3.10 The Development and Policy Lead responded that he was keen to investigate outcomes further especially where a decision had been taken that there was not enough evidence to pursue a case. The Chief Executive added that he did not feel that the Force had responded to the OPCC's challenge in bad faith but that he was frustrated by the lack of information available.
- 3.11 In response to Councillor Davies, the Chief Executive stated that going forward the OPCC would have to be mindful of the extreme pressure the reorganisation caused by the termination of the alliance would place on the senior leadership team. It had to be recognised that the Force was not in normal times.
- 3.12 Councillor Dirveiks stated that it would also be important for the Panel to keep its brief as a 'critical friend' in mind during the coming year and to be mindful of additional strain it may potentially place on the OPCC or indirectly on Warwickshire Police.
- 3.13 Councillor Davies expressed concern at the number of cases not being pursued because the Crown Prosecution Service was not prepared by the court date. She stated that it seemed there was a lack of accountability for the Crown Prosecution Service and HM Courts and Tribunals Service as their actions were affecting outcomes for the Police and residents.
- 3.14 The Chief Executive stated that the OPCC did attend the Local Criminal Justice Board at which the Crown Prosecution Service was also represented but the OPCC had limited influence over the Crown Prosecution Service.

- 3.15 Councillor Dirveiks asked how the number of discontinued cases related to the total cases as a quarter of discontinued cases related to North Warwickshire but it was not clear whether this meant North Warwickshire was disproportionately affected.
- 3.16 The Development and Policy Lead stated that he did not have a comparison between total cases and discontinued cases but agreed that this would be a useful measure. The Chief Executive stated that he believed it was about in line with the total cases.
- 3.17 Councillor Davies expressed concern that the lack of user confidence in the IT systems may influence officer's decisions regarding cases and felt that it may be beneficial if refresher training was offered to experienced officers.

4. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspections Briefing Note

- 4.1 The Chief Executive stated that the OPCC regularly met with the business improvement team who were focused on addressing the areas which had been criticised by the inspector. The Force's Serious and Organised Crime Unit had recently had a positive peer review. The OPCC had a fair degree of confidence that the Force would not be rated as 'requires improvement' when they were inspected in March 2019. However the alliance split would impact the efficiency rating.
- 4.2 Councillor Davies welcomed the work the Force and OPCC was doing to address concerns raised by the last inspection.
- 4.3 In response to the Chair, the Development and Police Lead stated that HMICFRS had a liaison officer who worked with West Mercia and Warwickshire Police Forces and so were fully aware of the termination of the alliance and its impact.

5 Athena

- 5.1 The Development and Policy Lead gave a verbal update to the Working Group on the Athena software package which was introduced in October 2017. An Athena Development Team had been established and they had undertaken a number of interventions since the initial roll out where there was concern that the software was not functioning as intended. Since launch it had become apparent that there was a lack of user confidence in the system. A backlog in recording had built up and there had been a number of system outages resulting in a lack of accurate and reliable information being available to management.

- 5.2 The OPCC had produced a report on the implementation of Athena which identified 25 dis-benefits and identified potential solutions. The Chief Constable had commented on the report and it had been the intention of the OPCC to bring the report to the Police and Crime Panel. The Force had however requested that it not be shared as they felt that it may harm the force and aid criminality were it to be made public. The key actions identified by the Chief Constable were an uplift of resources in areas where there had been the most difficult and the 'case' portion of Athena which was used during investigations was to be replaced by an alternative software package not tied to Athena. The uplift in resources identified meant that some of the expected savings from implementing Athena would not be realised.
- 5.3 The Development and Policy Lead concluded that the OPCC had challenged the Chief Constable and were satisfied that he suggested meaningful actions with a realistic plan of action. An executive summary of the report would be included as part of the Chief Constable's report at the November 2018 meeting of the Police and Crime Panel.
- 5.4 Councillor Dirveiks asked if Athena allowed for sharing of data between forces and if it would influence future collaboration.
- 5.5 The Development and Policy Lead responded that nine forces had adopted Athena and the platform was managed up the Athena Management Organisation. Athena was developed by Northgate who also produced the CONNECT platform on which Athena was based and used as a standalone product by several forces. The nine forces which used Athena were predominantly located in the South and East of the country and while best practice and development costs were shared between the nine forces it was unlikely that they would be suitable future collaborators. There was also a possibility that Athena could be adopted nationally.
- 5.6 In response to the Chair, the Development and Policy Lead confirmed that West Mercia had experienced similar problems in their role out of Athena including around the 'case' module.
- 5.7 In response to Councillor Davies, the Development and Policy Lead stated that there was now a need for performance metrics to monitor whether the solutions suggested by the Force have an impact. The OPCC was represented on both monitoring groups for the project going forward. The Chief Executive stated that Athena was fundamental to the operation of the Force as it impacted on everything from performance and reporting to the health and wellbeing of officers.

5.8 In response to Councillor Dirveiks, the Chief Executive responded that data drawn from Athena would be directly comparable with data drawn from whatever software package is chosen to replace the 'case' module as the outcomes being recorded would be the same. The data quality should improve if officers are more confident using the system. There may also be an improvement in outcomes as if officers are better able to utilise the software the cases they pass on to the Crown Prosecution Service will be of a higher quality and may result in more successful convictions.

6 Police and Crime Panel Work Programme 2018/19

6.1 The Working Group noted that the Road Safety, Complaints Procedure and interim policing model items had been moved to later in 2019. The interim policing model would also be addressed by the Chief Constable in his submission to the November 2018 Panel.

6.2 The Working Group requested that an update on the precept consultation to be either included as part of the Police and Crime Commissioners report at the November 2018 Panel meeting or as a separate item at that same meeting.

6.3 Athena would continue to be monitored as part of performance reports but would not be the subject of a standalone item on the work programme.

6.4 In response to comments submitted by Andy Davis, Councillor Davies stated that she agreed that the alliance negotiations would need to be scrutinised by the panel but she felt it was too early in the process to be able to build this into the work programme. Councillor Dirveiks stated that it was important to leave enough room in the work programme for the alliance items to be added through the year.

6.5 In response to comments submitted by Andy Davis, the Chief Executive responded that the weekly meetings between the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner were continuing but the website may not have been updated to reflect the recent meetings.

7. Register of Gifts

7.1 Councillor Dirveiks stated that he had looked at the register and could not see any items which would be of concern.

8. Date of the next meeting

8.1 The next meeting of the Panel was due to be held on Monday, 21 January 2019.

Close of meeting: 12 noon