

Planning and Performance Working Group

11 February 2019, 10:15am

Present

Planning and Performance Working Group: Councillor Davies, Andy Davis, and Bob Malloy (Chair)

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner: Neil Hewison (Chief Executive) and David Patterson (Development and Policy Lead - Performance)

Warwickshire County Council Officers: Tom McColgan (Democratic Services Officer)

1. General

Councillor Dirveiks sent his apologies for the meeting.

2. Performance

Neil Hewison and David Patterson introduced the Warwickshire Police Performance Summary October – December 2018.

In response to Councillor Davies, Neil Hewison stated that the performance scrutiny produced by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) was the basis of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) questioning at the monthly holding to account meetings. A portion of every holding to account meeting was turned over to scrutinising the Force's performance. The OPCC relied on the written response from the Force only if there was no face to face holding to account meeting.

David Patterson added that in addition to the holding to account meetings he attended various boards and panels which examined performance. These ranged from Warwickshire Police specific meetings such as the HMICFRS Assurance Board and HMICFRS Assurance Panels to Alliance wide and national bodies. These meetings helped the OPCC gain context for the performance figures and meant they had early warning of any issues which may impact upon performance.

In response to Andy Davis, David Patterson stated that with the termination of the Alliance the Alliance wide boards would have to change to reflect the new ways of operating in place from October 2019. Generally the Force was moving towards establishing boards with a more localised focused.

Andy Davis asked what follow up there was to the Force's responses to the PCC's scrutiny and whether the OPCC referred back to previous responses when holding the Chief Constable to account.

David Patterson responded that there were similar themes that were followed through in the scrutiny of the performance figures but agreed that the OPCC needed to do more to track issues it had raised and to track improvements.

Neil Hewison added that the OPCC wanted to make sure the Force responded to the performance scrutiny on a level the OPCC was happy with as there were some long running issues where sufficient progress had not been made. Neil Hewison stated that the OPCC was considering commissioning an in depth report on case outcomes similar to the report the OPCC had produced on Athena.

The Chair stated that he understood the OPCC's desire to be consistent and proportionate in its response to the Force's performance and not to just react to monthly changes which may not reflect actual performance. The Chair, however, was not reassured by the Chief Constable's response to the OPCC which he felt lacked detail and clear actions the Force was planning to take to address the issues raised.

Neil Hewison responded that he hoped the report on Outcomes would steer the Force towards developing an action plan that would address the persistent issues. David Patterson stated that while case outcomes was a useful metric in itself it also served as a barometer for other factors such as; public confidence in the police, recording, capacity, screening out cases and skills in CID among others. HMIC would also be carrying out a deep dive into investigations in Warwickshire as well as looking at Organised Crime at a regional level.

The Chair asked if the Force's longstanding issues with the Athena software platform were still impacting the reliability of the performance data being reported.

David Patterson responded that there were four elements to Athena;

- Investigations – Following an uplift in staffing numbers the backlog of cases needing to be entered onto Athena had been cleared. Dedicated decision makers now reviewed the outcome codes assigned to each case and the backlog of cases awaiting an outcome had been cleared.
- Intelligence – There was still a backlog of work to be added to the intelligence module but this was reducing as staffing levels increased and staff became more familiar with the system.
- Case – The Force had taken the decision to stop using the Case module and was using an alternative software solution.
- Custody – The main issue had been around files relating to individuals released under investigation. Northgate (the Athena software developers) were in the process of producing an app for the custody module which it was hoped would help address some of the issues.

Northgate were also now monitoring the Alliance ICT systems to help improve Athena's overall stability. David Paterson stated that he felt the position was vastly improved and would continue to improve as officers gained experience with the system. He noted that nationally Athena had been criticised publically by some of the other forces that had adopted it.

Neil Hewison stated that there was still an issue with categorisation using keywords in Athena especially around vulnerability markers which did not represent clarity around performance. Athena used 49 keywords to categorise cases and the Athena key words did not perfectly match existing terminology in the Force i.e. 'Cybercrime' was tagged with the keywords 'online crime'.

In response to Councillor Davies, Neil Hewison assured the Panel that there was a robust infrastructure in place to identify vulnerable individuals and that even if vulnerabilities were not being tagged using key words they were being picked up through other avenues.

In response to the Chair, David Patterson stated that the audit of data integrity had not yet taken place but confirmed that he still expected the force to undertake an audit of data integrity in the coming year.

In response to the Chair, Neil Hewison stated that the performance report showed actions taken by the Force against Organised Crime Groups which were principally based in the policing area. He stated that the Serious Organised Crime Joint Acton Group (SOCJAG) had been praised in the last HMIC inspection especially its emphasis on the role of community partners in addressing organised crime. Neil Hewison stated that Warwickshire Police was well placed to address organised crime on a local, county wide and regional level. The Force's response to Organised Crime Groups was set at a regional level and was determined by the level of harm caused by a group's actions. The activities of Organised Crime Groups were not constrained by policing areas and groups operating in Warwickshire had links to the surrounding areas especially Coventry and the Force was looking to work more closely with West Midlands Police.

In response to Andy Davis, Neil Hewison stated that when an organisation was going through a significant change staff wellbeing would always be a concern. Neil Hewison stated that the new officer posts created in the 2019/20 budget would help reduce the pressure on staff but with additional resources being focused on local policing this would not address all the areas of understaffing. Neil Hewison stated that the Chief Constable was ultimately responsible for the structure of the Force and it would be up to him to create a sustainable structure.

3. Future Planning and Performance Working Group Agendas

The Chair stated that the Working Group was considering the way in which it worked and whether carrying out more focused intensive scrutiny of a targeted area would

be more effective than simply reviewing performance figures. The Chair stated that there were several topics which had come up at meetings which may benefit from closer examination; road safety, rural crime, community safety partnerships for example.

Councillor Davies stated that the Panel would be mindful of any additional strain scrutiny would place on the OPCC especially given the circumstances around the end of the strategic alliance with West Mercia.

Neil Hewison responded that the OPCC welcomed outside scrutiny from the Panel. He also provided the Working Group with an update on the Commissioner's road safety fund. Neil Hewison suggested some other areas that the Panel may want to examine; officer health & wellbeing, outcomes, Victims Services. The OPCC itself would be guided by the HMIC inspection in March as to what areas needed to be focused on. Neil Hewison cautioned that both the OPCC and the Panel needed to be mindful of the Force's capacity to respond to challenge given the current circumstances.

Police and Crime Panel Work Programme 2018/19

The Working Group suggested the follow agenda items:

14 March 2019

- Road Safety – Update
- Consultation and Engagement Strategy Update

20 June 2019

- Annual Report of the PCC
- Annual Report of the PCP
- Post Alliance Arrangements

19 September 2019

- Police and Crime Plan 2016-2021 - Post October 2019
- Victims Services Review

The Group also asked the OPCC to provide an update on the rural crime team once it was established and operational. The Group noted the item on the Community Safety Partnerships requested at the last meeting and felt that the Panel would have to consider how best to approach the subject.

It was also agreed that the Commissioner's update report which came to the Panel as a standing item would include an update on officer recruitment and would detail any lobbying undertaken by the Commissioner regarding the police funding formula.

Register of gifts

The Chair stated confirmed that he had reviewed the register of gifts and that it was up to date and there were no items which he felt required further investigation.

Date of Future Meetings

13 May 2019

Close of Meeting