



OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR BEDFORDSHIRE
PERFORMANCE AND GOVERNANCE BOARD
Tuesday 26 March 2024

Attendees:	Festus Akinbusoye, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC - FA)
	Anna Villette, Chief Executive OPCC (AV)
	Dan Vajzovic, Deputy Chief Constable – Force (DV)
	Fiona Dawson, Staff Officer - Force (FD)
	Wayne Humberstone, Director of OPCC Operations – OPCC (WH)
	Katie Beaumont, Head of Governance and Transparency - OPCC (KB)
	Phil Wells, Chief Finance Officer – Force / OPCC (PW)
	Samantha Denness, Performance and Accountability Manager – OPCC (SD)
	Bethany Coles – OPCC Minute Taker

Agenda Item	
ITEM 1	Apologies: John Murphy
Welcome	Minutes from previous meeting were ratified and to be published. No matters arising.
ITEM 2	2.1 Actions from previous meetings
OPCC Questions or items to raise	All actions have been added into agenda items for this current meeting.
	2.2 Information Document for Publication
	The PCC thanked the Force for the submissions for the Information Document and this now will be published on the OPCC website along with the minutes from February.
ITEM 3	3.1 Crime performance figures with restricted detail
Performance Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DV introduced the paper. The reporting year is from April – February and with the most recent figures, recorded crime is down by 1.5% and there is some good progress being made. DV stated that if you look at if Bedfordshire is a safe county, the answer is a resounding yes. Bedfordshire is ranked 11th crimes per 1,000 population. If you look at solved rates there has been some improvements as well as reductions in outcomes. We have seen our detection rates run from 10.9% to positive outcomes up to 11.2%. Other Forces are also improving and we are ranked 33rd out of 43 Forces so not where we want to be but an improving picture.

- The PCC asked around the detection rates from 12 months ago. Are we seeing more officers going to jobs quicker? What is driving this?
- DV stated he doesn't have that figure in front of him however there are two Superintendents working on this and therefore stability in command. We are unified in view that we need to double efforts around investigation. Firstly, there is work being completed around Out of Court Disposals. The Criminal Justice System is currently under huge pressure. DV is keen as a Force and Criminal Justice Service to try and bring justice sooner. There are a lot of cases where there are interventions which can be put into place.
- PCC asked are you able to reassure residents that this isn't a shortcut? It is important to see that Out of Court Disposals are not a 'get out of jail card'.
- DV stated if you think of a 15-year-old who has not been in trouble before but gets caught with a knife. In every circumstance where someone is caught, they should be put before a court. There are significant delays with the Criminal Justice System and if this person gets charged, they may get dealt with in 18 months. They are then waiting for case to be assessed, with previous risks. If we as a Criminal Justice Service can provide a different path, provide an outcome, and put them down a different route, then this can be a very positive message to community.
- PCC asked are you satisfied we are explaining Out of Court Disposals and what they are?
- DV stated a very good point. When it is explained, the public are very supportive of Out of Court Disposals. We are focussing on this and have made it mandatory that all front-line officers investigate crime.
- PCC stated when he does walkarounds, not all officers are happy about this, however he recognises this always happens with change. The PCC stated he is always keen with change that there is ongoing explanation to officers as to why this is necessary. Do we want to have a Force where officers only know how to do one thing?
- DV stated vast majority of officers do understand and that we are building culture for long term. DV also noted that Out of Court Disposals are changing to Out of Court Resolutions as part of the communications and messaging to the public.
- WH stated that the OPCC are working closely with the Force on this. The PCC spoke with Chair of Magistrate Bench and was given feedback from Out of Court Disposals Scrutiny Group. Previously he was concerned and wasn't sure we had the balance right however he was reassured with the Scrutiny Panel in place this is now working very well. PCC stated Scrutiny Panel works very well and adds layer of reassurance for the public. DV stated if OPCC members want to be invited then they are more than welcome to attend.

Overall Crime

- Regarding Facial Recognition and Technology, the PCC asked when is this landing?
- DV stated we need to work with retail businesses to improve security and preventive activity and work as a partnership for prolific offenders and protecting

vulnerable people. Regarding facial recognition, we have appointed a new Superintendent within Strategic Service Improvement Department (SSID) on review of facial recognition technology. Not just stores for prolific offenders, also public CCTV, examining CCTV reactively and using technology in other ways.

- PCC stated in your experience do you find that a thief only specialises in one type of area? Or do you find they will also burgle homes, take valuables from cars?
- DV stated the picture is looking at the offenders. There are shoplifters who are vulnerable for lots of different reasons. Some offenders may feel consequences are lower for shoplifting than burglary. If we target through Operation Belleville which focusses on the most prolific and these individuals are causing most harm in our communities.
- The PCC stated he is blown away by outcomes for both Bedford and Luton. A Business Owner in Bedford informed the PCC that December through to February was the quietest they have had for shoplifters in around 20 years.
- DV stated we are now up to full strength with our community teams up to the end of the financial year and are at 70.
- The PCC asked how long can this be sustained if it is a one-off operation? What are plans to make this part of business as usual?
- DV stated this is an operation for prolific offenders. Jaki Whittred is developing long term strategy for the whole of Beds Police. Also work on facial recognition as well as support from OPCC and those who fund.
- The PCC asked around car thefts which he stated is a commonly raised issue now. Is there any data from other Forces on what is happening? Or any local Force colleagues raised anything surrounding this, as it cannot just be Bedfordshire?
- DV stated he has not heard of anything recently. The types of offences have changed, and high value vehicles have been stolen where keys are taken, disappearing, and turning up internationally. The market has changed, and we will continue to monitor and review good practice.
- PCC said is there anything the Force can do via comms for example keys left on kitchen table for high value cars? Is there anything from a prevention point of view?
- PW stated information will be going out on the website on this as a campaign.
- The PCC raised faraday wallets. Some insurance companies now invalidate policies if faraday signalling blocking systems are not used. DV stated a balance should be struck, people should be able to go about their life without being blamed. Through a communications campaign we can put messages out there to the public on reducing the likelihood and making criminals lives more difficult to target.
- PCC said on an operational level are the Force deploying resources into trying to deal with this issue?
- DV stated yes.

Outcome 14 Victim does not support and no named suspects

- Regarding victims supporting investigation, the PCC asked why is this declining?
- DV stated that surrounding outcome 14, this explains that the victim does not support prosecution but that also we do not have named suspect. The numbers reduced from 368 in December, 293 in January and 261 in February. This isn't a sustainable decrease.

Outcome 16 (Suspect - victim does not support)

- The PCC asked surrounding outcome 16 – what is happening here in your view?
- DV stated that the report explains about detections. The number of offences solving is increasing, since crime levels are broadly static, unsolved crimes slightly decreasing.
- PCC stated reductions in personal robberies and sexual offences – trend in last month. Is this going to be sustained?
- DV stated we are doing huge amounts of work through the Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit (VERU) on serious youth violence which also relates to personal robberies. There is a series of actions we are leading on. There is improvement in victim satisfaction, and we have invested across a number of teams.
- PCC asked in terms of disparity is this still the case that Black and Asian people are disproportionality more likely to be a victim as well as a suspect?
- DV stated that disparity levels are reducing.

Hate Crime

- The PCC stated it seems in Bedfordshire that almost every single crime level, Black and Asian are more likely to be a victim and suspect including hate crime. How is that happening?
- DV stated that he hasn't seen the figure nationally.
- The PCC asked have you seen any crime types where there hasn't been the disparity?
- DV stated that broadly more crime happens in urban areas than rural areas. Societally there is a disproportionate level of unrepresented groups in urban deprived communities. Since communities are disproportionality affected, it is not surprising within the data.
- The PCC asked specifically with hate crime, if this is the true picture and if there is an issue with the system on how crimes are being dealt with, work could be completed. With hate crime, talk through how it is more likely that a Black or Asian person could be a suspect for a hate crime?
- PW stated this is an action to look over last 12 months.

Action: *To look at the disparities with data relating to hate crime and the trend over the previous 12 months and report back in 6 months (September 2024)*

- PW stated that the data is reported one month at a time and is not comparing to previous months. Kimberley Lamb has a longer term understanding of the trends and is reviewing the victim and suspect side. We should not be dwelling on data which is based on one crime and should look at overall picture.

Action: *Information to be included in April 2024 Performance and Governance Board for improving policing for Black people in Bedfordshire.*

- PCC would like to look at 12-month data and review. PW stated he doesn't think percentages will be high in comparison to month by month. System should be fair irrespective of race.

Case Loads

- The PCC stated that there is an increase from previous month with caseloads. What are the Force's plans for addressing this?
- DV stated this is an ongoing piece of work going through systems and updates in place and is ongoing business as usual. We are trying to ensure good practice across all teams and deal with workload including investigating quickly.
- The PCC asked around the 5331 figure, what is that as a percentage for caseloads?
- DW stated less than half.
- The PCC asked are we assigning more now than 12 months ago?
- DW stated can bring this back.

Action: *The PCC requested data over last few months around workloads/caseloads being assigned. The PCC requests this from the last 12 months and whether we are assigning more now than 12 months ago.*

- DV stated that he is confident we can get outstanding suspects figure down below 1,000. DV stated that the focus is on highest harm offenders. PCC stated what he is hearing is prioritising resources to the highest risk.
- PW stated you can see a reduction with RASSO, Boson, and Emerald over the last few months.

Neighbourhood Crime

- PCC asked surrounding neighbourhood crime case loads?
- DV stated in terms of this, caseloads are increasing but trying our best to ensure allocated across teams.

Burglaries

- PCC stated is there anything to touch on regarding burglaries?

- DV stated performance remains good for domestic burglaries and we are at an unprecedented low.
- The PCC stated theft of motor vehicle in February, this has been going up? Why is it this crime is so difficult to resolve?
- DV stated if you went back 20 years and asked communities on issues with crime concerned about, it was predominantly burgling of house which has now decreased. Theft from motor vehicle has reduced and the same for personal robbery.
- KB asked within statistics disparity of crime types – KB asked for example can we look at Beford as the Asian community is six times more likely. DV stated twice as likely in Luton.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and Serious Sexual Offences

- The PCC stated that 30% of suspects gender is not being recorded, how does this work?
- DV stated this isn't the case for suspects, it is gender of offender not being recorded as we haven't identified suspect. For example, if someone says they were assaulted by someone, but no suspect identified.

Customer Support Report

- The PCC said there is an increase in complaints following police action – why is this happening and what is the usual reason? KB provided examples.
- DV stated that there is a lesson for us all in terms of reports, as the report is in the same format as previously presented. It would be helpful to go away and identify fields on tracking for longer periods of times and requesting authors for longer periods of data, as this report is one months of data, and we require longer term data.
- PCC asked how confident are you that public feedback following contact is being captured?
- DV stated we get a lot of feedback through dissatisfaction and victim surveys, and we also complete surveys for communities and community engagement events. DV stated it's not all captured in the same place but there are broad themes and trends. There is more we can do through the comms team with engagement platforms.

3.2 Spotlight Report – Priority 3 - Tackling the causes of crime and breaking the cycle of re-offending

- The PCC thanked for the report and asked can we keep grading for His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)?
- DV cannot determine at this stage.

Professional Standards Department (PSD) Cases

- The PCC asked are there any cases with cause for concern on officers with the public?
- DV stated that he oversees all cases that sit within the Professional Standards Department (PSD). There are a small number of cases which cause significant concern and disappointment however can only discuss cases which are finalised.
- DV stated that the PSD is progressing, providing positive outcomes, getting outcomes quickly.
- The PCC explained he is not in any way, shape or form explaining that officers should not use force. There are one too many cases where officers should have used force to protect themselves, their colleagues, or the public. It is ensuring that the balance is struck. We do not, not, want officers to use their powers but there is a way it is expected to be done. The balance should be fair with ongoing engagement and dialogue with officers.
- DV stated nationally we have got significant consideration for firearms officers and their use of force.

3.3 Domestic Abuse Update Paper

Domestic Abuse (DA) Crime Investigation

- The PCC asked what do you expect the review and process to look like for Emerald?
- KB asked what does this look like?
- DV stated all standard and medium risk referrals are flagged up on the original risk assessment and is then reviewed and assessed by the Public Protection Unit (PPU) Hub. Anything assessed as high risk is for the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) Team to review.

Victim Satisfaction Surveys

- The PCC asked is this just for Emerald? Should this be overall and as part of the review for victim satisfaction?
- DV stated that PPU and MARAC complete referrals to East London Foundation Trust (ELFT) and social care. Victim Care offered by Victim Engagement Officer's (VEO) or the officer in charge (OIC) depending on capacity. We also flag up Victim Care Services on Athena which can be accessed by victim. The VEO engages with most vulnerable victims. The VEO is embedded within the team.
- The PCC asked about the VERU report, and it is stating that the PCC oversees the VERU. This needs to be amended around governance structure as PCC provides funding but does not oversee. The oversight is from the Serious Harm Board.
- The PCC asked about review of VERU. DV and AV have a catch up surrounding this and will be able to feedback to the PCC.

- The PCC stated regarding Male Violence Against Women and Girls (MVAWG), there is no mention of Safer Streets. Is the Force working closely with the office on this?

Action: *To ensure the Force highlights Safer Streets information in the MVAWG report.*

- The PCC asked around MVAWG - how satisfied are you that people can report? How do you feel Force is doing?
- DV stated that he was more reassured a week ago. Individual cases come to DV's attention. As an Exec we should be and are clear on Force values. DV stated when an offence is brought to our attention surrounding a member of staff within the Force, this is taken very seriously. The outcome is dismissal from service.
- The Board discussed the Angiolini Inquiry and Report, DV stated some areas we need to work out how we implement without negative unintended consequences such as the recommendation of visiting the home of new officers. The PCC raised that some communities do not tell family they are officers or are against this.
- The PCC asked about the re-vetting process of the whole of the Force. Has this highlighted any issues?
- DV stated yes, as a result there are six people who haven't been through a full re-vet, of those six, four are ongoing, two are that vetting has been withdrawn. DV is satisfied on no historic vetting backlog.

Vetting Update

- DV stated that several cases being worked through on Operation Prevent. Work will take around 2 years to complete.

Public Protection Unit Domestic Abuse alarms

- The PCC asked what are these alarms?
- DV explained that if you have someone who is at risk of Domestic Abuse, with consent, the alarm is installed into their property and can be activated where they are subject to further Domestic Abuse incident. The alarm records 30 minutes of audio and allows better evidential capture of anything taking place. We have received our first activation in a recent investigation and subsequent prosecution which therefore shows that the alarms are of use.
- KB asked when pressed does it just record?
- DV said will be helpful to provide the case study.

Action: *PPU Domestic Abuse Alarms case study of recent investigation and subsequent prosecution to be provided by the Force.*

- WH stated there are a lot of different versions of the alarms.

Clare's Law

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PCC stated that the number of requests received are quite low? • DV confirmed that the Force have changed process and numbers have now increased. We are pushing out comms on the process and providing information on what Clare's Law is. We are now seeing that requests are increasing.
	<p>3.4 Serious Violence Update Paper</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PCC said solved rates is a good outcome. What work is being done around College of Policing, what does this entail with support? • DV stated that the College of Policing has several peer supporters and experts who can review what is being done. Peer supporters come in and look at good practice and provide information. • KB asked do they look at any area? • DV stated yes however this is specifically in relation to homicide. <p>Serious Youth Violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PCC said that there have been several incidents and what is Forces strategy on the outburst? • The PCC stated videos are always circulating of these incidents. Are we not getting people come forward who are stating they know the individuals in the videos and where they can be located such as their address? • FD stated yes. • The PCC said to include information in comms stating that public information helps assist in arresting. • DV stated we have got a clear Serious Youth Violence Engagement Strategy as a county, a multi-agency one. AV has been working with the Force and various other people around strengthening the governance process surrounding this. <p>Action: <i>Report to be submitted in June from the Liaison and Diversion Team surrounding the multi-agency response with serious youth violence following school half-term and summer break. KB will look at information submitted previously and provide to Fiona.</i></p>
	<p>3.5 Vetting Update Paper (Operation Protect)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DV updated that Operation Protect review all cases. 72 out of 377 cases have been finalised. We are getting through cases as quickly as we can. 99.9% of staff now have the correct level of vetting across Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and Hertfordshire (BCH). • The PCC asked what are the most common reasons on failing or losing vetting? • DV stated this is small numbers so couldn't say specific trend other than two broad categories around people who have done things and who doubt integrity. If you lose integrity, then you lose your job. The second category is associations. There are a couple of cases where individuals have lost vetting as they are associated

	<p>with those who are criminals. This causes doubt to a person's integrity or exposes the Force to too greater risk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PCC confirmed he would rather the bar is set so high that only good people get through rather than low and bad people get through.
ITEM 4 Risk	<p>4.1 Risk (Change in risk OPCC and Force)</p> <p>KB updated that the Pre-Election period starts today - Election Protocol is on the OPCC website and a piece is being released internally by the Force Comms department.</p> <p>All election requests to be passed to - BedsPCCElectionsInbox@beds.police.uk.</p>
ITEM 5 Collaboration	<p>5.1 Collaboration Updates:</p> <p>To be discussed at the Performance and Governance Board in April 2024.</p> <p>The PCC thanked Simon Parkes from ERSOU who is retiring and acknowledged his exemplary service to policing.</p>
ITEM 6 Complaints	<p>6.1: Chief Constable Complaints</p> <p>No complaints were raised.</p> <p>6.2: Reviews</p> <p>KB updated that there are none outstanding, and all completed. There is a document passed to the Force Exec around OPCC oversight on highlights with organisational learning.</p>
ITEM 7 Quarterly Reporting Efficiency Budget / Efficiency	<p>7.1 Any financial update prior to Police and Crime Plan</p> <p>PCC discussed the Special Grants announced yesterday. AV stated the budget takes a lot of hard work and work that the PCC and Chief Constable do to start the process of how this is built takes time and a lot of discussion. This is to be recognised on preparation as well as PW and his colleagues support provided.</p>
ITEM 8 IMU report Police and Crime Panel Requests AOB	<p>8.1 IMU Report – Tri – Force Monitoring Report</p> <p>IMU report noted.</p> <p>Any Other Business (AOB)</p> <p>FA thanked FD for her work and support and is very grateful for contributions.</p> <p>END</p>

Next Meeting: 26 April 2024