

 	<h2>Minutes: 1:1 PCC John Tizard & CC Trevor Rodenhurst</h2>
Date	Monday 8 th July 2024
Time	1400-1500
Venue	CC Rodenhursts Office, HQ
Name	Position
Trevor Rodenhurst (TR)	Chief Constable
John Tizard (JT)	Police and Crime Commissioner
Suzy Collings	PA Support (Minutes)

Open Session

1. **Welcome**

PCC Tizard opened the meeting.

2. **New Government**

The meeting began with discussions of the new Labour Government and the two new MP's now within Bedfordshire.

JT had sent a letter to the new Home Secretary congratulating her on her appointment, inviting her to visit Bedfordshire, describing the innovation taking place within the police service and making the case for reform of the funding arrangements. TR agreed this was a good starting point in addressing the lack of funding, special grants and our reliance on these along with the need for funding reform. TR suggested writing collectively to the MP's, explaining our position and setting up an early meeting. JT asked that the letter include that we are keen to contribute to delivering the mission of the government. TR also suggested a meeting with the Policing Minister. This would be an opportunity to show efficiencies achieved through collaboration, innovation, productivity, and priority-based budgeting.

The majority of the MP's have been elected. Blake Stephenson MP was on the Police and Crime Panel so has some knowledge of Bedfordshire policing. JT suggested offering Alex Mayer a tailored briefing as she is new to the county. TR and JT have both written to all the MP's congratulating them on their wins. The two new MP's have also been invited to an introductory call with TR.

Work is ongoing to determine the baseline for community policing. TR feels that as our model evolves, we will work more collaboratively across teams to focus more to local affecting communities such as shoplift/mobile phone thefts in the street/ASB in town centres. JT has been considering his Police and Crime Plan. TR feels that as our workforce grows in capability and capacity, in the future we may be able to revisit geographically having more aligned

resources that respond. This does not mean more police stations but could mean some more bases where resources deploy from.

JT stated that his police and crime plan will include the reinvigoration of local policing and that he wants community policing to be closer to and embedded in local neighbourhoods, problem solving with local communities, businesses, and councils. Local policing has to be hard edged and deployed in ways that builds public trust in policing.

JT said that the Home Secretary was concerned at the low level of public trust in policing. TR feels Bedfordshire Police have spent a lot of time with communities to increase trust, with a Cohesion team which is well embedded, and when this has been tested due to some difficult circumstances, communities have come together with the police in a positive way. There have been some significant issues nationally and some issues locally that have impacted confidence, but TR feels that a lot of work with the community has been done, to build trust locally, and we need to continue to build on that. JT concurred with this.

3. Pressures on Bedfordshire Police during Summer Months

JT asked if the summer pressures happen every year, why are these not being built into the plan, what are the risks associated with this and what would a worst-case scenario look like. TR explained that our resourcing picture, reduced over a long time and then grew acutely over a relatively short time. This means that we won't have all the skills where we want them for some time and when you combine this with high periods of demand over a number of weeks this creates real pressures. However, the approach this year is a 'summer plan' with daily command and control, as we are seeing some not insignificant increases in recorded crime. This should be considered the new normal as significantly improved 999 wait times and high crime recording standards will be behind much of the additional recording.

In the current context there is daily focused grip and oversight of the use of all resources so that adjustments can be made to ensure that no one unit is unable to meet its service level. TR is hopeful that next summer it will be a case of business as usual where resourcing has been built in to reflect demand as capacity grows. TR feels that overall demand is following the projection but with higher rates than previous years. The Force Control Room (FCR) is performing considerably better and there is now no failure demand and calls are being answered quickly. A plan has been put in place to look at resourcing across the board to ensure the cover is there. This plan looks at each day, hour by hour and has mapped every team across the organisation. It is expected to be a busy summer, but TR is content that plans ensure the best possible use of resources.

JT said that he was reassured but wanted to have regular updates and would expect a detailed report to the next Performance and Governance Board. He would expect that in future years the summer pressures were part of the plan and not regarded as an exceptional event.

JT asked what risks could tip the situation to being critical. TR explained that if there was a major critical incident, where resources needed to be surged for a period of time, this will always be possible but may have an impact – both morale and welfare - on the workforce (ie more cancelled time off) or service levels to some demand types

JT asked about antisocial behaviour. TR said that it is not being overlooked and resources are still being targeted towards them, an operational look at the anti-social use of off-road motorbikes being one example. TR feels we will be in better place next year but there are lots of factors to consider, for example some intake programme lengths changed 2 years ago from 2 to 3 years and so training is taking longer for some officers, reducing the speed at which officers are fully deployable. However, the retention rate continues to improve with officer attrition at 7% and so this will mean we will grow increased capacity.

TR explained that another risk was around our proactivity, which in turn has a crime reduction effect, as this is sometimes reduced when resourcing pressures are acute, as some of these resources are pushed into reactive work. JT agreed it sounds as this is being addressed but if TR feels the pressures escalate, he would like to know. TR expects the summer measures to be in place be effective from now until the beginning of September.

4. Police and Crime Plan 2024-28

JT explained that public consultation on the key objectives for the plan would commence week beginning 22nd July.

The plan would then be completed by the end of August for approval by the Police and Crime Panel in September. There will be two stages – one from October 2024 to March 2025 and for the rest of his tenure in office. The plan for April 2025 to May 2028 will be published in March 2025. This would allow time for greater stakeholder engagement, to take into account the new government's plans and spending review, and to ensure alignment with the police budget for 2025-2028. Mission Boards will be established to develop the plan and drive its implementation. These boards will involve stakeholders and will report into the current governance arrangements.

JT said the plan needs to be ambitious and stretching but needs to be achievable to be delivered. It must contain measurable outcome objectives to ensure delivery and accountability. There is a Police and Crime Panel next week which will be a workshop to discuss the key objectives.

5. People and Workforce

JT asked what impact the current pressures have on individual staff as opposed to the collective. TR explained that the response teams are the ones that feel the most impact as it will become harder to take leave and some rest days will be cancelled. There is also concern over their high workload. Quite a few of the Sergeants in Response are acting/temporary in rank but this is part of the workforce plan to improve.

TR explained that morale issues occur when some members of staff have more rest days cancelled than other members without a logical reason. Resource management can be difficult, but the workforce optimisation tool is going live this week for postings and thereafter resource management, which will enable us to ask the AI to share the load more equally.

TR reported that our overall attrition rate continues in the right direction, and this is helped by the fact that we now have the lowest number of retirees comparatively to other forces. We do have the highest number of resignations in the first two years, but we also have the highest

number of people under 5 years' service in the country and if you are going to find out that policing is not for you, it will be in the first few years.

JT ask what TR thought JT would hear if he were to speak to officers. TR said that, mainly in response, the feeling would be that there was not enough of them or enough of them for what they are being asked to do. The intention for the force vision days was to be able to update the workforce on how this picture will be improving and that their concerns are being heard. Feedback from the vision events (having spoken to 1850 of the workforce) has been overwhelmingly positive.

JT said that whilst he was not going to engage in management issues, he was going to have regular meetings with the Police Federation, Unison and the Superintendent's Association.

JT asked about sickness levels. TR did not have the figures with him, but states much has been done to grow a welfare team and that we can bring sickness detail into performance and governance board formally. JT said he would wish to see these statistics at future Performance and Governance Boards.

TR has a regular call with Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire Chief Constables, and they are reporting similar feelings in their forces as it feels that demand is increasing in most areas compared to previous years.

6. Innovation

TR reports that Beds use more AI than any other force. One of the main areas of development at the moment is the workforce optimisation module which allows us to look at all the information from all the systems in one place and to be able to answer questions from this quickly. This should make a real difference to the resource management soon.

The redaction tool gave the equivalent of ten detectives back per year.

JT said that he had spoken to external experts who agreed that Bedfordshire is leading on many aspects of technological led innovation and said that he would wish to set up an innovation fund to support further investment.

JT had been speaking to a constable who explained that when they arrest someone it can take a good 4 hours to complete the process. TR explained that the Athena upgrade is happening this week which will mean that more than one person will be able to access the same records at the same time which should in turn speed up the case management aspect which is currently the most time consuming and arguably the least efficient element of the process.

7. Preparing for HMICFRS

TR explained that there was part to the inspection which has taken place recently before the full inspection in September, which was crime data integrity. TR had been discussing this with our crime registrar and has seen the agreed assessment of our crime data integrity which seems to show a strong performance.

The main inspection starts in September. From the last inspection there were two questions that we were judged to require improvement. One area was in responding to the public. TR

believes we have made good progress to this in terms of how quickly we get to people on the phone, but improvement is still needed in how quickly we physically get to people – ‘response times’. TR believes we will be able to show a good plan of what our improvement journey looks like. Investigating crime also needed improvement. We are not currently solving as much crime as TR would like however the current workforce plan will deliver resourcing for investigations being fully up to strength for the first time in many years by spring 2025.

JT is keen to understand the correlation between TR assessment and the HMICFRS assessment. He would expect a strong correlation. TR believes we have made progress in all the areas that required improvement the test will be whether we have made enough however what we will have is a clear plan on how improvements continue to be made.

JT said that he would wish to be involved in the strategic preparation for the inspection and that he regards external inspections as important for any learning organisation.

8. Closed Agenda Item

Not minuted.