

SOUTH YORKSHIRE'S POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

11 JUNE 2020

PRESENT: Dr Alan Billings (Police and Crime Commissioner)
Michelle Buttery (Chief Executive and Solicitor)
Sophie Abbott (Interim Chief Finance Officer)
Erika Redfearn (Head of Governance)
Fiona Topliss (Community Engagement & Communications Manager)
Kevin Wright (Evaluation & Scrutiny Officer)
Sally Parkin (Governance and Compliance Manager)
Lyndsey Dudley (Senior Communications Officer)
Stephen Watson (Chief Constable)
Mark Roberts (Deputy Chief Constable)
David Hartley (Assistant Chief Constable)
Tim Forber (Assistant Chief Constable)
Lauren Poultney (Assistant Chief Constable)
Jackie Bland (Interim Director of Resources)
Debbie Carrington (Interim Head of Finance)
Shaun Morley (District Commander, Doncaster)
Andrew Lockley (Chair of the Ethics Panel)
Steve Wragg (Chair of the Joint Independent Audit Committee)
Cllr Garry Weatherall (Sheffield City Council)

APOLOGIES: Carrie Goodwin and Councillor Paul Wood

1 **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Commissioner welcomed those who had dialled into meeting, including Councillors Short, Grocutt and Steinke, members of the Police and Crime Panel, and three members of the press (P Whitehouse, G Dennison and G Torr).

2 **SOUND RECORDING NOTIFICATION**

The Commissioner confirmed that the meeting was being sound recorded and, subject to the sound quality, would be published on the website.

3 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

4 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

5 URGENT ITEMS

The Commissioner made reference to the death of George Floyd. He highlighted the conflict around people wanting to remain at home and not gather in large numbers and the impulse to stand with those who are discriminated against because of the colour of their skin.

The Commissioner commended the Force on the measured and supportive way the Force had managed the protests.

The Commissioner highlighted that protestors have an obligation to think imaginatively to enable social distancing to be maintained whilst protecting people, particularly those who are vulnerable.

6 ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

There were no items to be considered in the absence of the public and press.

7 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

8 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD HELD ON 12 MAY 2020

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

9 MATTERS ARISING/ACTIONS

390	The uplift position would be monitored and a full picture established and presented at a future PAB 11/06/2020 - Ongoing
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D Carrington enquired whether this was just a financial position or a wider position. The financial position would be covered in the July's budget monitoring report.

The Commissioner highlighted that this had been requested by the public through the Police and Crime Panel and asked for a financial position with context.

D Carrington agreed to confirm timescales so that this could be added to the work programme.

10 FORCE PERFORMANCE - DONCASTER DISTRICT SUMMARY UPDATE

A report of the Chief Constable was presented to the Board. The purpose of the report was to provide a brief update in relation to local operationally based delivery of the Police and Crime Plan in Doncaster, in line with the reporting requirements.

The Commissioner thanked S Morley for the report. He highlighted the use of acronyms in the report and asked report writers to remember that the reports are in the public domain.

The Commissioner also asked that consideration be given to district reports following the same format. He highlighted that this had been raised by members of the Police and Crime Panel who would find it useful to be able to make comparisons.

The Commissioner referred to neighbourhood policing teams working closely with partners and enquired if the teams are co-located. S Morley confirmed that over the last 12 months Doncaster district had developed very close working relationships with Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) at both a strategic and operational level. There is a general agreement with DMBC that when the Force develops its neighbourhood policing teams this will incorporate DMBC staff to create a multi-agency problem solving team. A good example of this is the team at Edlington where, on a weekly basis, meetings take place between agencies to effectively resolve issues for vulnerable and high demand individuals. This has resulted in a reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour.

The Commissioner enquired about the locality based model with DMBC and other partners. S Morley confirmed that this involved multi-agency meetings with key stakeholders to ensure community safety issues and problems are addressed effectively at a local level and in a coordinated way.

The Commissioner highlighted Operation Tazz and enquired about the impact of Covid-19 and whether any learning had taken place as a result of this. Operation Tazz was introduced in 2018 as part of a partnership approach, alongside a number of other agencies, to tackle the issue of street begging and spice use.

S Morley confirmed that Covid-19 had created some real challenges which have required sensitive and careful policing to ensure Government guidelines have been followed.

S Morley highlighted communities such as the Roma Slovak community where a multi-agency approach had been taken in relation to leaflet being produced in different languages.

Increased visibility has been undertaken to reassure residents and deter breaches of the regulations had taken place.

The Commissioner raised residential burglary and confirmed that the Force was an outlier in this area. He enquired why residential burglaries had increased in the middle of 2019. S Morley confirmed that the rise in 2019 was as a result of known offenders being released into the community from prison who then became active. A more robust process is now in place.

Since November 2019 Doncaster has started to see a consistent reduction in residential burglaries which has accelerated in the last few months. May 2020 saw the lowest recorded number of residential burglaries for some substantial time. This is a picture that has been replicated across the whole country as a result of government restrictions.

The Commissioner highlighted that Doncaster has “fewer than one robbery a day” and enquired if this was a result of knowing who the perpetrators are. S Morley confirmed that it was. Most robberies are fairly low level and intelligence reports are used to effectively and quickly assist with investigations. All robberies are investigated to ensure the level is kept down.

The Commissioner noted the success of the Prison Crime Unit.

The Commissioner highlighted the improved response times and enquired how this had been achieved. Doncaster district has introduced a Resource Management Sergeant (RMS) to the team. This is a dedicated role responsible for the management of the active queue demand, assessing vulnerability and the prioritisation of incidents. This enables officers to get to incidents quicker and improves the quality of the service and outcomes for victims.

The Commissioner enquired if this was sustainable. S Morley confirmed that demand has returned to pre Covid-19 levels and this is being sustained.

The Commissioner highlighted the expansion of Doncaster’s domestic abuse teams and enquired where the additional resources had come from. S Morley stated this was as a result of the increase in officer numbers and the improved management of demand which has enabled the district to be able to reorganise resources. Doncaster has been able to move experienced staff into the domestic abuse teams and this has impacted positively on the quality of outcomes.

Building on this improvement Doncaster will be implementing a further expansion of its Domestic Abuse Unit in August 2020 when a third team will be established. This investment will ensure Doncaster continues to improve its service delivered to domestic abuse victims, whilst improving the quality and standards of investigations, ultimately leading to better outcomes for those victims.

The Commissioner welcomed the introduction of an advisory group of young people and highlighted that he would like to meet them in person once Government restrictions were lifted.

S Morley highlighted that he was proud of the response provided by officers in Doncaster over the last three months. Officers have had to go into difficult situations and have been subject to assaults, being coughed on and spat at.

Absenteeism is the lowest it has been for some time and this demonstrates staff motivation.

The Commissioner asked S Morley to pass on his thanks on behalf of the public.

It was agreed that:

- **Consideration be given to district reports following the same format**

11 COVID 19 UPDATE (TO INCLUDE DOMESTIC ABUSE UPDATE)

D Hartley provided an update on the Force’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Force held its first Gold meeting on 5 February 2020 in relation to the concerns around Covid-19. This early investment has proved to be beneficial.

The support provided to officers and staff has resulted in low abstraction and infection rates.

The Force has maintained full capacity with no real change to the service provided to the public. The only change has been in relation to the type of demand.

The Force has a 20 strong Covid tasking team. A victim response team is in place which has had to deal with three times more deaths than usual.

Legal Services has undertaken an excellent job in interpreting the legislation and providing officers with guidance.

Internal media and communications has been strong with a bespoke App being developed to provide daily Covid-19 updates. This also offers support in relation to staff welfare.

At no point did the Force experience a shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

The Force continues to hold weekly Gold meeting.

Analysts have provided accurate Covid-19 related intelligence and information. The Commissioner acknowledged this work.

D Hartley confirmed that the current structure is still in place and will move into the recovery phase on the 4 July.

The Commissioner congratulated the Force on the impressive way it had managed some difficult situations during the Covid-19 pandemic. He also highlighted how quickly the Force reacted to issues in local care homes before care home issues were recognised nationally.

D Hartley highlighted the excellent work undertaken by the Local Resilience Forum.

D Hartley confirmed that demand had reduce following the close of retail premises and the night-time economy. Demand is now back to normal levels but is still changing. It is anticipated that there will be an increase in the number of violent and alcohol related crime as the lockdown eases.

Like the rest of the country domestic abuse dropped by around 100 incidents a week during the first two weeks of lockdown. A number of interventions were put in place to address this, including increased online reporting facilities and a radio media campaign.

The Force would normally expect around 650 incident a week this has now increased to 750. The Force welcomes this increase which means vulnerable victims have the confidence to report abuse.

D Hartley confirmed that there had been no change in the capacity to deal with domestic abuse.

The Commissioner acknowledged the view that victims have the confidence to report domestic abuse.

12 FORCE PERFORMANCE REPORT AGAINST POLICE AND CRIME PLAN 2017-2021 (RENEWED 2019) - TREATING PEOPLE FAIRLY

A report of the Chief Constable was presented to the Board. The purpose of the report was to provide an update on the progress against the 'treating people fairly' outcome of the Police and Crime Plan 2017-2021 in support of the Commissioner's overarching aim of South Yorkshire being a safe place in which to live, learn and work.

The Commissioner highlighted the virtual court solution implemented by IT Shared Services and commended the Force on the speed in which it had dealt with issues resulting from Covid-19.

M Roberts acknowledged that custody is a difficult environment and highlighted the concerns around keeping visitors, such as solicitors, detainees and staff safe. The Force continue to arrest people and detainees need to be interviewed safely.

Detainees are dealt with by remote court where possible.

Jury trials have been suspended and there is now a backlog.

The Commissioner enquired if virtual courts were just taking place at Shepcote Lane or in all custody suites. M Roberts confirmed that the facility was available in all custody suites.

[Note - Additional information was provided after the meeting].

The Commissioner enquired about virtual consultation. M Roberts confirmed that the Force is able to interact with members of the public without the need to attend a police building by using a customisable virtual consultation service. This provides a cloud-based e-signature.

The Commissioner raised the BME representation in the Force and expressed disappointment that the Force had not been able to make progress in this area. He enquired if there was anything to be learnt from other forces.

M Roberts confirmed that the Force do take BME representation seriously and highlighted that the Force had achieved a degree of success. The Force had won an award for being an employer of choice.

M Roberts highlighted the selection process and acknowledged that the Force and HR are alive to the current situation and are ensuring there are no blockages.

The Force is also awaiting feedback from the Commissioner's Independent Ethics Panel (IEP) in relation to whether they have identified any barriers with the recruitment process.

M Roberts highlighted the benefits of working for the police and provided reassurance that this was a good career choice.

The apprenticeship scheme comes on line soon. This will give people the chance to study for a degree who may not previously have had the opportunity.

M Roberts highlighted the media reports around racism in policing and suggested that this would not help the recruitment process. He re-emphasised the positive

steps the Force is undertaking in relation to recruitment including the work with the IEP and other equality and diversity groups.

The Commissioner confirmed he had asked the IEP to look at this and invited A Lockley to comment.

A Lockley referred to his exception report presented at the last meeting of the Board which highlighted recruitment and promotion of BME officers as two areas of concern. He highlighted the under-representation at sergeant rank which has become more acute with the promotion of several BME sergeants to inspector in 2019. The IEP is trying to establish if there is any learning from other forces.

A Lockley stated that this did not mean the IEP did not appreciate the work the Force has been doing in this area.

M Roberts confirmed that the Force did speak to other forces to try to bring in learning. He highlighted that this was a difficult issue with no simple answer. The Force does review its recruitment processes regularly.

The Chief Constable highlighted that the Force is undertaking a positive action campaign. He confirmed that the Force was alive to what other forces are doing. No force has a stand out example of what should be undertaken.

The Chief Constable confirmed that there was no complacency on the part of the Force. Work is taking place to ensure there are no barriers for people from a BME background to enter the Force.

The Chief Constable encouraged people from a BME background to give the recruitment process a go and see where they get to. He highlighted that the Force want people with the right qualities and values.

The Commissioner acknowledged this was an area under some scrutiny and confirmed that he would continue to ask the IEP to look at this.

M Roberts highlighted the fantastic support the Force had received during the Covid-19 pandemic from Special Constables. A number Specials had been furloughed and had put themselves at risk by giving even more time to the Force.

The Commissioner highlighted that he had provided a statement in support of Special Constables.

13 THE POST COVID LANDSCAPE

A report of the Chief Executive and Solicitor was presented to the Board on how policing coped with Covid-19 in the lockdown phase.

The Commissioner highlighted that he sits on the Economic Recovery Group, chaired by the Mayor. There is concern around the impact on employment for the under 25's. The most vulnerable may turn to criminality.

M Buttery highlighted that the report provides information on the emergency legislation and how the Force dealt with this.

Non-crime demands on police have continued, but the Force and the police service nationally have taken the opportunity during lockdown to pursue investigations and to follow up on those wanted for arrest and on warrant; a clearing of the decks.

M Buttery highlighted that it is imperative that the service retains public confidence through continuing to enforce emergency powers appropriately and proportionately, and through their response to the changing nature and levels of crime predicted over the coming months.

The Commissioner's commissioning team continues to pursue external funding opportunities to maximise the funding available for policing and crime services in South Yorkshire.

M Buttery highlighted the wider criminal justice system. The Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) is holding fortnightly meetings, chaired by the Commissioner. The focus is on recovery planning. A task and finish group is looking at data gathering and the backlog in the courts. Addressing the backlog is essential for victims and witnesses.

The Commissioner, along with other PCCs nationally, has regular telephone conversations with Ministry of Justice and Home Office ministers. Concerns are in relation to the backlog of jury trials and the likelihood of increases attrition rates of witnesses. The last jury trials took place on 25 March 2020.

T Forber highlighted that over the last six to eight months the Force had worked hard to improve investigations to increase judicial outcomes for victims, and this will continue to increase. Over the Covid-19 period the Force has continued to process offenders, around 60 to 80 offenders per day. However, an outcome is not achieved for the victim until they have been to court. At the moment the Force is not able to give the victim a clear idea of how long it is going to take to get to court.

The Commissioner and Force will work with partners to ensure outcomes are delivered and provide a service to victims.

14 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

A report of the Chief Executive and Solicitor was presented to the Board. The purpose was:

- to explain the work being undertaken to continue with the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) statutory obligation to engage with the public and hold the Chief Constable to account for his engagement, and
- to outline how the Office is understanding how the public is feeling in relation to the police's application of emergency legislation in relation to the coronavirus outbreak and how local

F Topliss confirmed that the PCC's Communications and Engagement Team continue to monitor correspondence and concerns.

Over the last month there has been a decrease in the number of Covid-related concerns and a return to more general concerns, including anti-social behaviour,

drugs, off-road biking and burglary. There has also been significant support for the police and the work that they are doing across communities.

Specific to the Covid situation there has been a slight increase in social media comment around young people and asking parents if they know where their children are during lockdown.

Recently there has been an increase in reports of litter and in particular on fields and parks where groups of teenagers are meeting.

Consideration is being given as to how the Commissioner maintains contact with groups and individuals to gather their concerns and feedback on issues that are affecting them and their communities relating to policing services, during the pandemic.

15 PCC DECISIONS

A report of the Chief Executive and Solicitor was presented to the Board. The purpose of the report was to provide the Board with a record of key decisions taken by the PCC outside of this Board since the last PAB meeting.

E Redfearn highlighted one decision which was considered to be of public interest.

The Star Education Project was a one-off project to develop education resources for children in Sheffield who do not have easy access to the internet or suitable devices to continue with their home schooling during the Covid lockdown.

The Commissioner sponsored one supplement which was published on 28 May 2020 and included eight pages of activities for young people in both primary and secondary schools. It also included a question and answer session with the Commissioner and a column where Dr Billings encouraged young people to consider a career in the police.

Working with the Violence Reduction Unit and the Prince's Trust a guest editor was identified to work with the Star. Mike Thompson is a former young offender who has transformed his life and now works with vulnerable young people.

The paper was provided free of charge to 133 different outlets, including schools, children's nurseries and centres; foodbanks and voluntary organisations across Sheffield.

16 PAB WORK PROGRAMME

M Buttery confirmed that the work programme provided a look ahead to future reports.

The results of the neighbourhood policing survey would be provided to the July PAB meeting once discussed with ACC Forber at the Trust and Confidence Board.

17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS - TO BE NOTIFIED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MEETING

There were no any other business.

18 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

7 July 2020 at 10am.

CHAIR

