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Edward Leigh
Chair
Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel
c/o Jane Webb
Peterborough City Council

22nd May 2020

Dear Edward

I hope you all found our telecon last week useful and informative. In the same way I did for our previous call in April, I thought it would be useful to provide my responses to the questions we discussed in order that these can be circulated to Panel members. This response can be found at Appendix 1.

I appreciate the Panel will inevitably be interested in the policing response to the current crisis. However, I wish to reiterate that the Panel are mindful that any such operational matter that they may seek to scrutinise me on which is relevant to their challenge and support of my role, would also place an unnecessary burden on the Constabulary in responding to.

I hope the responses provided will enable the Panel to both gain reassurance as how I am holding the Chief Constable to account at this unprecedented time and how the Panel can support and scrutinise the work of myself and my office.

Yours sincerely,

Acting Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Enc - Appendix 1 - Responses to questions discussed on Panel telecon on 14th May 2020

Appendix 2 - Crime and Disorder Reduction Grant Allocations Comparison

Acting Police and Crime Commissioner's response to questions raised on telecon on 14th May 2020

Participants:

Police and Crime Panel: Edward Leigh, Cllr Sharp, Fiona McMillan, Jane Webb. **Office of the**

Police and Crime Commissioner: Ray Bisby, Jim Haylett, Aly Flowers **Cambridgeshire**

Constabulary: Nick Dean, Chief Constable, Jon Lee, Director of Finance and Resources.

1. Police headcount 'Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Month 11 2019/20', Agenda 10.0, April BCB

Both the Acting Commissioner and Chief Constable are pleased with the good progress that Cambridgeshire Constabulary (the "Constabulary") has made in recruiting and training the additional number of new officers. It is also pleasing to see a good number of applications still coming through, with application numbers remaining stable during the Covid-19 crisis.

1.1 Question: Local Policing 69 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) over strength in officers - relative to budgeted numbers or new target?

Response: The 69 FTE over strength includes 21 Uplift officers that were not accounted for in the budget but for which the Constabulary subsequently received a grant for from the Home Office. Officer numbers flowed under and over establishment during the year due to the recruitment cycle not corresponding exactly to retirees/leavers; most of the first six months of the year the officer numbers were under establishment and as a consequence that is where the underspend came from. Also, additional Sergeant posts were planned for the whole year but only started in September.

1.2 Question: 25 FTE under strength in staff - Is this COVID-19-related or a system problem?

Response: This is not related to the Covid crisis. Figures given in the Business Co-ordination Board (BCB) report are to the end of February 2020. Most vacancies are in areas with traditionally high turnover i.e. the Demand Hub. There were also vacancies in teams which were undergoing restructures, such as the Corporate Development Department.

1.3 Question: 7 FTE under strength in PCSOs.

Response: At year end there were 72.81 FTE against a budget of 80 FTE. The 2020/21 budget is for 80 FTE. The Chief Constable has no plans to recruit any additional PCSOs in the next 12 months.

1.4 **Question: How is the strengthening of the force with new recruits as forecast in the budget, reinforced by statements from the Prime Minister, proceeding? How is this shortfall in staff affecting recruitment, training and support of officers?**

Response: As part of the overall target to recruit an additional 20,000 officers nationally within three years, the Constabulary have made good progress in recruiting and training the additional number of officers agreed by the Home Office.

Since last October when the National Uplift Programme started up until March this year, the Constabulary has recruited 93 new officers, of which 21 of these were additional as part of the uplift target. The Constabulary's Deputy Chief Constable leads on the Uplift Programme across the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and Hertfordshire collaboration.

For the 2020/2021 year, the Constabulary has budgeted for an establishment of 1559 FTE officers including 41 for uplift. This is the highest number of officers Cambridgeshire has seen in recent years. Between March this year and next year, the Constabulary will be recruiting 159 new officers (144 new recruits and 15 Police Now), which includes an additional 41 officers as part of uplift. There is typically an intake of 18 officers joining each month who then start their training. The next full intake is on 18th May. The Constabulary expect to hear from the Home office this Autumn what the uplift targets for years 2 and 3 are.

With the lockdown, recruitment has continued after careful review into the way that the Constabulary recruit and train new officers ensuring the right measures and adjustments in place. Any shortfall in staffing is not affecting recruitment and training of officers or staff.

The Constabulary continually review how they can encourage and increase the diversity of new officers joining them and have 'positive action work'. The latest figures as at the end of March 2019 for the proportion of the workforce that is classed as BME was over 4% of officers, over 9% of PCSOs, and over 3.8% of staff, when compared to 9.7% of the county's population being BME.

The Constabulary review the diversity data on new police officers joining against national averages. Currently new female police officers account for 36.9% of all new officers, which is in line with the national force averages on gender (30.4%). For new officers joining with a BME background they currently make up just under 8% of new officers joining; this is against a national average 6.9%.

The Wellbeing of both officers and staff is always a primary focus for the Constabulary. The Constabulary has implemented a number of measures during COVID-19 to ensure their staff and officers are being supported and these will be sustainable with a newly implemented dedicated tactical lead.

2. Police budget 'Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Month 11 2019/20', Agenda 10.0, April BCB

Questions: - *paras 4.4 and 4.5, Appendices 2 and 3 of the report*

The report that went to the April 2020 BCB meeting, to which these questions relate, is based on the reporting period until the end of February 2020, and therefore does not take account of the current Covid-19 crisis. The impacts of the Covid crisis will not have a significant impact in the 2019/20 Outturn. The impact on the 2020/21 budget is likely to be seen from period 2 onwards but this will be closely monitored.

2.1 Question: Budget variances are small in percentage terms, other than income - are there any areas the OPCC is concerned about?

Response: The report is based on the end of February 2020 position and things have moved on now with Covid-19. The Acting Commissioner has no real concerns regarding the budget and takes assurance from the fact that the budget is monitored on a monthly basis. The Constabulary has a strong Finance Team who the OPCC work closely with on an appropriate basis. The Capital Programme budget has dipped slightly down at year end.

2.2 Question: Standard pay expenses underspend by £199k - how does this reconcile with being "69 FTE over strength"? v overtime overspend £709k - Is this COVID-19 related?

Response: No it is not Covid-19 related; they are two separate budget lines. The Police Officer Pay & Allowances was prepared for full year costs of additional supervisors, but these were only part year costs. Overtime was incurred to meet operational needs and, although spend was a cause for concern in budgetary terms, the Constabulary are now undertaking rigorous quarterly monitoring to understand overtime requirements.

2.3 Question: BCH underspend includes relatively large underspends on ICT - Is this good or running late?

Response: The underspend is as a result of a mixture of staffing and non-staffing costs. On average approximately eight FTE posts have been vacant or predicted to be vacant at some point in the year, four of which were predicted to be vacant for the whole year.

The non-staffing underspend related to one-off savings in relation to a number of factors including contract renegotiations resulting in reduced costs, unused data credits, the closing down of dual running lines, but offset partially by a pressure in relation to contractual commitments, licenses and storage.

2.4 Question: Roads Policing Unit (RPU) underspend - Is this good or are resources being diverted elsewhere?

Response: A recruitment drive has been undertaken in RPU but some of the moves to those posts have been delayed as it means losing experienced officers from local policing. This position is under review with the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and

Hertfordshire collaborated Joint Protective Services Unit, who are responsible for the operation of the RPU.

2.5 Question: OPCC 'other running costs' underspend by 30% - How? Is workload now falling on too few staff?

Response: There was budget included for consultancy costs which was not required. The OPCC has just undergone a review of its staffing, with new ways of working being developed.

3. Crime and Disorder Grants 'OPCC approach to grants within the current pandemic', Agenda Item 11.0, April BCB

3.1 Question: Would it be possible to see this presented with additional details? The previous year's grant alongside the current, including non-renewed awards.

Response: The 2019/20 Crime and Disorder Reduction Grants are all available to view on the Acting Commissioner's website. The intended awards for 2020/21 were attached as an appendix to the April BCB report (reference above). In summary the only changes to highlight for 2020/21 are:

- An increased award to the Youth Offending Service to continue work started in 2019/20 supporting young people at risk of criminal exploitation – this was initially funded by the Home Office and is called the Safer Relationships Team.
- Cessation of awarding funds to Crimestoppers (the Constabulary will pick this up)
- New small award to Embrace – Child Victims of Crime
- Reduction in award for ASB Prevention in Peterborough as part of a staged reduction
- Small increases in some grants based on staffing increases

A table showing the comparison between 2019/20 and 2020/21 grants is attached at Appendix 2.

3.2 Question: The OPCC's assessment of each awardee's effectiveness in meeting Police & Crime Plan objectives. (At the moment there is just an implied good/bad assessment based on whether the organisation qualified for a grant or not.)

Response: A number of grants are statutory contributions made on the Constabulary's behalf (Safeguarding Boards; Youth Offending Services and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements). Another tranche are part of much larger contracts commissioned by other organisations with shared outcomes (Integrated Mental Health Team; Cambridgeshire Substance Misuse; Healthy Schools; a number of offender grants). The recipients of smaller grants are required to complete six-month grant monitoring returns.

3.3 Question: Any guidance or conditions set on grants awarded.

Response: Each grant recipient is required to sign a standard grant agreement which contains both a number of conditions and requirements for monitoring. Schedule 1 of the grant agreement sets out what the grant is to be used for. As set out in the Acting Commissioner's 'Commissioning and Grants Strategy' (available on the Acting Commissioner's website), there is an expectation that all grant recipients agree to a set of 'delivery activities' which provide detail on what the funding should deliver.

3.4 Question: Breakdown of Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) grants

Response: This year (2020/21) is the second and final year of a two-year arrangement. An amount of £24k remains available to each CSP if they can show this can be spent within the year. A number of CSPs have already been allocated their amounts.

3.5 Question: How is the allocation for CSPs going to be done this year? - The last round of bidding appeared to suffer from delays and poor communication.

Response: In January 2019, following endorsement by the Cambridgeshire Strategic Community Safety Board, the OPCC invited CSPs to bid for two years' worth of funding to act as system leaders on cross cutting prevention workstreams on behalf of the county. CSPs were asked to present their intended outputs and outcomes in line with an 'Understand, Plan, Do, Review' Commissioning Cycle. Funds were available to be bid for from April 2019. This is the second year of that agreement.

3.6 Question: Both Fenland and East Cambs have drawn two their two years of funding to work on housing and community resilience. Huntingdonshire bid for funds which they were awarded within 2019/20 but this money was not drawn down.

Response:

- South Cambridgeshire was awarded £26k over two years but is reviewing its approach.
- Peterborough was allocated £16k towards the transformation of early help and adolescent services; £8k was awarded through joint work with Cambridge City. Conversations are ongoing with Peterborough regarding their second year.
- Cambridge City has been awarded the 2019/20 funds and been made aware the second year of funds are available if it can be spent within year within the original agreed scope.

3.7 Question: A member wishes to express support for continued funding of the Youth Offending "Safe Team prevention" work. Early indications show this is working well. How has Covid-19 impacted on this?

Response: The Safe Relationships Team prevention work has continued with staff successfully supporting young people through virtual means.

3.8 Question: What is the process for reviewing and feedback of grant applications and awards and do you accept re-applications if they initial fail to meet certain thresholds?

Response: Officers of the OPCC undertake the assessment, review and monitoring of the grants and provide feedback, with the Acting Commissioner having an overview of the process.

4. Communities Theme - 'Police and Crime Plan Communities Theme Performance Update', Agenda Item 7.0, April BCB

4.1. Question: What is a volunteer cadet force doing to prevent crime and reassure the public?

Response: The Constabulary currently has 114 volunteer cadets. Nationally, volunteer cadets have been suspended until September 2020, this includes weekly parade nights and events. However, the Constabulary's cadets have been involved in the following since the COVID 19:

- Virtual gathering for VE day
- Clapping for the NHS
- Producing posters for Social Media and their local area to re-assure people

Over the past three years the cadets have participated in a number of community events at a local and county level to promote crime prevention and reassure the public. These have included crime prevention and road safety events, National Hate Crime Week and undertaken cigarette test purchasing operations.

They have attended remembrance Sunday events, Roads Victims Trust Service, projects to tackle loneliness, and handed out thousands of crime prevention leaflets. A number of cadets have also undertaken training to become part of the 'Friends Against Scams' group whereby they deliver cyber fraud protection advice to some of our vulnerable community members.

4.2 Question: Is "Attacking criminality" an appropriate phrase to use?

Response: The term 'attacking criminality' reflects one of the Constabulary's priorities set by the then Chief Constable when the Police and Crime Plan was first agreed in 2016. The Police and Crime Plan was reviewed by the Panel in February 2017; it cannot now be changed until a new Police and Crime Commissioner is elected.

The Constabulary's new Corporate Plan 2020/21¹ does not utilise this language but remains focussed on the necessity to tackle serious and organised crime and disrupt Organised Crime Groups. Police enforcement should focus on disrupting offenders and would-be offenders. Offenders must be brought to justice in a way which delivers the best outcomes for victims. Locally all agencies coming into contact with offenders must play their role in ensuring the causes of criminality are addressed.

¹ Cambridgeshire Constabulary Corporate Plan 2020/21
<https://www.cambs.police.uk/assets/PDFs/About/Transparency/AboutUs-OurForce-Corporate-plan-2020-21.pdf>

Prosecutions Possible

- 4.3 **Question: What is understood as influencing the “prosecution possible” rate, and what are the key constraints (budget, experience, distribution of crime types, etc)?**

Response: A range of factors influence the prosecution possible rate. It is recognised nationally that outcomes are likely to have been influenced by the changing caseload and crime mix being dealt with by the police. On-going work to improve crime recording by police forces has both increased the volume forces are dealing with and changed the crime mix to include more complex cases, such as sexual offences and domestic abuse, which can be more challenging to resolve. At the same time, while more crimes are now being recorded, in a growing proportion of cases the victim either doesn't support further action or police are unable to contact them.

The March 2020 BCB report provides the Constabulary's performance and demonstrates the impact local process improvements in are having in this area. The all crime prosecution possible outcome rate in April 2020 was 18.9%; the highest single month figure for more than two years. The rolling 12 month rate increased to 11.5%, continuing the recent upward trend, with improvements seen across the majority of offence types.

Higher numbers of Community Resolutions continue to influence the direction of travel, but improvements can also be attributed to an increase in the number of charges in recent months. Pro-active campaigns to use civil powers to tackle criminal behaviour, such as Public Space Protection Orders, are being used to good effect.

- 4.4 **Question: Rural communities have seen a recent spate of break-ins – the public perception needs to be that something has happened in response to these.**

Response: As a result of the previous precept rise, 10% of the Constabulary's workforce are now embedded in neighbourhood policing, with community relationships strong. Additional officers are now in the Rural Crime Action Team (RCAT), and the team are now equipped with drone capability and have made good use of other technology such as GoodSAM and What3Words.

The Constabulary are aware that the public's perception is a real concern for them, especially in rural communities. The Chief Constable has tasked officers to explore how public confidence in rural communities can be improved. The Chief Constable acknowledges that follow-up action and keeping people informed has always been an issue across policing. A Victim Care Contract is key to follow-up, managing expectations and maintaining victim satisfaction.

- 4.5 **Question: Goodsam – does this feed evidence into the Demand Hub and is it admissible as evidence.**

Response: GoodSAM was developed with the private sector. It is installed on officer and staff mobile phones, with footage directly recorded onto police systems and is in the correct format to use for criminal justice purposes.

5. Miscellaneous

5.1 **Question: Do all officers and staff still have access to appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?**

Response: Yes. This has been a priority since the Covid-19 crisis began. The availability of PPE for officers is tracked on a daily basis and monitored through various Covid internal and partnership meetings. The Constabulary has worked in collaboration regionally and nationally to ensure that frontline officers are sufficiently equipped and are confident in the quality of this equipment to protect them. The Constabulary has also adapted working practices and officers continue to undertake regular training and re-certification in the use of their PPE equipment.

5.2 **Question: Are safeguards adequate to protect officers from being coughed or spat at as an act of aggression?**

Response: Yes. All assaults on officers and staff are treated seriously and of paramount importance is the ongoing welfare of officers. The Constabulary's officers have PPE equipment and guidance to support them when they require it. They also have spit hoods which are deployable if a person does show signs of going to spit or has a history of spitting and is being aggressive.

The Constabulary's Force Control Room triages calls received for suspected or confirmed Covid cases to give prior warning regarding PPE requirements. Officers can never be totally protected by unprovoked and unforeseen aggression but have the necessary guidance and PPE equipment available to mitigate this risk.

5.3 **Question: What percentage of the police force are absent through sickness or self-isolating?**

Response: Covid related absences are currently just below 10%, with those self-isolating still able to work.

5.4 **Question: How confident are you that the Constabulary will still be able to enforce the new, more flexible conditions on lockdown, and also highway alterations that the County Council has been instructed to implement (which may include more 20mph areas and access restrictions for motor vehicles)?**

Response: The Constabulary is working in line with national guidance supplied by the College of Policing and will endeavour to adapt and flex to any new guidance and or legislation as appropriate.

As of the 10th May 2020, the Constabulary had issued over 110 Penalty Notices for breaches of the Covid social distancing legislation. Cambridgeshire was at the lower end of the numbers issued; this is a reflection on the co-operation of those within the county. The Chief Constable is very clear, the position remains that the Constabulary use the 'Engage, Explain, Encourage' elements first and only then move to enforcement as a last resort.

As for enforcing the speed or access restrictions for vehicles, the Chief Constable gives his assurance that the Constabulary will be doing their best in support of the restrictions. However, the Constabulary can only operate within the parameters of the legislation and cannot enforce Government or other non-statutory guidance. The Constabulary has to prioritise where its resources are used based on threat, risk, and harm basis. If matters relating to vehicle restrictions becomes a community concern, then the Constabulary will consider their position regarding their approach to this. However, it should be recognised that the public's perception maybe be different in respect of what the Constabulary should be enforcing as opposed to what they can legally enforce.

5.5 **Question: Can we agree an action plan to prepare for a virtual Panel meeting in June? Response:**

Yes.

**OPCC
22nd May 2020**