

# Meeting Notes

**Kent Police and Crime Commissioner's**

**Governance Board – Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2013**

Clift Room, Kent Police Headquarters, Sutton Road, Maidstone, Kent ME15 9BZ

## **PART A**

### **1. Welcome**

The Commissioner formally welcomed everyone to the Governance Board, and set out how the agenda was divided.

### **2. Notes of previous meeting and action plan – 15<sup>th</sup> October 2013**

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

The actions sheet had been updated: the first two items had been discharged, and item three was an agenda item. On the fourth item, the Commissioner stated that she wanted the National Crime Agency on the forward agenda. The Chief Constable enquired whether he should approach the NCA to provide a presentation when the item was considered, and this was agreed.

### **3. HMIC Report on Crime Recording and Performance Culture- Force Recovery Plan Update**

The Chief Constable provided a recap on the situation for the meeting. The Force had undertaken a review of data accuracy and recording practices, and had produced a report in January/February of this year. HMIC then conducted their own review and reported in June. The Chief Constable felt that HMIC's report did not pick up any new issues, but in fact reinforced the Force's view of the situation. He stated that HMIC were clear that there was no misconduct, no breaking of the law and no culture of bullying; however, they did find some skewed activity focused on chasing easy targets, but concluded that Kent Police's crime recording was 90% accurate. This was acknowledged as not good enough, and the Force put a lot of work into tackling this.

The Chief Constable was clear that Force activity should be directed towards harm-based crime, and not chasing numbers. He was confident that the HMIC report did not identify big failings, but that the challenge was around data accuracy.

HMIC returned at the end of October and carried out a follow up review. They found that crime recording accuracy stood at 96.2%, and the no-criming accuracy at 97%. The Chief stated that, anecdotally, in comparison to the two other Forces that had been informally reviewed, Kent were much better. In response to the Commissioner's question as to why this had not been made public, the Chief Constable stated that these were informal reviews, not official ones, and therefore the results were not being made public.

The Chief Constable discussed the issue that crime recording was always going to have an element of subjectivity. He did not believe that Kent's current accuracy score could improve and reach 100%, given the margin of error for accuracy. He was very comfortable with the Force's quality assurance programme, and that the appropriate checks and balances were in place. However, it needed to be understood that this came at a cost.

In relation to the cultural review, this was more of a challenge as it was a more nebulous topic, which concerned motivation, officers' mindsets, and Force standards. HMIC had reviewed the Force's work last week, and the initial debrief suggested that the new processes the Force had in place were sound, and that they were enabling the new culture to embed across the Force.

The Commissioner asked the Chief Constable that if the question were put to him again, namely whether the people of Kent could have confidence in the Force's crime recording practices, would he answer yes or no. The Chief Constable was certain the answer would be yes, and was confident in the integrity of the data.

The Commissioner highlighted the fact that if 95% accuracy were considered 'compliant', then Kent could have some confidence given that it was above this level. The Chief Constable stated that HMIC had refused to be drawn on what level they considered 'good enough', but certainly felt that above 95% was appropriate. The Commissioner stated that HMIC had, in a letter to her the previous week, used the 95% statistic as their level for compliance; the Chief Constable responded that this was a change in position from HMIC.

The Commissioner outlined that she had concerns that HMIC were only planning to review approximately 50 crimes per Force, when in Kent they had looked at 303; the Chief Constable agreed that this lower figure may not be statistically significant, but that it was an issue for HMIC.

The Commissioner also had concerns that in comparing Forces' performance, it could not be done accurately if other Forces' data were not being recorded properly. The Chief Constable agreed with this position, and stated that Kent has seen an increase in its recorded crime in the last 12 months partly because it was recording crimes more accurately.

The Commissioner stated that there had been disquiet over the issue of HMIC's review of Kent's figures, but felt that local people should now have confidence. The 90% accuracy result had come as a shock, especially in the context of previous good reports from HMIC. However, the new score could act as Kent Police's baseline.

The Chief Constable agreed with this, and also highlighted that next year would provide an even more accurate picture, given that data would be compared with this year's data which is accurately recorded.

The Commissioner, Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable discussed the number of reviews that had taken place, both by HMIC and by the Force, since the initial inspection. The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that the data accuracy had increased over this time, from 90, to 92, 95 and was now consistently at 96 to 97%.

Mr Stepney enquired whether the Chief Constable thought other Forces had had a wake up call in

relation to this topic.

The Chief Constable felt that other Forces were learning from Kent's experience: the Deputy Chief Constable had recently been to Manchester and met with representatives of a number of Forces who were keen to emulate Kent's best practice. In addition, on the 5<sup>th</sup> December, three other Forces were visiting Kent to look at crime recording practices.

In response to Mr Nolan's queries, the Deputy Chief Constable advised that the Culture Board took information from all officers and staff, and staff associations. Success was, for him, delivering against the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan aims, and delivering continuous improvement without targets. He also clarified the basis of the comparative numbers quoted in paragraph 11 as being based on per 1 000 population.

The Commissioner enquired about the number of boards and groups, having counted six in the report. The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that this number had been condensed, with the KPM Board sitting at the top, with a focus on reducing demand. The Cultural Board would be staying to ensure a focus on officers' behaviour.

Mr Stepney asked whether the cost to the Force in maintaining these high levels of data accuracy and associated practices would reduce as the practices became embedded and the Force's culture changed. The Chief Constable felt that at the present time, it would not- there was currently a quality assurance industry, as it was necessary to train officers and their supervisors to ensure they got it right.

The Commissioner requested a timeframe for these processes, and the Chief Constable felt that a couple of years would be necessary to build and deliver these training processes and cultural change. The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that the training had just started, and that there was a big Cultural Review pencilled in for 18 months, by which time he expected that there would be measurable change. He also confirmed that the HMIC results should be with the Force by the end of the calendar year, but this was in the gift of HMIC.

### **Domestic Abuse**

The topic of Domestic Abuse was introduced by the Deputy Chief Constable in the first instance, who informed the Commissioner that HMIC had been in Force the previous week, and would be reporting on the Force's work in this area by April/May. However, there was an action plan in place already.

The Chief Constable stated, in addition, that there had been an increase in reporting of Domestic Violence that was encouraged by the Force.

Det. Supt Tim Smith of the Public Protection Unit then gave a presentation on his department's work.

The presentation covered the following topics:

- Understanding the problem: this focused on the risks, where domestic abuse was most prevalent, and that the number of reports to the Police was increasing.
- Initial response: this covered the role of the Force Control Room, call handling and sign posting victims.

- The role of the attending officer: to protect the victim and children if involved, and the DASH assessment (Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment).
- Further information on DASH
- Ownership of victim safety: the work of PPU, the wider Force and other agencies.
- Recording a crime: that both HMIC and the College of Policing had declared that Kent Police's recording practices were accurate, the role of the Investigation Management Unit
- The Central Referral Unit: the work of this multi-agency group, the risk assessments, and referring cases to Social Services.
- MARAC, the multi-agency risk assessment conference: this is chaired by the Force's Detective Inspectors, and that the work of the local MARACs and their Chairs had been judged good by a national review.
- Outcomes: that the work of the MARACs has led to 76% of the victims in the cases referred experiencing a reduction in the need to call the Police, and 53% having a total cessation.
- Issues from last year: this focussed on the areas that the Force was working on, including the work of response officers, PPU and CRU, and neighbourhood officers.
- Future developments: this included the College of Policing Peer Review Outcomes, and that the HMIC hot debrief stated that there is "clear evidence that domestic abuse is a priority; that there is good partner working; the work of the IDVAs and the MARACs is good; and that there is a good understanding of the risks to young people."

The Chief Constable followed the presentation and highlighted the excellent partnership work that was being undertaken. He reiterated that he was pleased to see increased reporting, but that equally the number of repeat victims had reduced. In reference to paragraph 12, the Chief Constable noted that all cases go to a special Domestic Abuse court, and that it was important to get the cases to court as soon as possible to reduce the risk of victims withdrawing their support.

The Commissioner stated that for a victim to report crime, this usually meant that they had endured a long period of abuse, and so to make the victim wait further was cruel. The Deputy Chief Constable agreed that the reason for the specialised courts was to ensure the first hearing was held as soon as possible.

Det. Supt Smith outlined that whereas there had previously been a delay of 22 weeks to reach court, this had now reduced to 19 weeks; he appreciated that although this was going in the right direction it needed to improve and was a standing item on the Criminal Justice Board.

The Commissioner enquired how many victims pulled out in those five months; Det. Supt Smith reassured her that the numbers were low, and the victims were well supported through the process.

The Commissioner then asked about the training provided to the Neighbourhood officers who dealt with the lower-risk cases; the Deputy Chief Constable stated that all officers, including PCSOs, had special training in this area, but that it was an area he wanted to develop and improve.

In relation to a pilot scheme where schools were informed about domestic abuse incidents that affected the children, the Commissioner queried whether this should be a matter of course, as schools would want to know? Det. Supt Smith agreed, but highlighted that the pilot had shown

that although welcomed by the schools, there was a capacity issue in schools in terms of processing the information. However, the feedback that he had received was that schools felt they were able to better deal with children's needs and safeguard them.

The Commissioner followed this up with a question about the support available for children who witnessed Domestic Abuse; Det. Supt Smith confirmed that this was the role of the CRU (Central Referral Unit). One third of all referrals to Social Services relate to Domestic Abuse. The Force was very active in this particular respect.

The Commissioner raised a concern that if victims were to withdraw from the process and only a few hundred cases went to court, would this mean that lots of Domestic Abuse cases would go down as unsolved crimes? The Deputy Chief Constable clarified that two thirds of cases are 'incidents' not crimes, but that all the information was recorded on the system, and that all victims were signposted to the appropriate services. The Chief Constable added that where the incident was classified as a crime, in 84% of cases an arrest was made.

Mr Stepney queried how the Force dealt with Domestic Abuse incidents that happened outside of the home. The Chief Constable described this as a new development in these sorts of cases, and stated that there had been a particular increase over the summer, which he felt was a result of residents' confidence in reporting these incidents to the Police. In support of this, the Deputy Chief Constable added that HMIC had found Kent Police to be 100% compliant with recording practices for Domestic Abuse.

Mr Stepney then enquired about what impact Clare's Law would have on the Force. Det. Supt. Smith stated that the formal review of the pilot had not yet been released, but that the Government intends to roll it out. One of the Forces in Kent's Most Similar Group, Avon and Somerset, was involved in the pilot and so over the summer they would look at what this and other Forces had done.

Mr Stepney then queried the support for the staff in PPU, given the amount of stress they must suffer in their role. The Chief Constable stated that there was a lot of support in place through the normal networks, and that HR was also involved. He was also confident in Det. Supt Smith and his team's work in monitoring staff welfare and referring where needed.

Mr Nolan stated that in relation to the HMIC hot debrief, the Force had referred to the positive outcomes, and asked whether there were any areas where the Force needed to focus on improvement. The Deputy Chief Constable stated that training for junior, neighbourhood officers was the main area, and that there was already an action plan in place.

The Commissioner stated that there was an upwards trend for reporting Domestic Abuse, but that she was comfortable with this as it demonstrated people were confident in reporting. She also stated that as Domestic Violence was included in Violent Crime for recording purposes, and that it made up 34% of Violent Crime, it would be better to strip it out and separate it from the overall rate to get a better idea of the real picture.

The Chief Constable stated that most violent crime related to either Domestic Abuse or the night-time economy; he felt that the most important measure was around repeat victims of Domestic Abuse.

The Commissioner then stated that she would write to the Policing Minister, and to the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners about separating Domestic Violence from the overall Violent Crime figures.

## **PART B**

### **4. CSR2 Update**

The Commissioner introduced the item and informed the meeting that she was holding an event on this topic on Friday.

The Chief Constable then outlined the Force's response to CSR1: a £50 million reduction in funding had been achieved, with the loss of 479 officers and around 700 staff. The service had been redesigned, but he believed that the public had not noticed any change in how policing was delivered.

However, he felt that CSR2 was a different matter. The Force was currently working on the assumption of a £20 million reduction: the best case would be £17.5 million, the worst £23.5 million. A piece of work was being carried out by Chief Supt. Neil Jerome to consider the impact of this on Kent Police, and with a focus on whether it would be possible to keep the current model and arrangements for policing.

When the £50 million was taken from the budget for CSR1, around two thirds of this was found by reducing the number of staff, and as a result there was little scope to reduce staff numbers further. Whilst the non-staff budget would of course be reviewed, CSR2 will require a reduction in police officer numbers.

The Chief Constable highlighted the fact that the Force's work on CSR1 had finished a year early, which would give Kent Police a year to prepare for CSR2 in '15-'16, and would hopefully soften the blow. He was clear that the financial challenge would unquestionably be met, and that the real issue was how to deliver a high quality service. Again, the Chief Constable stressed that the challenge of CSR2 meant that it was not possible to deliver the same service in the future, and that one element of Ch. Supt Jerome's work was focussing on how to reduce demand. An example given was that the Police would not necessarily attend every crime, if they were not required or needed by the victim- for example, where just a crime number was needed for insurance purposes.

The Chief Constable stressed that another part of the work would be to manage the expectations of the public and the Commissioner, as an overall loss of £70 million will inevitably mean a negative service impact. Ch. Supt Jerome was focussing on how to get the greatest return for the number of officers.

Finally, the Chief Constable reminded the meeting that CSR2 was unlikely to be the final reduction in spending, and that more cuts may be made in '16-'17 onwards- the Force was aware it needed to be ready for this eventuality.

The Commissioner responded that the residents of Kent wanted visible community policing, and asked how this would be maintained.

The Chief Constable agreed that this was the key challenge. The principles for the changes made under CSR1 were sound, but one consideration was that Neighbourhood and Response officers, which are currently separate, may be brought together. He was clear that the Force had to focus on its core principles of protecting people and property. Finally, given the size of the challenge, it was vital to engage with the public from the beginning.

The Commissioner reiterated that the event on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December was for public engagement on these issues.

The Chief stated that Kent is the bottom quartile for precepting, and that if it were average, this would in fact significantly help to offset the £20 million required by CSR2.

He then informed the meeting that this year there was expected to be a £6.2 million underspend in the current year as a result of delivering CSR1 initiatives early.

Looking at the Force as a whole, the overtime costs had increased slightly, but this was down to mutual aid (for the MPS and Northern Ireland) and so the money would be repaid by the end of the financial year. There was also an issue with the tyre contract for the fleet- the cost of this was due to increase by 25% as a favourable contract came to an end.

Mr Nolan stated that he was in regular dialogue with the Force, and made the point that there was also the 2014-2015 budget to build before CSR2 came in in 2015-2016. In relation to next year's budget build, all the partners and stakeholders had been sent a copy of the Police and Crime Plan to ask for views, as this was being refreshed. He was expecting the full details of the grant for '14-'15 on the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> December.

Mr Stepney enquired what opportunities there were in relation to the underspend; the Commissioner suggested one approach may be to invest in technology. The Commissioner also highlighted the HMIC Value for Money profiles, and asked if Kent were an outlier in any areas compared to its MSG?

The Chief Constable stated that the costs of police staff compared well, but that our estate was more expensive, although this related in the main to PFI. DSP payments, the CJU and Custody all compared favourably. When questioned by the Commissioner as to whether this offset the requirements of CSR2 at all, the Chief Constable stated that it did give a little help.

## **5. Force Performance**

The Commissioner invited the Chief Constable to review the Force's current performance.

The Chief Constable first outlined the highlights. Taking a five-year view, there had been year on year reductions in recorded crime up to this year, which equated to 15%, or 16 000 crime, reduction. However, over the past 2-3 years, the number of staff and officers had reduced, and now crime recording accuracy had improved. In addition, April 2012 had seen the lowest number of crimes recorded in that month for a significant number of years; inevitably therefore,

April '13 was not going to match this.

In the 12 months to October, there had been a 9% increase in overall crimes recorded, which equated to 8 000 more. The Chief Constable felt that this was down to three things:

1. A 6% increase in accuracy of crime recording
  2. An increase in crime reporting- for instance, the Pred Pol work meant that officers were out and about in high crime areas, and so officers saw and recorded more crimes. This proactive stance had accounted for a 2% increase in crimes recorded.
  3. Given April '12 was an outlier, there was a 1.8% increase in recorded crimes as a result.
- The Chief Constable explained that these three elements accounted for the 9% increase.

He then focussed on the three key challenges.

1. Vehicle crime: this spiked at the end of the last quarter, where two gangs has been targeting vans and 4x4s. A successful operation against them meant that this issue was no longer a significant problem.
2. Violent crime: mainly relating to the night-time economy. Reports of Domestic Violence had been fairly consistent, and Op. Narrate had been put in place to tackle the night-time economy problems. The Force knew where the hotspots were- mainly pubs and clubs at closing time- and it was generally low-end violence. The Force had been proactive in relation to bail conditions as well, and these actions meant that Violence was beginning to stabilise.
3. Burglaries: this was the biggest challenge facing the Force. The current rate of burglaries was relatively low: at 700 000 households, there were on average 17-18 burglaries per day. There were a number of Operations in place to tackle this problem, especially at this time of year when, owing to the longer nights and Christmas, the rate of burglaries generally increased. Operation Castle focussed on these issues: the Force was using its Intel. to proactively identify offenders, and were using police officers and staff to go out and patrol in high risk areas, and give out crime prevention advice. In the last event, 500 leaflets were distributed and 200 people spoken to with advice. The Chief Constable believed that if burglaries remained stable, then there would in fact be fewer than last year by the end of the financial year.

The Chief Constable also stated that nationally, 21 Forces had seen an increase in crime: as most Forces were starting from a very low base level of crimes, and had had to reduce officer numbers, he felt that this provided an explanation for the increase.

The Commissioner returned to the issue of crime recording accuracy. The Chief Constable agreed that next year would allow a more accurate judge of performance, as they would be in a position to compare with this year, when crime had been accurately recorded.

The Commissioner then queried how confident the Force could be that Operation Castle was working. The Chief Constable responded that he received a daily update; there had been 234 arrests since the 1<sup>st</sup> November, and 65 search warrants had been executed. Kent was also linking in with the Met., to ensure that neither Force displaced criminal activity into the other's area.

The Commissioner stated that comparing two years was a snapshot, and that it was better to review trends over five years. She then queried the number of burglaries per 1 000 households,

as she felt that this was a better measure.

The Chief Constable responded that in Kent, it was 4.4, compared to a national average of 4.3.

The Commissioner then queried the rate per 1 000 households, as this was the best measure overall. The Chief Constable stated that in Kent, it was 9 per 1 000, compared to 10 per 1 000 nationally, though in some of the London boroughs it was three or four times this rate.

The Commissioner queried if the Force were running a campaign to make people aware of the issue of burglaries at Christmas. The Chief responded that as soon as the clocks went back, the Force ran a proactive message, which was now backed up by Pred Pol.

The Commissioner noted that she had not seen this proactive message, and had not received any crime prevention information. The Deputy Chief Constable promised to take that matter away and review why the Commissioner had not seen or received the Force's message.

Mr Stepney then queried whether the 17-18 burglaries was just from the home, as opposed to commercial properties, and this was confirmed. He then queried whether burglars tended to repeatedly target the same victims.

The Chief Constable stated that this issue was part of the Pred Pol algorithms: a person is more likely to be the victim of a burglary if they have already been burgled in the past two weeks; similarly, the neighbours of a victim of burglary are more likely to be targeted.

Mr Stepney then enquired about the peer review of the Force's handling of violent crime. The Chief stated that the hot debrief had identified a great deal of best practice in Kent, and that this would be shared with other Forces.

The Deputy Chief Constable returned to the topic of burglaries, and stated that officers attending a burglary would also visit neighbours to reassure them and to offer crime prevention advice. He added that the mobile police stations were also being used for this purpose.

Mr Nolan drew attention to paragraph 14 in the report, which stated that satisfaction had decreased significantly, and enquired if this were recent.

The Deputy Chief Constable responded that satisfaction had dropped 2%, from 89% to 87%, but this was deemed to be statistically significant; however, the Chief Constable was unhappy with any decrease and wanted to ensure that victims of crime were satisfied with Kent Police.

The Commissioner stated that when she spoke to people about this issue, they felt it was the lack of regular updates from the Police that was the problem; both the Deputy and the Chief Constable agreed with this point.

The Chief Constable stated that the level of satisfaction was fairly consistent; the Commissioner asked that if the Force were compliant with the Victims' Code, how can satisfaction have decreased?

The Deputy Chief Constable responded to confirm that the Force was compliant; however, the

Code stated that victims had to be updated every 28 days, and the Force did so, but that they could and should be quicker to do this and some victims wanted more frequent updates. The Chief Constable added that the public's expectations of the Force and what it should do were increasing, and this would need to be managed appropriately.

Mr Nolan then drew attention to paragraph 19, where Kent was shown to be an outlier. The Chief Constable responded that this was the danger of comparisons based purely on the numbers- they could be skewed. For example, the quality of crime recording in other Forces was not known, and so it was not possible to compare Kent to other Forces who are unlikely to be accurate.

The Commissioner then queried the compliance rate for other Forces in the MSG; the Chief Constable responded that HMIC's work on this would start in the new year, and it was likely to take some time.

## **6. Update on Significant Operational Matters**

The Chief Constable updated the meeting about the 'all-out' Pred Pol day the previous Friday. This had focussed on burglary, and an additional 300 staff, both officers and police staff from Corporate Services and Finance, had worked on the day. The public feedback had been very positive. 20% of all the incidents recorded had been in or near a Pred Pol box- the issue to consider was if nothing occurred in one of the boxes, was this as a result of the Police being there as a deterrent, and that he had to trust to the science. However, it would be difficult in future to demonstrate the link between Pred Pol and crime coming down for this very reason.

There were clear benefits in terms of visibility, detections, and being a deterrent- the impact of the Police presence acting as a deterrent lasted for a further two weeks. There was also a significant public engagement benefit.

The Chief Constable noted that in Los Angeles, they only used police officers. In Kent, all staff were used, and they were also considering whether to use covert officers in addition. Partners had expressed a desire to join in, and this was an area that the Force wanted to develop, especially working with Local Authorities to design crime out of an area.

The Chief Constable then turned to the increase in robberies of ATMs (cash points). There had been a spate 3-4 weeks ago, where the offenders were pumping gas behind the ATMs and popping them out. Work had been undertaken with the Metropolitan Police on the OCGs (Organised Crime Gangs) behind it; and then on Thursday they had caught the OCG in the process of one of their attempted robberies. Now the matter was working its way through the criminal justice system and so he was prevented from saying anything further.

The Commissioner closed the meeting, reiterating that the Governance Boards were a key way to open up Kent Police to the public.

She then gave her full and sincere thanks to the Chief Constable for his work, given his imminent retirement. She noted his lifetime of public service, and how well regarded he was- he would be greatly missed.