

Meeting Notes

Kent Police and Crime Commissioner's Governance Board – 11 November 2015

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

Summary of Key Points and Actions

Item 1. Welcome and Introduction.

The Commissioner welcomed everyone to the Governance Board.

Item 2. Notes of Previous Meeting and Action Updates – 11 August 2015

The Meeting Notes from the Governance Board on 11 August were noted as a true and accurate record and the following action updates provided:

- A report to be provided to the Commissioner at a Governance Board in early 2016 on the contribution of SCD in tackling OCGs.
 - Discharged - report added to forward agenda for consideration at a future meeting.
- The Commissioner requested a report outside of the meeting on the effectiveness of Integrated Offender Management (IOM) for the 234 offenders currently on the scheme.
 - Discharged – the requested report had been received.
 - The Commissioner stated that she may request a further update at a future meeting.
- The Commissioner requested the Chief Constable to update her on the proportion of the 35 individuals Stop and Searched in Thanet and whether they were residents of Kent.
 - Discharged – the requested update had been received.

PART A – Specifically requested items:

Item 3. Engaging with Communities

How does Kent Police engage with the public?

- The Chief Constable shared his recent experience of visiting Folkestone and patrolling with local officers, seeing first-hand the excellent level of community engagement.
- Mobile Police Stations are now visiting high-crime areas such as those identified through PredPol. The Chief Constable said the Folkestone Mobile Police Station regularly visited areas with high levels of shoplifting.
- During the 20 minute period the Chief Constable observed the Mobile Police Station, there were 36 engagements with the public, resulting in intelligence reports and provision of crime prevention advice.
- The Chief Constable was mindful that from a public perspective the Mobile Police Stations should reassure and extend engagement, rather than being seen as a response to a particular threat.
- In addition to officers holding public surgeries, they also attend Parish Council meetings and other local community events. These are advertised through various means, including social media, the Kent Police website and leaflets distributed in high footfall areas.

- This year, almost 10,000 members of the public attended the Kent Police Open Day, providing a free and interactive event for the community to engage with officers and staff.
- The Commissioner asked if PACT meetings were still held. The Chief Constable said the Local District Policing Teams and Community Safety Units focus on understanding local problems and working with partners to address them. PACT meetings have been superseded by the new model of policing in Kent.
- In relation to a question about the 'hyper local' pilot in Ashford, the Chief Constable said this was developed before the model was changed. Whilst the Force had learnt from it, the new model of policing had provided more opportunities for local officers to engage with their communities.

Online engagement

- The Chief Constable said online meetings regularly receive 60 to 70 questions from the public, with many more 'logging' on to view the meeting live or viewing offline after the event.
- Kent Police has 73,000 Twitter followers and 50,000 likes on Facebook. Both proved to be an invaluable tool for providing information to the public when Op Stack was in place over the summer period.
- Engagement through the Kent Police website is not as good as it could be. The new website will address this, not only reducing demand on the Force Control Room (FCR), but allowing the public to access more services and information online. In light of anticipated future savings, reducing demand is a priority for the Force - around 700,000 calls to the Force last year did not require the deployment of an officer.

Community engagement

- The Chief Constable provided an update on Operation Action which involved 45 Special Constables visiting victims whose details were on a 'scammers list'. A third of victims spoken to were unaware they had been the victim of a crime. All victims were provided with advice and guidance, including how to protect themselves against online fraud. This service was extended to vulnerable victims who had moved to other areas of the country, including Devon and Cornwall.
- The Chief Constable provided a further example where PCSOs had gleaned intelligence by speaking to their local communities and via completion of a questionnaire. The results showed concerns about the level of gang activity and violence. As a result, a number of warrants were issued, and a property was closed down. A follow-up questionnaire showed residents felt their community had been 'reclaimed'.
- Kent Police continues to work with partners and the wider policing family, including Trading Standards and KCC Wardens to increase and develop levels of community engagement.

Rural engagement

- The Commissioner asked the Chief Constable about rural communities and what they were telling the Force.
- The Chief Constable said that previously many rural communities didn't bother reporting crime as they felt the police wouldn't be interested. However, through the work of the Rural Crime Task Force, this has changed and rural communities are now much more engaged with the Force and willing to report crime.
- Rural communities now believe that the Force will do something about the crimes they report. For example, through excellent partnership working, an offender was recently convicted and sentenced for fly-tipping.

Engagement with young people

- The Force works closely with the Commissioner's Youth Advisory Group and is focused on ensuring those involved in crime from a young age have the appropriate support to divert them from a future in the criminal justice system.
- The Force continues to work with the County Independent Police Advisory Group (IPAG), and at a local level district IPAG's to engage with harder to reach groups within communities.

Sgt Johnson (Shepway Community Safety Unit) was invited to talk about engagement in Folkestone

- He described how local community engagement is conducted through face-to-face interaction, as well as social media and the Kent Police website. He said officers engage with local stakeholders, community groups and elected members to gain intelligence, provide advice and promote key policing messages.
- The meeting was provided with an example of how local officers had overcome difficulties engaging with farmers. Sgt Johnson explained that an email system has been set-up to provide information, but this simple solution enables busy farmers to retrieve information at a time most convenient to them.
- The meeting was told about the Dover Community Hub which is working to gain the trust and confidence of the local Roma community, breaking down cultural barriers so they feel more comfortable engaging with the police. In addition, he said police leaflets are translated into native languages to increase access and availability of information.
- Sgt Johnson also described how officers work with the local Ghurkha community and Muslim community to build relationships and develop an understanding of different cultures and faiths.
- The Commissioner thanked Sgt Johnson for attending the meeting and for his very helpful input. The Commissioner also stated that she would like to visit Shepway Community Safety Unit in the future.
- **Actions**
 - **The OPCC to arrange for the Commissioner to visit Shepway Community Safety Unit.**

Item 4. Developments in IT

- The Chief Constable reiterated that everyone in the Force is extremely busy and so it is imperative to ensure the Force's IT is up to standard. This will not only maximise the productivity of officers and staff, but also ensure the service provided to victims and witnesses is first class.

Athena

- The Force decision to transfer information from Genesis onto the new Athena system was supported by the Commissioner who recognised the importance of having historical information available to officers and staff within one integrated system. It was also acknowledged that whilst this has delayed implementation, a decision not to do undertake this work would have posed a significant operational risk.
- The delay in implementation is not a huge concern, the current Genesis system works well, meets Force needs and is actually better than some systems used by other forces.
- As other forces go-live with Athena, the implementation process develops enabling Kent Police to learn lessons and distil best practice.

Mobile policing

- The Force is piloting 100 handheld devices, a mix of tablets and phones. To date, they have been well received by those officers and staff testing them, with positive feedback. Currently, they only offer limited functionality, but with every week, more is being added making them increasingly versatile.
- In the future, Athena Mobile will provide significant functionality as it will reduce bureaucracy and enable frontline officers and staff to stay on the streets.
- Security of the devices and the information held on them is a fundamental part of current IT developments. All information needs to be encrypted to a high national standard and the Force must be able to remotely control the devices should they be lost or stolen.

Force website

- The redesign of the Kent Police website is intended to reduce FCR demand by allowing the public to access more policing services and information online.

- It is anticipated that the contract for the new website will be awarded at the end of November 2015.

Emergency Services Airwave

- Airwave, the primary voice communication system used by the police and other emergency services is to be upgraded. As well as improving the technical infrastructure, the upgrade will facilitate both voice and data communications between emergency services. Whilst expensive, the upgrade is a national requirement.
- The Chief Constable said that as Kent Police and Essex Police have a shared IT directorate, this is a joint project. The Force is confident that it will be delivered on time.

Body Worn Cameras

- Whilst there had been some adverse publicity around the cost of the cameras, both the Chief Constable and the Commissioner stated they were satisfied that the procurement process had been thorough and rigorous.
- Decision as to which camera to buy was based on specifications unique to operational policing, including:
 - Encrypted hard drive
 - Software that can be verified for evidential value
 - GPS capability
 - Waterproof
 - Weatherproof
 - Ability to upload files
 - Fully automated search function
- The Body Worn Camera pilot saw 400 cameras out on the frontline, and this resulted in moderated offender behaviour, reduction in vexatious complaints and increase in first time guilty pleas.
- Further 1600 cameras purchased and have arrived, but following testing found some unexpected problems. The supplier has now resolved almost all the issues and re-testing taking place. No money has been paid to the supplier as yet.
- Hampshire is piloting the use of Body Worn Cameras to record victim and witness statements for evidential purposes. However, more work is required to ensure compatibility with processes throughout the Criminal Justice system.

Virtual Courts and Live Link

- These are having a very positive impact on the service victims receive. An example was given where a crime victim had been too frightened to leave their home to give evidence. However, through the use of an iPad, the victim was able to appear in court and give evidence from the safety of their own home. The Commissioner said the fact that the judge had accepted evidence in this way was a huge step forward for vulnerable victims.
- With its own Live Link suites, the Commissioner and Chief Constable agreed that Compass House continues to fulfil its intended purpose, supporting and signposting victims of crime across the county. The Commissioner said she was aware of two young victims of sexual assault having recently given evidence via video from Compass House.

Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras

- The Chief Constable explained that ANPR cameras are a well tried and tested enforcement and investigative tool, and as such an important IT development. The equipment is expensive and so it's paramount the Force makes best use of mobile and fixed ANPR cameras.
- The Commissioner asked how ANPR camera locations are selected. The Chief Constable said they are selected through the ANPR Strategy Board, each one being assessed based on necessity and proportionality.

Item 5. Child Sexual Exploitation – A Partnership Approach

- The Commissioner said when a victim of CSE comes into contact with police, it's too late for intervention and the police and/or partners have failed. This was reinforced by the Chief Constable who stated early CSE intervention is a national priority and must incorporate work with schools and youth projects.
- Funding from the Commissioner of £200,000 as well as £400,000 from the Force in each of the next three years (£600,000 per year), has enabled the creation of a joint CSE team. This is funding 9 police officers and 6 police staff, many of whom are already in post. The Chief Constable also confirmed that the injection of funds from the Commissioner's Office had assisted with the pace of creating the team.
- It was recognised that the team is in its infancy, with some staff still going through the recruitment phase. The importance of partners being committed to the team and providing resources was acknowledged and the Commissioner asked where Health were with their support arrangements.
- The Chief Constable said there is significant commitment from Health and expressed confidence that partners are willing to put resources into the team, though some are not there yet. He said along with CSE Champions, further online training has been delivered to officers and staff, with 4600 staff having completed Stage 1 training and 3500 having completed Stage 2.
- **Actions**
 - **The Commissioner requested an offline update on Health's contribution to the CSE partnership strategy.**
 - **Under Part B of the agenda, add 'CSE Team progress' as a standing item.**

Item 6. Crime Recording & Crime Reduction in Kent

- The Chief Constable confirmed there had been a real reduction in crime across Kent, resulting in fewer victims. However, he also acknowledged there were some areas of improvement including reducing threat risk and harm, specifically around the high volume of missing persons and improvements in case file quality.
- HMIC have announced that they will be conducting a new round of crime recording accuracy inspections. The Chief Constable stated he was happy with this, as a recent internal inspection found the Force continues to have an excellent accuracy rate of 96-97%. The Commissioner said the level of accuracy should act as a 'limiting judgement' within HMIC's inspection programme.
- The Chief Constable explained the accuracy rate in other forces remains unclear making performance comparison impossible. In addition, if data accuracy is low, not only are victims being failed, but it is difficult for forces to plan their resources effectively.
- The Crime Survey of England and Wales had been released, and this had shown a national increase in crime of 5%. This was not the case in Kent.

PART B – Standing / routine update items:

Item 7. Financial Monitoring & Planning for the future

- Despite the financial uncertainty, the Chief Constable said he was focussing on the future of Kent Police to ensure the emphasis is on providing a first class service to the people of Kent.
- The revenue forecast for the financial year shows a predicted £2.7m underspend. The majority of this relates to officer and staff pay. If a vacancy arises, the Chief Constable explained that the Force would rather leave it unfilled than recruit someone and potentially have to make them redundant in the future.

- The Force won't know the funding it will receive from the Home Office until mid-December 2015.
- Kent Police are working to ensure buildings are up to standard and the vehicle fleet is appropriate and proportionate. In addition, key developments within IT will facilitate demand reduction and support frontline officers and staff. The Force is building a legacy for the future that is right, not one that's rushed.
- The Force is also exploring collaborative opportunities beyond Essex, including extending to other forces in the Eastern region. It was recognised that with regards to performance management, the Force was months ahead of most other forces and so to collaborate at this time would be to step back into 'reds and greens' and away from quality of service.
- The Chief Constable stated his priority remains informing those running teams, such as sergeants, and PSE equivalents of any changes, so they are aware of how their teams will be affected.
- The Force has not had to use Regulation A19 to achieve the necessary attrition rate for officers. It also recognises the effect of job losses on police staff, not only in terms of employment, but in terms of families, mortgages and life outside the Force. The Chief Constable stated the decision to make redundancies would not be taken lightly.
- The Force has a plan to deliver savings of around 25%; however anything over this and up to 40% and the plan will require significant revision.
- The Chief Constable reinforced the importance of ensuring officers and staff on the frontline are aware of what is happening, and that they should not be the last to find out what's going on.
- The Commissioner expressed her concern over other forces making a huge number of redundancies and stated that her heart sunk thinking of the effect this will have on morale.

Item 8. HMIC & Related Report(s) since last meeting

- This item was taken as an update and noted by the Commissioner.

Item 9. Update on Significant Operational Matters

Exercise Fort Invicta

- Exercise Fort Invicta was a joint agency counter-terrorism exercise which was designed to replicate a terrorist attack in Ramsgate Port. Based on early feedback, the exercise was a success, but more detailed information won't be known until December when the formal debrief takes place.

Engagement with the Home Office

- The Home Office was impressed with Kent Police's future preparation and planning, along with the Force's operational delivery.

West Kent Organised Crime Group (OCG)

- An operation in West Kent had resulted in an OCG being dismantled. To date, those offenders who have gone through the court process have received a combined sentence of 141 years and 10 months imprisonment, and there are more to follow.