

To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel

Subject: Divisional Policing Review

Date: 18 December 2024

Introduction:

1. Kent Police has undergone a change to the target operating model, with the review designed to help improve front line capacity and capability, enhance the quality of investigations and provide an improved service to victims of crime. It brings together several disparate but interdependent projects, changes and initiatives from across the Force into one programme of activity, in order to deconflict, make best use of resources, manage risks, and develop benefits in a co-ordinated and structured approach.
2. The programme commenced in March 2023 and has been subject to extensive planning through the Force Change Team working with Chief Officers, the wider workforce and other key stakeholders.
3. This report provides an overview of the Divisional Policing Review (DPR) Investigation Project and its implementation. The project is one of four workstreams under the DPR, the others being: Neighbourhood Policing, Local Policing and the Force Crime and Incident Response.
4. The new DPR Investigation model went 'live' on Monday 14 October 2024, although some smaller elements were implemented in May (e.g. merging of Crime Squad and Gangs & County Lines Teams).
5. The PCC is grateful to Kent Police for its assistance with this paper.

Context:

6. The Investigation Project sought to improve the initial response and subsequent management of investigations, empowering decision-making and leadership at a local level. These aims directly support the Kent Police Pledge and the Force's commitment towards providing a high-quality policing service, with a focus on solving crimes and the relentless pursuit of criminals.
7. To achieve this, the Force considered the benefits of fewer teams with broader remits offering greater resilience, whilst acknowledging the importance of retaining specialist teams in areas of risk and complexity.

Governance and oversight:

8. A governance structure has been in place since the start of the planning phase prior to implementation. This governance was enhanced following 'go live' to monitor and manage the change programme. This includes key representatives from the impacted operational teams as well as the vital support services (e.g. Fleet, IT, HR, Analysts, Estates). No significant implementation issues or risks have been identified to date.
9. The overarching governance for all elements of the DPR is the Force Strategic Change and Resourcing Board. Update reports and verbal updates are provided to the meeting, including a summary of project risks.
10. Weekly meetings have also been held between the Force Change Team lead and the Deputy Chief Constable in the months prior to, and during, implementation. A monthly update on progress is also provided to the Chief Constable.

Consultation and engagement:

11. There was extensive consultation by the Change Team with over 700 officers and staff during the planning stage, which was in addition to engagement undertaken by the Chief Constable and wider Chief Officer team. The findings from this consultation helped shape the model.

12. At key points in the review there was structured and focused consultation. For example, during the postings process a series of online engagement sessions were held allowing officers and staff to understand how the process would work and ask any specific questions or raise concerns. The issues raised were then publicised on a 'Frequently Asked Questions' page on the Force intranet (part of a wider internal communications strategy). In addition, focused engagement was also held to gather views and ask questions in relation to the new Crime Allocation Policy.
13. Regular meetings have been held with the Federation and Unison throughout the review.
14. At 'go live' extensive face-to-face engagement was undertaken by Chief Officers, local Senior Leadership teams and the Force Change Team.

Impact on officers and staff:

15. Through the postings process, 93% of officers who chose their 'location of work' as a priority, and 83% of officers who chose their 'role' as a priority received their first preference. All officers involved in the process either received their first or second preference.
16. The extensive engagement from Chief Officers, local Senior Leadership teams and the Force Change Team, since implementation, has resulted in widespread positive feedback from the operational teams that have been impacted. The benefits of the model have been recognised and the fact that it has been developed around extensive engagement with frontline practitioners has been warmly welcomed (e.g. larger and more resilient teams with a wider remit).
17. The engagement with the Federation and Unison has resulted in virtually no issues or concerns being raised from officers and staff before, during or after implementation.
18. Local Senior Leaders continue to regularly engage with their teams to identify any emerging concerns amongst frontline practitioners. Any issues are flagged either directly to the Change Team or through the Implementation Board.

Overview of the changes:

19. The main changes under this model are as follows:
 - a) Combining Divisional CID Teams (dealing with acquisitive crime, serious violence, drug supply offences, etc.) with Divisional Vulnerability Investigation Teams dealing with domestic abuse, to create larger and more resilient teams that retain a focus on domestic abuse and violence against women and girls (VAWG) investigations, with detective oversight. These merged teams will improve opportunities to develop an inexperienced workforce.
 - b) Combining Crime Squad and County Lines and Gangs Teams and moving under local Divisional ownership into new Proactive CID Teams. Again, this creates larger and more resilient teams, removes working barriers, and improves the local proactive capability.
 - c) Retaining Divisional missing person function, supported by the Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Child Protection Investigation Teams. These teams will be aligned to CID. Retaining Detective oversight provides ability to manage risk, as well as support Local Policing Teams with specialist missing person enquiries.
 - d) Renaming the 'Crime and Protecting Vulnerable People Directorate' as the 'Crime and Public Protection Directorate', to provide the appropriate nomenclature for its new remit (as follows).
 - e) Combining Rape Investigation Teams with High Risk Domestic Abuse and Stalking Teams. Ownership of these operational teams moves to the Crime and Public Protection Directorate. Specialist serious sexual offence investigations require consistency and improvement in line with national best practice. High risk domestic abuse and stalking requires specialist investigation and a partnership approach.
 - f) Ownership of Child and Adult Protection Investigation Teams moves to the Crime and Public Protection Directorate, including Child Sexual Exploitation investigators. Specialist and complex investigations require consistency and improvement in line with the MacAlister report.
 - g) Alignment of all Management of Sexual Offender and Violent Offender (MOSOVO) Teams from Divisional ownership into the central ownership of the Crime and Public Protection Directorate. This provides an enhanced response to VAWG offences, including an increase in use of preventative orders.

Benefits for Kent communities and Kent Police:

20. The key benefits are as follows:

- a) Larger and more resilient teams that retain a focus on Domestic Abuse and VAWG investigations, providing consistency, focus, and an improved response to offending.
- b) Increased use of preventative orders for High Harm offenders, and enhanced complex offender management to protect communities and vulnerable persons from those who pose the greatest threat.
- c) Expanded teams with a broader remit that will improve opportunities to develop an inexperienced workforce and attract future detectives.
- d) Improved Divisional proactive capability to react to serious acquisitive and violent crimes that affect local communities.
- e) A retained specialist missing person function that has proven to reduce the length of missing episodes, as well as utilises problem-solving and partnership approaches for repeat missing persons.
- f) Specialist serious sexual offence investigations under central command (aligned to the policy and practice lead) and compliant with Op Soteria (national best practice for rape investigation).
- g) The model recognises that some high risk domestic abuse and stalking requires specialist investigation and a partnership approach.
- h) Child sexual exploitation aligned to Child and Adult Protection Investigation Teams to increase resilience and partnership working.

Impact since implementation:

21. The new model has been implemented with no issues of criticality, nor significant concerns identified.

22. The restructure required the Crime Allocation Policy to be re-written. This was deemed to be a potential risk area prior to implementation. A separate working group has been running over several months, involving far reaching consultation and engagement across the force. The new policy was communicated across the force with bespoke online engagement and Q&A sessions for those most effected (notably first line supervisors). Local senior leaders have also delivered frequent and strong messaging around the need to apply appropriate application of the policy, with the needs of victims and witnesses at the heart of all such decision making. At the time of writing there have been no allocation issues raised through the governance structures or directly to the Change Team.

23. Following the HR posting process that was undertaken in May 2024 to populate the new model, regular resource tracking meetings have been held. This has helped to identify resourcing gaps and action required to balance skills in the new teams. Plans continue to be worked on to ensure the resourcing strength of the DPR model in the future.

24. Daily monitoring of absence levels has identified no significant absence increases since 'go live', other than a slight increase in overall officer and staff absence that has been witnessed over several years at this time of the year due to seasonal factors.

25. A comprehensive analytical product has been developed to help senior leaders and Chief Officers to monitor any impact of the DPR change implementation on force performance and service delivery. At this time, no performance threats or challenges have been identified. This remains under daily review by the Central Analytical Team as well as the Force Change Team.

26. Key partners (notably in safeguarding) have been regularly briefed around the DPR change programme and also provided with new contact details in order to maintain the Force's strong partnership arrangements. No concerns have been raised by key partners since implementation.

Next steps:

27. The monitoring regime via the governance structures will continue for the coming months to ensure that the objectives of the review are achieved, with regular reporting into the Deputy Chief Constable.

28. A Post Implementation Review of the DPR will be undertaken in Spring 2025.

Holding to account:

29. One of the principle ways the PCC holds the Chief Constable to account is through the quarterly Performance and Delivery Board.

30. Open to Panel Members and the public on a non-participating basis and also live streamed, the meeting is chaired by the PCC and papers are submitted by the Force in advance and published [here](#). The Chief Constable is required to attend the meeting in order to present and discuss the papers and answer questions about delivery of the [Making Kent Safer](#) Plan and policing generally in the county.
31. The PCC will also continue to hold the Chief Constable to account via their regular weekly briefings and receive bespoke briefing notes and updates from the Force as required.

Recommendation:

32. The Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel is asked to note this report.