



ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

A meeting of the Accountability and Performance Panel was held in the Strategic Co-ordination Centre, Police Headquarters, Martlesham on Thursday, 28 February 2013 at 9.30 am.

PRESENT:

Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner

Chris Bland (PCC Chief Finance Officer), Christopher Jackson (Chief Executive), Ian Rands (Business Manager), Claire Swallow (Deputy Chief Executive) and Vanessa Scott (Policy Officer).

Suffolk Constabulary

Sarah Bolt (Strategic Change), Phillip Clayton (Constabulary Chief Finance Officer), Dave Dring (Head of Corporate Services), Charlie Hall (Assistant Chief Constable), Paul Marshall (Temporary Chief Constable), Tim Newcomb (Temporary Assistant Chief Constable) and Rachel Wilkinson (Head of HR).

PUBLIC AGENDA

1. PERFORMANCE PRIORITIES – MONITORING REPORT

- 1.1 Paper AP13/1 provided an update on the performance priorities set within the Policing Plan for the period April 2012 to January 2013. Discussion centred on the following:

Domestic Burglary [copy of the Action Plan tabled]

- 1.2 While the 6.6% reduction in reported burglaries was welcomed, the solved rate was an area of continuing concern, particularly in the west of the county where cross border activities were difficult to manage. A recent operation that included checking on the handling of goods had helped to arrest the spike in activities but the focus on the detection rate remained. It was intended to update the action plan with activities intended for the new financial year including:

- Revised stop/search training to encourage its use in intelligence-led circumstances;
- Use of training/opportunity days for additional pro-active operations;
- Increase the Detective strength – six officers had recently completed training and six more were due to complete the course in May;
- Add three posts in Integrated Offender Management (Partnership Teams);
- Give greater emphasis to prevention activities – engage with Community Safety Partnerships on this.

- 1.3 Burglary detection remained a priority in the new Police & Crime Plan and the PCC said he would do all he could to support the Constabulary, which could include funding activities through the new community safety commissioning arrangements.
- 1.4 Other matters raised included links to business crime that might include oil thefts and catalytic convertors but overall business crime levels were down. The importance of learning the lessons from the good work in the east of the county was highlighted to ensure performance did not slip if those convicted decided to re-offend when released from prison.

Actions

Revised action plan to be presented to the next meeting.

Serious Sexual Offences [copy of Action Plan tabled]

- 1.5 Once again while the crime rate had reduced, to a level similar to Norfolk, the solved rate continued to be disappointing and was well below the three year average. The focus tended to be at the higher level crimes such as rape and two-thirds of cases were indecent assaults that fell to response officers and SNT officers to deal with. An area-based approach to the management of such cases was being introduced that included better supervision and advice through the Gemini teams.
- 1.6 As with burglary, increased detective resources had been agreed and close liaison with the CPS on case management continued. An ex-officer who had supported Norfolk in terms of case building had been consulted and the checks he made confirmed processes were in order.
- 1.7 Constabulary officers were asked whether lessons could be learned from those forces with much better solved rates such as Wiltshire and while this would be done there was an acceptance that recording methods were not standardised; indeed the Metropolitan Police had been heavily criticised for encouraging victims not to report incidents.

Actions

- (i) Further information on the practices in other forces be reported to the next meeting to include an outline of the management of cases;
- (ii) Efforts should be made to highlight good news stories wherever possible;
- (iii) The PCC to help raise awareness of partners to the importance of protecting vulnerable people.

Victim Satisfaction

- 1.8 Suffolk's performance in relation to the 'whole experience' continued to improve and the latest figure of 85.1% was expected to move the force to 29th in the national table. However, it was recognised that this was an area that the Constabulary could influence and chief officers were adamant that efforts would continue and a top quartile position was the aim.
- 1.9 Steps to improve the situation would include visiting an increasing number of crime scenes and ensuring the importance of customer care was embedded in training. The impact of now having Volume Crime Scene Investigators available was expected to be positive and in response to a question the decision-making process as to whether to attend a crime scene was explained.

Actions

An evaluation of the work of the Customer Service Desk be included within the next report to the Panel.

Response to Emergency Incidents

- 1.10 It was disappointing that in recent weeks performance had fallen below the 90% response target, although it was clear the bad weather had been a factor. The year-to-date figure was 90.1% and chief officers said this would be subject to close scrutiny and action taken if performance was to drop below the target for any prolonged period. An assurance was given that the reduction in the number of response hubs a few years earlier was not having an impact and the geographic line management arrangements were described which response officers favoured.
- 1.11 The STORM command and control system was expected to have a positive impact and would support performance monitoring of the new urban/rural response times as included in the Police & Crime Plan, including comparisons with others. The PCC said that he would act as an advocate for the revised approach should that be necessary.

Actions

A high level breakdown of the categories of incidents be provided to the next meeting.

General

- 1.12 While discussion had centred on those areas where performance was graded red or amber, there was an acknowledgement that, overall, performance was holding up well with crime levels continuing to fall.

Actions

Discussions to take place on the format of performance reports, with particular reference to the approach when monitoring against the new Police & Crime Plan.

2. PROTECTIVE SERVICES UPDATE (Paper AP13/2)

2.1 Matters highlighted included:

- Demands on the Major Investigation Team were back to a normal level and officers were currently helping County Policing Command investigations;
- Child Sexual Exploitation continued to be high profile – development of the Multi Agency Services Hub would help in that regard;
- The increasing number of Registered Sex Offenders was an issue for all Forces – there was a 3% increase on the previous year;
- Structures at a national level including Counter Terrorism and the introduction of the National Crime Agency could impact regionally including Serious & Organised Crime Units adopting a more standardised approach;
- A requirement to make three Police Support Units available for the G8 summit in Northern Ireland.

- 2.2 The PCC repeated his desire to support the Constabulary in talks with partners such as the judiciary and by utilising the APCC, which he expected to be fully operational sometime in March, to press the government and others at a national level.

- 2.3 The Deputy Chief Executive drew attention to the inclusion of a reference to the Strategic Policing Requirement in the Police & Crime Plan and the need for monitoring arrangements. As well as a document agreed recently at an ACPO Council meeting that would assist, it was reported that the College of Policing were leading on some measures based on capabilities. An outline could be reported to the next meeting.

- 2.4 Given the mention earlier of the CSI and VCSI posts, ACC Hall provided a further update in terms of their current and expected impact in relation to incidents attended and positive fingerprint IDs which was encouraging. He explained that two VCSI posts were already in place in Ipswich with three more staff expected to complete training shortly and be fully operational by April.
- 2.5 Finally, on Roads Policing the PCC referred to continued frustrations over the delays in re-opening the A14 after accidents, although there was an acceptance that the police were often reliant on others. It was noted that Therese Coffey MP had called a meeting of the various interested parties to discuss the issue.

Actions

- (i) Discussions take place as to the level of the data to be included in future reports in relation to performance;
- (ii) Information on the means to monitor against the Strategic Planning Requirement be included in the next report.

3. UPDATE REPORT ON COLLABORATION (Paper AP13/3)

- 3.1 There was a discussion on the level of detail that might be included in future reports and how this might compare to information to be provided to the new Norfolk/Suffolk Collaboration Panel. The Chief Executive said that he was providing advice on what was required for the Norfolk/Suffolk meeting in April and reviewing certain information in those papers might be possible. The important issue for this Panel was performance from a Suffolk perspective.
- 3.2 As to the way forward further discussions were proposed. This would include consideration of a suggestion by the Temporary Chief Constable that the Panel reviews progress of one or two collaborated departments at each meeting in more detail with heads of department in attendance. Such a discussion would also need to consider the reviews built into the collaborative business cases for which a timetable existed; they were expected to be internal reviews completed by the Strategic Change Team. Consulting users of the service was proposed.
- 3.3 The information in Paper AP13/3 was noted.

Actions

- (i) Discussions to take place on the format of future reports;
- (ii) The Constabulary to review the position of chief officer posts linked to collaborative activities in accordance with an earlier Police Authority decision prior to the end of the financial year.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE (Paper AP13/4)

Sickness

- 4.1 There had been a disappointing rise in sickness levels over recent months although it remained below the previous year's accumulative performance. The primary reasons were respiratory conditions and digestive disorders, a position replicated elsewhere. The Head of HR was able to report that the trend was beginning to be reversed in the second half of February and she also referred to discussions with line managers and others – this included the approach to Return to Work interviews. In response to the PCC she also described the trigger mechanisms to identify those off sick on a regular basis and in turn where additional support could be offered.

4.2 Other matters highlighted included:

- Some difficulties had arisen in terms of response times from Occupational Health;
- The position in terms of cases of long term sickness was good when compared to medium term cases;
- The loss of the additional dedicated resource supported by the Police Authority was not felt to be a major issue with systems now embedded;
- Norfolk had experienced similar issues around sickness;
- Utilising officers on long term sick on the Customer Service Desk was not an easy suggestion to progress.

4.3 There was a discussion as to the possibility of taking a harder line with those on medium term and in particular longer term sickness and reporting back on the possible action was supported, to include details of costs.

Actions

- (i) A report back to the next meeting on 30 April on the issues raised in paragraph 4.3 above;
- (ii) The next report to also include comparisons with sickness levels across the public and private sector.

Officer Establishment and Strength Levels

4.4 The establishment was currently 1181 FTE which was positive and it was reported that reaching the target of 1200 should be achieved early in 2013/14. The recent recruitment processes had impacted on the numbers of both PCSOs and Specials with recruitment campaigns planned.

5. FINANCIAL MONITORING AS AT 31 JANUARY 2013 (Paper AP13/5)

5.1 The ACO stressed that the vast majority of the under-spend of £2.16m was non-recurring and included staff pay, penalties linked to the PIC contract, premises costs and earlier than expected savings on IT under the collaboration business case. It was predicted that a figure of between £200k and £300k was recurring and would be reflected in the development of medium term financial plans.

5.2 A final outturn report was expected to be presented to the Panel in June, to include details of carry-forwards proposed by the Constabulary and slippage against the capital programme which was currently estimated at £1.64m against the total of £11.355m.

6. ESTATES STRATEGY – LATEST UPDATE (PAPER AP13/6)

6.1 There was a lot of interest expressed in the work that had commenced in relation to a joint Norfolk & Suffolk Estates Strategy which had three main strands : public access; parts of business which might co-locate and external advice on best practice. The ACO described how that work was being taken forward and the PCC spoke about his vision on the future of estates that included a variety of solutions to include further joint projects with public sector and voluntary sector partners. He also mentioned a review of properties on the borders with Essex and Cambridgeshire.

6.2 Other matters raised included the latest position on the identification of a town centre location for the Ipswich Central SNT and a public access point where details of a possible alternative property had emerged and further discussions with the County Council on the overspend in respect of Landmark House. Reference was also made

to a possible public sector project for a storage facility; further details could be reported to a future meeting.

PRIVATE AGENDA

7. CHIEF OFFICERS' RISK REPORT

- 7.1 By way of background the ACO described the process in place to review the entries at regular command team meetings and more formally on a quarterly basis.
- 7.2 It was agreed to go through the five entries in the register and those in the Radar section and details of the discussions are contained in private minutes.

The meeting closed at 12.40 pm

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