



PAPER AP13/56

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, 31 October 2013 at 9.30 am.

PRESENT:

Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner

Chris Bland (PCC Chief Finance Officer), Christopher Jackson (Chief Executive), Tim Passmore (PCC) and Ian Rands (Business Manager).

Suffolk Constabulary

Rupert Birtles (Assistant Chief Officer), Phillip Clayton (Constabulary Chief Finance Officer), Paul Marshall (Deputy Constable), Douglas Paxton (Chief Constable) and Gareth Wilson (Assistant Chief Constable).

Also present: James Close (Joint Head of ICT) for item 8 and Peter Worobec (Independent Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board) for items 3 and 4.

PUBLIC AGENDA

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING [Paper AP13/45]
 - 1.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2013 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the PCC subject to the following matters of clarification:

Paragraph 3.3 – it was acknowledged that rather than referring to a *decision to procure vehicles* it should have referred to a *process to procure vehicles*.

Paragraph 5.1 – it was recognised that at the time of the previous meeting, PCCs were intended to become members of the LCJB. Since that time the membership of PCCs on the Board had been clarified.
2. ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2013 [Paper PA13/46]
 - 2.1 The Annual Audit Letter produced by Ernst & Young as the PCC's and Constabulary's External Auditor was formally received.
 - 2.2 The key findings were generally positive and the PCC acknowledged the hard work put in by staff in the Finance Department to ensure compliance with changes in the accounting practices. Placing the letter at a meeting where the PCC and Chief Constable were present closed the process of the Annual Accounts.

[The PCC changed the order of the agenda so as bring forward the reports relating to Children and Young People.]

3. PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE UPDATE [Paper AP13/51]
 - 3.1 ACC Gareth Wilson introduced the report highlighting the links to the Local Safeguarding Children Board, the incremental development of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the intention to provide a Child Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). In relation to SARCs, including child provision, the NHS was making available funding of £300k in the current year and £1.2m in the next financial year for the eastern region. The Constabulary would be pressing for funding for Norfolk and Suffolk and the PCC agreed to lend his support if that were appropriate.
 - 3.2 The PCC enquired as to the commitment of partners to the MASH given some earlier concerns and ACC Wilson said that he was quite positive in that regard. Detailed staffing requirements were in the process of being developed prior to the 'go-live' date in January next year. The PCC asked to be kept in touch should there be concerns, so that he might go direct to partners on the Constabulary's behalf.
 - 3.3 It was agreed to note the contents of the report.
4. LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (LSCB) ANNUAL REPORT [Paper AP13/52]
 - 4.1 Peter Worobec, the Independent Chair of the LSCB, was welcomed to the meeting. He introduced the Annual Report which appears in the Minute Book along with the covering paper. Before drawing attention to the recommendations, he highlighted the deficiencies referred to in two Safeguarding Reviews which had recently been published and were of national significance. They emphasised the need for continuing vigilance given criticism of professional over-optimism and evidence of poor communications between agencies.
 - 4.2 In terms of the recommendations he acknowledged that Suffolk Constabulary performed well when compared to many others and demonstrated continuing commitment. Given the financial outlook he hoped that careful consideration would be given to the impact of any possible changes in the future given it was such a high risk area and highlighted the need to embed in the skill base of all officers the need to challenge the welfare of children.
 - 4.3 The PCC acknowledged that the issue of communications and data sharing was often highlighted as a problem and Peter Worobec emphasised the importance of the MASH in that regard in terms of sharing intelligence in a safe environment. He believed the commitment was there to ensure it would be a success in the longer term but had some doubts as to whether it would be fully functional in January. This led to a discussion about high vacancy rates within certain partner agencies and a tendency recently for services to be run by those in temporary positions.
 - 4.4 The recommendations in the Annual Report were noted and there was an acknowledgement that the multi-agency family focussed approach being promoted by the Board was supported.

5. THE OPERATIONAL APPROACH TO SPEED ENFORCEMENT [Paper AP13/47]

- 5.1 The report was introduced by ACC Gareth Wilson who highlighted the over-arching principle of promoting a transparent approach to enforcement, including the focus of resources where they were most needed. He explained in more detail the approach to the enforcement thresholds in paragraph 2.3 and gave some context in terms of actual numbers who opted for the Speed Awareness Course. He also outlined the revised approach to deployment including strategic tasking and publication of the list of sanctioned sites.
- 5.2 Among the issues discussed was the need for a communications strategy, the further clarity that would follow once support was available in terms of Evidence Based Policing and further re-invigoration of the Roadsafte Board. The Chief Constable also acknowledged the need for a major push on driving standards generally and in particular use of seatbelts and mobile phones.
- 5.3 The PCC welcomed the report and supported the way forward described. An assurance was received that the review of Community Speed Watch referred to at paragraph 4.11 would not be delayed.

6. PERFORMANCE PRIORITIES – MONITORING REPORT APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2013 [Paper AP13/48]

- 6.1 DCC Paul Marshall introduced the report which highlighted the fact that performance against the priorities in the Police & Crime Plan was very strong with 11 of the 14 objectives ahead of baseline. Overall, recorded crime continued to fall with a marked reduction in ASB over the past year.
- 6.2 Prior to the meeting the PCC had given notice of his intention to request an exception report to the December meeting on the subject of Serious Sexual Offences and this was confirmed. A copy of the College of Policing Peer Team Report had been made available to him and the report in December could outline the response to the findings, details of the problem profile, the impact of the new CPS team and what could be expected from the introduction of EBP. In terms of detections, current performance was showing a marked improvement – the solved rate for the period April – September 2103 was 29.7%. In that regard mention was made of additional resources already made available to the Gemini Team.
- 6.3 Reference was made to the category of Violence with Injury where the solved rate had a ‘red’ status and DCC Marshall referred to the impact of the reduction in night-time economy crime where crimes were more readily solvable. This meant that offences of domestic abuse were becoming a larger proportion of recorded crime in this category and they tended to be more complex and more prone to attrition. It was not considered necessary to request an exception report to the next meeting.
- 6.4 The only other performance area showing a ‘red’ status was *People who think the police do a good/excellent job* where the performance for the past 12 months was 57.4% compared to the 3-year baseline of 60.1%. This was somewhat surprising given the performance in relation to the remaining categories under Public Confidence and the report as a whole. The Chief Constable spoke about the need to better influence public opinion and said that ACC Tim Newcomb had been asked to begin a review of how this might be achieved.
- 6.5 The contents of the report were noted.

7. FINANCIAL MONITORING : APRIL – SEPTEMBER 2013 [Paper AP13/49]
- 7.1 Phillip Clayton was pleased to present what was a positive report given there was a forecast under-spend of £900k as at month six. What was particularly pleasing was the level of permanent savings that would be removed from budgets next year. He gave some further detail in relation to pay budgets. One budget showing a forecast over-spend (£400k) was Building Maintenance and reference was made to the impact of dual running costs. As far as Ipswich was concerned, purchase of the alternative premises for an SNT base had recently been agreed so that disposal of the Police Station could now be progressed.
- 7.2 There was also a discussion on the summary of capital schemes given the level of slippage. Phillip Clayton advised that all managers responsible for capital projects had been contacted so as to more accurately profile spend to inform the Medium Term Financial Plan. A spreadsheet that set out further detail of projects in the current programme was tabled and appears in the Minute Book.
- 7.3 In agreeing to note the contents of the report, the PCC also referred to discussions with the Constabulary on the principle of zero based budgeting.
8. COLLABORATION UPDATE – JOINT ICT [Paper AP13/50]
- 8.1 Rupert Birtles introduced the report and was supported by James Close.
- 8.2 Given problems he and his team had encountered with ICT and representations received from other staff, the PCC was surprised that no current performance issues had been identified. James Close acknowledged that the migration to the Microsoft operating platform had revealed certain difficulties including the reliance on a number of local networks where a solution had to be found. He believed things were settling down and the extra functionality would be of great benefit moving forward.
- 8.3 This led to a discussion about the rectification of faults and the role of the Help Desk, which was explained by James Close. Keeping customers updated on the progress of their report was a continuing issue, and Rupert Birtles advised that consideration was being given to a review of the Help Desk processes. The PCC made reference to the fact that the savings target for ICT under the Business Support Review was exceeded by £1.5m and he questioned whether greater investment would have alleviated some of the problems that had arisen. Rupert Birtles commented that all managers had been tasked with achieving as many savings as possible given the wish to protect frontline services.
- 8.4 Finally, the PCC made reference to the cultural differences highlighted in the report and Rupert Birtles gave more context in terms of the differences in resourcing, working practices and equipment, while in Suffolk there had also been a steady turnover at senior management level. The PCC referred to the need for a period of stability and hoped that this might also result in less contract staff being required, which was clearly costly.
- 8.5 It was agreed to note the contents of the report.

PRIVATE AGENDA

[A detailed account of the discussions and decisions on the following items is contained in the Confidential Minutes.]

9. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

9.1 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 13 August 2013 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the PCC.

10. PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMAND UPDATE

10.1 The report provided an update from each of the seven Directorates within the Protective Services Command identifying key performance information and significant operational or organisational issues.

10.2 The contents of the report were noted.

11. CHIEF OFFICERS RISK REPORT

11.1 This report provided an update on the Chief Officers Strategic Risk Register which was noted.

The meeting closed at 11.26 am

[During the meeting the Chief Executive drew attention to a series of questions on the reports that had been submitted to the Chief Constable in advance. A written response had been provided and in order to be open and provide further evidence of holding to account, it was agreed to make the questions and answers available on the PCC's website.]