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SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL -
27 APRIL 2018

SUBJECT: CONTACT AND CONTROL ROOM (CCR) AND PUBLIC ACCESS

SUMMARY:

1. This report provides an update on the Contact and Control Room (CCR) and website projects (Police and Crime Plan Objective 2, action points 19 & 20).

2. This report details the project work which is ongoing to ensure a more effective and efficient CCR including Public Access and Websites projects updates.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. The Accountability and Performance Panel is asked to note the content of this report.

SECTION ONE: SUFFOLK CONTACT AND CONTROL ROOM (CCR) UPDATE

1.   DEMAND

1.1   The Constabulary continues to experience heightened demand for emergency calls, with the rolling 12 month figures for February showing an increase of approximately 5,500 calls per annum (just under 5%, likely to increase as the year progresses). In addition the force has seen spikes in demand relating to adverse weather, most notably high winds and storms in early February, and most recently the 'Beast from the East' which caused widespread disruption due to heavy snow.

1.2   The Contact and Control Room (CCR) closely followed the weather forecasts, supplementing staffing in anticipation of the high demand. As a result these events have not had the negative impact on performance which might otherwise be expected. Suffolk Constabulary continues to receive requests to support the Metropolitan Police with 999 calls as per the national agreement with BT for 999 resilience.

1.3   The Average Time to Answer (ATTA) for non-emergency calls increased unexpectedly in January. As a result prompt action was taken within the CCR to reallocate some resource to peak demand periods which had the positive effect of bringing the ATTA down to the expected level for the month of February. This reallocated resource remains in place and will be continually monitored for effectiveness.

1.4   Early feedback has been received from Flagship Group regarding the 'Single Front Door' partnership project, which is exploring opportunities for closer work between local Suffolk services regarding public contact. The full report is expected in June and will include suggestions on how we can expand our work with partners to improve service to the public.

2.   RESOURCING

2.1   A total of 10.81 FTE recruitment was agreed for February 2018. This included .81 FTE allocated to part time staff wishing to increase working hours and 10 FTE recruited from outside of the organisation. Changes have been made to the recruiting process in an effort to ensure all new recruits fully understand the nature of the role, including shift work, prior to application. This included hosting an open evening for prospective candidates, a new and improved assessment centre and a more robust paper sifting process. 10 candidates were successful and begin their training on 16th April 2018 (subject to successful vetting).

2.2   A number of resources are currently abstracted from the CCR teams supporting the testing phase of the IP Telephony project. The department has recognised the need to provide additional resource to ensure that the testing is completed thoroughly and effectively against the tight deadlines that the project team have set for implementation. This involves the full time secondment of 4 FTE to the project, plus continued management support from both the Problem Solving Manager and the CCR Manager.

2.3   In addition to the above it has been necessary to make some further abstractions to allow staff to be trained on IP telephony ahead of implementation. The CCR trainer and project team have managed this closely, using pre-arranged training time to minimise the abstraction of staff as far as possible.

2.4   An application has been made to fill two held vacancies within the switchboard team to provide additional resiliency during the implementation of IP Telephony.

2.5 A shift pattern and flexible working review has been scheduled to be carried out six months after the implementation of IP telephony (to commence 9th November). This will allow the Constabulary to use a full six months of data from the new system to best align shifts to our demand profile which we anticipate changing when IP telephony goes live. Allowing 30 days to collate and understand the data and a further 30 days for staff liaison and selecting the most appropriate pattern, followed by the required 90 day notice period, it is anticipated that the new shift pattern going live by the end of April 2019.

3. **TECHNOLOGY**

IP Telephony – Phase One Delivery – Benefits

3.1 The IP Telephony project is still progressing positively. The PCC will be aware that this project has been subject to a number of challenges which have delayed the implementation date. This is in part due to the innovative nature of the project, which has required an amount of software development from the supplier.

3.2 On 'go-live' the IP telephony system will initially provide the following benefits:-

- **Resilient Infrastructure** – The new IP telephony system will replace aging technology. The CCR has seen the switchboard hardware fail on a number of occasions, and as the aging Windows XP system it is becoming increasingly costly and difficult to maintain. IP telephony will provide a stable platform across the telephony and call centre areas of the CCR.

- **Improved quality of communication** – The digital sound quality of the new system is noticeably superior to the current equipment. This means communication during critical emergency situations is improved, reducing the risk of miscommunication of vital information.

- **Surge Demand Management** – IP telephony will allow call handling to take place from any of the 66 identified positions with the CCR and other Constabulary resilient sites. This is a significant increase in capacity from the current situation, which allows call handling from just 23 positions. This means that staff operating in a different capacity within the CCR (For example radio support staff) can be utilised to handle spikes in demand.

- **Call Prioritisation** – The biggest strength of IP telephony is the ability it affords us to prioritise calls based on Threat, Harm and Risk. Calls will be triaged at an earlier stage by the switchboard team, and answered in order of urgency by the CCR.

- **Management Information** – The CCR's current technology provides very little information which can be used to react to demand. Current understanding of issues reported to the police are based upon Storm and Athena data, which only report on incidents created in either system. This leaves a large volume of calls we are unable to report on. The new telephony system will provide a significant amount of information, providing granular detail around both 'on-call' and 'off-call' workloads. It will also produce high level data of benefit to the force in terms of understanding where the greatest sources of demand sit.

- **Channel Shift** – In queue messages provide the first opportunities for channel shift to more efficient methods of contact. Tailored messaging is attached to each of the differently classified call paths, providing signposting information to the callers who are waiting to speak to the CCR. As an example, callers ringing to report a crime may be offered the website details to report a crime online if they

chose. Reporting software will allow the Constabulary to monitor the effectiveness of these messages, meaning that they can continue to evolve after implementation.

- **Emergency Messaging** – The new system gives the CCR the ability to 'front load' a bespoke emergency message in response to a major or critical incident, or to address peaks in demand. For example, if the Constabulary was dealing with reports of flooding in a particular area, a message could be added at the start of the automated greeting, providing information and warning of any delay in answering. As this is customised, it can be used to filter calls at the earliest stage (For example 'If you are calling regarding flooding in Lowestoft, we are aware of flooding in the High Street and London Road. Please visit the environment agency website for more advice. If this is an emergency and life is at risk, please hang up and dial 999').

Monitoring Benefit Realisation

3.3   The new technology and reporting software will give the opportunity to intelligently monitor how the benefits of the new system are realised. The system will allow individual call paths to be reported against and work is in progress with the Joint Performance and Analysis Department (JPAD) to ensure that each work stream is monitored appropriately and ethically. The system is able to produce spectrum reports which can be tailored to the individual messages played to callers holding. This means the Constabulary will be able to identify when a call abandons due to the query being resolved by the message, or due to the suggestion to channel shift.

3.4   CCR supervisors will have access to significantly more information to allow individual performance management of staff. Supervisors will be able to provide staff with individual development plans based on average call lengths, number of calls handled and adherence to schedule. This will make it possible to create individual targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to improve overall performance.

3.5   The project board will continue to progress towards the implementation of further stages of the project as detailed below.

Future Phases

3.6   The project board have begun the planning for future phases of the project to include the following:-

- Moving to version 9 of the software – this is a system upgrade due for release which will further improve the resiliency of the system and remove some minor problems. This is a major upgrade of software which requires system testing prior to introduction. ICT are preparing a 'test bed' system on which to thoroughly test this upgrade before adoption.

- Super Directory – Super directory is an enhanced telephone directory which will be utilised by switchboard staff. This piece of software will integrate with the Constabulary 'AD' HR system, meaning it will draw information directly from any personnel moves or changes. Once super directory is installed there are opportunities to reconsider the role of the switchboard in the future, making it more efficient.

- Workforce Management – A piece of workforce management software was included in the tender for the system. This piece of software will manage accurate forecasting of demand and allow for a more efficient deployment of resources. This tool will also opportunities to modernise the CCR workforce, making better

use of flexible working contracts. This software can be used to build bespoke shift patterns which meet the business need.

- 999 + V – This is a function of the telephony system which automatically reserves an agent for a 999 call. The system is intelligent and will ensure a predetermined number of staff are protected for 999 calls, whilst at the same time sharing the workload evenly amongst the staff on duty. This is significantly more efficient than ring-fencing staff to handle only 999 calls. This had initially been scoped as part of phase one of the project, however has proven to be technically challenging for the supplier within the time scales for implementation. In order to realise the other benefits of the system without further delay, this has moved to a later phase of the project.

- Multimedia – The system is able to handle Email, SMS text messaging, social media and webchat. This will allow channel shift from calls to these more efficient methods of contact management. This phase of the project is being considered alongside the police national website project and the project team have been involved in briefing CDC to ensure the two projects are interconnected and that any solution if fully integrated with the telephony system.

SmartSTORM

3.7 A new version of the Storm command and control system, known as SmartSTORM is currently under testing. This system provides an enhanced web interface for staff outside the control room, as well as several benefits for CCR staff, most notably the ability to interrogate two CADs simultaneously. This product is expected to be in place in October, although the system will run in parallel, meaning staff can be trained gradually to minimise abstraction.

What Three Words

3.8 The Constabulary has been working in partnership with an APP developer to explore the use of an innovative mapping system, which would overlay existing maps, allowing the CCR to narrow down an individual persons location very quickly, and to within a three metre radius. This will be of particular use in rural areas, or at large events such as the Latitude Festival, where locations can be difficult to establish.

Text Messaging Service

3.9 The CCR is taking part in a two forces project to find a single supplier for text messaging, suitable for multiple departments. This will assist the CCR with community engagement, and will allow us greater options for contacting and updating victims. This project is in the early phases of the tendering process.

Sat Nav/Storm Integration

3.10 Funding has been secured to provide a direct link between the CCR Storm system and the Satnav's fitted to response vehicles. This link will mean that upon being deployed to an incident, the postcode will go direct to the officer's satnav, saving valuable time in response. This requires some minor work by fleet to ascertain which Satnav's we have installed in each vehicle, and to fit or connect a lead to provide the information. It is anticipated this work will be completed by November 2018.

4. COMMUNICATION

4.1 The CCR hosted BBC Radio Suffolk for their breakfast show at the end of February, attracting some positive social media interactions and comments from the public.

4.2   Prior to Christmas 2017, the CCR hosted a 'Tweetathon' and this event involved live tweeting every appropriate incoming incident over a 24 hour period. This led to over a million twitter interactions and positive feedback from the public.

4.3   During the inclement weather the CCR Hosted a live broadcast from BBC Look East. The Constabulary was able to demonstrate the level of the challenge the weather presented, provide guidance to members of the public regarding travel and demonstrate how Suffolk Constabulary was managing the challenges.

5.   OPERATIONAL UPDATE

5.1   Exercise Blue Sentinel was a regional counter terrorism exercise, the 'live roleplay' element of which was hosted by Suffolk constabulary. The CCR maximised the opportunity to learn from the exercise, managing the exercise as a real incident. Contingency plans were well tested and the exercise was a real success. The CCR have collated feedback from visiting experts, our staff and officers on the ground and have used these to fine tune the contingency plans in case of any future deployment. Particular credit should go to C/Inspector Matt Rose for orchestrating the exercise, and also to Inspector Richard Gubbins who acted as Oscar One. Likewise, to   inspectors Roger Salmon and Nick Stonehouse for their efforts in preparing and revising the plans used on the day.

5.2   The recent 'Beast from the East' inclement weather presented a real operational challenge to the CCR. An increased staffing level was put in place in response to the poor weather forecasts which provided the much needed resilience as the snow began. Some of the CCR staff made significant personal sacrifices to ensure they could attend work. For some this meant sleeping at Police Headquarters for a number of nights, others made long and treacherous journeys by road or on foot. As a result of the commitment shown by staff, call handling performance during the poor weather remained at business as usual levels.

SECTION TWO: WEBSITE UPDATE

1.   WEBSITE PROJECT UPDATE

1.1   The Website Project has now been completed and the project team dissolved. The new website is in full operation for business as usual.

1.2   Online payments are now fully up and running in respect of firearms licensing.

2.   CHANNEL SHIFT

2.1   The increased levels of demand currently being experienced in the CCR make it difficult to accurately estimate the volume of channel shift as a result of the creation of the new website. What we are able to establish is that a significantly higher percentage (an increase of over 500%) of crime is now reported online as shown below:-

| 31/08/15 – 31/08/16 (old website) – Number of crimes reported | 931 |
| 13/03/17 – 13/03/18 (New website) – Number of crimes reported | 4860 |

2.2   The vast majority of these crimes would otherwise have been reported by telephone to the CCR.

2.3 In addition, the new Constabulary website has attracted almost three quarters of a million additional page views as shown below.

31/08/15 – 31/08/16 (old website) – Number of page views	1,748,719
13/03/17 – 13/03/18 (New website) – Number of page views	2,415,296
Increase in page views of	666,577

2.4 Although comparative data for the old website is not available, data from the new website shows that a good percentage of the 'contact us to report' page views relate to reports of lost and found property, which would indicate a channel shift away from both front counters and the CCR.

2.5 When viewed on an hour by hour basis, the demand curve for reporting crimes online is very similar to that of the CCR demand curve, supporting the theory that members of the public will channel shift when CCR lines are busy.

2.6 During the 'Beast from the East' inclement weather, there was a significant increase of views on our online traffic map pages of the website. The page was viewed 345 times on 26th February 2018, rising as high as 9,771 views on 1st March 2018. Again, it would be reasonable to assume a good number of these additional views would have resulted in telephone calls had they not been provided with the information they required.

Page views on the traffic map during the recent snowmageddon

26-Feb	345
27-Feb	1,811
28-Feb	5,905
01-Mar	9,771
02-Mar	5,946
03-Mar	1,354
04-Mar	186
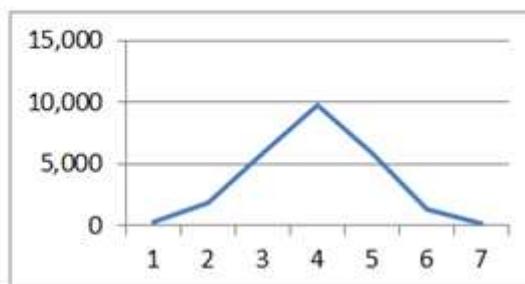
2.7 Social Media contact has also increased, with the Constabulary receiving an average of up to 17 Facebook private messages per hour. The CCR and representatives from the digital media team are attending a Social Media crime reporting event, hosted by Merseyside Police, to look at how social media crime reporting could be introduced in Suffolk. This work will run alongside the Phase 2 IP Telephony multimedia work.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no additional financial implications that are not already managed through existing governance structures.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

4.1 No new risks have been identified. Risks relating to specific projects continued to be recorded in the project specific risk register. Ongoing risks related to the increase in call volume remain.

ORIGINATOR CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)	PLEASE STATE 'YES' OR 'NO'
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	NO
Has the PCC's Chief Finance Officer been consulted?	NO
Have equality, diversity and human rights implications been considered including equality analysis, as appropriate?	YES
Have human resource implications been considered?	YES
Is the recommendation consistent with the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan?	YES
Has consultation been undertaken with people or agencies likely to be affected by the recommendation?	N/A
Has communications advice been sought on areas of likely media interest and how they might be managed?	NO
Have all relevant ethical factors been taken into consideration in developing this submission?	YES