

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Meeting to be held on 16 September 2020

Police & Crime Plan Performance Monitoring Report

Contact for further information Ian Dickinson, 01772 533587, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, ian.dickinson@lancashire-pcc.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Panel with an update on progress in delivering the current Police and Crime Plan (the Plan) for Lancashire 2016-2021.

This reports aims to provide an overview of the activity of the PCC/Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner during the 4th Quarter (1 April – 30 June 2020) and how it has changed during the COVID-19 pandemic. This overview will look at all areas of the Police and Crime Plan and additional activity, provide an update for each category with understanding of the current situation and any anticipated possible scenarios that may require a change

RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to consider the report.

Background

1. The Police and Crime Commissioner has a responsibility to hold the Chief Constable to account for the Constabulary's performance as against the Police and Crime Plan priorities by means of the quarterly Strategic Scrutiny meeting.
2. This link <https://www.lancashire-pcc.gov.uk/meetings-and-decisions/meetings-and-reports/strategic-scrutiny-meetings/> details the Scrutiny papers received from the Chief Constable and the note of the meeting records the PCC holding the Chief Constable to account.
3. The Panel are therefore referred to the Scrutiny meetings and may through today's meeting ask the Police and Crime Commissioner issues they feel relevant to the Scrutiny activity.

Performance Headlines

4. On 3 September 2020, the Commissioner held his regular quarterly Scrutiny meeting with the Chief Constable (CC) to discuss the data and issues highlighted within the report and the progress against the delivery measures

in the Police and Crime Plan. The full report is available for public inspection on the Commissioner's website.

Key issues discussed included:

- The overwhelming response of individuals and groups through the Lancashire Volunteer Partnership to support those vulnerable people in need during the covid-19 pandemic.
- The continued development of the Constabulary's approach to Valuing Difference and Inclusion (VDI).
- The trends in homicide and the subsequent impact on force resources.

Covid-19

5. Throughout the national crisis, the Commissioner has been tracking the impact on demand and resourcing closely.
6. In the main, the impact in Lancashire has been reflective of that nationally, with increases now seen in incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and assaults on emergency workers (+19% in 4 weeks to end of June 2020 nationally and +13% in Lancashire). National intelligence suggests the latter was linked to a spike in cases of individuals claiming they had tested positive for Covid-19 and spitting at officers as they responded to incidents of ASB or public order.
7. The decreases seen across other crime areas were also in line with nationally reported trends. Serious violence and sexual offences decreased considerably, as did vehicle crime, burglary and commercial thefts and robbery.
8. Transport-related incidents also reduced as a result of dramatic reductions in the volume of traffic on the County's roads. However, there is evidence to suggest that the large reductions seen at the start of movement restrictions and social isolation are plateauing and levels are slowly returning to those seen in the same period last year. Reductions in shoplifting and other theft across Lancashire were statistically linked to reduced retail sector mobility and reduced levels of assault to reductions in workplace mobility.
9. Through the Constabulary and the Lancashire Resilience Forum, the Commissioner has carefully monitored the impact of social isolation on the County's most vulnerable residents. Mental health incidents, child sexual abuse or exploitation crime and the numbers of missing persons all reduced following the implementation of emergency measures to control the pandemic.
10. The Commissioner has proactively reached out to potential victims, increasing awareness and providing opportunities for safe reporting locations during the lockdown.

11. As social movement restrictions are lifted further, Lancashire is seeing a gradual return to 2019 levels with the Constabulary expecting to see surges in demand as incidents come to light that had previously not been reported, (e.g. burglaries, as commercial properties are reopened and domestic violence or child abuse, as victims have freer access to reporting channels). The Commissioner, through the Constabulary will continue to monitor fluctuations closely.

Finance outlook

12. Looking towards the next budget and the 3 year spending review period starting in 2021/22, the Commissioner is concerned that a COVID recession in the UK may adversely impact many households, reduce council tax base, reduce council tax collections and put great financial pressure on many of our residents. This means we expect to budget for the impact of a collection fund deficit in 2020/21 which will immediately impact 2021/22 planning and also the MTFS income assumptions for subsequent years.
13. The Chief finance Officer is aware that billing authorities are anticipating a lower than forecast tax base and a lower than currently forecast collection rate than previous MTFS assumptions in the next 3-4 years.
14. In addition, the unprecedented level of national government borrowing is an emerging national risk and the Commissioner fears some inevitable future restrictions on public sector funding as a consequence.
15. The Chancellor is scheduled to announce the three year Spending Review in November. Whilst the commitment to the uplift in officer numbers appears unchanged we do expect the pressure on central government budgets to be reflected in this settlement. As a consequence, the Commissioner has established a planning process to deliver future savings with the Chief Constable to meet the financial challenge presented by the level of government funding in future years.

Police Officer Uplift

16. The Commissioner is pleased to be able to update Panel Members on progress in recruitment. The Constabulary was successful in reaching its target headcount for 2019/20.
17. They are currently at 3076 officers which is an uplift on the baseline of 88 and are well ahead for the profile to year end projection.
18. This is a significant achievement, and the Commissioner is enormously grateful to Constabulary colleagues for the energy and effort that has gone into achieving this milestone.

Criminal Justice

19. Through his office, the Commissioner continues to be actively involved in the Local Criminal Justice Board Recovery Plan.
20. However, the backlog of court cases continues to grow and there is no significant movement nationally to address this. Demand coming into the police is increasing to more normal levels and whilst the court capacity continues to be very limited the backlog of cases is likely to continue to grow exponentially.
21. Members will recall that the Commissioner has written to the Home Secretary to highlight the difficulties in setting trials, the cost of funding of virtual remand hearings and the impact these delays have on the victims and witnesses. Following a response a meeting has taken place to push progress with the HMCTS' Head of Operations for the Region and other identify alternative venues to ease this burden.
22. Members will recall that the Commissioner recently appointed a new Independent Chair for the local Reducing Reoffending Boards at the beginning of lockdown. The Chair, has been very proactive in his new role supporting the revised membership of the local boards, engendering buy in from Police SMTs and local authorities and driving forward local delivery plans.

Reducing Crime and Re-offending

23. At the last meeting the Panel was informed that the Commissioner had submitted a bid to the covid-19 Extraordinary Ministry of Justice Funding for Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Support Services. The fund had been established to support victims and survivors' of domestic abuse (DA), sexual violence (SV), vulnerable children and their families, as well as victims of modern slavery, during the COVID-19 emergency pandemic.
24. The Commissioner can now advise the Panel that he was successful in his bid and has subsequently awarded £506,228.41 to domestic abuse charities to assist them with delivering services in light of the additional demands the pandemic has placed on them.
25. The Commissioner has also secured over £700,000 of extra funding to tackle thefts and burglary in problem hotspots in West Lancashire and Burnley.
26. The funding will go towards a range of crime cutting measures including installing CCTV, alley gating, improved back gates and doors to properties where the existing ones are substandard as well as installing motion sensor lights. The package of measures which are being drawn up by the relevant local authorities will aim to reduce crime in areas where burglary and theft have been highlighted as an issue.

Commissioned Services

27. The Commissioner's commissioned services have been contacted in order to understand any service disruption that may occur and to ensure services receive any support that may be required. We have received plans and/or assurances that are updated weekly by our contracted providers and those delivering high risk provision.
28. Continuing throughout the period the OPCC has held regular meetings with Lancashire Victims Services (LVS) to understand the level and types of referrals being made.
29. LVS received 13,440 referrals between 1 April and 30 June 2020, which is around 2,000 less than last quarter and significantly less than the same quarter last year. Referrals from other agencies have decreased slightly which is unsurprising but pleasingly the self-referral rate remained high.
30. The Commissioner has secured £506,228.41 of funding through the covid-19 Extraordinary Ministry of Justice Funding for Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Support Services. This funding will help meet the additional costs registered charities or social enterprises have incurred or will incur whilst adapting their services during the pandemic, and to cope with demand increases resulting from it.
31. The Commissioner has also approved the funding of £34,087.32 to enable the Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to continue to deliver 'Operation Provide', in partnership with Lancashire Constabulary and Fylde Coast Women's Aid, until 31 March 2021.
32. Operation Provide was launched across west division in March as a collaboration between Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Lancashire Constabulary, as a direct response to the withdrawal of face-to-face domestic abuse support services during the Covid-19 lockdown.
33. Evaluation of the initiative is planned in the coming months and the Commissioner will present a further update at a future meeting.
34. Of particular interest to the Commissioner at his recent Scrutiny meeting with the Chief Constable was the overwhelming response of the Lancashire Volunteer Partnership (LVP). Over the crisis LVP volunteers including those volunteering for the Constabulary have:
 - Welcomed over 680 new volunteers
 - Directly supported over 930 vulnerable people
 - Made over 62,000 welfare calls to vulnerable people
 - Contributed over 63,000 hours of volunteers

In addition:

- Each of the LVP Volunteer Officers were supporting up to 130 volunteers
- Social Media posts were accessed over 300,000 times
- LVP received up to 70 referrals a week for their community support offering
- The LVP website was visited 3,600 times a week

35. Since the last meeting, Our Lancashire has increased its membership and now has access to over 150,000 group members. Additionally, Our Lancashire:-

- Has offered groups over 1,000 free Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks
- Lists over 1,200 groups as part of the Our Lancashire platform
- Received over 12,000 website visits during the crisis
- Provided over 32 training events and opportunities
- Supported the allocation of £1.3M of funding for local charities and groups
- Reached over 62,000 people on social media
- Acted as link officers for 14 District Hubs

36. Numbers do not tell the whole story and Our Lancashire has captured a number of case studies as to how its activity has helped reduce demand on public services and supported vulnerable people such as:

- Supporting groups making and supplying PPE
- Supporting groups providing meals and food parcels for vulnerable people
- Hosting virtual coffee mornings to keep people connected
- Securing funding for groups supporting the response effort

Public Engagement

37. The Commissioner and his Office have continued to inform and engage with members of the public throughout the current pandemic in a variety of ways. Numerous members of the office joined the Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF) to support Lancashire's strategic response to the pandemic – this involved work on county wide campaigns, information sharing across local partnerships as well as targeted stakeholder communications.

38. In addition to the work on the LRF the following activities have taken place:

- The Commissioner's office continues to respond to any incoming enquiries from the public via post, email, social media and the website.
- The Commissioner has launched his annual Let's Talk Policing Survey which has been promoted via social media, digital newsletter and the

media. The survey is due to close in September and has had over 4,500 responses to date.

- The Commissioner published his annual report providing an overview of the work and achievements of the office over the past year. The document has been shared with the public via social media channels, the website and via press release.
- The Commissioner continues to highlight support for anyone affected by domestic abuse through the #NoExcuseForAbuse campaign. SPAR stores have now joined the county wide campaign and the Commissioner joined the launched event and shared related messaging with the media and via online channels.
- The Commissioner relaunched his Community Action Fund in July to support community organisation that help make Lancashire a safer and better place through projects aligned to his Police and Crime Plan priorities.
- The Commissioner shared information and resources with the public to highlight the need to safeguard our children and young people during the pandemic. Information was shared via press release and social media.
- The Commissioner committed another £100k to support projects tackling reoffending across Lancashire and help offenders integrate back into the community – public messages were shared to highlight this work.
- The Commissioner secured a £500k funding boost for domestic abuse services to support their response to pandemic – messaging was shared to highlight this and raise awareness of available support.
- £700k of Safer Streets Funding has been secured which was highlighted via press release and social media

39. All communication methods are under constant review in terms of any further emerging issues or advice from the Government and NHS.

Violence Reduction Network (VRN)

40. Whilst some of the planned work of the VRN has been put on hold due to COVID-19 other activities and resources have been developed to support partners and continue to contribute to the trauma informed approach to tackling serious violence.

41. The VRN developed a survey used with a wide range of partners to assess likely demands and pressures on domestic abuse services as lockdown measures are relaxed and more opportunities present for victims to report

incidents of abuse. The survey will be repeated at the end of September to assess how service providers are coping and understand if there have been any changes in demands and pressures.

42. The Commissioner has received grant funding from the Home Office of £98,101 for small charities working with vulnerable young people at risk of serious violence. The grant is to provide additional support where charities have lost income, seen an increase in demand or sustained additional costs to change the way services are delivered due to COVID-19. Applications to the fund were assessed jointly by the Home Office and VRN, on behalf of the Commissioner and funding has been awarded to eleven organisations. The funding covers costs incurred in the period from 1st April – 31st December 2020.
43. The VRN has produced a number of resources to support schools and educational establishments as they re-open with advice and information for engaging pupils who may have been traumatised or adversely impacted by the effect of lockdown. Additional resources aimed at families where a parent is incarcerated have also been developed and will be circulated to all schools in Lancashire. The VRN Needs Assessment identified that having a parent in prison is one of the factors known to increase the likelihood of a young person becoming either a victim or perpetrator of serious violence.
44. Members will recall that the Commissioner has secured funding of £1,189,610 for 2020-21 from the Home Office Police Surge Fund to support police led prevention, enforcement and investigation of serious violence activity. This will enable the Constabulary to continue some of the activities commenced in 2019-20 with previous funding secured from the Home Office as well develop new areas of work. The Constabulary work is being coordinated by the VRN to ensure that it supports and is supported by the wider work of the VRN.
45. In addition, the Commissioner has also raised the funding available from £10,000 to £20,000 for each of the 12 Lancashire District Councils for allocation through the relevant Community Safety Partnership (CSP).
46. The ambition for 2020/21 is for CSPs to work in partnership with the Lancashire Violence Reduction Network (LVRN) and the Police to tackle serious violence ahead of the new Serious Violence Duty that will be placed on CSPs and a number of public sector organisations.

Complaints

47. Since the 1 February 2020, the Commissioner has taken on the responsibility for conducting reviews of police complaints which replaced the appeals function for low level service complaints under the previous complaints regime. Supported by the Standards & Compliance Policy Officer, the Director reviews complaint cases to ensure that they have been dealt with reasonably and proportionately. Where there are failings or issues, the Director can

request further action from the police in order to assist service recovery and resolve conflict. There have been 46 reviews submitted to the OPCC since the new legislation went live.

Staff Welfare

48. The offices of the Police and Crime Commissioner continue to remain closed and all staff based at this office are working from home in accordance with government guidelines. Work has now commenced on reviewing how the Office will operate in the future. The Office is maintaining service and is operating business as usual.

49. Contact with staff continues to occur on a weekly basis, through staff meetings, email, individual calls and via a weekly internal bulletin

Recommendation

50. Panel Members are recommended to consider the information contained in this report, and the information provided within the meeting, and comment accordingly.

Angela Harrison
Director