

## **1. The Task Group Looking at 101 Calls and the Operation of the Force Control Centre**

The Task Group consisted of Councillors Berry, Brunskill and Hurt and had been set up to look at the how 101 calls were handled, the operation of the newly redesigned control room and the delivery of anticipated outcomes.

## **2. The Role of the Task Group**

The group firstly noted the relationship between the policing plan which sets out the intentions of the Police and Crime Commissioner on his priorities for policing in the County and the role of the Chief Constable who delivers policing in the County. The group noted that-

(1) A Police and Crime Commissioner must, in exercising the functions of commissioner, have regard to the police and crime plan issued by himself.

(2) The Chief Constable of the police force for a police area listed in Schedule 1 to the Police Act 1996 must, in exercising the functions of chief constable, have regard to the police and crime plan issued by the police and crime commissioner for that police area.

A breakdown of the roles and functions of are set out at appendix A.

The role of the Task Group was to look at and make recommendations on the issue of non-emergency calls received by the police and the operation of the Force Control Room.

## **3. Scope and Focus of the Groups Work**

The group had agreed their method of work as follows

- To look at the vision that led to the redesign of the control room and the key outcomes that were perceived.
- To receive updates on progress to date and key milestones since implementation.
- To look at key work practices that deliver outcomes.
- To look at areas that are still in development to deliver the vision and the barriers to these.
- To look at response times to emergence and other non-emergency calls.
- To look at call abandonment rates.
- To look at comparative data from authorities/inspection reports.
- To look at the future development and service enhancement.
- The visit the force control room and look at the centre in action.
- To discuss with the commissioner his vision for the response to customer contacts in policing plan based on the evidence gathered.
- To report the findings to the PCC.

## **4. Visit to the Force Control Centre**

The Task Group commenced its work by visiting the Force Control Room at Headquarters. The group were shown the centre in working conditions.

The group were informed of the reasons that the call centre had been re-organised and the issues that had led to this decision being taken. The centre now covered all the regions of the division under one roof and the control mechanisms of the centre were explained.

The control room was divided into Areas relating to geographical split of the county with north, west and east areas and separate areas for NPR and a switchboard area that took non-emergency calls and directed them where required.

The sections or area pods reflect the split of the county into 3 Police Divisions, East, West and South. Pods were divided in to call receivers and Police radio operators.

Members were informed that all calls were first handled by BT who then directly connected it to which ever service was required/requested. (i.e. Police, Fire and Rescue or Ambulance)

The Task Group were shown the operation of the system and how the operators handled the calls they received. The group were appraised of the way that the system linked with other agencies such as fire and ambulance and how these agencies could be contacted at the same time as police resources were being deployed.

The group looked at the training that operators received and how they ensured that quality was maintained.

The use of CCTV cameras to monitor and assist in call handling was displayed and members were informed that although CCTV was monitored from the Centre in Blackburn the control room could tap into any camera for real time pictures that could help with understanding and interpreting situations.

The group were informed that the control room had just introduced the new switchboard to answer non urgent calls which had previously been dealt with by the teams. It was hoped that this would reduce the pressure on the teams by ensuring that the calls could be directed where necessary and not block the system. This was an area that the Task Group would revisit in the coming months

The group looked at the type of calls that were received by the non-urgent service and how the number of non-police related calls effected the service delivered by the control room. This was particularly relevant when the other services closed down for the weekend etc.

The Task Group looked at the geographical information that came through with calls and how this assisted in dealing them.

## 5. Performance of the Call Centre

Members looked at the monitoring and performance data that was submitted to the Commissioner on a regular basis. This highlighted the response times for both urgent and non- urgent calls together with the levels of calls abandoned. This was discussed with the commissioner at the follow up meeting.

Members noted that the figures were pre the introduction of the dedicated switchboard for dealing with non-emergency calls and this would have a major influence on the work of the centre. This could be revisited once the data relating to the introduction had been running for some time.

## 6. Meeting with the Commissioner.

Following on from the visit to the call centre the Task Group met with the Commissioner to discuss their initial findings and the Commissioner's vision for the development of the service. This meeting provided clarity to the members of the task group on a number of issues and assisted in formulation of the final recommendations from the group. Members were updated on the outcome of the PEEL Review and the positive comments on Policing in the County.

## 7. Recommendations from the Task Group

The Chair of the Task Group met with the Commissioner in November and presented the following recommendations to the Police and Crime Commissioner which are now before the panel for consideration.

- 1 That the Commissioner, support staff and Police be thanked for their support and assistance.
2. That the work of the members no longer on the PCP be noted.
3. That the following recommendations relating to the working of the non- urgent call handling be submitted to the PCP for consideration and submission to the Police Commissioner for response.
  - a. That the monitoring of data submitted to the Commissioners Scrutiny Meetings be shared with the PCP to enable members to measure progress in dealing with non-urgent calls.
  - b. That with regards to the 101 calls that relate to non-policing matters, particularly those coming in during evenings and at weekends that relate mostly to mental health issues, the task group recommend that the Commissioner contact the NHS and the Unitary Social Services Departments to make sure they have appropriate out of hours contact provision and that Councils have an emergency contact number. The Panel is recommended to support the work of the Commissioner on this issue.
  - c. That the Commissioner be recommended to consider the benefits of merging the social media and telephone call centres to ensure consistency of service and cross reporting etc. and the Commissioner continue to promote the digital service to relieve pressure on telephone services.
  - d. That the positive work of the switchboard in directing and dealing with calls be supported and continue to be monitored and reviewed.
  - e. That the benefit of the control centre being able to dial into town centre CCTV schemes be noted and the Commissioner be recommended to look at the possibility of extending this service particularly as in certain cases funding from the PCC has been used to assist setting up these schemes.

## Appendix A

### **Role: Police and Crime Commissioner**

#### Responsibility

- To secure an efficient and effective police force for Lancashire.
- To appoint /remove from office, the Chief Constable and hold him to account.
- To set the strategic direction and objectives for Lancashire Constabulary.
- To publish a Police and Crime Plan for Lancashire.
- To set the budgets and determine the council tax precept.
- To issue an annual report.
- To monitor all complaints made against officers and staff, whilst having responsibility for complaints against the Chief Constable.
- To be the local link between the Police and communities.

### **Role: Chief Constable**

#### Responsibility

- To maintain the Queen's peace.
- The direction and control of staff and officers.
- To be responsible to the public and accountable to the PCC.
- To be the operational voice in policing.
- To be politically independent of the PCC.
- For the day-to-day responsibility of allocated budgets.
- For managing complaints against police officers and staff.

### **Role: Police and Crime Panel**

#### Responsibility

- To scrutinise the PCC's exercise of their statutory functions.
- To be responsible for complaints about a PCC.
- To review the draft Police and Crime Plan and the precept and make recommendations to the PCC.
- To hold confirmation hearings for the proposed appointments of Chief Constable, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer.
- For suspending the Police and Crime Commissioner if charged with an imprisonable offence or appointing an acting Police and Crime Commissioner where the incumbent is incapacitated, resigns or is disqualified.