

MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 12 AUGUST 2020 MEETING HELD VIA SKYPE VIDEOCONFERENCE CALL

Present: D Keane, Police & Crime Commissioner
D Martland, Chief Constable

Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner

C Hodgson, Head of Finance, Operations & Governance
B McCrorie, Head of Policy & Partnerships
M Walton, Senior Governance & Performance Officer
D Ollier, Engagement & Policy Officer
J Park, Operational Support Officer

Cheshire Constabulary

J Cooke, Deputy Chief Constable
J Sims, Assistant Chief Constable
M Burton, Assistant Chief Constable
P Woods, Head of Planning & Performance

Four members of the public were present to observe the meeting.

1. MINUTES OF THE 08 JULY 2020 SCRUTINY BOARD

1.1 The minutes of the meeting on 08 July 2020 were noted and approved.

2. CHESHIRE CONSTABULARY ACTION PLAN: HUNTING

- 2.1 The Commissioner acknowledged the work completed since the initial public scrutiny meeting, noting the quarterly report and acknowledging the progress made in relation to the Chief Constable's action plan in order that the Constabulary could police efficiently and effectively.
- 2.2 The Commissioner noted the RAG ratings were marked as complete which provides reassurance. The Commissioner also noted within the action plan the production of a voluntary Code of Conduct which both the pro-hunt and anti-hunt communities could adhere to and to ensure compliance with the law. The Commissioner explained there has been a tremendous amount of work that had been completed and enquired whether hunts had permitted to the observing of laying of trails. The Chief Constable confirmed this had been agreed at the end of the season and confirmed how valuable this was for the Constabulary and all parties.
- 2.3 The Commissioner noted the Code of Conduct was to provide confidence to everyone involved that the law was being followed and asked the Chief Constable to confirm whether all parties had now signed the voluntary Code of Conduct or if there was work still to be done. The Chief Constable confirmed whilst there an agreement in principle, some hunts have sought legal advice earlier this year and they would not formally sign. The Chief Constable confirmed whilst such hunts have not formally signed based on legal advice, the Constabulary has seen a marked change in attitude and approach towards the policing of the hunts and the relationship with the anti-hunt community. The Commissioner enquired whether there's any correlation in reported allegations or offences between those that have or haven't signed up to the voluntary Code of Conduct. The Chief Constable confirmed he will take this away from the meeting and will provide an update at a further meeting. The Commissioner acknowledged the voluntary Code of Conduct is not mandatory, but this would provide relevant advice and guidance and national best practice to ensure all parties behave appropriately and in accordance with the law. The Commissioner

expressed concerns that there are some that are not willing to sign a voluntary Code of Conduct that encourages people to behave legally.

ACTION:

2020/13: The Chief Constable to provide a briefing in relation to any correlation in reported allegations or offences between hunts that have or haven't signed up the voluntary Code of Conduct.

2.4 The Commissioner explained that the engagement plan (prior to the hunting season) had previously improved relationships throughout the hunting season, with the Constabulary setting early expectations. The Commissioner sought assurance with regard to the engagement plan in advance of the 2020/2021 season and that the good progress made to date would not be lost. The Chief Constable confirmed the Constabulary would adopt the same approach this year although there remains some uncertainty of what hunting will look like due to COVID but there was an assumption that hunting will commence at the back end of the autumn.

2.5 The Commissioner confirmed that some relationships and understandings appear to have improved and hoped that this has led to a more efficient and effective police service. The Chief Constable agreed it had and that it wasn't the same level of intensity last year compared to previous years and that this was testament to all individuals involved in building relationships and continuing the operational order and approach learnt from previous years. The Chief Constable confirmed there will be pre-season meetings prior to the season to discuss the protocol once again in anticipation of assurance and agreement. The Chief Constable confirmed he would provide the Commissioner with the Constabulary's approach for the forthcoming season.

ACTIONS:

2020/14: The Chief Constable to provide an engagement plan for the 2020/2021 hunting season.

2020/15: The Chief Constable to provide a briefing in relation to the approach of the Constabulary for the 2020/2021 hunting season.

2.6 The Commissioner thanked the Chief Constable and the dedicated teams for the ongoing work and stated he welcomed a briefing ahead of the new season.

3. 2020/21 BUDGET PRIORITY DEVELOPMENTS: SIX IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

3.1 The Commissioner summarised the budget for the current financial year, explaining there are six clear budget priority developments in addition to the much wider realm of work in policing. The Commissioner noted progression in relation to the six key areas and that the OPCC continues to monitor the progress of delivery.

3.2 The Commissioner noted the dedicated, named, faced Police Officer for every community in Cheshire is underway and noted progress. The Commissioner confirmed the Chief Constable had previously offered reassurance in relation to the dedicated Police Officer in each of the 122 communities by ensuring the new role profiles and utilising last years increased precept establishment. The Commissioner applauded the ongoing work, with a clear commitment to ensure delivery, despite the constraints of COVID. The Commissioner noted that of the 122 communities, all now have a named Police Officer, although two officers will remain in specialist roles until September. The Commissioner explained this is a huge achievement, but enquired how the two officers who will be ending their specialised secondment in September will be supported to ensure a relevant handover and engage with their community at the earliest opportunity.

3.3 The Chief Constable confirmed the Constabulary had established a special operation response team to deal specifically the incidents in relation to COVID-19. The team has continued to offer assistance over the summer period and two of the successful candidates will be released during the first two weeks in September. Both officers are experienced and have previous knowledge of local policing, enabling them to commence their role as soon as they are released. The Chief Constable confirmed that by mid-September, Cheshire will have a

dedicated community Police Officer in every one of the 122 Police communities across Cheshire. The Commissioner thanked the Chief Constable and the whole team for the work completed and the impact this will have in communities across Cheshire to have a dedicated Police Officer and PCSO, both of whom will provide visibility and support in our local communities from local community bases.

- 3.4 The Commissioner explained there continued to be discussions with partners about the focus on people and place, particularly the fire service and ambulance in relation to the blue light approach, but also wider about how our public services family can support our communities building on a person-centred, place-based approach. The Commissioner thanked the Chief Constable and his team for the delivery to date. The Commissioner confirmed it has been noted beyond Cheshire and he continues to receive regular contacts from other Commissioners as to how Cheshire is able to deliver this model, but with the support of our local communities and the full support of the Constabulary, this does look to be a model that other forces are aspiring to replicate. The Commissioner expressed his great pride in such a team achievement.
- 3.5 The Commissioner explained the second budget priority is an increased investment in the Force Control Centre (FCC) and noted the Chief Constable was keen to make sure the Force Control Centre is able to deliver the best possible service, including an improved service for callers to 999 or 101, given the increased demand and average waiting times. The Commissioner had approved an increase in the establishment by 11 posts in the budget for this year. Recruitment continues but due to attrition, the Constabulary had planned additional recruitment for both August and September. The Commissioner sought reassurance from the Chief Constable that the Constabulary would be able to maintain the establishment throughout the year.
- 3.6 The Chief Constable assured the Commissioner that the Constabulary would maintain the establishment throughout the year, despite the level of attrition linked to both PC and PCSO recruitment. The Chief Constable explained the Constabulary has an overview of attrition and he is confident the Constabulary will maintain additional 11 posts for the foreseeable future. The Commissioner acknowledged the ongoing challenges within the FCC, noting that call operators work long shifts and are the front line of policing, dealing with the very difficult and often horrific calls and reports that come into 101 and 999. The Commissioner thanked all the Police Staff and Officers in this department and recognised the part they continue to play in making our services work and more importantly, offering reassurance to people calling in seeking help.
- 3.7 The Commissioner sought assurance from the Chief Constable in relation to welfare provisions available to support staff and new recruits to the FCC, particularly through the COVID pandemic but also the impacts of COVID beyond the daily stressful job they do on a daily basis. The Chief Constable confirmed the Constabulary has worked on hygiene factors, spacing, hand gels, wipes ect. to ensure such staff have the relevant support as they are the 24/7. The Chief Constable explained the Constabulary continues to work closely with Unison along with monthly meetings that ACC Sims chairs to support and recognise the work being done. The Chief Constable reassured the Commissioner that support staff who deal with traumatic incidents are also included in the debriefs and provided the opportunity for support and counselling following the Commissioner's additional investments over the previous twelve months into the Occupation Health Unit (OHU). As a result, counselling support, psychological support and the usual physical support is available via OHU and he is acutely aware that they are very much the front and centre of operational policing. It is right that they receive the best available help and support.
- 3.8 The Commissioner discussed with the current mapping to ensure the 11 additional posts are delivered and also the future progress report to determine whether this additional resource has improved the service, will there be a quantitative difference or are we expecting a qualitative difference or perhaps expecting both. The Chief Constable confirmed they will be looking at both as the FCC has been under resourced for some time given the increasing demands. Although the number of 101 calls have decreased slightly over the previous twelve months, the

number of 999 calls have increased and where they have, the demand within the OMU which records all crimes across the Constabulary has also increased. The Chief Constable reassured the Commissioner that staff will be in place, the establishment will be maintained and confirmed 101 and 999 performance will be monitored. The Chief Constable explained that the Constabulary are up in the upper 90s in relation to answering the 999 calls within 10 seconds and with the response cycle within twenty minutes, which is all captured within the general KPIs within the FCC, the first point of contact and making sure they are recorded appropriately through quantitative and qualitative performance improvements.

- 3.9 The Commissioner discussed the improvements in technology, with Single Online Home providing several functions for those able to use IT systems to contact the Constabulary, although confirmed that 101 will be retained for those who need to contact the Constabulary via telephone. The Chief Constable confirmed when a member of public calls 101, they will now hear his voice with a range of different routes into the organisation and the Constabulary now has the function within Single Online Home to utilise text messaging. The Chief Constable confirmed they continue to explore technology and the various aspects of contact management, exploiting all technology available given the increase in mobile phone usage, but ensuring 999 calls remain a priority, particularly with demand increasing over the previous years. The Commissioner highlighted he will continue to encourage people to contact the Constabulary via such technology for those who are able, but stressed that we must retain traditional telephone and face to face methods for those unable to use such technology.
- 3.10 The Commissioner stressed the importance of an inclusive service, highlighting the clear need for strong provision for people with impairments or disabilities to be able to contact the Constabulary. The Commissioner explained that he wished to ensure that the service was accessible and inclusive to all and asked the Chief Constable to ensure such consideration will be in the forefront of his and the team's mind in the review of the contact management strategies. The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed they are passionate about protecting vulnerable people and they're often the people who need us the most and are not able to contact us by digital methods. The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed the Constabulary continues to investigate how demand flows into the system and making sure that the Constabulary is an accessible services to all of our communities, including the most vulnerable. The Commissioner agreed that the first point of contact with policing is absolutely essential, particularly in an emergency to ensure equality of access, if not priority of access for those that are vulnerable. The Commissioner explained he would like to be more involved and work with the Deputy Chief Constable, have a deep dive at a private briefing to help assure our public at a later stage that those aspects are covered. The Commissioner explained his desire that, given the leadership role of the Deputy Chief Constable, Cheshire be the best police service in the country for equality of access issues, and the subsequent quality of service.

ACTIONS:

2020/16: The Deputy Chief Constable to provide a briefing in relation to inclusion and diversity with regards to supporting public contact and accessibility.

- 3.11 The Commissioner explained the third budget priority is to improve and focus the occupational health service to serve all those within the Constabulary, including officers, staff and volunteers, whilst looking forward to the journey of revising the Occupational Health Service offer. The Commissioner discussed the focus in relation to prevention, mental health provision by early support, increased use of counselling services and also looking at social, financial and physical health. The Commissioner confirmed that delivery was on track and he wished to look at the business cases for the best provision of health and wellbeing services future, recognising the investment that may be required but balancing this against a service that could make officers, staff and volunteers the best they could be to serve the residents of Cheshire. The Commissioner recognised that better investment could have a positive impact on health and wellbeing and could reduce illness and absence, resulting in a more efficient and effective police service.
- 3.12 The Commissioner explained the fourth budget priority for investment in proactive operations to tackle areas such as county lines, serious organised crime with a collaborative approach.

The Commissioner congratulated policing on some excellent outcomes over the last few months in terms of protecting communities against serious organised crime and felt the reassurance of the Constabulary's commitment to keep people safe. The Commissioner praised the Chief Constable on assets seized under the Proceeds of Crime Act that has been reinvested directly into the communities in an attempt to reverse some of the harm that criminals have inflicted on such communities. The Commissioner recognised the investment this year and plans to work towards further investment next year, in particular to build on the work of the serious organised crime unit in disrupting criminality that use our road and motorway networks and how we can invest to be even stronger in the fight against crime.

- 3.13 The Commissioner explained the fifth budget priority for Cheshire's integrated anti-stalking unit which was initially a national trial that Cheshire was involved in and continue to maintain on a local basis. The decision to continue was based upon the delivery of the integrated anti-stalking unit, development into a Threat Management Unit and prevention of some serious crimes. The Commissioner confirmed that ongoing partnerships are essential and making good progress, but offered his support where necessary, suggesting he and the Chief Constable continue to discuss with partner agencies where things aren't working quickly enough, reiterating our joint commitment at the highest level to influence and ensure the success of the integrated anti-stalking unit. ACC Burton provided a brief update and summary of future plans and services. The Commissioner thanked ACC Burton for the update provided and confirmed the preventative approach is the right way to go to manage the threat of individuals involved in stalking and harassment, with the intervention to prevent offenders going from victim to victim and working in partnership to support victims.
- 3.14 The Commissioner explained the final budget priority for further support for Cheshire's Women's centres to support survivors of domestic abuse, interconnected with priority five. The Commissioner confirmed the work completed by the Constabulary and partners has been exceptional and he is pleased to lead on some of that work with the Chief Constable, highlighting the successful bid to secure over £300,000 of national money for Cheshire with additional funding awarded locally via the Commissioner's Safer Communities Fund using money seized under the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA). The Commissioner reiterated the work completed to date, from a position of limited women's centre provision in Cheshire last year, to now being able to deliver this in every local authority area, noting this isn't merely a policing issue, it's a much wider public services and societal issue. The Commissioner praised the support from Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service with its leadership on these issues of domestic abuse and standing alongside our campaigns on a multi-agency approach.
- 3.15 The Commissioner explained the work in relation to offering a referral mechanism to women within custody or preventing women going into custody by utilising women's centres is already making a difference. The Commissioner explained how essential it is that Police Officers are trained in domestic abuse matters as should Police Staff in relevant posts where they're dealing with calls coming in to give a full understanding to help make our services better. The Commissioner sought assurance from the Chief Constable that they are on track to re-establish Domestic Abuse training from autumn onwards, as it is recognised many officers have already had the training but will be a continual process going forwards. The Chief Constable confirmed this is a priority for the Constabulary, especially during COVID as a lot of resource went into such training and the importance to ensure every frontline officer has online training and when able to do so, the traditional classroom approach.
- 3.16 The Commissioner thanked the Chief Constable for the progress to date and the reassurance provided.

4. POLICE & CRIME PLAN: PERFORMANCE

- 4.1 The Commissioner noted the percentage of the public who agreed Cheshire Police are dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) issues effectively in the area has decreased slightly, particularly over the previous months. The Commissioner acknowledged that with the additional investment via a dedicated Police Officer in each local community, there will be a greater focus on dealing with ASB, particularly in collaboration with partner agencies to ensure activities and measures are in place. The Commissioner noted the connection could be linked to COVID but unsure if there is any other statistical reason for the decrease in recent months. The Chief Constable confirmed there was only three categories of change when COVID started, a 40% reduction in overall crime but an increase in domestic abuse and a spike in ASB. The Chief Constable explained that during the lockdown period, people not adhering to guidelines was categorised as ASB which caused the spike in ASB. The Chief Constable explained from September onwards, the Constabulary hopes to see a reduction in ASB.
- 4.2 The Commissioner explained with following COVID restrictions, he hopes that there will be a real increase in visibility and engagement within local communities, with the local dedicated community PC and PCSO using a problem solving approach to reduce ASB within local communities. The Commissioner highlighted the funding that will be launched in the autumn for the local PC and PCSO to work with partners to deliver problem solving initiatives. The Commissioner acknowledged that ASB is not always related to young people and that within the problem solving approach for each community, there is the dedicated problem solving teams aligned to each local authority area that can assist. The Chief Constable explained that prevention and stopping such issues escalating is a priority for the Constabulary and is part of the responsibility of the local PC and PCSO within the local policing model.
- 4.3 The Commissioner noted the current performance data in relation to stop and search and hate crime, explaining that there is ongoing analysis of such data and a scrutiny board will be convened in the near future to ensure deeper and dedicated scrutiny on these matters.
- 4.4 The Commissioner noted the substantial decrease in the overall number of missing and absent children, as well as the reduction in juvenile overnight detentions, seeking assurance from the Chief Constable that this is not due to a change in recording. The Chief Constable confirmed that with regard to juvenile overnight detentions, there has been a desire that unless absolutely necessary, the Constabulary would not detain a juvenile overnight. The Chief Constable explained that missing from home data continues to be scrutinised on a daily basis and confirmed they have seen a reduction over the previous months which is largely attributed to the COVID-19 lockdown. The Chief Constable explained, however, that he is acutely aware that young people, particularly those in care, are incredibly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. The Chief Constable confirmed Police Officers and PCSOs continue to work with partners and are engaging with care homes and children's homes in relation to welfare. The Commissioner thanked the Chief Constable for the reassurance provided and applauded the Youth Justice Services in Cheshire, particularly in relation to the appropriate adult schemes in custody and their part in keeping young people safe.
- 4.5 The Commissioner noted the future planning and approach to road safety, confirming future meetings with departments and partners on strategies and budget matters in the near future. The Commissioner welcomed the decrease in the number of killed and seriously injured collisions within Cheshire and applauded the ongoing Fatal 5 campaign in collaboration with Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service and NW Ambulance Service. The Commissioner explained that local speed enforcement via PCSOs within local communities must continue and that in addition to the Fatal 5 campaign and further education, it is hoped there can be a culture change with regard to speeding across Cheshire.
- 4.6 The Commissioner discussed the concept of average speed in Cheshire and the impact such technology can have, citing the Cat 'n' Fiddle road as an example. The ANPR system in Cheshire also continues to be a valuable tool in response to travelling criminality. The Commissioner acknowledged that the Constabulary's Road Safety Strategy is up for review and the Commissioner wished to discuss technology with the Chief Constable as road safety will be a focus in the plans for next year's budget given this continues to be the single biggest area of loss of life that we come across. The Chief Constable confirmed his desire to work in

partnership to reduce KSIs in the future, a key priority for Cheshire Constabulary. The Commissioner acknowledged that this will require partnerships with local authorities and other blue light services to ensure a multi-agency response with increase education and enforcement.

- 4.7 The Commissioner thanked the Chief Constable for the inclusion of date in relation to the ongoing contribution of the Special Constabulary with approximately 6,000 hours a month. The Commissioner explained he was blown away with the input of the Special Constabulary throughout the COVID period, which should be applauded. The Commissioner sought assurance in relation to investment and support to Special Constables given the contribution in previous months. The Chief Constable confirmed the Special Constabulary are an invaluable resource and also applauded the contribution over the previous months, particularly in relation to Operation Business and assisting the Roads Policing campaign. The Chief Constable confirmed the Constabulary continues to focus upon supporting the Special Constabulary to be able to patrol independently and also how it can be aligned to the 122 model to support local priorities.
- 4.8 The Commissioner confirmed he had responded to a national consultation with regard to Special Constables be able to become members of the Police Federation, providing the same level of support and protection that regular officers would receive. The Commissioner explained that he understood this would require a change in legislation and enquired whether the Chief Constable would support him in pursuing such a change in legislation. The Chief Constable praised the Special Constabulary for the ongoing commitment as well as the Police Federation that does offer some support. The Chief Constable confirmed that he is fully supportive of Special Constables becoming members of the Police Federation, the issue remains cost but this would be an investment worth making given the ongoing contribution and requirement to offer support and protection. The Chief Constable confirmed he continued to discuss the matter on a regional and national basis.

5. PEOPLE & HR: PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 5.1 The Commissioner wished to commend the ongoing recruitment over recent months and explained that he continues to support the approach of the Constabulary in ensuring recruitment of replacement officers, particularly given the challenges of COVID-19. The Commissioner noted that new recruits will be required to complete very lengthy training procedures, before becoming independent police officers, but sought assurance that virtual assessment was meaningful and that standards were maintained. The Chief Constable confirmed that Cheshire was one of the pilot forces in relation to the initial recruitment assessment and assured the Commissioner that standards were maintained with no changes to the criteria. In addition, the Constabulary has maintained face-to-face interviews following the initial assessment, noting not all forces are interviewing this way. The Chief Constable confirmed that the quality of recruits had been maintained.
- 5.2 The Commissioner highlighted the bite size training sessions that are available for Constabulary employees via the learning hub, noting 57% of staff had registered. The Commissioner urged the Chief Constable to ensure all staff access the learning hub and complete the relevant learning modules. The Chief Constable confirmed that feedback from staff has raised the issue of online learning but the Constabulary continue to develop training, for example criminal justice inputs, via traditional means that will be more instructive as opposed to online IT learning.

6. COMPLAINTS, CONDUCT MATTERS, EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNALS AND GRIEVANCES: QUARTERLY REPORT

- 6.1 The Commissioner noted the resource implications following the changes to legislation in February 2020 and the broadening of the definition of a complaint to any expression of dissatisfaction. The Commissioner noted the increase in demand within the Professional Standards Department as well as the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner. The Chief Constable confirmed there has been additional pressures due to the legislative changes and

the Commissioner committed to discussing resources with the Chief Constable.

6.2 The Chief Constable offered to provide a briefing to the Commissioner detailing the increase in demand. The Commissioner stated that it would be good to review current demand and whether additional resources are required to ensure the public are assured that complaints are dealt with efficiently and effectively.

ACTIONS:

2020/17: The Chief Constable to provide a briefing in relation to current demand following changes to the police complaints system.

6.3 The Commissioner thanked colleagues and members of the public in attendance and closed part one of the meeting.

Duration of meeting: Part One of the meeting commenced at 11.00 and finished at 13:05.