

**Meeting: Police Accountability Board**

**Venue: Skype Virtual Meeting**

**Date: 11th of May 2020**

**Time: 14:00 – 16:30**

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| **Members:** | Mr Dafydd Llywelyn, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)  Chief Constable Mark Collins (MC)  Deputy Chief Constable Claire Parmenter (DCC)  Assistant Chief Constable Emma Ackland (ACC)  Mr Edwin Harries, Director of Finance (DoF)  Mrs Carys Morgans, Chief of Staff, OPCC (CoS)  Mrs Beverley Peatling, Chief Finance Officer (CFO) |
| **Also Present:** | Ms Sian George, Corporate Communications, DP (SG)  Mr Gruff Ifan, Policy and Engagement Advisor, OPCC (GI)  Insp Justin Evans, Staff Officer, DPP (JE)  PS Tanya Grey, Staff Officer, DPP (TG)  Miss Mair Harries, Executive Support, OPCC (MH) |
| **Observers** | *Members of the Dyfed-Powys Police and Crime Panel:*  Cllr Emlyn Schiavone (ES), Carmarthenshire  Cllr Keith Evans (KE), Ceredigion  Cllr David Evans (DE), Powys  Cllr Bob Summons (BS), Pembrokeshire  *Members of the Dyfed-Powys Police and Crime Commissioner’s Youth Forum:*  Cai Phillips (CP)  Celyn Mai (CM)  Elin Gore(EG)  Tom Evans (TE)  Nadine Farmer, Pembrokeshire County Council (NF) |
| **Apologies:** | None |

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| ACTION SUMMARY FROM MEETING ON 17/02/2020 | | |
| Action No | Action Summary | To be progressed by: |
| **PAB 135** | **The Force to confirm Dyfed-Powys’ placing out of 41 forces as the safest place in England and Wales according to Home Office and iQuanta data ahead of the publication of the OPCC’s precept notice.** | **Complete – DPP will use the phrase *‘One of the safest Forces in England and Wales’* moving forward.** |
| **PAB 136** | **Mair Harries to ensure that good news stories regarding Operation Mabel are presented at the Policing in a Rural Setting Conference on the 6th of March.** | **Complete – PC Esther Davies included this in her presentation.** |
| **PAB 137** | **The Force’s Connecting Communities Board to review Dyfed-Powys’ performance at ensuring public access to stations following concerns raised to the PCC that calls for access to stations are not answered despite officers manning the stations.** | **Complete – This issue has been referred to the Connecting Communities Board on the 26th of June.** |

**1 - Apologies and Introductions**

The PCC welcomed new Assistant Chief Constable Emma Ackland to her first Policing Accountability Board meeting. The PCC also congratulated the Force on its recent Investors in People Gold Award, praising the hard work of staff across the organisation.

The PCC extended his well wishes to Dyfed-Powys Police and Crime Panel member William Powell and his family following his recovery from Covid-19 the previous month. The Board sent their collective good wishes to the Panel member.

**2 – Questions from the Youth Forum**

The Board received questions from the Youth Forum member CP on issues including support available for young offenders in custody during the lockdown, the exit strategy for coming out of lockdown and lack of policing in coastal areas as visitors from outside the Force area travel during lockdown.

The CC stated that custody protocols have been put in place on top of existing policies which include ensuring that young people and adults’ temperatures are taken before they are placed into custody to ensure where possible that those with Covid-19 symptoms are identified in a timely manner. In response to the query about an exit strategy the CC stated that Dyfed-Powys Police’s (DPP’s) Learning and Development Team are working on a bespoke recovery package, reviewing how working practices adopted in response to the lockdown can be used in future. Practices include allowing staff to agile work more frequently and to minimise travel across the Force area for meetings. In relation to Police response in coastal areas, the CC stated that DPP have worked and liaised regularly with Local Authorities to engage with second home owners with property within the Dyfed-Powys Force area to encourage them not travel during this period. In addition, DPP officers have been visibly engaging with road users during lockdown, stopping cars to establish whether their journey is essential. To date 1,060 enforcement notices have been issued to individuals in breach of lockdown measures.

The PCC stated that he and other Commissioners in Wales had been in contact with Welsh Government representatives during the day following the UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s announcement that England, unlike the devolved nations, would be relaxing some of its travel restrictions. The PCC stated he wanted to understand how this would impact policing in Wales in order to ensure the correct response was seen from DPP officers. The CC supported this statement saying that DPP officers had actively been working to discourage individuals from outside the Force area from continuing their travel plans through the four counties, and would continue to do so as the measures in England are relaxed. The CC also clarified that while officers have the power to discourage and fine individuals for non-essential travel, the Police do not have the authority to evict second-home owners once they have arrived at their property.

EG posed questions relating to how the Police will engage with young people wanting to socialise after the lockdown, and queried how people in England will be made aware that the lockdown regulations in the devolved nations are currently stricter. The CC stated first that DPP had found young people to behave sensibly during lockdown and that officers would be encouraging them to socialise in an appropriate manner as lockdown measures are gradually eased. It was noted that DPP’s School Liaison Team would be working with schools and colleges to support children and young people with the transition. Addressing EG’s second question, the CC stated that the difference between lockdown measures in England and the devolved nations had been covered widely by national UK news coverage ensuring that people across the country are aware of the situation. The CC stated that he and the PCC would continue to lobby the Welsh Government with regard to the variance in fine amounts that Police can issue to individuals breaching regulations, as Police in England can issue fines of up to £3000 while officers in Wales may only issue fines up to £120, which is potentially not enough of a deterrent for some determined to travel. The CC emphasised that while 47% of enforcement issues were given to individuals from outside the Force, 53% were given to residents within the Force area meaning that DPP would continue to push the importance of staying at home to save lives on their social media pages and via their officers’ engagement with the public.

**Action: GI to arrange a conversation between the Commissioner and Youth Forum members for the week commencing the 17th of May to further progress discussions which took place during the Youth Forum’s question time at PAB on May the 11th.**

**3 – Minutes of previous meeting held on the 17th of February**

Pending a minor amendment relating to the date of the previous Policing Accountability Board meeting, the Board agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting were a true and accurate reflection of the discussions.

**4 – Force Performance Report Quarter 4**

The PCC thanked the Performance Team for producing the report to the Board alongside their ongoing analytical work for the Force’s Covid-19 response.

The PCC remarked on the drop in crime volume in April 2020 which 2019 recorded incidents compared to the same period last year which saw 2774 recorded incidents. . The CC stated that a significant drop in crime levels came during the first three weeks of lockdown as pubs, clubs and shops were closed. It was noted that during the Bank Holiday Weekend of the 8th of May that calls for service increased considerably suggesting that the good weather and celebrations for VE Day may have caused increased activity leading to more incidents. The PCC queried how long-standing investigations were being progressed during this period and was informed by the DCC that as everyday crime levels dropped in April, officers in the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) had increased capacity to investigate long-standing investigations. This has led to the number of ongoing long-standing investigations in the department reducing from 229 to 168. KE queried how reduced crime levels had affected other officers’ capacity and was informed by the CC that a huge increase in Covid-19 related calls meant that response officers were still being called upon to investigate matters such as lockdown regulations being breached.

The PCC moved the discussion on to other crime types, querying whether a reduction had been seen in travelling criminality across the Force. The CC stated that while travelling criminals had not dramatically reduced their activity the reduction of traffic on the roads has led to an increase in successful stop-checks where stopped vehicles from outside the Force area have been found to contain illegal drugs, firearms and other items.

The PCC queried whether redeploying officers to support essential teams during the lockdown response has led to an increase in capacity on the front line of policing. The DCC stated that a full review had been conducted to identify officers whose skills could be utilised elsewhere during the lockdown period, such as the Driver Retraining Team and the School Liaison Teams who have been supporting Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs). The PCC queried how the Force have ensured that safeguarding mechanisms for children have been in place during the lockdown, and was informed by the CC that Safeguarding Boards within the Force have been meeting twice a week to ensure the Force is proactive in its response to child safety. It was noted that school head teachers and school governors are in regular touch with the Force to ensure vulnerable children are brought to the Force’s attention. KE queried whether it would be possible to publish key messages from the Force on ‘Hwb’ the Welsh Government funded information platform for schools with regard to support for vulnerable children and domestic abuse victims.

**Action: School Liaison officers to consider publishing key messages of support for children on ‘Hwb’ the Welsh Government funded information platform.**

The CFO queried whether officers in collaborative areas of business such as the Wales Joint Firearms Unit (JFU) have been utilised during the lockdown. The CC stated that the JFU and ARV collaborative teams have been working with Forces in Wales, specifically on Operation Dovecote on reviewing road networks across Wales.

The discussion moved on to sexual offences, a crime type which has seen a reduction in the number of reported cases from 122 in April 2019 to 64 in April 2020. The PCC queried whether the Force was concerned about a delayed demand where individuals who have suffered sexual crimes and domestic crimes will come forward after the lockdown has ended. The DCC stated that sexual offence numbers have decreased in the Force area by 12%-13% which is in line with what other forces are experiencing. The DCC stated that DPP have been active on social media encouraging individuals suffering from sexual and domestic crimes to come forward regardless of lockdown regulations. DPP have been working to assess new cases within a 24-hour period to ensure that appropriate response and support are provided to victims. The DCC stated she was confident that DPP’s efforts are effective as April 2019 saw 104 domestic reports being made while the weekend of the 8th of May saw 135 being made, indicating public confidence in DPP’s ability to respond to abuse victims.

The discussion moved on to recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) which has risen from 721 incidents in March 2020 to 2157 in April 2020. The CC explained that all Covid-19 related calls for service are recorded as ASB resulting in a high number of recorded incidents. The DCC stated that high ASB figures for April 2020 are replicated across all UK Police forces, and was confident that there was no additional cause for concern for ASB offences.

The PCC queried what the DCC’s views were of how overall demand has been managed. The DCC stated that when the lockdown period started fast-tracked work commenced on making improvements to the Force Communication Centre (FCC) alongside ensuring that the call handlers were re-located into small teams to minimise the risk of infection from Covid-19. It was noted that the rate of answering calls had been maintained by the team throughout the lockdown period. The PCC queried an increase of abandoned 999 calls between February 2020 and March 2020. The DCC stated that at that time the FCC had briefly been under staffing capacity, however the ongoing improvement work which will see online reporting being utilised to decrease demand on the team would ensure that call handling numbers would improve.

KE raised a question of staff morale during the lockdown period and how Chief Officers were supporting staff and officers during this time. The DCC stated that the Chief Officer team were confident that staff felt supported, remarking that the Force’s recent Investors in People Gold Award was evidence that officers and staff were content. The DCC also stated that a page had been created on the staff intranet for individuals to contact the Occupational Health Team with concerns during the lockdown. The PCC stated that he was grateful to the Force’s IS&T department for supporting his staff with additional laptops to allow all staff to work from home, and that his Chief of Staff had been in regular contact with staff as they worked remotely. The PCC requested that data on the use of technology be included in the next performance report.

**Action: The Force to include data on the use of technology in the next performance report for PAB. This will include utilisation of Single Online Home, agile working data and use of skype facilities.**

A discussion ensued regarding mental health related incidents across the Force with particular regard for officers who have attended calls with individuals displaying Covid-19 symptoms. The DCC stated that officers responding to such calls are offered support and are sent for testing for the virus. To date 131 referrals have been made, and the Force’s Occupational Health department make follow-up calls to officers to support their mental wellbeing.

The DCC gave a brief update on complaints noting that at the beginning of the lockdown period the number of complaints against officers rose as members of the public were concerned that some officers were being over-zealous with their stop-checks of individuals going out to exercise and that some officers were not equipped with masks and PPE. The DCC stated however that the public have been mostly supportive of DPP officers’ response to the lockdown. The CoS stated that the OPCC has also seen an increase in communications particularly relating to Covid-19. The PCC stated that he was pleased that some of his staff have been able to support DPP departments such as the Freedom of Information team during the lockdown period while some departments experience capacity issues as individuals self-isolate.

**5 – Financial Performance during Quarter 4**

The DoF commenced the discussion stating that the PCC had set a budget of £106.897 million as a Revenue Budget for the financial year 2019/20 which incorporated a use of reserves of £0.981 million as well as financial savings of £2.932 million which were deducted from baseline budgets.

The DoF stated that actual spending for the year is predicted to equate to £105.118 million - a net additional saving of £1.779 million against the allocated budget. Whilst this saving is significantly larger than that projected following the February month end, much of that increase was unforeseeable in nature. The DoF stated however that there are some developments needed that could assist with making projecting the forward position easier for the future particularly focussed around income, collaboration and ICT headings.

It was noted that vacancies, earlier retirement and transfers of police officers and staff have largely offset the additional cost impact of the additional 0.5% pay award that became payable from September 2019. Overtime spending has been constrained within the budget for the year despite recent major incident activity. The work undertaken by the Overtime Group has been instrumental in delivering savings of £213K and £43K against the overtime headings for police officers and staff respectively. Pension payments are slightly over budget by £38K as a result of decisions around permanence and injury awards that were taken in March on medical grounds.

Moving the discussion on to additional income the DoF stated that income has been earned from driver training and from the Uplift Grant. An additional grant was also received for Designated Security Posts and Critical National Infrastructure which negated the need for the increase of £121K set aside in the budget. It was noted that the income shortfalls in respect of interest receipts, firearms licensing, prosecution cost income and mutual aid receipts all ended up lower than was prudently feared. The DoF also stated that the Force received notification in March 2020 that the Home Office has provided an additional £1 million of funding to South Wales Police in order to cover the costs of the PEQF programme in lieu of Apprenticeship contributions. DPP has been awarded £250K for 2019/20.

Moving on to the Capital Budget the DoF stated that the PCC set an original capital budget of £8.617 million in January 2019 for the financial year 2019/20 which was amended to £5.976 million in 2020. The budget was funded from grants, capital receipts (sales of assets), earmarked reserves and prudential borrowing. In total a sum of £4.997 million has been spent by the end of the financial year.

The CFO stated that she, the DoF and financial team within DPP have undertaken detailed reviews on the variances in the budgets which have occurred for a number of reasons. The CFO stated that many prudent assumptions have been made by the team and that a cultural change had taken place with regard to finance following the CC’s implementation of the Finance Gold Group within DPP.

Moving on to the utilisation of savings against the budget, the DoF stated that a decision needed to be made on the utilisation of the savings that have arisen in the 2019/20 financial year. It was noted that the Policing Board had already accepted a paper that recommended the creation of a new reserve of £650K in respect of the significant additional PPE and other net pressures versus savings being experienced in responding to the Coronavirus outbreak in 2020/21 as an interim measure whilst the Force awaits the outcome of the National Funding discussions. In addition, the DoF suggested that an additional Direct Revenue Transfer is actioned in order to prevent the need for the PCC to borrow to fund capital Estates spending in 2019/20. The DoF also stated that there was a need to consider non-enhancing spending that was to be funded from capital budgets but had to be charged to the Revenue budget under proper accounting practice amounting to £190K in order to prevent future borrowing against future ICT spending.

The CFO stated that in relation to financial support in response to Covid-19, the DoF and the accounts team had reviewed potential funding opportunities. The CFO relayed a number of potential opportunities from the Home Office, the Treasury, Welsh Government and Civil Contingencies and the thresholds that need to be met in order to be eligible for the funding. The CFO stated that the likelihood for obtaining funding is limited due to the money that has been put aside nationally to support members of the public through the lockdown.

**6 – Action and Risk Summary from Meeting**

It was agreed that the actions from the meeting would be distributed within the week and a draft of the minutes circulated as soon as possible.

**7 – Any other business**

1. **OPCC Report on Analyst Resources**

The DCC stated that the report was provided to give the PCC an overview of the analytical capability of DPP during the lockdown. It was noted that staff have been innovating and flexible to support the requirements of the Force, with all 14 Force Intelligence Bureauanalysts and 9 Business Improvement Analysts being able to work from home. It was also noted that all other roles within the Business Improvement Team and Performance and Demand Team have, excepting one, had the capability to work remotely.

1. **Questions from Board members**

KE queried whether how roads policing officers had been deployed following concerns on social media that key workers were being hindered on the way to their work. The DCC stated that officers had been redeployed to work with other teams to ensure that key workers were not being targeted, however the roads were still being policed to ensure drivers are complying with lockdown regulations.

BS extended his thanks to officers for their diligent work supporting the public during this difficult period.

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| ACTION SUMMARY FROM MEETING ON 11/05/2020 | | |
| Action No | Action Summary | To be progressed by: |
| **PAB 138** | **GI to arrange a conversation between the Commissioner and Youth Forum members for the week commencing the 17th of May to further progress discussions which took place during the Youth Forum’s question time at PAB on May the 11th.** | **Gruff Ifan - OPCC** |
| **PAB 139** | **School Liaison officers to consider publishing key messages of support for children on ‘Hwb’ the Welsh Government funded information platform.** | **Staff Officers** |
| **PAB 140** | **The Force to include data on the use of technology in the next performance report for PAB. This will include utilisation of Single Online Home, agile working data and use of skype facilities.** | **Staff Officers** |

**Date of next meeting**

August the 4th – location / method to be confirmed at a later date.