**Meeting: Policing Board**

**Venue: Teams Meeting**

**Date: 5th December 2023**

**Time: 15:00-17:10**

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| **Members:** | Deputy Chief Constable, Steve Cockwell (DCC)  Police and Crime Commissioner, Dafydd Llywelyn (PCC)  Chief Executive, Carys Morgans OPCC (CEO)  Chief Finance Officer, Beverley Peatling OPCC (CFO) |
| **Also Present:** | Staff Officer, DI Delyth Evans (DE)  Director of Commissioning and Partnership, Alison Perry (AP)  Head of Estates, Heddwyn Thomas (HT) (Item 4d only)  Principal Analyst Paul Clarke (PC) (Item 5 only)  Executive Support, Ffion Thomas OPCC (Minutes) |
| **Apologies:** | Chief Constable, Dr Richard Lewis (CC)  Director of Finance, Edwin Harries (DOF) |

**Administrative Matters**

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1. **Apologies and Introductions** *(Chair)*

The PCC noted apologies from the CC and DOF.

1. **Update on actions from previous meetings** *(Chair)*

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| **Action No.** | **Action Summary** | **Update** |
| PB 272 | PCC to discuss with the Ch Insp of Custody Services the possibility of employing a dedicated Custody Health Care Provision internally and the challenges around Dafen custody operating efficiently. | OPCC – updated below. |
| PB 273 | PCC & CEO to look at meetings in the calendar between now and December. | CEO - Complete |
| PB 274 | LH will raise RJ referrals and ASB letters with the Niche project manager. | Force - Complete |
| PB 275 | The OPCC Policy advisor to contact CI Neve and DI Briggs regarding child centred approach in Policing. | OPCC - Complete |

*PB 272*  
The PCC has spoken to Ch Insp Andy Pitt, however Insp Jenna Jones has recently been made the head of custody. DCC said that Ch Insp Pitt has had several meetings with CRG, as a result a few Custody Healthcare Practitioners have been recruited. This has improved matters; however issues may continue due to unforeseen sickness and the inability to cover at short notice, this will be monitored. There is also a ‘telemed’ service being promoted since August.

Note – Independent Custody Visitors to be updated regarding this.

*PB 273*  
The PCC updated that this has been completed and the meetings will remain as they are.

*PB 274*  
Supt Louise Harries has raised this the Project Team Manager and a follow up meeting is scheduled on Thursday and the issue is trying to be resolved.

1. **Standing Items** 
   1. Chief Constable’s Update

The PCC noted that an issue had been raised by an MP within the Force area in relation to a case that the Force had recently been involved in and the concerns were in relation to the actions of the police due to the

individuals health circumstances. The DCC confirmed that the individual had been placed in hospital under arrest due to seriousness of the criminality but agreed that the events may have been attributable to mental health issues.

The PCC requested additional information in relation employee domestic abuse perpetrators and the timeliness of dealing with the cases. The DCC advised that there were currently 5 members of staff suspended, two had been redeployed and one remains in post. One hearing was scheduled for January and other cases are progressing. The timings whilst frustrating from a Force perspective were due to following the due process. The PCC enquired whether details of the cases will be made public as there is public interest and the DCC advised that it is down to the Legally Qualified Chair to make the decision on whether a case is made public.

The PCC asked whether a communications strategy has been developed in relation to the impending PEEL inspection. It was confirmed that the final report is yet to be received and the Force is considering its response as there are areas that have improved since the inspections was undertaken.

The PCC requested additional information in relation to PCSO numbers following the recent announcement made by Welsh Government. It was confirmed that 400 is the current number being worked to which is a net reduction of 30 PCSO’s which is unlikely to be achieved by April. The Force has asked for detail to be provided on any financial transition arrangement that will be put in place. Further clarity has also been requested in relation to the abandonment of the 600 target and it should be noted the budget figure may not be provided until 17th December. The PCC advised that consideration should be give on how this would be explained at the upcoming finance seminar.

Discussion followed in relation to the workforce plan and it was agreed that whilst numbers are important the narrative behind the numbers is equally as important for inclusion within the Mid Term Financial Plan.

The DCC provided an update in relation to the Information Management Gold Group that has been established following a recent Information Commissioners Office Audit of the service. The DCC advised that there was confidence that there is now full visibility of data and there are ways to address the issues quickly. Currently there are 260 outstanding FOI cases and in respect of Data Protection cases there is better news that the backlog has reduced from around 790 cases to 370. There is a plan in place to deal with the higher risk cases to be dealt with first. A further area of concern has been in relation to the backlog in DBS checks some of which are due to NICHE but IT are working on a fix to allow searches across new and old systems. The Force has asked DBS for additional resources but they have so far refused. Overtime has been allocated to address the situation and it has stabilised recently and the Force is working with Local Authorities to ask them to share the cases of concern so these can be prioritised.

The PCC asked is it possible to put the figures in to context against other forces.

**Action: Updated information in relation to Information Management to be brought back to the February or March meeting.**

* 1. Police and Crime Commissioner’s Update

The PCC presented an update paper and asked that it be noted the issue in relation to Duty Solicitors had now been solved. The PCC also noted

there were upcoming Open Doors events in Headquarters where many local Councillors and Community Leaders will be in attendance.

* 1. Force Review

The PCC noted that a significant amount of information contained within the report he was already aware of and this highlighted the good level of communication between the Force and the OPCC so that nothing comes as a surprise.

Discussion ensue in relation to the numbers of people who had left the organisation and it was 12, but when considered last years Mid Term Financial Plan the projected figure was between 60 and 70. It is not contained within the report but if the Force is carrying that number of vacancies then some areas must be feeling the pinch. Is the organisation feeling pressure and if so in what areas? The DCC advised that the starting point is a positive position in that £6.2m savings have been identified and this only resulted in 12 people leaving the organisation. There have been unexpected leavers and the Force wishes to recruit to those positions but this has been a struggle so far.

It was further noted that there is a desire to develop our own staff and there have been successes with some apprentices. It was agreed that clarity is required on what we were assuming as the level of vacancies and what are the actual vacancies as this will assist in developing next years requirements.

The DCC noted that there have been significant changes as part of the review for example we no longer have a BSU and we have changed the model around governance and change. The Force has invested in its performance and analytic capability but it is not as quick as required. It should be noted the Force could have been more radical in service

redesign but it is not timely to do so now. It was further noted that vacancies are not purposely held and the vacancy factor is linked with attrition. Nationally and in Force attrition levels are increasing and people are not choosing lifetime careers with the Police anymore. The attrition level has quadrupled in the last three to five years for police officers.

The PCC asked what is the Force doing to reduce the churn of staff. The DCC advised that they are attempting to develop their own staff.

* 1. Procument / Contracts

Consideration was given to the contract in relation to the refresh of hardware backup. The PCC asked if the differential in costs between the previous supplier and the new supplier had been factored in to the budget and it was confirmed that this is the situation.

The PCC noted he was happy to accept the recommendation contained within the report.

1. **Matters for Discussion**
   1. Offender Diversion Scheme

The paper presented for discussion was in relation to the Offender Diversion Scheme and was presented for line of sight.

The report noted that Out of Court Disposals is applicable to Domestic Abuse incidents. It was asked whether the Force was going to take an operational decision to join a pilot prior to any legislation being introduced. A further issue was highlighted in relation to the additionality of funding that has been secured, but it is going to be challenging as the Home Office have awarded it for this year and it will require contractual changes, vetting of staff and recruitment of staff. It should be noted that

in effect we will get one year at best out of what should have been two years funding.

The DCC advised that if we joined a pilot stage then it will have implications for CPS and could clog the system as South Wales Police and Gwent are currently on the system. It would make more sense to wait until the pilot has concluded.

**Action – The wider Domestic Violence activity to be taken forward by the ACC and linked with the Criminal Justice portfolio regionally.**

* 1. Summer Demand

The report was circulated to the board and a discussion ensued. The PCC asked if the recommendations are being taken forward to Summer 2024, DCC answered that the ACC will pick up the work in terms of the plan for next year and staff welfare will be considered due to the increased sickness figure over the last summer due in part to Op Cambrian.

The ACC has already discussed with the DoF that the FCC will be recruiting over establishment in March/April time to prepare for the Summer demand.

**Action – Add Special Constabulary to the December meeting agenda under AOB.**

* 1. Consideration of Police Led Prosecutions

A paper was presented in relation to Police Led Prosecutions specially around motoring and driving offences. The PCC noted that he had asked the CC some time ago were there concerns in relation to performance and

the lack of prosecutions due to a timeliness issue and a perceived reputational damage to not prosecuting individuals. The DCC noted that there has been a change within Criminal Justice in relation to traffic processing. Historically the Force has not been good at placing resources where they need to be to meet demands. Within the report there it should ne noted there have been ongoing staffing issues and the work has built up.

It was agreed that some service improvements are required to make the process more efficient and ensure vacancies are filled. The DCC advised there should be a note of caution on the figures in relation to the loss of income as the amount contained within the report is the total amount that could be recovered if we recovered the maximin amount. However, the decision on the amount lies with the courts.

* 1. Estates Rationalisation

A paper has been provided regarding the force’s site assessments for requirements locally to the following areas: Crickhowell, Hay on Wye, Llanfyllin, Narberth, Llandeilo, Llandovery Stations. The PCC asked for re-assurance if these facilities are required? The DCC said that some of the stations are small in size and wouldn’t provide anymore facilities than what the Neighbourhood Policing Team hubs do.

HT confirmed that after speaking to the divisional Superintendents that they have been clear with their minimum requirements.

The PCC raised concerns that the local communities will feel that there is less police presence and it was important that the Force communicated these issues clearly so that the public understood it would not result in lower service provision.

A discussion ensued and it was agreed that a decision should be made in six months’ time due to the proximity of the election and to enable the change to work effectively, it should be the decision of the newly elected

Commissioner. HT confirmed that the offer from the Mid & West Wales Fire Service to share location would stand in 6 months time.

It was agreed by the Commissioner that the approval of the LED Lighting can be made via correspondence and the decision recorded formally at the next Policing Board.

**Decision – The paper is well received; the direction of travel is supported by the PCC however the final decision will need to be pended for a final decision in May.**

1. **Focus:** Priority 2: Serious Violence Duty

PC shared a report with the board, and highlighted the next steps will be a facilitated workshop run by Crest to consider the strategic needs assessment and develop some recommendations for the delivery plan that will be written and published by the end of January. It was noted that legislation now allows data to be shared amongst public bodies which is a strength.

1. **Matters for Decision**
2. Child to Parent Abuse Covenant.

The PCC advised that the office is the only Commissioners office to directly commission PEGS to undertake this work. There had been a request to sign an internal covenant in relation to Child to Parent Abuse. The DCC noted there were no particular concerns around this and it should be considered as part of a Force well-being strategy.

**Action: Child to Parent Abuse Covenant to be passed to Linda Williams for consideration.**

1. Safer Dyfed Powys Diogel Trust and Cadet Funding

Agreed that this report be deferred to the meeting in December to allow the Chief Constable and Director of Finance to consider the report.

1. **Any Other Business**
2. Vetting Backlogs and delays to vetting clearance

The PCC noted the report and stated that the report was seemingly written defensively and this was not the aim of the request from the OPCC. The issue had been raised due to the need for additional scrutiny around vetting due to the public interest.

The PCC asked whether there are issues in relation to resources that are causing issues even though it should be noted that there was good feedback from HMICFRS and areas were highlighted as good practice and examples show we are doing more than the minimum standard.

The DCC advised that the current backlog is 163, but these are not new vetting but renewals or upgrading statuses. It was accepted that some staff gain employment elsewhere due to the delays but this is being reduced and the risk managed.

Agreed that a report come back in 6 months time in relation to where we are with the backlog.

1. **Review of all actions and decisions taken** *(Chair)*

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| **Action No.** | **Action Summary** | **To be progressed by** |
| PB 276 | The wider Domestic Violence activity to be taken forward by the ACC and linked with the Criminal Justice portfolio regionally. | Force |
| PB 277 | Add Special Constabulary to the December meeting agenda under AOB. | OPCC |
| PB 278 | Child to Parent Abuse Covenant to be passed to Linda Williams for consideration. | Force |

**Next Meeting:**  5th December 10:00. Focus: Performance - Impact of Niche

**CLOSE**