**Meeting: Police Accountability Board**

**Venue: Wales Air Ambulance Headquarters Llanelli**

**Date: 26th May 2023**

**Time: 10:00 – 13:00**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Members:** | Dafydd Llywelyn, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)  Chief Constable Dr Richard Lewis (CC)  Edwin Harries, Director of Finance (DoF)  Carys Morgans, Chief Executive, OPCC (CEX) |
| **Also Present:** | Superintendent Andrew Edwards, Chief of Staff (AE)  T-Inspector Richard Davies, Staff Officer OPCC (RD)  Neil Evans, Business Manager, OPCC  Emily Wheeler, Engagement Advisor, OPCC |
| **Observers:** | Police and Crime Panel Members  Local Government Representatives  Members of the Wider Public |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Decision No** | **Summary** | **To be progressed by** |
| PAB 005 | The PCC agreed to donate £500 to Wales Air Ambulance | OPCC |

1. **Apologies and Introductions**

The PCC welcomed attendees to the meeting of the Police Accountability Board. Apologies were received by the CFO.

1. **Input from Welsh Air Ambulance**

A representative of the Welsh Air Ambulance provided an overview on their service provision and how they are fully funded by donations as a registered charity.

The PCC thank the representative for their information and for the use of the facilities for the meeting and during the build of the Carmarthenshire Custody facility. In recognition of this support the PCC advised that he would be making a charitable donation of £500.

**Decision: PCC to donate £500 to the Welsh Air Ambulance**

1. **Community Questions**

The PCC thanked individuals for submitting questions in advance of the meeting and also welcomed any further questions.

*Q. I’d be keen to learn more about the types and severity of environmental crime occurring In Carmarthenshire, and what measures are being taken to tackle such by Dyfed-Powys Police?*

A. The CC advised that there are five types of environmental crime, namely wildlife, pollution, illegal logging, illegal fishing and illegal mining. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) are the prosecuting authority however Dyfed-Powys has established a Rural Crime Team to support with this, which The Police and Crime Commissioner has helped fund.

*Q. Will there still be a town neighbourhood police station kept at the current Old Castle Road Base, Llanelli.? – Independent Custody Visitor*

A. The PCC noted that this question had been raised by an Independent Custody Visitor (ICV) and wished to record his thanks for the work of the ICVs, who check on the welfare of detainees across the Force area.

As custodian of the estate, the PCC highlighted that it is becoming more and more challenging with the age of the buildings becoming dated to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. A Neighbourhood Policing presence will be maintained in Llanelli town despite the new facility in Dafen.

*Q. How will Dyfed-Powys police be responding to the proposed “UK Government Resilience Framework” announced in December 2022 please?*

A. The CC responded that risks contained within the resilience framework were foreseeable for example climate change. The pandemic on the other hand was unforeseeable but even though plans had been prepared it was not until we were in the middle of it did we realise how difficult things would be in reality. The Force responds in conjunction with partners as part of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) which is a multi agency response. The Force is represented by Assistant Chief Constable Ifan Charles on the LRF.

A new important duty that relies on partnership working is the Serious Violence Duty that has resilience at its core through working together with local authorities and other important agencies.

*Q. I have read the Deep Dive 2018 report by the Commissioner and note that Outcomes 16 for Rapes and for Other Sexual Assaults are higher in DPP than the National Average (where the victim knows the perpetrator but no further action is taken) in light of Operation Sorteria, would the Force be willing to engage with Betsy Stanko’s team, as has South Wales Police and/or engage with DI Phil Sparrow of the South Wales Police force to learn how he has created a specialist trauma informed team which deals with rape and sexual assaults and is seeing a greater uptake of prosecutions?*

A. The PCC advised that the Force is engaged and he has been debriefed on Op Sorteria and has met with Betsy Stanko on previous occasions. South Wales had been selected to be a lead force in the first instance. Officers from Dyfed-Powys now link in with their colleagues in South Wales to learn from their experience. The PCC continued that lots of work had been undertaken in the last 12 months and in relation to Op Soteria and there was an all Wales response in place.

The CC advised in relation to Outcome 16 that Dyfed Powys Police did have the highest numbers in the country, however improvements have been made and we are now performing much better. . The PCC also noted that there were partner agencies providing additional support such as New Pathways. The PCC also welcomed the work undertaken as part of his office’s scrutiny activity as they can assist in identifying improvements. A deep dive is in the process of being undertaken in relation to Stalking and Harassment. The CC advised that Stalking and Harassment is a difficult crime to deal with is and all people want is an equity of service across Wales.

A further point was raised from the floor in relation to a complaint that had been made in relation to stalking and harassment. The victim had been advised that this was not a stalking case and no further action would be taken. It was agreed that the individual would discuss matters further with the Chief Constable’s staff officer.

1. **Force Contribution to National Measures**

The PCC noted that the next two items would be taken together but advised that there is a health warning in relation to the data as the Force are currently transitioning to a new records management system which is causing some challenges.

AE provided an introduction, advising that the information to be presented was in relation to Priority 3 and this was an extremely complex area due to investigatory processes and procedures. AE advised that the information was up to date for the period to March 2023.

AE advised that there is an intrinsic link between the length of an investigation and whether there will be a successful outcome. In general the longer the investigation, the less likely there will be a conviction or the victim will have withdrawn. The Force aims for 24 hours for a file to be completed. The Force have previously been 37 out of 43 in this area, but through improvements and investments in processes, they are now the best across the country.

The CC advised that case files will not be presented to CPS unless they are completed properly. To ensure this high standard of entry more investment is being made with Sergeants now having to assess a crime file as part of their promotion process. If they fail to assess the file appropriately then they will not be eligible to apply for the promotion board. A question was asked from the floor on whether there are any delays within the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the PCC was able to advise that he was not aware of any issues. The CC confirmed that Dyfed-Powys was in a healthy position in relation to courts compared to some regions within England.

AE continued that the introduction of performance dashboards within the Force were now enabling the monitoring of individual trends as well as Force trends. In relation to issues around case files the CC was clear that should information not be contained within a case file then this would be unacceptable but the information would be used to drive performance improvements.

AE noted that the Force is dealing with the timeliness and the accuracy of the information contained within case files and both need to be addressed together. Figures for the end of March 2023 showed that 80% of files were good when sent to CPS. AE confirmed that the more recent data has this figure at somewhere in the 90’s.

The PCC stated that a Central Investigations Hub has been set and invested in. This is where police officers will be office based and can investigate the crimes and take the pressure of response officers.

The PCC asked about the backlog in digital forensics investigations and what is being done about it. The CC noted that some of the backlog is due to the number of investigations that are being taken on. The other issues that are adding to this are there is a skills shortage in this area. The PCC continued and asked whether the Force links with academic institutions to identify workers and do staff in this area received adequate welfare provision. The CC stated that in relation to welfare provision, due to the nature of the work staff receive an annual occupational health assessment. In relation to liaising with academic institutions AE advised that they have worked with Cardiff University who have provide some 12 month industrial placements to assist with the work in this area. EH advised that there has been a £1.1m investment in infrastructure and £300k-£400k investment in staff. There is further work ongoing with a business case currently under development.

The PCC thanked AE for the detailed presentation provided.

1. **Force Performance Against Priority 3 – Our Justice System is more effective**

This item was considered as part of item 4

1. **Minutes of Previous meeting and matters arising**

Minutes from the previous meeting were deemed a true and accurate record of the meeting. The PCC asked EH to provide an update in relation to the current situation on the Statement of Accounts. EH advised that there had been delays in signing off the 2021-22 Accounts due to issues highlighted in relation to the valuation of the estates of the Force. These issues were ongoing and it was likely also that the 2022-23 Statement of Accounts would also be delayed.

The PCC advised that the Force knows what its savings target and every year it is becoming increasingly difficult to get a balanced budget but through early discussions with the Force allows the PCC to set a precept level that is acceptable to the public and enables the Force to operate.

1. **Matters arising from Policing Board scrutiny focus themes**

The PCC provided an overview of the report highlighting the activity undertaken at Policing Board meetings which included scrutiny of topics such as the Race Action Plan, Investigation Standards, Force Operating Mode and Stop and Search disproportionality. The PCC continued by highlighting that the OPCC works closely with the Force when topics for Policing Board have been identified so that there is value added by the Board in undertaking the work.

1. **Any Other Business**

The PCC advised the meeting that at a recent Local Criminal Justice Board meeting it had been noted that 8 lives have been saved by the use of Naxolone that is used to counter the effects of a drug overdose. It was suggested that all Police Officers should be trained in its use and should carry the drug. The CC advised that in his opinion this would be a waste of money, and this approach would not be appropriate. He agreed that front line officers should be targeted but for those who work in CID or in the office for most of the time, there is little need for them to carry the drug.

END