

OFFICE OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR GWENT
STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD
7th June 2021

Present: **Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)**
Mr J Cuthbert - Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
Ms E Thomas – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC)
Mrs S Curley – Chief Executive (CEX)
Mr D Garwood-Pask – Chief Finance Officer (CFO)
Mrs J Regan – Head of Assurance and Compliance (HoAC)
Mr R Guest – Head of Communications and Engagement (HoCE)
Mrs N Warren – Governance Officer (GO)

Office of the Chief Constable (OCC)

Ms P Kelly – Chief Constable (CC)
Mrs A Blakeman – Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)
Mr I Roberts – Assistant Chief Constable (ACC)
Mr N Stephens – Assistant Chief Officer, Resources (ACOR)
Mr N McLain – Chief Superintendent – Head of Continuous Improvement (HoCI)
Ms N Brain Det/Ch/Superintendent– Head of Crime and First Point of Contact (HoCFPoC)
Ms L Brustad – Superintendent – Head of Professional Standards Department (HoPSD)
Mr D Broadway – Head of the Criminal Justice Department (HoCJD)
Mr M Hobrough Chief Superintendent –Ch/Supt West LPA (MH)
Mr T Harding – Chief Superintendent –Ch/Supt East LPA (TH)
Ms N Wesson - Head of Corporate Communications (HoCC)
Mrs N Brennan - Assistant Director – Head of Joint Legal Services (HoJLS)
Mrs S Connolly - Head of People Services (HoPS)

Staff Associations

Mrs L Davies (Unison)
Mrs A Kift (Police Federation)

The meeting commenced at 9:00am.

APOLOGIES

Action

1. No apologies for absence were received.

MINUTES

2. We received and confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on the 3rd March 2021

The CC congratulated the PCC on his re-election. The PCC informed us that he was looking forward to continuing working with the Force and other key partners to provide the best possible service to members of the public for the three year term.

ACTIONS

3. We received and noted the actions from the meeting held on the 3rd March 2021.

The PCC thanked those involved for updating the actions and providing the requested information in relation to 101 calls and Operation Uplift.

The PCC acknowledged the improvement in the use of acronyms and asked that all acronyms be expanded in all future reports.

Action 6, 3rd March 2021, Force Delivery Plan 2021/2022

We noted the Force Delivery Plan would remain unchanged until the new Police and Crime Plan had been developed in order to correlate the new Force Delivery plan with its priorities.

Action 5, 24th November 2020, Compliance with the Code of Ethics

We noted the CEx had been invited to attend the first Internal Ethics Committee on 30th June 2021.

Action 6, 3rd September 2020, Collaboration Update - Executive Summary of Operational Areas. The CC advised us that the DCC would provide a Collaboration Highlight Report for scrutiny to this meeting going forward. Collaborative reporting would also be discussed at the OPCC and Force joint away day at the end of June 2021.

ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE REPORT AGAINST THE POLICE AND CRIME PLAN PRIORITIES – QUARTER FOUR

4. We received the organisational performance report against the Police and Crime Plan (the Plan) Priorities for Quarter Four.

The Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) informed us that the report considered the (Police Efficiency Effectiveness and Legitimacy) PEEL areas, the Police and Crime Plan (PCP) and monitored against Operation Uplift targets and the benefits of the work undertaken by Gwent during this exceptionally unique year could be seen in the report when comparing the Force to its most similar group (MSG) of Forces.

The Force Delivery Plan focussed on the reduction of crime and increase in public confidence over the year and also the maintenance of Crime Data Integrity (CDI). An unannounced CDI Inspection was expected this year and the Force had been focussing on ensuring incidents were recorded accurately under the appropriate categories.

The Force were in the process of conducting a self assessment of the service provided to Victims overall, in order to help inform their decision making process to ensure effective resource deployment to further improve the service.

The Operational Policing Board and Performance regime had moved from monthly focus at the Scrutiny Executive Board (SEB) to a quarterly meeting as performance had stabilised.

The Public Confidence Survey was in its third quarter and proving to be beneficial in providing information on public perception of the Force. It had been identified that more communication and engagement was needed to promote the good work in the Force, particularly in area of Serious and Organised Crime; which was usually unheard of by the community. Two Engagement Officers had been appointed for deployment to the East and West areas to improve communication and to increase public confidence in the Force.

There had been a significant amount of work undertaken in relation to the people in the workforce; the induction process had been improved and substantial well being plans had been developed and implemented to offer support to all employees.

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) asked what the three most significant areas of achievement or concern were for the Force during the year.

The DCC informed us that the recording of crime and outcomes of crime had improved. There had also been a stronger focus on problem solving and Crime Prevention.

Organised criminality was the most significant concern as it had a big impact on the community overall; organised crime usually filtered through to the smaller aspects of criminality such as neighbourhood crime and vehicle theft or drug related incidents.

Vulnerability in areas such as domestic abuse and rape continues to be an area of focus for the Force and it was acknowledged that the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (OPCCs) Rape Review would assist in this area.

The PCC advised us that he and the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC) had met with Dame Vera Baird, at the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners' meeting where it was been acknowledged that the service provided to Rape victims was not adequate across the country and required improvement. The PCC asked what the Force were doing to improve the service to Victims of Rape.

Action

The DCC informed us that work was being undertaken on a national front in relation to Rape, including a national Rape Action Plan to which the Force response had been positive. The Force were focussing on encouraging Victims to report incidents of Rape. Welsh Forces were also focussing on Sexual Assault Referral Clinic (SARC) provision in order to ensure forensic evidence could be captured as soon as possible following an incident and also to signpost Victims to support services. Resource provision and training in relation to support services such as Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs) was also a key area of focus for the Force going forward.

The Head of Crime and First Point of Contact (HoCFPoC) assured us the approach had become much more structured as local Rape Action Plans fed into the National Rape Action Plan. The all Wales Rape and Serious Sexual Offence (RASSO) group meet to discuss their local Action Plans and this information is conveyed to the National Rape Action meeting and the Force Criminal Justice Board. There were also two new RASSO officers in post to review investigations ensuring case updates were being provided to Victims regularly.

The DCC informed us the Force had increased its Rape reporting target as the Force believed there to be many unreported offences. Although the decrease in reporting was likely to be attributed to fewer people out in the night time economy during Covid19 and it was expected that the number of reports incidents would increase as restrictions were lifted. Work was on-going to provide safe spaces within the night time economy for Victims or potential Victims. The Force were also contemplating using Facial Recognition in order for Victims to be able to visually identify perpetrators who had been caught on camera with the Victim prior to the incident but the Victim may not otherwise know their details.

The CC emphasised the importance of a strong partnership approach in these instances to support Victims and advised us that there were delays from partner agencies at the point of reporting to charge which required improvement. However, Force performance from the point of charge to prosecution was very positive. There had been significant improvement in the number of cases going to Magistrates Courts, however, there were still delays with cases going to Crown Court which were mainly due Covid19. The CC suggested further joint discussions take place with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to discuss lobbying the Criminal Justice Board in order to improve the process for Rape Victims.

CC/PCC

The DCC informed us that digital crime was also an area for focus due to its ever changing form and the risk it presented to the Force.

The PCC asked what was being done to combat cyber crime and expressed his concern that there was a high level of involvement of

cyber in crimes which was not reflected in the crime recording data at 4%.

Action

The HoCFPoC advised us that cyber crime was a very complicated area as cyber cuts across the majority of crime in some form. And Organised Crime Groups were using cyber as a new route to enable their criminality during Covid19. In order to manage the increase in demand a review of the Cybercrime department was being conducted.

The Head of Continuous Improvement (HoCI) advised us that crime recording in relation to cyber was a national issue which was under discussion at the National Crime Recording Board and via the Home Office. It was suggested that crime recording practices may need to be updated to incorporate cyber elements in other crimes. However, this would need to be done on a national basis.

The PCC referred to the 'All Crime Trends' bar chart within the report and asked for clarification on the term 'meeting crime reductions' and in what context it was being used. The DCC advised us the UK Government stipulated there should be a 20% reduction in crime and a 20% increase in confidence over a 4 year period as a result of the Uplift in Officers. Therefore, a review of Force performance had been undertaken a year ago to identify areas of focus, prioritised by the public, with the aim of reducing crime in those areas by 5%, year on year including Vehicle Thefts, Assaults and Domestic Violence. The All Crime Trend identified the Force had met their target this year. This has enabled the Force to focus on the areas requiring improvement and to support this, two auditors had been appointed. A recent example of their work was a review of the service provided to Victims throughout their journey to improve areas for improvement.

The PCC referred to areas of poor Victim Satisfaction, particularly in Blaenau Gwent and asked what was being done to improve it. The DCC advised us that the public confidence work undertaken had given the Force an understanding of their communities' requirements and how the Force engaged with them. However, in Blaenau Gwent the traditional methods of engagement were not as productive as in other areas. In order to combat this, two new Engagement Officers had been appointed in the East and West Local Policing Area to assist with community engagement. Advice has also been sought from a local engagement representative within Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council with regards to communication strategies they had used to engage with the community.

The Ch/Supt (Local Policing Area) LPA West informed us there were also other contributory factors for the low Victim satisfaction rate such as the impact of Covid19 upon force engagement; the role of the Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) had evolved so they were able to have to same level of direct engagement with the public and the Crime Prevention Panels had also been disbanded. However, work has be

on-going to improve confidence in the area. The Blaenau Gwent social media platform has been utilised to promote Force activity and to demonstrate visibility, the Local Neighbourhood Sergeants and Inspectors meet with Local Councillors to maintain contact. Engagement was also discussed at the monthly local performance meeting and a dedicated PCSO had been deployed in the West (LPA) as part of the new structure reform to target the groups of people that were harder to reach. The We Don't Buy Crime (WDBC) Team have been distributing documentation following incidents to Victims and their neighbours. A dedicated Shop Watch and a Pub Watch has been introduced as this had previously been one of the areas that was least compliant with Covid19 regulations; this has subsequently improved. Deighton Primary School has also joined the Heddlu Bach scheme providing the opportunity for the Force to engage with younger members of the community.

Action

Going forward, the Force plan to introduce PCSO call backs to Victims of Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) to offer advice and support following every incident of ASB and the dedicated Communications Officer within the West LPA was to ascertain the most effective ways of communicating with the community in Blaenau Gwent as social media wasn't accessible all members of the public.

The PCC advised us that he had recently visited local businesses with Force representatives and the response to the WDBC initiative had been very positive and suggested that the initiative should be further publicised and formally launched with a joint communication campaign.

HoCC

The PCC requested clarification of the acronym SDE and was advised that it referred to 'Self Defined Ethnicity'.

The PCC asked if there had been an increase in Hate Crime, particularly since the onset of the new Delta Variant of Covid19. The DPCC assured us there had been no increase. All incidents of Hate Crime were scrutinised through Daily Management Meetings. A Deep Dive had been conducted into the incidents with the audit team in the past month and the response to general Hate Crime had changed to ensure every possible opportunity was maximised to identify suspects and evidence to reassure victims.

The CC suggested consideration be given to focussing on key areas in the next performance meeting such as Crime Data Integrity, Operation Uplift, Public Confidence, the increase in PCSO's and the Safer Streets Funding which has recently been attained through a successful bidding process. The PCC thanked all involved for attaining the two Safer Street Bids and agreed to the CC's request.

DCC

5. We received and noted the Covid19 Recovery Update Report.

The CC expressed her sincere gratitude to the Lead Officer Team for their continued hard work since the onset of Covid19 as their work had been to the highest of standards which would be difficult to surpass.

The following key areas were highlighted:

There had been 18,000 extra calls to the service since the onset of Covid19 in March 2020.

There have been 92 protests requiring policing in the last 10 months which meant officers were abstracted from front line policing to support this at a time of significant demand.

The Strategic Coordination Group, led by Gwent Police, had worked with partners throughout Covid19 and the CC thanked the Leaders and administration team for their professionalism and hard work during this time. The Strategic Coordination Group was being replaced by a Recovery Coordination Group and Local Authorities would take on the responsibility for the leadership response to Covid19.

Although the Force had been recognised for good practice during the Her Majesties Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) thematic Covid19 response Inspection in December 2020, further improvements had been made following the inspection; the Force has implemented a dedicated Wellbeing Specialist, the Police Federation also have a well being lead and there is dedicated Wellbeing Section on the Force Intranet for all to access. The CC thanked the Head of People Services and her team for ensuring the wellbeing tools were made available promptly to front line staff and officers. Wellbeing calls are taking place on a weekly basis for those who require them, two extra support Councillors have been appointed and a new Bereavement Support Group had been established to support the workforce.

The Force has also received recognition from on the Joint Custody Inspection for their approach to Mental Health.

The Force Diversity and Inclusion Lead also chairs a weekly Covid19 Community Dial-in with representatives of Faith Groups, Cultural Organisations, Support Workers and other representatives of Gwent's diverse communities to ensure the Force are engaging with all members of the public.

The CC advised us that although we were moving into the recovery stages, focus should remain on performance, teamwork and wellbeing,

particularly when could potentially be a third wave of infection as a result of the Delta strain.

Action

The Internal Test, Trace and Protect service had proved to be success as absences could be monitored on a daily basis and the Force can respond quickly to officers who have been subject to suspected infection to ensure their safety and welfare. The Force extraction levels have been lower than ever before during this crisis.

The All Wales on-going Collaboration response to Covid19 has been positive and would continue throughout the next phase of Covid19 in conjunction with other emergency services.

The Force were in the process planning a hybrid approach in terms of agile working; back support staff could potentially work 2 to 3 days a week in the office from September onwards dependent on Government advice at the time.

The CC suggested the PCC be briefed on Surge funding and the impact it would have on the Force as further restrictions were lifted, the PCC welcomed the briefing.

CC/PCC

The PCC asked for an update on the Vaccination Programme and the CC confirmed that just over 1000 staff and officers had received their vaccinations. The CC expressed her disappointment on the decision for frontline staff and officers not being part of the prioritisation list initially however, many of the front officers had received their vaccinations due to the age group rollout so there was no need for the PCC and CC to continue lobbying. As a result of PCC and CC lobbying the Welsh Government, the Force had access to lateral flow tests which was helping to prevent officers and staff with Covid19 from entering the workplace.

The DPCC thanked the CC for the detailed report that demonstrated the contribution, leadership and support by the Force during the pandemic and asked if the CC could reflect further on the impact on the Criminal Justice System, particularly as there were 1700 outstanding cases in the Crown Court across Wales and the impact on Victims was considerable.

The CC noted her thanks to the Court Service for its response in respect of the Magistrates Court backlog and to the Head of Criminal Justice Department (HoCJD) who had been instrumental in ensuring the cases at the Magistrates Court had been expedited. The majority of Crown Court Cases were moving quicker than anticipated, however, cases with more defendants were slower than others due to difficulty obtaining the required timeslots in Court but they were often the more serious of the cases.

The CC requested that the most up to date data on the numbers of cases awaiting trial at Crown Court and also the number of victims who had withdrawn their complaints due to the delay in awaiting a Court date were forwarded to the DPCC in order that she may assist in progressing the matter further.

The HoCJD assured us that Victims who were waiting for their cases to go to Court were being supported and contact was being maintained. The offer of Victim support was open ended throughout the process should the Victims have initially refused support.

The CC advised us that Wales was in a better position than other parts of the UK but there was still work to do as many Victims had been waiting for their cases to go to Court for up to 2 years which undermined the Criminal Justice System.

The PCC and CC thanked all those involved for their quality response to Covid19 in serving members of the public.

THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER 4 2020-21

6. We received and noted the Professional Standards Performance Report Quarter 4, 2020-21.

The following key points were highlighted:

The Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC) had drafted a framework report and invited Forces comment on its format. The Head of Professional Standards Department (HoPSD) planned to meet with the CEx to discuss the content for the next quarter.

The Gold Group for software for monitoring of devices, such as laptops and mobile phones has concluded as a significant amount of work had been completed as the Force were implementing the new monitoring software on devices and it was expected to be completed by the end of September 2021.

The PCC referred to the low number of complaints based on discrimination and asked if there was a reason for this. The HoPSD confirmed this was reflected across previous quarters and nationally and acknowledged there was work to do within the Professional Standards Department (PSD) to engage with the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community in case there was any reticence in coming forward with complaints.

The PCC referred to equality monitoring and requested clarification on the 'race unknown' category to ascertain if it meant the person wasn't asked or had refused to give their details. The HoPSD confirmed the Single Online Home complaint forms were non-mandatory fields so

many of them could be bypassed which was why their identity can be listed as unknown.

Action

The DCC assured us that the IOPC had been invited to PSD within the last quarter to scrutinise cases as there had been a reduction in the number of cases referred by PSD the IOPC during Covid19. The IOPC response report had been very positive and they were satisfied with the processes followed within PSD.

We were assured the Vetting Appeals Panel hears appeals from existing staff, contract staff or new applicants. Applicants with protected characteristics were automatically put to the panel if there were any issues with their vetting regardless of whether they had appealed or not, in order for the Force and OPCC to challenge, reflect and adjust their processes accordingly if required.

RESPONSE TO OFFICE OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S CRIME PREVENTION REPORT

7. We received and noted the response to the OPCC's review of Crime Prevention.

The ACC advised us that the Policing Operating Model had been reviewed over the course of year and consideration was given to all of the recommendations within the Crime Prevention Review.

There has been significant investment in the problem solving hubs in both LPAs including the implementation of the WDBC initiative and the appointing of two dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Inspectors in the East and West LPAs to engage with members of the public in order to problem solve. The Ch/Supt East LPA (TH) has been appointed as Strategic Lead for Crime. There has been a change in culture in terms of Force response to problem solving as further analysis of problems was taking place to ensure the appropriate response was taken as opposed to just responding to problems in general; this was consistent across the Force.

The PCC asked how the problem solving hubs were working and how they were engaging with the public. The Ch/SUPT LPA East informed us that the hubs had been up and running for a while and were working well, communications were to be circulated across the Force to provide information about the hubs. New PCSOs formed part of the hub to improve engagement with members of the public and the Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) were also working with the hub on local policing plans to in order to problem solve in their areas.

The ACC informed us that the problem solving hubs and NPTs work together to engage with the public as the role of neighbourhood policing teams has been redefined to ensure they were engaging with residents

to understand their priorities and responding accordingly, supported by the problem solving hubs.

Action

The Ch/Supt LPA East(TH) agreed to brief the PCC and the DPCC on problem solving hubs and to arrange for them to visit.

**CH/SUPT
LPA (TH)**

The structure of Crime Prevention Panels (CPPs) had changed to an independent body, as they were to be listed a Police Volunteers supported by the Force and the OPCC. The Crime Prevention Lead was working with CPP Leads to ensure that the new structure was embedded. Correspondence had been sent to all members to ascertain if they wished to continue as members of the CPP and the Force were awaiting confirmation in order to determine how many CPPs would exist.

The PCC advised us that his office had received calls from CPP members who were not fully aware of their new role. The Strategic Lead for Crime Prevention advised us that he held an online meeting with the CPP members to discuss the proposals and what their new role would be. It was agreed that their details would be forwarded to the Strategic Lead to clarify their role.

GO

The Crime Prevention Strategy was in the process of being updated to reflect the latest changes.

We were advised that the Crime Prevention Strategic Lead was responsible for local policing and problem solving and the HoCFPoC was the Strategic Lead for Vulnerability, SOC and Counter-terrorism.

We were advised the Police Foundation had highlighted the impact that the private sector had on crime reduction in terms of innovation as part of their policing review. For example, vehicle theft and burglaries had reduced significantly by 70-80% as a result of private companies developing new technology and design by making cars and houses more difficult to break into. The review highlighted the importance of involving private companies particularly as cybercrime evolves and encouraged the Government to contemplate implementing a legal requirement on private companies to consider Crime Prevention when developing their products.

The DCC assured us that the issue had been recognised by the National Police Chiefs Council forum. Discussions had recently taken place with National Farmers Union (NFU), the NFU Mutual and a number of manufacturers in relation to challenging insurance policy issues and managing out design issues in relation to quad bikes and farming machinery, which could be a contributory factor in driving criminality, such as theft of these vehicles. The Force has submitted a report to the Home Office Crime Strategy Unit in relation to criminal property in order to challenge the national links for opportunities to dispose of it to shut these avenues down.

The DCC informed us that the Force had participated in the National Catalytic Converter Week of Action and it was a very positive week with thousands Catalytic Converters being recovered, crime property marking had taken place and approximately 50 offenders were arrested by working with manufacturers. The DCC assured us that a huge amount of work was taking place in this area of work.

DRAFT ACCOUNTS INCLUDING DRAFT STATEMENT OF ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/21

8. We received an update on the draft set of accounts 2020/21, the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and the Year End Financial Performance.

The CFO informed us there had been a £222k underspend in total against a £138m a budget. The production and publication of the draft Statement of Accounts had been finalised on the 28th May 2021 prior to the statutory deadline of the 31st May 2021. However, there were a few minor additions to be made as the Finance Team were awaiting information from the Pension provider and Government Actuary Department.

The PCC queried what the £222k underspend related to and the CFO confirmed that it related to timeliness issues, the funding for 62 officers for Operation Uplift was received in advance but there was a phased approach to recruitment of those officers. There was also late receipt of Surge Funding for Covid19 costs. A new process had been developed to maximise any in year savings/underspend in a timely and agile manner throughout the year through the Service Improvement Board. It was also important to note that the Force should bank the recurrent Covid19 savings in order to meet the recurrent deficit of £7.5m 2025-2026.

The CC acknowledged the Force had a significant capital programme, particularly the new Head Quarters build and although Gwent were not different to other Forces in terms of receiving funding for Operation Uplift in advance the CC requested that the underspend relating to the uplift was ring fenced for operational purposes and to fill any skills gaps, particularly with the expected increase in demand following the lifting of restrictions.

The CFO confirmed that he would ensure the relevant grant funding or in year savings were ring fenced for operational purposes in his Reserves Strategy in order to meet operational requirements. The Reserves Strategy would be scrutinised by the Joint Audit Committee (JAC) in September 2021.

There was a positive interim audit earlier in the year and the Chief Finance Officers had received positive feedback from Audit Wales

(AW) in relation to the quality of work produced by the Finance Department. The full audit commenced on the 1st June 2021 and it was expected to be completed between mid to end of July in order to meet the secondary statutory deadline of 31st July 2021 for publication of the accounts. There were no issues with the AGS overall; appropriate governance arrangements were in place and good progress had been made in relation to actions from previous AGS action plans.

The CFO advised us the JAC would have the opportunity for initial scrutiny of the accounts and the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) at the JAC meeting on the 10th June 2021 and, following that, at the JAC meeting on the 28th July 2021 to recommend approval to the PCC and CC to sign off the Final Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement.

The CFO thanked the Finance Team for their hard work as the level of work had improved significantly over the last couple of years since the change in structure, the introduction of the Big Red Button formatting tool, and the new Fully Integrated Resource Management System (FIRMS) software. This had been reflected in the quality and timeliness of the accounts.

This year there was a requirement for a joint self-assessment of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Financial Management Code of Financial Resilience which was introduced to ensure Public Sector organisations governance was linked to public finances and policies. Following completion of the assessment, the CFO assured us the status and position of the Force and OPCC against the Code was positive and there were no issues of concern.

The ACOR referred to the £222k surplus and advised us that this had enabled the Force to put some reserves aside and an analysis of these reserves had been provided to Management and further transparency around ring fenced reserves would be provided through the Reserves Strategy to provide assurance to the CC.

The decision was taken to decrease the overtime budget by £1 million in the last financial year however operational requirements took precedence during Covid19 so there was an overspend £750k. The Time Management System was now enabling targeted overtime on a real-time basis, Supervisors have oversight of system requests and rotas to ensure overtime is approved if required. This was also being monitored through various Governance Boards and working groups.

Some aspects of proposed capital spend did not take place for minor elements of the Capital Programme, however the Head Quarters build has progressed as planned.

There were significant transport cost savings as there had been minimal out of Force travel and the introduction of the Microsoft Teams technology meant that people could meet and train in an effective way without travelling and some of these aspects may be maintained going forward.

The number of telephone calls made from the organisation had decreased significantly with the utilisation of Teams and minimal employees attending work buildings due to agile working thus there was a reduction in costs.

The ACOR informed us that the UK and Welsh Government had provided funding late March 2021 and in particular the Covid Surge Funding however, the Force had spent £778k on Covid19 costs during the year. The force has also set aside £517k for Force Commanders in the new financial year to focus on operational priorities. The challenge going forward was understanding what operational responses would be required for each of the phases during the course of this financial year.

The ACOR advised us there had been a substantial improvement in the collection of debt due to the Finance Team focussing on that area of work over the last 12 months.

ANNUAL ESTATES STRATEGY 2020/21

9. We received and noted the Annual Estates Strategy for 2020/21. We noted the report had been considered by the Estates Implementation Group and the recent Estates Strategy Board and therefore the ACOR summarised key points.

The Estates Strategy has been updated to incorporate the changes that had taken place during the financial year and any current plans.

A significant amount of work had been undertaken to implement the Strategy such as the new Head Quarters build. The revised business case for the new Abergavenny Hub was approved in November 2020 for a new Abergavenny Police Station as the joint facility with Abergavenny wasn't operationally suitable. The Strategic Outline Case for the Torfaen Hub to upgrade custody had been approved and work continues. Progress is monitored through the various Estate Governance Boards.

The appropriate land has been identified for a Joint Firearms range for Gwent, Dyfed Powys and South Wales Police to replace the old range in Bridgend and discussions with the landowner were being finalised.

The four Welsh Forces have agreed to have a shared Sustainability and De-carbonisation Strategy and work was underway to ensure appropriate resources would be available to deliver the agenda.

The PCC welcomed the development of the Sustainability and De-carbonisation Strategy and asked what the Force were doing in terms of Sustainability and De-carbonisation of existing buildings and if all buildings had been adapted to meet Covid19 requirements.

Action

The ACOR advised that a review of the Estate has been conducted with the Carbon Trust on six of the larger properties and progress has been reported through the Estates Implementation Group. One of the proposals was to implement LED lighting which would be rolled out across the sights this financial year. Other initiatives were identified but as some of the Estate was due to be renewed as indicated within the Estates Strategy, a proportionate approach was being taken to ensure value for money. However, investment would be made in the longer term.

The ACOR assured us the Health and Safety Lead had worked with the Head of Estates and Facilities to ensure there was appropriate ventilated and distances spaced throughout the Estate. This has resulted in fewer employees being able to sit in one room and additional premises being sourced to accommodate this to ensure we were compliant with Covid19 regulations. The review of agile working would assist with this going forward.

We agreed that there would be an amendment under item 4.2, page 4, where Bargoed Town Council was referred to as a third sector organisation. It was noted that it should be classed as a statutory organisation.

GO

COMPLIANCE WITH VICTIMS CODE OF PRACTICE ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

10. We received and noted the report on the Victim Code of Practice Annual Report 2021/21

The ACC summarised the key points. There had been some improvements, however it was acknowledged there was still work to do. Work was on-going on a national basis in relation to dip sampling as there was quite a limited sample of 120 cases which did not give much insight in terms of Victim Satisfaction over the year across England and Wales. The Force has continued to dip sample cases to review the data even though the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) have stated they can pause it whilst the process was reviewed.

There have been improvements in keeping Victims updated and dip sampling has indicated the defined timelines were met in 76% of cases. Although it was acknowledged that this needs further improvement.

The dip sampling of cases also indicated an improvement in the use of Victim Personal Statements (VPS) in that officers were offering them appropriately. However, only a small number of those who agreed to

make a VPS did so; 20 Victims out of 75 cases dip sampled took up the option. The Force acknowledged there was more work to do in this area.

In 69% of cases formal assessments were made of Victims needs but only a very small percentage take up the support of other agencies so there was also more work to do in this area.

Over the course of the year Force focus has been on further training for officers and their front line Managers in relation to the importance of Victim Updates and the processes that should be followed. A Contact Module has been implemented within the Niche Crime Recording System and a new business case has been developed for a new Victims Care Unit to ensure Victims have a dedicated point of contact throughout their case as opposed to calling 101 for an update.

The HoCJD advised us that the Victims Care Unit was expected to go live at the end of June 2021 once the full team has been established and this should also reduce the demand from 101 in the Force Control Room.

The Victims Board has been running for over 2 years, there is a regular Working Group that meets to review procedures and also a Working Group that meets quarterly with Victims.

The Survivor Engagement role plays a key part in assisting the Force in improving processes and procedures to support the Force in training and the Victims themselves.

The PCC asked when the Victims Board last met and the HoCJD confirmed they had met in April 2021 but last Board in May had been postponed whilst work was ongoing with the new model. They planned to meet next in this month and the ACC would be Chairing the meeting.

The DPCC thanked the HoCJD and asked if there would be a Communication plan to highlight the good work of the team and the Head of Corporate Communications (HoCC) assured us there was a robust one in place, it was just a question of timing when the launch was to take place to ensure they made the most of the opportunity.

CHIEF CONSTABLE'S UPDATE REPORT

11. We noted and received the CC's Update Report.

The CC summarised key areas of her report.

The CC advised us that Gwent had led the analytic work highlighting that over 4000 emergency workers across Wales had been assaulted during a 10 month period. A media campaign was being run through the Emergency Services Group and the data on the number of assaults

would be made available bi-annually in order to monitor the impact on Emergency workers.

Action

Despite Covid19, the Force implemented text messages to share incident reference details and information with Victims of Crime and changes have been made to the Crime Management Unit workflow to speed up the process leading to more accurate data and investigation outcomes. The Force were also recruiting English and Welsh speaking Force Control Room Operators and Call Handlers.

The CC applauded operational support and the Force Planning department particularly, the Superintendent of Operational Support for his work in relation to public protests.

The CC thanked the HoCJD and his team for their hard work in Custody, particularly in relation the challenges brought about by Covid19 where custody units had to be split to ensure the safety of detainees and the officers.

We noted the newly implemented joint Digital Evidence Management System had made a positive impact by allowing the capture, review and sharing of digital evidence speedily and securely with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) as the volume of files that have been shared has increased dramatically.

The CC advised us that the Force response to SOC was the best it had been over the last 4 years and the seizures noted in the report evidenced the good work. However, it was acknowledged that more needed to be done to publicise this work.

The High-Tech Crime Unit (HTCU) had been awarded the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) accreditation following assessment. The CC acknowledged the level the work the team had put into preparing for the assessment.

We were informed that the downloading of information from phones plays a pivotal role in investigations and therefore, the implementation of the new Kiosk Model was very beneficial as download requests were completed quicker which was reducing of the number of requests escalated to the HTCU and speeding up investigations.

The CC praised the work of the Public Protection investigation teams and referred to a recent case involving a male committing sexual assault against a young child. The offender was subsequently imprisoned for 17 years due to their hard work.

The CC suggested a joint visit with the PCC to the Public Protection Unit to thank them for their hard work and the PCC agreed.

CC/PCC

The Financial Crime Unit is ranked as one of the top performers in its field nationally in the use of civil detention orders and judicial outcomes for fraud. The increase in seizures over recent months in comparison to the previous year and the high judicial outcome rate evidences this as referenced in the report.

The CC attended the Coroner's Court in relation to Operation Jasmine during which time the Coroner thanked the CC's team on behalf of the families for conducting the investigation on behalf of the Victims. The officers involved were to be commended for their work.

The joint Digital Services work had played an integral part in the Force response to Covid19, equipping officers and staff with laptops and devices to ensure work continued regardless of location and many other initiatives as referenced within the report.

The Force recruitment process for Operation Uplift has been progressing well and there has also been a positive rise in representation, a 27% increase in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (officers and 100% in PCSOs. Further proactive work was being conducted by the Head of People Services (HoPS) and her team. The CC has also met with some of the new recruits from the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community and acknowledged that support may be required to assist officers or PCSOs from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities after joining the Force, as there was sometimes personal implications for them from within their community.

The CC advised us that the HoPS was reviewing the best approach to surveying the workforce over the coming years but the Durham University survey that had been used for the last 4 years had indicated that the Force was improving. There had been a 37% response rate and all key measures have seen an improvement, particularly in clarity of the Force vision, organisational support and pride and providing supportive leadership. The results would be shared in due course with the OPCC. The CC acknowledged there was work to do to improve further.

The PCC thanked the CC and all involved for their hard work particularly in relation to Operation Jasmine which is a traumatic case.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

12. The information contained in the report(s) below has been subjected to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 2018 and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent's public interest test and is deemed to be exempt from publication under section 7.

JOINT STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

13. We received and noted the Joint Strategic Risk Register.

Action

The CEx assured us that the risks were recorded appropriately and careful consideration had been given to each risk on the register to ensure it had been rated at the right level and appropriate mitigation put in place. The CEx had attended many of the Governance Boards to review the risks with the DCC and was reassured that the risks had been thoroughly scrutinised.

The DCC advised us that the format had changed in order to make the risk register easier to follow and although some of the risks had been on the register for a long period of time, there were robust plans in place to mitigate the them.

Our attention was drawn to a new risk 'Recording of Crime following third party disclosure at Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). The risk had been registered as medium level rating as resources have been deployed to address the issue.

The DCC thanked the DPCC and the HoCJD for their support in relation to the risk relating to detaining Children in Custody as there was very little, if any, secure accommodation available in local authorities and following a clear submission to Welsh Government and partners stating that this was an organisational risk that was being left with the Force, a new pilot scheme has been secured in Newport and alternative options have been agreed.

OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER RAPE REVIEW

14. The Chief Executive presented the OPCC Rape review to the Chief Constable on behalf of the PCC.

The CEx informed us that need for the OPCC Rape review had been identified as a result of review of the Police and Crime Plan in 2019. The CEx thanked all involved in the review, particularly key members of the OPCC, the PPU team and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

The CEx asked if the CC would be in a position to provide a Force response to the recommendations within the OPCC Rape Review by the December 2021 meeting. The CC agreed and suggested it may be beneficial for the CC and CEx to meet prior to the meeting to ensure the responses were sufficient.

**CC
CC/CEx**

The DCC thanked the OPCC for the deep dive review and advised us that the report had been reviewed prior the meeting. Although the deep dive was received favourably there were a number of the recommendations which overlapped with the National Rape Action Plan. Therefore, it was suggested that the OPCC liaise with the Force prior to any future deep dives to ensure there were no other similar reviews on-going in Force.

The CEx explained that although the OPCC had liaised with the force throughout the Review, the delay in producing the report had been a key factor in the its overlap with the National Action Plan. The CEx committed to continuing to link in with the Force when conducting any future deep dive reviews.

Action

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

15. There was no other business raised

TO IDENTIFY ANY RISKS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING

16. No risks were identified during the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 11:50