**OFFICE OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR GWENT**

**STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD**

**8th AUGUST 2024**

**Present:** **Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)**

J Mudd – Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) (Chair)

S Curley – Chief Executive (CEx)

J Regan – Head of Assurance and Compliance (HoAC)

S Slater – Head of Strategy (HoS)

S Howells – Standards and Governance Officer (SGO)

N Merrick – Office Manager (OM)

S Richards – Personal Assistant (PA)

**Office of the Chief Constable (OCC)**

M Hobrough – Temporary Deputy Chief Constable (T/DCC)

N McLain– Assistant Chief Constable, Organisation (ACC Organisation)

M Coe – Chief Finance Officer (CFO)

L Bartley – Superintendent Continuous Improvement (SCI)

A Tuck – Head of Protective Services (HoPS)

S O’Brien – Chief Inspector Governance & Assurance (CIGA)

C Williams - Chief Superintendent - Local Policing Area East and First Point of Contact (CS LPA-East & FPOC)

J Meale – Staff Officer (SO)

B Ashman – Detective Constable (DC)

The meeting commenced at 12:00pm face to face and online via Teams.

We noted that this meeting had been arranged to discuss the Force Management Statement (FMS) in detail due to the time constraints of the previous Strategy and Performance Board meeting held on 6th June 2024 where this document was due to have been presented to the PCC.

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| 1. **APOLOGIES** | **Action** |
| Apologies for absence were received from P Kelly Chief Constable, Temporary Assistant Chief Constable (T/ACC), E Thomas Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner and D Garwood-Pask Chief Finance Officer for the OPCC. |  |
| **The information contained in the report(s) below has been subjected to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 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.** |  |
| 1. **FORCE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT**   The CIGA gave an overview of the FMS and informed us that it had been broken down into 13 sections that he would take us through.  **Business Planning Cycle**  The CIGA explained that the force had received feedback from His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in 2023 due to Gwent Police being 1 of 28 forces to have their FMS reviewed. Following the review, there were 14 recommendations on areas for improvement that had been incorporated into the development of the most recent FMS.  The T/DCC added that learning from previous FMS submissions had led to a new process being developed by the force to reduce the demand placed on authors to contribute to the FMS in quick time. The future process would require contributions to be submitted on a quarterly basis to ensure the work required was spread out over the course of the financial year.  **Finance**  The CIGA gave us an overview of the finance section highlighting that the 2024-25 budget had been set at £176.53m which included the OPCC commissioning budgets which was an increase of 7% on previous years. We noted that a budget deficit of £2.805million had been projected for 2024/25 with £12.744million projected by 2028/29 and discussed the plans in place to try and mitigate against this shortfall.  The PCC highlighted that the force had identified the need to make efficiency savings going forward. She asked with pressures likely to increase, what level of confidence the force had in achieving the required efficiency savings without impacting on operational service delivery.  The CFO informed us that each of the efficiency savings in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) had had been assessed through business cases which had been scrutinised through the change management process. The benefits realisation work the force undertake to assess each of the savings identified determine if they were non-cashable productivity savings or cashable savings. He added that at the end of the year, the force have usually made the savings required to either be underspent or to achieve a balanced financial position.  The CFO advised that individual projects were monitored through the Service Improvement Board (SIB). We noted there was a good process in place to identify the benefits and monitor savings for each project and that the force was good at accessing new grant streams as and when they became available. The CFO did advise there would be pressures going forward but was confident the force could overcome them.  The T/DCC gave assurance that if there was an operational demand that needed to be met, this would take priority and that retrospective conversations would take place to ensure these were built into savings plans.  The PCC informed us that part of her role was to attend the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) to make a case for potential precept increases and asked how she would explain to the panel that the force was modelling its finances based on achieving an underspend.  The CFO advised that the force did not plan to underspend but that each year of the MTFP had indicated an overspend resulting in the request for an increase in precept. He told us that the budget is based on what was needed from an operational perspective and was scrutinised by both the force and OPCC in detail. He added that the force approach was to ensure that the CC has the resource to deliver policing safety. He highlighted that additional funding that had not been planned for could be received during the financial year which could result in the MTFP showing an underspend. He confirmed that the public were never asked to contribute more than was required.  The PCC commented that from the perspective of a PCP member, who were elected members representing their communities and potentially struggling with justifying an increase council tax as well as the precept, it was important if there was an underspend that there was a robust explanation to avoid challenges going forward.  The ACC Organisation advised the force try to provide a clear indication of where the budget will be allocated in the next financial year and this was usually well received by the PCP.  The CFO informed us that the force brief the finance and estate sub-group of the PCP to provide information on the assumptions used in the MTFP as well as how the force was progressing. This provides the sub-group members with an opportunity to challenge the force on the assumptions used throughout the financial year.  **Wellbeing**  The CIGA provided an overview of sickness levels and the wellbeing services offered by the force and informed us that the wellbeing team had won national awards for their work.  The PCC recognised the positivity of the increase in occupational health referrals and asked what the impact was in terms of resources. The T/DCC advised that the force had a healthy establishment in relation to the Occupational Health unit compared to most forces. The impact of these referrals was assessed continually. He advised there was a high level of sickness in force and advised there were various processes in place to try and manage wellbeing before it resulted in sickness.  The PCC stated that across the public sector in Gwent, the workforce did not reflect the heritage and culture of the communities we serve. She queried what plans and strategies were in place to enable the force to work towards a more representative workforce. The T/DCC advised that the force had made steps in the past 2 years with representative workforce numbers increasing although he added there was still further work to do. He recognised that communities needed to have trust and confidence in the force for people to view Gwent Police as an employer of choice. He told us that the Deputy Head of Human Resources leads a team that provides opportunities to people from various representative groups to find out more about working for the force. The T/DCC highlighted that retention was important and that the force needed to be open minded to changes which would make them a more attractive employer.  The CS LPA-East & FPOC highlighted that the diversity of officers had increased from 2.2% in 2018 to 3.5% in 2022 with Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) currently at 6.8%. He added that it was important that the force placed officers in areas where they represent and understand these communities.  The HoPS told us that they has also focused on recruiting detectives through direct entry routes which had increased representation, in particular for females. The PCC asked if there were measures in place around retention for detectives. The HoPS shared that there had been a national shortage of detectives but the forces had tried to increase detective opportunities as well as invest in tutors to support and retain officers.  The T/DCC informed us that it was important to get the culture and environment right and that the force was now looking at setting up a culture board.  The ACC Organisation added that recruitment material and advertisements had been reviewed to ensure people interested in joining the force as an officer understood what the role entailed and that this has assisted in retention.  **Responding to the public: requests for service**  The CIGA talked through demand and performance and the current and planned changes.  The PCC highlighted that she was impressed with the leadership team in the FCC. She asked how the force would sustain the current standard of service if demand increased. The T/DCC advised that this was a priority for the force, and he had confidence that current service would be maintained.  He highlighted that Gwent Police were in the top 3 forces consistently over the past 12 months in terms of 999 performance. The Superintendent identified demand and changes to staffing levels in order for shift patterns to be amended accordingly. The T/DCC confirmed that the projected establishment over the coming years for the FCC was above the baseline required.  We were told by the T/DCC that he had been sighted on research that had been undertaken regarding the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how it could improve the way the force utilise their virtual response team. He explained it would improve public satisfaction if the public spoke to an officer via video call when they did not need to attend in person whereas public satisfaction often lowers if they speak to an officer via a phone call.  **Responding to the public: incident demand**  The CIGA talked through incident demand asking us to note that there had been an increase of 11.3% in 2023 with a prediction of a slight increase over the next 4 years. He added that the actual number of incidents recorded in 2023 was higher than predicted by the FMS 5.  The PCC queried what timeframe the FMS 5 covered and asked if it had been influenced by FMS 4 and if the predictions had been skewed by Covid. The CIGA informed us that the FMS 5 covered 2022. The T/DCC advised it was possible that data used in the predictions for FMS 5 may have been impacted by covid but we were assured that this had been accounted for.  The HoS asked if all forces used the same demand modeller or if it was bespoke to Gwent Police. The ACC Organisation advised that it was bespoke as there was no national package available.  **Prevention and Deterrence**  The CIGA gave us a brief overview of prevention and deterrence of which the focus was on neighbourhood policing.  The PCC asked if the neighbourhood framework had gone live. The CS LPA-East & FPOC informed us that it would go live in the next few weeks once it had gone through governance. He told us that the abstraction policy had gone out for consultation internally this week.  The PCC raised the late night economy and asked how the force would manage future demand and improve public confidence in this area. The CS LPA-East & FPOC informed us it was key to work with partners and being robust in regards to policing. We were informed that there was a trial ongoing which saw officers remain in one area rather than walking around so that the public saw the officers routinely.  **Investigations**  The CIGA provided an update on investigation demand, neighbourhoods, digital online cyber investigations, intelligence, custody and justice services.  The PCC noted that the force’s modelling on rape and sexual offences shows an increase in demand, but, in briefings and discussions we had been informed that many of these cases were historic. She added it was positive that the public were feeling more confident to report these crimes but queried, in light of the national detective shortage, if the force could sustain management of this area going forward. She also queries how the force communicated with the public to give them confidence to report these types of crime.  The HoPS assured us that it was sustainable and advised that this was a priority area for the force and they were focussing on building CID capacity and capability. We were informed that the force had supplemented their rape investigation team with Police Constables so that there was a core of accredited detectives who undertake the investigations with additional support provided by uniformed officers who may then become future detectives. We were advised that the force use organisations such as New Pathways to provide support to victims who may not be ready to progress their reports. The CS LPA-East & FPOC advised that it was also about coaching and mentoring young staff as well as working across departments. CID briefings involving unformed officers and attachments into CID were also assisting and providing additional support as required.  The PCC asked us to note that she had made a commitment to the people of Gwent to focus on the challenges being experienced in relation to retail crime. She asked if the force could elaborate on the establishment of a retail team in Newport. The CS LPA-East & FPOC informed us that a team had been put in place in Newport as 30% of crime demand was situated there. We were advised that 60% of offences the team had dealt with had a positive outcome. The CS LPA-East & FPOC also stated that he had refocussed the priorities of the ‘We Don’t Buy Crime’ team to concentrate on retail crime, vehicle crime and burglary due to the impact they have on victims.  The PCC had been sighted on PCC funded projects in place in other force areas that reduced reoffending. She queried if the OPCC’s commissioning work was focused on the right areas to enable us to address these issues effectively. The T/DCC welcomed any further opportunity to work with the OPCC to focus on issues commissioning could help with. The HoPS advised there was a lot of positive work taking place including a piece of work ongoing within the serious organised crime portfolio regarding the mapping of the intervention and prevention opportunities available. The PCC requested that a separate meeting take place to continue the commissioning conversation to maximise potential and address some of the challenges identified in the FMS.  **Protecting Vulnerable People**  The CIGA made us aware that this section captured the majority of the 14 strands of vulnerability and included domestic abuse, stalking and harassment, child and adult safeguarding, child abuse and sexual offences, modern day slavery and human trafficking, hate crime, missing persons and mental health  The PCC asked what level of confidence the force had regarding the right care right person initiative. The T/DCC advised that the force had not seen the initial benefits of the implementation of right care right person compared to other forces due to the support being provided from the mental health experts already based within the FCC. He highlighted that compared to the other Welsh forces, Gwent Police did not show as much of a decline in incidents due to already undertaking much of what right care right person brought in. The SCI informed us that the force was seeing a 12% reduction in calls being attended in relation to concerns for safety since the initiative went live in April. She added that phase 2 was planned to go live from the 1st of October which related to patients who had gone AWOL and walkouts from hospitals and were advised that work was ongoing with all mental health hospitals within Gwent to ensure their policies and procedures were up to date so that these could be shared with the FCC operators.  The PCC queried if there was more the OPCC could do with perpetrators from a commissioning perspective. The HoPS informed us there was a pilot programme being run through the Multi Agency Tasking and Co-ordination group (MATAC) in relation to domestic abuse which had been partly funded by the Home Office. He advised that there was 1 service currently commissioned in this area. He advised there was more work that could be done in relation to the commissioning of services regarding to perpetrators.  **Managing Offenders**  The CIGA discussed managing offenders and informed us that demand was predicted to remain constant. He informed us that there had been an HMICFRS inspection in 2021/22 that the force received a good grading. He did ask us to note that there may be an impact on the youth offending team due to the reduction of school liaison officers since the Welsh Government had removed funding for this service.  The PCC stated there had been numerous meetings to discuss the implications of offenders being released having only served 40-50% of their sentence. We noted for Wales the projected figures were relatively low, there was potentially a greater risk of re-offending and queried if the force were prepared for this change.  The HoPS explained that T/ACC Operations had established a group to review prison overcrowding and to manage this risk with partners. He explained that information on release of offenders could be provided at short notice but there were processes to manage this as quickly as possible. We also noted that there was a victim liaison officer in place to provide support to victims and to ensure they were aware of the release of the offender. The Temp DCC also added that T/ACC Operations attends quarterly meetings with the Head of the courts and prison services to discuss issues arising within the criminal justice system.  **Managing Serious and Organised Crime (SOC)**  The CIGA gave an overview of SOC covering areas such as county lines, financial crime and organised acquisitive crime.  The PCC advised there was a concern regarding a shortage of naloxone which was used to reverse the effects of a drug overdose. She asked if the force were prepared for this and if there were measures in place to deal with this. The HoPS informed us that the force was aware of it and advised they had a representative who sat on a national forum where availability of naloxone was discussed. There was also a local drug threat group which took place with partners and also monitored the situation.  The PCC requested, that due to the time needed to scrutinise the FMS, that a specific meeting was planned in 2025 to discuss this document. She also requested that a separate meeting was arranged with the HoPS to discuss this area of work in more detail.  **Major Events**  The PCC queried if there would be a re-assessment of demand in this area when starting the FMS process again in October as a result of the recent incidents that had taken place across England.  The T/DCC explained that there were foreseeable major events which had been included but then those that were not able to be predicted. He advised that there had been a large increase relating to dangerous dogs that had not been foreseen and the impact of policing of this was still not known.  In relation to planned events, he advised the largest site in Gwent was the Celtic Manor and International Conference Centre but that current demand was minimal but would potentially increase. He stated that Gwent also provide officers for major events in Cardiff when required. We were informed that the force formed, along with South Wales and Dyfed Powys Police, a tri-force arrangement under the Regional Incident Control Centre (RIC) where the force could be requested to provide officers for national deployment to events. In relation to the ongoing incidents in England, he hoped these would soon stop as a result of the high profile arrests that had taken place but stated that the Home Office may review the incidents which could have an affect on the number of public disorder officers they require each force to have.  The PCC queried if the force found the FMS process useful in terms of forward planning. The T/DCC advised that the FMS process had evolved over time and was now at the stage where it was proving beneficial although there was still more work to do.  The PCC thanked the CIGA and the teams involved for their work on the FMS. | **Action**  **Action**  **Action**  **Action**  **Action**  **HoPS**  **Action**  **Action**  **HoPS**  **HoPS** |
| **The meeting concluded at 14.00.** |  |