

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**12th September 2019****REPORT OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR DERBYSHIRE****POLICE & CRIME PANEL MEMBER QUESTIONS****1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide a written response to the Police and Crime Panel to the pre-submitted questions raised by individual Panel members.

2. PANEL MEMBER QUESTIONS

- 2.1 *What is the strategic priority of the 101 service, and how call waiting time factors are used in evaluating the effectiveness of the service? (Cllr PEGG)*

The 101 service is an integral component of policing, providing access for the public in non-emergency situations. The reason for calls is highly varied and may be to report an incident or to try and make contact with a specific officer or member of staff. As part of our work we have introduced the concept of THRIVE (Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation (opportunities), Vulnerability & Engagement) in order for call handlers to be able to better deal with the issues callers are raising, therefore delivering a better quality of service. However, as with all aspects of the police budget, austerity has had its impact, and money spent on employing call handlers and police officers based in the control centre cannot then be spent on employing police officers based in communities.

The decision to improve crime recording at point of contact has understandably meant that individual calls are taking longer, which can impact on the time it takes to answer a call. The Force are working on technological solutions that may help filter some of the calls that come through – asking to speak to specific officers for example, which should help direct people to where they want to be more quickly, and reduce call times.

There are no specific targets for answering calls, though the time it takes to answer a call and the rate of people abandoning calls are reviewed as a proxy measure for performance. It should, however, be noted that for emergencies the Force are consistently able to respond to a call in under ten seconds and at the end of the day these are the calls that we would all expect to be answered quickly as there may be a risk to life.

The Panel should also note that alternative methods of contacts such as the use of the national Single Online Home portal that will allow people to do many of the things they would wish to do through the use of 101, again potentially reducing the volume of calls into 101.

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- 2.2 *The National Crime Agency has recently issued some concerning reports regarding Serious & Organised Crime Gangs and the financial expectations of combating these gangs Nationally. If the Derbyshire Constabulary still undertakes crime mapping of such gangs what and how many such groups have we operating within the County and especially in the City of Derby?* (Cllr POTTER)

Derbyshire currently have a total of 50 OCGs (Organised Crime Groups) mapped across the County.

- 15 of these are on the South Division (with 11 operating within the City area itself)
- North Division have 10
- Crime Support have 3
- The Organised Crime Management Group have 22

The Panel should also be aware that in their most recent PEEL (Police Efficiency, Effectiveness & Legitimacy) inspection, HMICFRS deemed Derbyshire Constabulary's performance to be Outstanding for Tackling serious and organised crime.

- 2.3 *When can we expect to see the practice of "lone working" for patrol officers on night shift eradicated?* (Cllr POTTER)

Patrol strategy is something that is clearly an operational matters and as such falls within the remit of the Chief Constable. That said, as PCC I have sought assurance from the Chief Constable that all 'frontline' officers, and staff, have received the appropriate training and have the necessary equipment to undertake their roles effectively and safely.

- 2.4 *How will the promised increase in police funding be used to address the two biggest criticisms of front line policing; 'Lack of police visibility on the street' and 'speed of response'?* (Cllr WHEELTON)

As the Panel are only too well aware, a consequence of austerity since 2010 has been that the number of police officers in Derbyshire fell by approximately 450 to a level not seen in decades. In addition, there were also significant cuts to police staff numbers, including PCSO's. In 2018/19 and 2019/20, the Government gave me the option of increasing the local council tax to first halt, and then reverse some of these cuts to police officer and staff numbers. However, even this year's increase of 120 additional police officers and staff still leave the Force under resourced, a factor which continues to have an impact on visibility and speed of response.

Whilst much has been made of the headline figure of 20,000 new police officers, frustratingly, at the time of writing the detail of how and where these officers will be delivered and deployed has yet to be worked out by Government. I am working to make sure that Derbyshire is at the forefront of forces when it comes to recruiting any additional officers and Derbyshire Constabulary are engaging with other forces nationally to understand the preparedness to be able to deliver this challenging pledge. My expectation is that Derbyshire should be entitled to

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the best part of 300 new officers joining the ranks if the Prime Minister delivers on his pledge. Whilst welcomed, this uplift would not fully reverse the decline in offer numbers felt locally over the past ten years due to austerity, and it is still unclear what this announcement means for police staff numbers, including PCSO's. However, this increase would result in additional officers being deployed out in communities which would, in turn, have an impact on both visibility and speed of response. The locations of any deployments would be an operational decision and therefore one for the Chief Constable to make, but as I have explained there are significant potential opportunities through the uplift pledge.

- 2.5 *In a multi-media world, where increasingly the Public's perception of the Police is shaped by the PR skills and personal awareness of the officer in front of the lens - what support, guidance and advice is provided to police interviewees to ensure that they consistently reflect the professionalism of their colleagues and an image of the service that inspires public respect. (Cllr WHEELTON)*

This is an operational matter and as such is the responsibility of the Chief Constable. Inevitably, the level of training varies depending upon the seniority of the officer, what level of media engagement they are routinely expected to undertake and so as part of the ongoing training and development of officers, elements of media and PR skills are given. The Force encourages officers to embrace modern technology, but guidelines are given on how social media should be used as a positive tool for public engagement. As part of the training for senior officers, input is given as they often will find themselves in front of the camera as representatives of the organisation. As part of the recruitment of the Chief Constable, my office devised a series of tests as part of the interview process to see how well candidates responded to both supportive and hostile media. As reported to the Panel at his confirmation hearing, CC Peter Goodman performed well in these tests.

- 2.6 *Building on the need to strengthen public trust and confidence in local policing, please can you provide a clear County overview of the current number of front-line officers? Likewise, how you see those numbers moving forward over the next 12/24 months? (Cllr WHEELTON)*

This very much depends upon what is meant by the "front-line" and the reality is, is that without a clear understanding of what the questioner means by that concept any answer would be misleading.

As stated previously, as far as future police numbers are concerned, the Home Office has only been able to give minimum details of the pledge beyond the Prime Minister's headline figure of "20,000" police officers. As of today, we do not know how many of those extra officers will be allocated to Derbyshire, what years we will be allowed to recruit them in or how they and the associated on-costs will be paid for. That said, I will be disappointed if we do not get the best part of 300 new officers as a consequence of the Prime Minister's announcement and we are working hard to ensure that Derbyshire is ready, willing and able to start recruiting immediately the Government confirms that funding is in place to allow us to do so.

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- 2.7 *Please can an update be provided on the recruitment process connected to the additional precept award and where their placements have been in relation to the Safer Neighbourhood teams? (Cllr HART)*

When the Chief Constable and I discussed the potential of a £24 precept rise I was very clear that people needed to feel the difference, a view that was supported by the Chief. He made the commitment that we would have all of the officers recruited by the end of July and I am pleased to be able to say that this has been achieved. As I am sure that panel will appreciate, the process of training and preparing new recruits for the challenging role of a police officer is not a quick or simple one that process is still ongoing.

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