

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

18th March 2021

REPORT OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR DERBYSHIRE

Panel update on Covid-19

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To respond to the Panel on a number of issues raised by them in relation to the ongoing Covid 19 situation, namely:

- We would like a further report on Covid and the implications for the force coming out of Covid.
- We would also like to ask the commissioner to confirm how his commitments and strategic priorities outlined in the PC Plan will be considered in further supporting the people of Derbyshire.
- Will there be additional presence at a local community level to support his key priority areas : vulnerable people, young people, the impact of drugs and alcohol use, those with mental health issues.
- We see the removal of restrictions as a significant risk and seek reassurance that strategies are in place to ensure a smooth transition and minimise threat harm and risk for the people of Derbyshire.

2. COVID UPDATE

2.1 As we are now at the twelve-month anniversary since the first cases of Coronavirus were discovered within the United Kingdom (one of which was in Buxton), it was thought timely to provide a short narrative update regarding the entire year as a whole.

BACKGROUND

2.2 The Police & Crime Panel were last updated in January 2021 as to the response from the Constabulary to the Coronavirus pandemic, including details of how the emergency is being managed within the county, as well as several operational and strategic matters.

2.3 The Constabulary's response to the Coronavirus pandemic is a standing agenda item for the PCC/Chief Constable weekly meeting. The PCC also receives ad-hoc briefings as the situation changes, including the responsibilities of law enforcement and other partner agencies.

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- 2.4 The Panel are reminded that the Constabulary have adopted a 'Gold, Silver, Bronze' command structure to deal with the response, as is normal for any major incident, and the PCC is represented at both the Gold and Silver levels.

TWELVE MONTHS IN REVIEW

- 2.5 At the start of the first lockdown period, the volume of both 999 and 101 calls dropped below expected levels for a period of approximately two weeks. Call volumes returned to normal levels in the first week of April and remained within expected ranges over the summer months. We have seen that volumes of 999 calls have then dropped slightly through lockdown two and further still during the current lockdown.
- 2.6 The volume of incidents began to increase in the first week of lockdown one, and peaked in the second week, with a total of more than 6,400 incidents in this second week compared to a weekly average of 4,490 in the weeks leading up to this lockdown (19% above pre-pandemic levels). Incident volumes remained high throughout April, May and most of June, being on average 19% above the pre-lockdown period. Volumes have since returned to expected levels, with weekly volumes of incidents at a similar level to the same period of last year; incidents are our primary measure of demand.
- 2.7 Within the total incidents picture however, there are some types of incidents that are showing different trends to what we would consider normal. When we record Coronavirus related incidents these will generally be within our anti-social behaviour (ASB) figures, so it is not surprising that ASB incidents increased significantly during the lockdown periods, with some weeks seeing more than double the number of incidents recorded compared to the equivalent weeks of the previous year. The highest volumes were recorded during April, May and June, and while weekly volumes have reduced slightly from the beginning of July, they remain above expected levels when considering previous year's figures. However, if ASB figures relating to Coronavirus are removed, then ASB levels are slightly lower than we would expect for a typical year within Derbyshire.
- 2.8 Volumes of transport incidents (road-related) and crime related incidents reduced during lockdown one, as would be expected based on people's travel patterns during a lockdown scenario, and we were able to do some early analysis (using Google mobility data) to show high correlations between people's travel habits and our recorded incident data. Weekly volumes for transport related incidents remain below expected levels despite the road system largely returning to volumes of traffic that would be expected for this time of the year as monitored by the County ANPR network.
- 2.9 Crime related incidents returned to expected levels at the end of July, however looking at the trend for these incidents during the current lockdown, the volumes do appear a little lower than we would expect, and it appears that some of our key measures in lockdown three are looking similar to lockdown one than lockdown two.
- 2.10 Levels of recorded crime in Derbyshire fell at the start of each lockdown period, with lockdown restrictions limiting the opportunity for certain crime

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types to be committed. Significant volume reductions were seen for burglary, shoplifting and vehicle crime offences, with weekly figures for residential burglary and shoplifting at more than half of the level recorded prior to the lockdowns. Outside the lockdown periods, and during the lockdowns two and three, crime figures were either at or slightly higher than usual, perhaps demonstrating latent demand within the overall system i.e. people waiting until they can commit crime without bringing attention to themselves breaking the lockdown restrictions.

- 2.11 For vulnerability related incidents and offences, there are some clear patterns in terms of the recording of matters such as domestic abuse, safeguarding concerns and child abuse during and following lockdown periods. In lockdown one, our data suggests that reporting offences were lower than we would expect, which was followed by an increase in offences being recorded after restrictions were eased. The effect was apparent to a lesser extent in lockdown two, but there were some key differences in the conditions in lockdown two (e.g. schools being open). January figures appear higher; however, it should be noticed that December and January would usually see higher levels of domestic abuse reported to us, and we have put in place mechanisms to ensure that victims are aware as to how they can get help from us and our partner agencies.
- 2.12 Work is ongoing to produce an addendum to our Force Management Statement, which will specifically look at the changing demand during the Coronavirus pandemic, the Constabulary's response (both internally and externally), and also look at what lessons we can learn as the impact of the non-medical impacts continue to influence society (e.g. unemployment and societal change). This is an extremely complicated piece of work, but one that is vital for the Constabulary to ensure that it is fit for the recovery and post-recovery phases of this emergency period; once complete it will be communicated to the Police and Crime Panel for their information.

CRIME FIGURES

- 2.13 It is worth noting that any crimes relating to breaches of the Coronavirus legislation i.e. those that would attract a fixed penalty notice do not appear in recorded crime statistics (this is not specific to Derbyshire).
- 2.14 Whilst the crime picture within Derbyshire is extremely complex, and would in and of itself be the subject of a lengthy report, in the 2020 calendar year the Constabulary has recorded 78,210 crimes; this is approximately 2% up on the 2019 calendar year.
- 2.15 Drilling into the data more closely (see Table 1), domestic abuse accounts for approximately 22% of recorded crime, compared to approximately 20% for the 2019 calendar year i.e. a 2% increase, and burglary accounts for approximately 6% of recorded crime, compared to approximately 8% for the 2019 calendar year i.e. a 2% decrease.

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	2019	2020
Total Crime	76,267	78,210
Domestic abuse	14,299	17,680
Burglary	5,900	4,310

Table 1. Crime data within Derbyshire for the 2019 and 2020 calendar years.

- 2.16 Looking at the statistics for the 12-month period March 2020 to the end of February 2021, All Crime is showing a 5.1% decrease, mainly due to a reduction in acquisitive crime.

RESOURCING & SICKNESS

- 2.17 There have been just over 338 confirmed cases of Coronavirus within the Constabulary, with spikes of infection in October, December, and January. This is consistent with the national infection rate and that seen across the communities of Derbyshire.
- 2.18 On 25th February 2021, approximately 7% of the workforce were off work either due to sickness or being required to self-isolate following contact with a positive or symptomatic case of Coronavirus. In March of 2020, this figure was approximately 20%, primarily due to a number of individuals being identified as clinically vulnerable and therefore required to shield.
- 2.19 In early January, the Chief Constable and PCC wrote to the Prime Minister to request that police officers and staff are considered for priority access to vaccines and workplace testing.
- 2.20 We received a reply from the Home Secretary suggesting that she was sympathetic to our concerns, and that she would be an advocate for us. However, we are disappointed that the Health Secretary has ruled out the emergency services being prioritised for vaccination, and the JCVI have concluded that the emergency services should not be prioritised in phase two of the vaccination process.
- 2.21 Police officers and staff are in a particularly vulnerable position, and vaccination would not only provide them with reassurance that their health is taken seriously by the government, but also ensure resilience regarding the resources available for enforcement. Police officers and staff attend many of the same incidents that our colleagues in health and social care attend, normally being the first on the scene to many of these incidents; we would respectfully request that you, as Panel members, please do what you can to make our position heard.

ENFORCEMENT

- 2.22 The Constabulary is proud to police by consent, and as such it is important that our officers attempt to use the first three Es of the 4Es process (Engage, Explain, Encourage, Enforce) before any enforcement is considered; this is in-line with guidance from the NPCC to all forces. The Constabulary and our

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partners with an enforcement remit, have shared a clear aim throughout the past twelve months to work with our communities, ensuring that they understand the regulations which are ultimately there to help protect them and their loved ones.

- 2.23 Since 9th March 2020 (until 2nd March 2021), approximately 1,605 fixed-penalty notices (176 in the past week) have been issued by the Constabulary, with five of these being at the highest level of £10,000 for the most egregious breaches of the legislation (e.g. illegal raves and house parties).
- 2.24 The constant changes to the Coronavirus legislation, and the significant disparities between this legislation and guidance, remain a continual challenge for my colleagues, the implications of the forthcoming changes that are expected as we exit lockdown remain to be understood.
- 2.25 All fixed-penalty notices continue to be scrutinised in order to identify cases where they have been issued inappropriately, and in these instances, those affected have received written notification of the withdrawal; this system has been in place since the Constabulary started to issue fixed-penalty notices in March 2020.
- 2.26 It is important to note, in the overwhelming majority of cases, incidents are being dealt with appropriately and officers are using their discretion, and professional judgement, in the correct way.

3. THE POLICE AND CRIME PLAN

- 3.1 The delivery of the priorities in the Police and Crime Plan has continued throughout the Covid19 situation. The PCC has worked closely with those commissioned services to ensure that they are able to continue to provide their services whilst observing prevailing covid restrictions. Whilst the delivery models have needed to change we have ensured that services remain open and are able to provide support.
- 3.2 The PCC has been represented throughout the pandemic on the Force's Gold Group managing the Forces response and consideration of the impact on the Plan, and in particular those who are vulnerable as well as victims and witnesses, has formed part of the discussions.
- 3.4 As the country moves out of current restrictions we will continue to monitor the impact this will have on the priorities in the plan and how commissioned services are able to transition from virtual to face to face service delivery.
- 3.5 It would seem timely to remind the Panel that following the PCC elections in May a new plan will be developed and will be shared with the Panel prior to its publication.

4 COMMUNITY LEVEL

- 4.1 Following discussions between the PCC and the Chief Constable the Force have started an initiative called Operation Derbyshire which sees a focus on many of the areas highlighted in the Panel's third question.

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- 4.2 Priority will be given to activity around ASB, 'community crimes' whilst supporting victims of crime and vulnerable members of communities. It will also see a focus on speeding, wildlife crime and police visibility, but these areas fall outside the scope of the question.)
- 4.3 To support this work the Force have established a neighbourhood policing board, at which the OPCC is represented.
- 4.4 An early task of this board will be to rollout problem solving training to all staff and officers working within a neighbourhood role.
- 4.5 This work will coincide with the process of unlocking community from current restrictions and it is hoped that the greater visibility will provide reassurance to communities.
- 4.6 Through support of the PCC investment has been made in additional equipment to support the Roads Policing Units to tackle issues of road safety, and in particular speeding offences, which are often raised as a concern by those who contact/speak to the PCC.
- 4.7 The Force continues to use the THRIVE+ approach (Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability, Engagement), which centres on any identified vulnerabilities within an incident. To date over 2700 staff and officers have received training in this approach.

5. LOCKDOWN EASING

- 5.1 The Operation Talla team within the Constabulary is currently working to plan for the easing of restrictions as we exit lockdown, to ensure that we are ahead of the curve as far as is possible for when we receive further instructions from the NPCC and Home Office.
- 5.2 As of 9th March 2021, we remain unsighted on the plans from the NPCC and the Home Office in terms of the role that policing will play going forwards, although communications on this matter are expected imminently.
- 5.3 The Constabulary is currently developing a roadmap which highlights key dates for the removal of restrictions and reviewing the implications that this will have upon operational policing within Derbyshire. This will enable us to plan communications for the removal or amendments of key pieces of legislation and government guidance to our colleagues, our key enforcement partners, and the communities of Derbyshire.
- 5.4 Alongside this work we are overlapping key events which are taking place either locally or nationally, such as the forthcoming Euro football competition, to ensure we have the correct staffing levels in place.
- 5.5 During the easing of restrictions last year, we saw an increased presence at local pubs instead of the normal night time economy centred around the large urban areas. Our licensing teams have been tasked with proactively making

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early contact with all licensed premises to ensure they are aware of any restrictions, and allowing us the opportunity to review any plans they are making for re-opening.

- 5.6 As has already been seen during the past twelve months, as the weather improves so do visitors to the Peak District National Park and other attractions. Last year, numerous car parks were closed to try and deter visitors, but this then created problems with people parking vehicles inconsiderately or illegally. We also saw issues with large numbers of people attending places such as the Blue Lagoon, where there are safety concerns with people swimming in a disused quarry and traffic issues; this quarry has already been dyed black by the local council.
- 5.7 We are proactively looking at the key dates and assessing our staffing levels and our operational deployments. We will continue to work with our partners to ensure that the lessons learned throughout this crisis are applied to our plans as the roadmap unfolds.
- 5.8 Finally, the Constabulary has just embarked upon a “Mobile Workforce” project, analysing how we have worked during the pandemic in relation to agile working. This will consider the flexibility that agile working has given our non-frontline colleagues, all cost savings and additional efficiencies, as well as the expected reduction in our environmental footprint; this will be discussed in further detail in the addendum to the Force management statement.

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