

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**15th November 2018****REPORT OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR
DERBYSHIRE****Police and Crime Panel Challenge****1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide the Police and Crime Panel with a response to the following challenge topic relating to visibility of policing in Derbyshire:

The Police and Crime Panel (the PCP) have asked the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to consider the following:

There is a need to deliver effective, robust solutions when combatting crime in Derbyshire. Please can the Police and Crime Commissioner respond to the following so as to offer assurance to the Panel:

- *What does the visibility of Derbyshire Constabulary actually look like to the residents of Derbyshire in real terms both in the short, medium and long term and is this satisfactory? If not what are you doing to improve it?*
- *Residents are concerned about the lack of visible policing in their localities so what strategies are being considered or implemented to allay these concerns and give confidence to communities?*
- *Are there different strategies in place for our rural areas and our urban areas?*
- *Overall, what measures and or strategies are being developed and or used to measure the effectiveness of your delivering visible policing going forward*

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As has previously been reported to the Police and Crime Panel (the PCP), the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is aware of concerns held by communities within Derbyshire of the levels of visibility of policing within the County.
- 2.2 As part of his #D383 tour, the PCC has heard feedback from residents from across the county about visibility.
- 2.3 The PCP itself has previously raised questions about this, and commented on visibility when it agreed the precept increase at its meeting in January 2018.

- 2.4 Because of this, the PCC has raised the issue with the Chief Constable and they have agreed that the issue of visibility is a key priority.
- 2.5 It is important to remember that a commitment to increasing visibility (resources permitting) is part of the Police and Crime Plan 2016-21, which has been discussed and agreed with the Panel.
- 2.6 The PCC and the Chief Constable are on record stating that Neighbourhood Policing is a cornerstone of policing in Derbyshire.
- 2.7 The effects of austerity on policing have meant that there are approximately 800 less staff and officers working within Derbyshire Constabulary compared with staffing levels seen in 2010. This has included an almost 20% reduction in the number of police officers and PCSOs
- 2.8 Derbyshire is a county of a million plus people, covering an area of over one thousand square miles. The impact of austerity means that there are now in the region of 1700 police officers providing a 24/7 service 365 days a year. With such challengingly small numbers it is vital that resources are targeted where the threat and risk is greatest. It is not an easy decision, nor one that either the PCC or Chief take lightly.
- 2.9 In addition to austerity, the face of crime has changes significantly, with a marked shift to crime taking place online. The response to this has needed to include efforts to increase visibility within the virtual world as well as a physical presence.
- 2.10 The PCC has recognised that the current funding settlement for Derbyshire is insufficient and fails to give the Chief Constable sufficient officers and staff. As a consequence, he has repeatedly pressed the Government for a fairer funding settlement, and when additional grant funding wasn't forthcoming, he increased the local precept by the maximum proscribed by law to help plug some of the shortfall. However, the Force remains approximately 800 people below the 2010 establishment.

3. DEFINING VISIBILITY

- 3.1 In order to address the issue of police visibility it is necessary to understand what is meant by the term.
- 3.2 Are we simply talking about seeing a police officer walking past your house? Whilst this may provide a level of assurance to the person sat in the lounge who sees the officer out of the window, it does nothing to prevent the grooming of a ten-year-old child on their computer in their bedroom upstairs for example.
- 3.3 Are we therefore referring to neighbourhood policing through safer neighbourhood teams? If this is the case, this would not include the visibility of those officers who came to support a victim of domestic abuse. Were the police officers who offered advice and support to

help prevent third-sector organisation becoming the victims of cybercrime contributing towards providing a visible presence? Is the PCSO who goes into their local school to warn children of the dangers of sexting providing a visible presence?

- 3.4 An additional consideration is who counts in terms of visibility? Are we only referring to warranted officers with a suite of policing powers? Or do we also include police staff who may not have warranted powers, but without whom effective policing would be significantly more difficult. Do we need to ensure that our definition refers to the reach, presence and footprint of Derbyshire Constabulary not simply the number of 'bobbies on the beat'?
- 3.5 What about our online visibility? With more of us spending more time in a virtual world – for either business or recreation, the likelihood of being a victim of crime online is ever increasing. How best to we police the online environment?
- 3.6 Whilst this all may feel like something of an academic discussion, it is important to recognise that visibility will mean different things to different people, and the 'answer' will therefore be different depending on the questioner.
- 3.7 Another important consideration is what the importance of visibility is. Are we talking about a correlation between visibility and assurance or confidence? If this is the case are more 'bobbies on the beat' the answer or is there something more fundamental about ensuring that the service people receive is of a high quality? Would it be right to put more 'bobbies on the beat', if that could only be achieved by taking officers away from other duties?
- 3.8 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) have consistently assessed Derbyshire Constabulary as either GOOD or OUTSTANDING. Is there an argument to suggest that this external validation is a better cause for confidence than simply seeing someone in a uniform? Clearly there is a balance to be struck.

4. STRATEGIES TO INCREASE VISIBILITY & ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1 As the Chief Constable reported to the Panel at its last meeting (September 2018), he has commissioned a review of neighbourhood policing capabilities to ensure that the Force have the right resources, in the right locations, doing the right thing.
- 4.2 As part of the work between the Chief Constable and the PCC there is a commitment to an increased focus on problem solving, engagement and visibility.
- 4.3 As previously stated both the PCC and the Chief Constable recognise that the public feel safer when they see the Police 'out and about'. To this end all frontline officers, PCSOs and Special Constables have been trained and equipped with mobile data terminals. This has

allowed those on the 'frontline' to work out in communities where they may previously have needed to return to a police station.

4.4 Using mobile data terminals officers can:

- complete statements
- undertake sudden death administration
- gather and submit evidence
- review area briefings
- update crime workloads
- automatically make referrals to partner agencies e.g. when a child is present at a domestic incident
- check the Police National Computer

(This is not an exhaustive list)

4.5 Work undertaken by West Yorkshire Police suggests that each device delivers an extra hour per day of increased visibility per officer.

4.6 Work is still ongoing on the details of the neighbourhood policing review and the PCC has been briefed on progress and will be in a better position to discuss details with the Panel once this review has been completed. The Commissioner has previously advised the Chief Constable of his view that any additional resources raised by an increase in council tax should be prioritised towards support neighbourhood policing. However, the Panel should note that following a national review of police pensions, the government is currently proposing that police budgets would fund this additional cost, which in Derbyshire's case amounts to £2.5m in year 2019/20 and £6.5m in year 2020/20. Potentially wiping out any progress made in a single stroke.

4.7 As part of its commitment to facilitate engagement, the Force introduced a 'Digidesk' in July allowing the public to engage with the police via Facebook or Twitter. To date over 1,100 interactions with the public have taken place.

4.8 As part of the review of neighbourhood policing the Force are looking to promote greater participation and active citizenship for the mutual benefit of all. This model has been used successfully in other force areas and has seen genuine partnership working between the police and the communities they serve.

4.9 We are already aware of some excellent work and best practice within SNTs, as reported to the PCC during his #D383 tour. Part of the SNT review is to capture this best practice and ensure that the lessons are shared across the whole Force.

4.9 The Force's Policing Delivery Plan 2018-21 states:

Increasingly, public contact and transactions take place in the digital space, online, through the internet and via social media. Policing should be no different. Whether for the reporting of incidents and crime, providing information and updates or facilitating financial

transactions, we will improve our ability to engage with the public in a digital way that adds value.

We will...

- *Provide a 24/7 capability to interact digitally with the public*
- *Engage with the public to determine the way they want to be able to communicate with us to ensure we don't miss any areas of the community*
- *Provide the right technology to allow effective communication and engagement with our public*
- *Ensure our staff have the skills and technology to engage digitally, in a meaningful way*
- *Collaborate with specialist IT developers*
- *Train staff in the new technology, and also invest in people to use the technology, to ensure the new methods don't lack emotion and ability to recognise vulnerability*
- *Provide timely, relevant information through the various online and social media platforms*

- 4.10 Panel Members should also remember that the PCC made a commitment to reinstating the 'Derbyshire Alert' system for engagement between the Force and local communities. This system was adopted by the OPCC and is now being rolled out through the Force and is compatible with the Force's mobile data units which will allow greater use of the system than in the previous incarnation.
- 4.11 The PCC is currently in discussions with the Police Foundation to join a cohort of PCCs undertaking research to better understand public priorities. This will allow more in depth discussions with members of different communities across Derbyshire around the challenges of prioritising work and balancing competing complex demands. The issue of visibility will undoubtedly feature highly as part of this work if it goes ahead.
- 4.12 As the Panel have previously been made aware, the PCC has made an additional £1million of additional funding available to the Chief Constable specifically to tackle the issue of increased visibility within Communities. The PCC has been clear that this, along with the additional funding gained through the precept, must have a real impact on local communities.

5. URBAN & RURAL POLICING

- 5.1 As discussed previously at PCP meetings the delivery of policing is based on threat and risk.
- 5.2 The simple answer to the Panel's question about different strategies

in urban and rural areas is 'Yes'. However, simply to pose the question as a difference just between rural and urban policing is to over simplify the issue, and misunderstand the challenges the police face. Providing a visible presence in a large urban area such as Derby for example is different from the challenges of providing a presence in a town such as Glossop, and yet both would be described as urban areas. The issues, needs, threats and risks are different and therefore the strategies for keeping these communities safe will be different.

- 5.3 As has previously been reported to the PCP, the PCC took part in the National Rural Crime Network survey. Enabling those living within rural communities to let us know what is important to them
- 5.4 A further piece of work is being completed to understand the challenges of addressing the issue of Domestic Abuse within rural communities compared with tackling the issue in urban areas.
- 5.5 The PCC has worked with the Chief Constable to see the Rural Crime Team established as it is recognised that there are different needs within rural communities.
- 5.6 The PCC has actively engaged with partners like the National Farmers Union to ensure that the voice of rural communities is heard .
- 5.7 The initial pilot and roll out of the new Derbyshire Alert scheme was targeted at rural communities.
- 5.8 The reality of crime is that there is a greater number of crimes that occur in urban and suburban areas and the Chief Constable is expected to ensure that resources are targeted where the threat is greatest.
- 5.9 Panel members should remember both the PCC and Chief Constable giving assurance that it doesn't matter where in the County you live, if you need police assistance you will get it in a timely fashion. But we shouldn't forget that Derbyshire is a large County and it can take several hours to get from the very top to the very bottom and this does present challenges

6. ASSESSING IMPACT

- 6.1 There is no simple way for the PCC or the Chief Constable to measure or assess the impact of the work on increasing visibility. There are, however, proxy indicators that should offer levels of assurance that initiatives are having the desired effects.
- 6.2 The PCC's #D383 tour of the County is a great way for the PCC to hear directly for local people. Indeed experience has shown that, given the opportunity to outline the challenges, many of those the PCC has spoken to who have initially talked about not seeing a police officer understand the challenges the Force are facing. They recognise and accept the decisions taken, even if this means that in areas of low crime they may not see a Derbyshire Constabulary uniform very often.

- 6.2 The use of satisfaction and confidence data can help demonstrate the impact of initiatives. However, care needs to be taken of over reliance of such data as there are many other (external) variables that can have an effect on someone's perception of confidence in the police.
- 6.3 External assessments by organisations such as HMICFRS are also indicators of the way in which the Force is able to respond to the needs of the communities it serves.
- 6.4 If undertaken the work with the Police Foundation will give an insight into people's priorities and facilitate a dialogue with communities about the things that are important to them.
- 6.5 The engagement work the Force are planning will give direct access to the views of communities. Experience elsewhere has been that once relationships are established communities are not backwards in feeding back to forces what is, and equally important isn't, working.
- 6.6 There is a significant role for members of the PCP as they are senior community leaders who are out there and will hear things directly from communities. As part of their role to both support and challenge the PCC they have an opportunity to take part in the discussions about the challenge of competing priorities and reducing resources.

7. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- i That the report and the work that the PCC has undertaken on this objective be noted.

HARDYAL DHINDSA
PCC for Derbyshire

November 2018