



**POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**
for Leicester,
Leicestershire & Rutland
Your Communities - Your Commissioner

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE BOARD

30th May 2024

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Please note that Operational Summary has been redacted as not suitable for public domain.

*Please note that some items were deferred during the CGB meeting due to time constraints.

1. Overview, attendance & purpose

Overview

Chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Corporate Governance Board is attended by both the OPCC and the Chief Officer Team who meet roughly every 8 weeks to discuss and highlight the performance of Leicestershire Police force, allowing the PCC to challenge, scrutinise and discuss potential support from the OPCC. Below is a report detailing the discussions of the meeting held on the 30th May 2024.

Attendance

Office of Police and Crime Commissioner

Mr Rupert Matthews (Police and Crime Commissioner)
Claire Trewartha (CEO)
Miss Kira Hughes (Chief Finance Officer)
Mrs Lizzie Starr (Director of Governance and Performance)
Mrs Clare Hornbuckle (Evaluation and Scrutiny Officer)

Office of Chief Constable

Mr Rob Nixon (Chief Constable)
Mr David Sandall (Deputy Chief Constable)
Mr Chris Kealey (Head of Communications and Engagement)
Mr Paul Dawkins (ACO FR)

Apologies – Mr Chris Kealey (Head of Communications and Engagement)

Purpose

The purpose of the Corporate Governance Board is to allow the PCC to carry out their statutory duty of holding the Chief Constable to account on behalf of the public. The board consists of both reports, presentations and verbal discussions guided by the Chair on key areas such as performance, corporate risk, recruitment, HMICFRS, among other measures. This report is to highlight the main points covered in the latest CBG, in the following format:

- i. Overview of issue (with the exception of repeat financial items)
- ii. Force update/overview
- iii. Police and Crime Commissioner response (where appropriate)

2. Urgent Business

Overview: Where urgent business items are discussed at CGB that are of interest to the panel, these will be included here.

Force update: CC Nixon updated the board that £10m fund made available for security around elections. As of this meeting, a total of 7 bids have been submitted, two of which are from Leicestershire and have been successful. CC Nixon informed the board that one of these is for supporting the Police and Crime Plan and one is for increasing controls on policing elections. The board were informed that Leicestershire Police are appealing retrospectively for a grant to cover 80 hours of bank holiday police officer overtime which occurred over the recent bank holiday, to police a meeting with the Prime Minister.

CC Nixon stated that there is an expectation that each force will have an Op Bridger SPOC for a 2-year period to circulate guidance and information and oversee the safety of elected bodies. While Op Bridger supports currently elected MPs, this programme will support other elected officials. Impact and risk are that the Force cannot recruit for this but need to extract an officer from the front line, resulting in a net loss. CC Nixon stated that they have been approached by an MP for guidance on elections and hustings and what that means locally and what MPs should prioritise and factor in for safety. The Force are looking to align guidance with the rest of the country and begin comms.

CC Nixon provided an update to the board regarding upcoming operational demand, explaining that the Force are entering a period of 6-8 weeks of exceptional operational demand. Events include Download festival, Kasabian gig, football quarter and semi-finals, Euro convention, as well as the HMICFRS PEEL inspection.

PCC response: In relation to the meeting with the Prime Minister, the PCC stated that the Force will likely see more high-profile visits in the future as well as local visits. PCC passed on thanks for bidding for additional funding to support operational work.

3. Operational Performance

a. Response Performance including All Reasonable Lines of Enquiry (dip-sample)

Overview: A Gold Group has been established in Force for managing response times. This group functions to identify early indications for pressure causes and allow for resource planning to improve performance and achieve stability long term.

Force update: The board received a report authored and presented by ACC Streets. The Force closed the 23/24 fiscal year with an average response time of 15m 35s for emergency calls, an improvement on the previous year's average of 16m 11s. There is no national target for emergency responses, therefore the Force have set a local time of 15 minutes for response in an urban area, and 20 mins for rural due to resource and travel time. The Gold Group has identified early indications for previous pressure causes including increased operational demand, 24 football matches, reduced mutual aid, festivals etc which need to be planned for with regard for the fact that much of the front-line officers have less than 5 years of service. The Force have previously trialled using digital technology and video interaction to deal with grade 2 jobs which previously had an officer dispatched to them. The board was informed that there has been positive initial feedback, and the Force are looking to roll virtual interactions out further to increase officer's time and capacity.

On burglary specifically, ACC Streets explained that the Force closed the business year at 14 mins 17 seconds average response times for Burglaries on emergency response (within 15 mins), and that non-emergency responses averaged within 5 hours, explaining that residential burglaries and shed breaks are all captured in one umbrella of 'residential burglary'. ACC Streets explained that often people report burglaries when they return home from work or holiday, and don't always require an immediate response as the assailant/s are long gone. ACC Streets explained that Op Forefront – Detect (Leicestershire Police's transformation programme) should contribute to reduced response times. ACC Streets went on to explain that the Force have undertaken an audit of compliance and found an area where the Force could improve offer around 'cocooning', which relates to cascading advice for neighbouring properties of burglary victims on self-protection on advice. It was understood by the board that weekly threat meetings chaired by a DCI in Force, and that community safety partnerships are also looking to help standardise and improve cocooning locally. Since Op Forefront Detect commenced on 1st Jan, the Force have seen increased positive outcomes consistently.

The Force's report also stated that weekly threat meetings are held across all NPAs, and a bi-weekly tactical burglary group chaired by a DCI ensures that delivery plans remain focused in the right areas and on the right people.

PCC response: The PCC queried the difference between 'emergency' (grade 1) and 'priority' (grade 2). ACC Streets explained that threat, harm and risk determine the grading. 'Emergency' referred to an immediate threat to life, offenders still on scene, or need for evidence preservation. Priority incidents are not at that level in the sense that attending within 15 minutes would likely not affect the outcome of a case, but there is still a need to attend within two hours.

It was stated in the report that the Force have an overall 15% detection rate. Lizzie Starr queried whether the Force had an idea of where they want to be pitching in terms of percentage for burglary. ACC Kerr responded that the ambition is always to be in the top quartile nationally. Top performing forces now are all in double figures so that is the Force's ambition currently. Of the Most Similar Forces Group, the highest performing force is at 15%. CEO Trewartha stated the report says the outcome rate has gone up since previous year but not by how much, and that the PCC would benefit from knowing these comparisons to understand trajectory.

Lizzie Starr queried a potential correlation between attendance times and outcomes and whether the delay in responding lead to a deterioration of evidence for example, which would impact conviction rates. ACC Kerr explained that call handlers are trained to ask for investigative opportunities in terms of evidence. Lizzie Starr went on to query what preventative work is being undertaken in relation to burglaries for summer (increased burglaries, open windows etc) and whether there was anything the PCC can support with. ACC Kerr responded that Layer 3 crime board is planning for activity over summer and stated that the PCC/OPCC has a standing invite to that board. Next board is on Monday 3rd – ACC Kerr explained that this is a perfect opportunity for OPCC to attend and identify support opportunities.

The PCC requested that as a general rule, all figures and percentages in reports have context in the form of previous figures for comparison and understanding trajectory.

b. Contact Management Department Response

Overview: This item is an update to a report from previous CGB. Contact Management Response has been monitored closely by the Force through a Gold Group to manage significantly increased demand in the department.

Force update: The Force has seen an increase of 17,000 emergency calls in the 23/24 year compared to previous year. A critical incident was declared in June 2023 to manage increased demand in CMD under a Gold Group. Looking at this yearend, 87.2% of emergency calls were answered within 10 seconds. At the close of March 2024, the average time to answer was 4.93 seconds for 999 calls and the Force are currently well in excess of targets set locally for non-emergency, which the Force will try to sustain.

The board were informed that Right Care Right Person has strengthened under Gold Group activity, as this has increased many available services with effective plans in place for additional services. ACC Streets explained that the Force is heading in the right direction for managing demand and has seen a reduction of 285 incidents created and attended 2,500 less RCRP incidents, increasing capacity for front line officers. The 2025/26 Transformation Programme will continue to strive to reduce demand on CMD.

PCC response: The Chair congratulated the Force on their improvements made.

CEO Trewartha asked whether the Force or OPCC could do anything to encourage non-emergency reporting online to reduce demand on call centre. The Force stated they are seeing increases in single online home reporting and that there is a general understanding nationally that emergency services are the only 24/7 accessible phone service and the Force cannot change this. CC Nixon explained that there is a planned comms campaign help to make people aware of reporting online but that the team need to find the right balance between diverting calls and providing the support to concerned members of public. CEO Trewartha queried why any non-emergency calls are answered during unsociable hours, Force responded that people may require support or updates on their cases at any time of day or may feel more comfortable reporting on the phone and don't want to remove that service.

Lizzie Starr asked if there was a difference in satisfaction rates between phone reporting and online reporting. ACC Streets agreed to review this and share with Mrs Starr.

C. Force Strategic Assessment

Overview: The Force completes an annual Strategic Assessment which provides an overview of long-term crime and issues affecting Leicestershire. It is used to drive the business of the Strategic Tasking & Co-ordination Group (ST&CG), aid business planning, inform resource allocation and assist in the formation of the control strategy. The assessment is completed utilising the Management of Risk in Law Enforcement (MoRiLE) assessment tool. This approach has been used to assess both operational and non-operational areas of business.

Force update: The board received a brief report authored by Supt James Avery, stating the following:

On 18th April 2024, the ST&CG was convened allowing Senior Leaders to consider the findings of the Strategic Assessment. This led to a recommended Control Strategy as follows:

- *Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking*
- *Drug Supply*
- *Rape*
- *Domestic Abuse*
- *Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation*

The following cross cutting themes as service priorities were identified:

- *Service to Vulnerable Victims*
- *Service to Violence Against Women and Girls*
- *Service to fighting Organised Crime*

In respect of Business priorities and cross cutting themes the following were identified:

- *Digital capability (cross cutting)*
- *Financial (cross cutting)*
- *Information Technology*
- *Contact Management*

The Strategic Assessment and proposed Control Strategy for 2024 – 2025 have since been agreed by the Force Executive Group.

The report was taken as read.

PCC response: CEO Trewartha touched on the Strategic Policing Requirement, stating that she wants to ensure the PCC narrative in their Police and Crime Plan is reflective of the Force's and that all appropriate considerations are made.

4. Finance

a. Transformation and Sustainability Plan Update

Overview: Leicestershire Police were presented with a budget deficit of £5.4m due to budget cuts and increasing costs. The PCC has been closely monitoring the planning for managing the budget deficit with intent to support the Force and approve funding decisions where reasonable and beneficial to do so.

It was agreed as an action in the CGB meeting of March 2024 for the Force to bring a full paper on a proposal to use £170k of reserves to the May CGB for discussion and sign off.

Force update: CC Nixon wanted to acknowledge the effort being put into maintaining operation standards while re-modelling fiscal challenges and that the Force are in a good position given the context. The Force explained that non-pay savings are being made already, reducing need for further loss of people. DCC Sandall continued the verbal updates relating to the paper, explaining the unexpected operational demand faced by the Force regarding the disorder in East Leicester. DCC Sandall explained that this incident led the Force to increase resource and preparations for other possible similar incidents and that non-cashable efficiencies need to be achieved to support this demand.

Discussion was held around the cost pressures incurred on the Force as a result of the recent XL bully legislation. The problem presented to the board was that the £350,000 budget for XL bullies and dangerous dogs (£250k after resource re-allocation), is not sufficient against the forecast cost of £600,000. DCC Sandall informed the board that Leicestershire have the least amount of money in the country for kennelling. It was explained that the demand stems from seizing the dog, injections and temporary kennelling, and that the costs are coming directly back into policing. DCC Sandall continued that the Force want support for national funding and requested the PCC to lobby and highlight this issue nationally. DCC Sandall explained that the budget for dog seizures used to be £60k per year, now it's a predicted £600k per year cost. The board were informed that Supt Johnny Starbuck is looking at a new process of effectively giving the dogs back to owners with an indemnity.

The board were informed that the current vacancy rate (the percentage of posts that are current vacant) is 4.77% which is under the 6% target. It was noted by DCC Sandall that there was 'more to do' but the board should note the positive progress so far.

PCC response: CEO Trewartha asked what the force would class as a manageable sustainable vacancy rate, to which DCC Sandall responded 1.5-2%.

The PCC asked, if savings with particular roles can be made using AI, how would the Force make this change if staff don't leave for other roles. Force responded that compulsory redundancies would support this move, and that impact and risk assessments are made for each of these changes. The Chair queried what would happen if nobody took voluntary redundancy in an area where it was needed, to which the Force confirmed that compulsory redundancy would then be carried out.

Kira Hughes queried the current 4.77% vacancy rate asking specifically how many posts are captured in this figure. DCC Sandall responded that this captures 40 vacancies excluding IT and CMD.

The PCC asked for a Force definition of a sustainable budget. CFO Dawkins responded that they see it as 'living within means' and that the budget can be balanced, by looking at whether the spend outweighs it. CFO Dawkins reinforced that demand is increasing, resources are reducing, and the gap between the two is widening. The PCC asked for a Force definition of sustainable saving to which CFO Dawkins summarised 'something repeated year on year', such as if a role was removed.

The PCC queried where the Force was currently at with redeployment, to which CC Nixon explained that as part of redundancy there might be redeployment opportunities, and the Force might wish to move people to other roles such as looking at investigative desk space skills. Force however stated that this discussion should be for another meeting where the board can go into more depth.

The PCC went on to query the Force's preparedness for removing more roles. The PCC asked whether the Force maintain a big document identifying which roles could be removed if needed. DCC Sandall responded that the Force have areas identified and keep this information. CC Nixon continued that the Force would not remove whole departments as you lose key functions but would instead likely trim from multiple areas to mitigate. CC Nixon went on to state that Leicestershire is currently one of the leanest forces in the country.

Kira Hughes sought clarity on whether contingency plans were in place for possible different government announcements in relation to funding. The PCC commented that any increases in funding were not forecast which was agreed by the board.

The PCC later provided 6 formal responses to the board. These were:

1. The PCC notes the report and progress appreciates the efforts made by the Force on the work so far and appreciates the emotional impact this work will have had on staff.

2. The PCC notes the Force's approach to close the budget gap and be financially sustainable for 2024/25. The Chief Constable is required to bring to the next Corporate Governance Board a report on progress to close the budget gap, for 2024/25 including further removal of staff posts where necessary. It is requested that the Chief Constable shows clearly which savings are sustainable through into 2025/26 and provides thoughts on a plan for balancing for the next financial year.
3. In relation to the removal of posts within the Force the PCC considers this to be an operational decision, the PCC's role is to hold the CC to account for the delivery of an efficient and effective service. The Force can brief on service impact rather than the justification of removal individual of posts.
4. **PCC agreed to the use of £170k from reserves for the VR posts.**
5. The PCC will need to consider further investment into prevention activity, across the OPCC, VRN and Force. The CC is welcome to bring an activity update on the business case that was approved for the Prevention Directorate in January 2024.
6. In relation to the hotspot funding the PCC still has concerns about abstraction of officers from NPAs for this purpose for a long period of time. The PCC has requested, in separate communication reassurance on how those areas affected will have the impact mitigated. He would welcome the CC setting that out within a business case to consider utilising the external funding from the Home Office ASB hotspot funding for the purposes outlined in this report in between CGB meetings.

b. Provisional Outturn (item deferred)

5. Transformation and Change

Overview: Recurring CGB item.

Force update: The board received a report authored by DCC Sandall with a briefing on the progress of the Operation Forefront Transformation and on the Budget Sustainability Plans to overcome the deficit and deliver a sustainable budget in 2024/25.

The report set out detailed overviews on a number of transformational projects including Operation Forefront which sets out a clear vision to be a leading force in the country, delivering high quality policing that local people trust, as well as IT capabilities, community engagement, workforce upskilling and budgetary challenges and achievements.

PCC response: The PCC acknowledged and appreciated how much work has gone into this.

The PCC requested that in July 2024, the Force bring back a plan of sustainability for 24/25 and be clear on definition of sustainability. It was stated that going into this period the Force have £5.4m dedicated on 1.5-2% vacancy rate. CC Nixon requested that the PCC bring forward discussions around income generation in between CGBs to alleviate time pressures. PCC suggested if there is a time pressure and if it is necessary to have another meeting before July, this can be arranged and income generation to alleviate cost pressures in upcoming years can be discussed there.

The PCC stated that in terms of redundancies, based on his own experience his preference would be to remove all possible redundancy posts in one go to avoid repeating the process over and over, and if money becomes available to re-recruit, that this could be dealt with in the future.

6. HMICFRS

PEEL inspection – Force Prep and Strategic Brief (deferred)

Overview: Carried out by HMICFRS, the PEEL inspection is a regular assessment of police forces in England and Wales. Using inspection findings, HMICFRS use professional judgement to assess how good forces are in several areas of policing. Most of these areas are then graded as outstanding, good, adequate, requires improvement, or inadequate. The intense inspection weeks begin in Force on 15th of July for 2 weeks. The PCC requests regular updates from the Force on their preparedness for these inspections, offering support and full engagement with HMICFRS where possible.

Force update: Item deferred due to time constraints.

7. AOB

a. Cyber Resilience (deferred)

b. Force Management Statement (deferred)

End of meeting

Date of next meeting: 30th July 2024