



To: Business Coordination Board

From: Chief Constable

Date: 25 February 2015

PERFORMANCE UPDATE

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This paper provides the Business Coordination Board (“the Board”) with commentary around the recent Office of National Statistics (ONS) crime data statistics, putting the data into context in respect of Cambridgeshire. It provides details around Cambridgeshire Constabulary’s (“the Constabulary”) operational response to changes in crime levels and on the potential impact on the Constabulary’s objective to ‘do the right thing’ for vulnerable victims.
- 1.2. This report is set in the context of the quarterly performance reports. The next quarterly performance report will be considered at the Board meeting in May 2015.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Board is asked to note this report.

3. Background and Context

- 3.1 The Constabulary remains committed to Keeping the People of Cambridgeshire safe, and Tackling Crime and Disorder as set out in the Police and Crime Commissioner’s Police and Crime Plan 2013 – 2016 (“the Plan”). Performance monitoring takes place against the Plan outcomes and associated measures.
- 3.2 Underpinning these objectives is the primary drive to ‘do the right thing’ and protect the vulnerable in our communities. In the context of diminishing budgets it is important that the Constabulary’s resources are dedicated to protecting the vulnerable: this is achieved through prioritisation based on threat, risk and harm. Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary’s (HMIC) Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy inspection report, 2014¹ commented “*The constabulary constantly assesses*

¹ <http://www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmic/cambridgeshire/>

demands on its services, levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and new and emerging patterns of criminality. This facilitates a flexible deployment of resources to where they are most needed."² The Constabulary were rated as good for both effectiveness and efficiency.

- 3.3 This paper covers in some detail, the internal (Constabulary) and external influences on recorded crime levels. Disaggregating each influence is not possible in any meaningful way.
- 3.4 It should be noted that the *Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)* found that the levels of violence and sexual assault had decreased. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) National Policing Lead for Crime Recording, Chief Constable Jeff Farrar, Gwent Police³ has said "*We are particularly reassured that this [the CSEW reduction] is combined with an increase in police recorded figures of violence and sexual offences. This is largely due to a renewed police focus on the quality of recording and a greater willingness from victims to come forward and report such crimes, past or present, with the confidence that they will be investigated fully*". There is nothing in this analysis to suggest the Cambridgeshire influences are any different to those put forward by Chief Constable Farrar.
- 3.5 In his recent 'State of Policing' report, Sir Tom Winsor, HMIC has stated "*one of the most significant problems faced by society – and therefore its police – is unreported crime. Many crimes are unreported, and of course it is impossible accurately to measure the size of the problem.*"⁴ Thus no attempt is made in this report to quantify the influence of under reporting on the Constabulary's crime figures. Local research has been undertaken to understand from a victim's perspective as to the reasoning for under-reporting of crime.
- 3.6 Unless otherwise stated, all comparisons in this report are based on the 12 months to September 2014 compared to the same period in 2013. Thus allowing the ONS data to be viewed in context.

4. The ONS Statistics in Context

The data: what does it mean?

- 4.1 The CSEW covers a broad range of victim based crimes (and includes crimes which do not come to the attention of the police), The latest figures (to September 2014) represent an 11% decrease compared with the previous year's survey and is the lowest

² <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/>; p14

³ <http://news.acpo.police.uk/releases/crimes-stats-our-challenge-is-to-deal-effectively-with-the-growing-demand-while-keeping-traditional-types-of-crime-down> ; CC Jeff Farrar

⁴ <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/state-of-policing-13-14.pdf>

estimate of crime since the survey began in 1981⁵. In contrast, nationally police recorded crime shows almost no overall change from the previous year (down by 0.5%).

- 4.2 The Constabulary's recorded crime statistics (all crime) indicate a 4.7% increase (compared to 3.7% in regional forces), whilst the Most Similar Force (MSF)⁶ family recorded a 2.4% decrease. A similar picture is observed for Victim Based Crime. Thus, the data infers that the Constabulary has had a faster rate of increase in recorded crime between the two points than either National, Regional or MSFs.
- 4.3 Whilst the percentage rate increase is an appropriate indicator of a change in volume of recorded crime over time, the recorded crime rate per thousand population puts the numerical increase into context alongside the population. Consequently, in the comparison period, Cambridgeshire has a lower (all) recorded crime rate than the National, and slightly higher than Regional or MSF rates. A similar profile is observed for recorded victim based crime.
- 4.4 In contrast, Cambridgeshire recorded crime rates for violence against the person are lower than either National, Regional or MSF; within the principal offence category, the violence with injury rates follow the same profile. The volume of domestic abuse offences can be influential on the violence against the person category. Whilst the absolute number of domestic offences recorded have increased, as a proportion of the violence against the person category we have seen a reduction. Thus it can be inferred that the increase in domestic offences has not been the only influence on the increase in violence against the person.
- 4.5 The violence without injury recorded crime rate in Cambridgeshire is lower than the Regional and National rates. An improvement in crime recording standards is likely to have had most impact on this category where the greatest percentage rate increase is observed. It is this category where the lower level offence is captured, which could typically occur during the evening economy where neither party wants to engage with the police.
- 4.6 Finally, the Burglary Dwelling recorded crime rate per 1000 households in Cambridgeshire is comparable to the Regional and lower than the National.
- 4.7 In summary, recorded crime in Cambridgeshire has increased, this is observed in both absolute percentage increase and an increase in the crime rate per thousand population. Nonetheless, Cambridgeshire crime rates in the 12 months to September 2014 remain below (or comparable to⁷) the National rate in the categories discussed in the report. It is apparent that the gap between the National and the Cambridgeshire

⁵ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/year-ending-september-2014/stb-crime-in-england-and-wales--year-ending-september-2014.html>

⁶ MSF are groups of police force areas that have been found to be the most similar to each other based on an analysis of demographic, social and economic characteristics which relate to crime.

⁷ In the case of 'All Sexual Offences'

recorded crime rate has narrowed year on year. The potential influences for this are discussed below.

Influencing Factors

- 4.8 Adherence to National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS)⁸ will influence the level of recorded crime. Following the de-designation of police-recorded crime as a National Statistic in January 2014, the House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee published its findings⁹ in April 2014 of its inquiry into whether appropriate checks were in place to ensure crimes were recorded properly. The Committee made a number of recommendations aimed at driving up standards. This, together with the subsequent HMIC Inspection (Crime Recording: A matter of Fact, 2014)¹⁰ and the Constabulary's activity has led to a much improved picture of police recorded crime. The Constabulary has seen NCRS compliance¹¹ improve from 71% during the HMIC Inspection of crime records (from the period 1st November 2012 to 31st October 2013), to 95% in January 2015. Thus, recorded crime has increased.
- 4.9 Operation Yewtree¹² has been cited as an influence on the increase in sexual offences brought to the attention of the Police¹³. The only reliable way of assessing the potential impact of this is through any change in reports of 'historic' sexual offences. In Cambridgeshire, the proportion of offences which are deemed historic¹⁴ in this category has stabilised at c46% in the year ending September 2014. This is an increase on the 12 months to September 2012 (34%), with one third of offences over five years old.
- 4.10 The impact of offenders from outside of Cambridgeshire crossing the county borders, is influential on crime; this is especially evident in Burglary Dwelling. Operation Juneberry was the tactical response to a team of Essex criminals operating across the Eastern Region. Similarly, East Cambridgeshire has seen the emergence of visiting criminality in outlying villages. The Constabulary is working with the local community safety partnership to design out and reduce crime.
- 4.11 The Constabulary's internal focus is on 'doing the right thing', thus ensuring the most vulnerable people are identified as early as possible, and the operational response is tailored to provide the most appropriate service. This has resulted in an increase in those categories where vulnerable victims are most likely to appear. The Constabulary 'Get Closer' media campaign has been developed aimed at improving victim

⁸ NCRS

⁹ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmpubadm/760/760.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/crime-data-integrity-interim-report.pdf>

¹¹ All crime

¹² Police investigation into [sexual abuse](#) allegations, led by the Metropolitan Police Service

¹³ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/period-ending-june-2013/info-sexual-offences.html>

¹⁴ Historic in this context follows the Child Exploitation and Online Protection definition; more than 28 days have lapsed between occurrences and reporting.

confidence to report particularly offences of a domestic and/or sexual nature; with an increase in victims reporting seen after the campaigns.

- 4.12 In summary the influence of internal and external factors is apparent in some crime categories. The drive for better adherence to NCRS is apparent within the Constabulary and elsewhere. The improvement in victim confidence to report, either as a result of Constabulary led media campaigns or the wider national media activity can be seen in those categories where some of the most vulnerable victims can be found. Disaggregating these influences on overall recorded crime figures cannot be reliably done. It is possible to identify the immediate impact of internally generated media campaigns, however, this is likely to only represent a small proportion of the entire impact.

5. Constabulary's Response and Focus

- 5.1 The Constabulary's Senior Managers use a range of information provided on a daily basis through which to consider their tactical response to crime. The data provides a view by vulnerability and crime type and is used in conjunction with local area knowledge and professional judgement.
- 5.2 An intelligence led daily briefing document provides additional information. The weekly Operational Review Meeting provides the mechanism through which local areas can bid for additional assistance from Constabulary's resources where allocation is made based on threat, risk and harm. The internal focus on 'doing the right thing' for the vulnerable ensures these victims are at the heart of service delivery.
- 5.3 The monthly strategic performance review process enables managers to consider progress towards crime plan priorities. Whilst quantitative measures play a part in this process, the qualitative context is brought to provide a more holistic view of performance. The use of intelligence resources to provide in depth knowledge of external factors influencing crime volumes is routinely considered (for example in understanding the risk factors in Child Sexual Exploitation). If necessary, partner agency tasking is undertaken to fill knowledge gaps.
- 5.4 The focus on vulnerable victims naturally leads to an improved recognition of the vulnerability and thus prioritisation of those victims (and therefore associated crimes). Whilst acknowledging the vulnerability transcends crime types, the most vulnerable victims *are likely to* reside within specific crime categories, for example domestic abuse, and child abuse. Thus the resource levels in the Constabulary's Public Protection Department have been enhanced in order to deal with the additional demand. This refocussing of resources provides the best environment through which to protect the vulnerable.
- 5.5 Whilst the influences on crime recording have been articulated, the Constabulary remains committed to crime prevention. A range of activities relating to the whole spectrum of crime and anti-social behaviour remain part of business as usual. For example, advice relating to minimising the chance of becoming a victim of personal

theft, burglary (business or dwelling); work in conjunction with Crimestoppers relating to shed/outbuilding security; Strategy Groups designed to support young people away from crime and anti-social behaviour; the use of eCops and other social media channels to inform and guide the public around known crime series and fraudulent activities.

6. The Future

- 6.1 The nature of crime is changing. Understanding the impact of those changes on levels of recorded crime is one of the key challenges facing policing in the future.
- 6.2 Sir Tom Winsor makes clear in his recently published State of Policing report¹⁵ that the Police Service has to be proactive in its role; reacting to what is reported but also seeking out crime, particularly where victims may be vulnerable. The Cambridgeshire focus provides the reassurance that this is what is happening. The recent crime statistics evidences the impact of 'seeking' out vulnerability.
- 6.3 The future is likely to bring an increase in reported computer enabled crime as criminals continue to exploit technological advances. Identifying and recording these offences is in its infancy, however it is already underway within the Constabulary.
- 6.4 Modern day slavery, prioritised through the Capability Assessment process, ensures the focus turns towards understanding the scale of the problem and ensuring the force is capable of responding.
- 6.5 Child Sexual Exploitation remains a priority, with proactive tactical activity continuing to identify and protect the victims vulnerable to this offence.
- 6.6 A focus on seeking out vulnerability and providing the right environment in which victims feel confident to report will stretch resources. The Constabulary remains committed to crime reduction initiatives in order to continue to tackle crime and disorder.
- 6.7 The NCRS continue to evolve and change shaping the landscape of crime statistics. As standards evolve it is likely the quantitative picture will change. It is ever more important therefore, that qualitative context provides the holistic view of performance. Quantitative measures can be misleading and diversionary.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to note this report.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Document	

¹⁵ <http://www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/state-of-policing-13-14.pdf>

Contact Officer	Susan Ratcliffe, Head of Performance, Corporate Development Department, Cambridgeshire Constabulary
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