



**To:** Business Coordination Board

**From:** Acting Chief Executive

**Date:** 03 September 2020

## **OPCC BUSINESS RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Business Coordination Board (the “Board”) of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) response to the Covid-19 emergency in respect of its statutory roles and responsibilities.
- 1.2 This report is an update of activity since the report to the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020 Board meeting.

### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 The Board is recommended to note the report.
- 2.2 Given the Covid response is now in the ‘recovery phase’, the Board is recommended to approve that any reporting on Covid related matters is now undertaken on an exception reporting basis, and as such any reporting can be on a specific business area as required by the Board.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Covid-19 situation means that business cannot be as usual. In order to respond to the emergency and fulfil statutory responsibilities, the Acting Police and Crime Commissioner (the “Acting Commissioner”) the OPCC, and Cambridgeshire Constabulary (the “Constabulary”) has to work differently within each of their statutory powers and remit.
- 3.2 As an Acting Commissioner can exercise all the powers that elected Police and Crime Commissioners have apart from varying or issuing a Police and Crime Plan (the “Plan”) (as provided for in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011). The Acting Commissioner had already determined that the priorities of the Plan should remain for the coming period. Now that his term has been extended to 2021 he reaffirms them. The delivery of the Plan remains steady but the Covid-19 crisis magnifies the need to drive forward the objectives and activities relevant to the needs in response to the

crisis in Cambridgeshire. He will continue to put support for victims centre stage ensure offenders are brought to justice and deterred from reoffending. He will also continue to issue crime and disorder grants in the context of the current Plan.

#### **4. OPCC response**

- 4.1 The Acting Commissioner continues to receive updates from the Chief Constable regarding the Constabulary's response to the Covid situation both in terms of the policing response to the legislative provisions and national guidance. The Acting Commissioner and the OPCC are also kept informed, and involved where necessary, in the both the Constabulary's recovery phase, part of which is looking at lessons learnt and looking at new ways of working to deliver a policing service.
- 4.2 In respect of the partnership landscape, as the immediate response has started to settle it has been possible to continue to progress some longer-term pieces of work with partners, taking account of the new context. Of course, local outbreaks may impact on this work over coming months.

#### **5. Victims Support Services**

- 5.1 Cambridgeshire's victim support services continue to operate at full capacity to support victims of crime in the county. A more detailed report is available in the OPCC Victims Update as part of Agenda Item 6.1 to the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2020 Board meeting.

#### **6. Criminal Justice System governance**

- 6.1 The Senior Criminal Justice Policy Manager, based in the OPCC, continues to drive partnership working which puts victims and witnesses at the heart of all policy decisions. An update on the operation of Cambridgeshire's Criminal Justice System is available within the OPCC Victims Update as part of Agenda Item 6.1 to the 3<sup>rd</sup> September Board meeting.

#### **7. Offenders**

- 7.1 Through a range of partnership governance mechanisms across the county, and some grants, the OPCC facilitates and supports collaborative working relating to crime prevention and reducing reoffending. The OPCC has liaised with key partners on a regular basis to ensure emerging partnership issues or risks are addressed, and that opportunities for collaborative working are identified.
- 7.2 In April, Government introduced arrangements, following appropriate risk assessment, for the early release of some prisoners in order to help manage the current health crisis. Alongside these exceptional releases, of course, those due to be released during this period as 'business as usual' continue to be released. This is in the context of challenges for those services providing support to these individuals given the need for social distancing and pressures on services such as temporary accommodation. Early prison releases have not been required on the scale initially envisaged by the government. This has enabled partners to focus on supporting the needs of business as usual releases. It has recently been announced that the early release arrangements were due to pause at the end of August.

- 7.3 Supporting the prison and probation leads on these releases, the OPCC has facilitated a broad-based partnership group. This is enabling partners to undertake joint planning for the safe release and resettlement of prisoners to help manage Covid-19, with appropriate escalation mechanisms through Local Resilience Forum Structures. For example, current social distancing requirements and prison arrangements make pre-release housing assessments more challenging. However, partners are working together to pilot the use of new prison video technology to undertake these assessments remotely.
- 7.4 This workstream is also linking with the wider work to ensure an appropriate response for those groups that can experience exclusion. More recently, this has included ensuring appropriate public health links with probation services as part of planning for responding to local outbreaks.
- 7.5 The OPCC continues to support sharing of information and practical problem solving between a very broad range of partners. This will continue through the recovery phase, including facilitating work to ensure that new, more flexible ways of inter-agency working during Covid, can continue where this adds value.

## **8. Communities**

- 8.1 The Acting Commissioner continues to support the joining up of service provision to listen and respond to day to day community safety issues during the Covid-19 crisis. He remains in regular contact with the Chief Constable as to the Constabulary's response to policing the lockdown restrictions.
- 8.2 Members of the community are being directed to the Government website for information on the current guidance on the restrictions and are able to report breaches on the Constabulary's website, where there is additional information.
- 8.3 The Commissioner's Communications Manager continues to support countywide communications colleagues on the 'warning and informing' communications cell of the Local Resilience Forum to ensure communities have access to appropriate and timely messaging during the pandemic. Campaigns such as those providing advice, support and signposting to services, such as reminding victims of crime of available support services, and the provision of advice regarding scams, continue to run across various forums and media.

## **9. Transformation**

- 9.1 Regular budget monitoring and reporting to the Board for 2020/21 has commenced with the Period 2 report. The next report is due to the Board at the end of September 2020. The Home Office have requested claims in from forces for medical grade Personal Protective Equipment and our claim has been submitted.
- 9.2 The Annual Statement of Accounts deadlines have been delayed nationally. However, year-end procedures are ongoing and the OPCC is working with both internal and external auditors, both to complete 2019/20 financial year requirements as thoroughly as can in the circumstances. We anticipate they will be signed by the October deadline.
- 9.3 The joint Constabulary and OPCC Resource Group continues to operate looking at strategic issues, risks and business planning.

## 10.0 Recommendation

10.1 The Board is recommended to note the report.

10.2 Given the Covid response is now in the 'recovery phase', the Board is recommended to approve that any reporting on Covid related matters is now undertaken on an exception reporting basis, and as such any reporting can be on a specific business area as required by the Board.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

<b>Source Documents</b>	Police and Crime Plan 2017-20 Community Safety and Criminal Justice Cambridgeshire and Peterborough <a href="https://cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/Police-and-Crime-Plan-Aug-2019">https://cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/Police-and-Crime-Plan-Aug-2019</a> 'OPCC Response to Covid-19', Agenda Item 6.0, Business Co-ordination Report, 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2020 <a href="https://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/accessing-information/decision-making/business-coordination-board/bcb-30th-april-2020/">https://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/accessing-information/decision-making/business-coordination-board/bcb-30th-april-2020/</a>
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