

APCC General Meeting Minutes: Thursday 28th May 2020: Virtual Meeting held on Microsoft Teams:

Item 1: Welcome and Minutes:

- APCC Chair Katy Bourne (KB) welcomed PCCs to the virtual General Meeting and noted the excellent turnout. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and Susannah Hancock confirmed all meeting actions had been progressed.
- KB updated PCCs on recent APCC business including the meeting of the APCC Board yesterday; work on the draft APCC Business Plan (2020-22); work relating to the CJS and victims; and work addressing Covid-19.
- KB referenced the written update on the PRTB which has been provided by Paddy Tipping (PT) as Chair of the PRTB and can be found in the General Meeting papers.

Approved/Agreed actions were:

- The draft APCC Business Plan (2020-22) will be circulated amongst PCCs for comment shortly.

Item 2: Finance, Commercial and IT Updates:

Item 2.1: The Police ICT Company:

- PFCC Stephen Mold provided an update on the recent work of the Police ICT Company. A fuller written update of recent developments would be circulated to members shortly.

Item 2.2: The BlueLight Commercial Company:

- PCC Matthew Scott (MS) updated PCCs on progress with setting up BlueLight Commercial. He noted that we had come a long way from the agreement by PCCs for it to be set up in October last year and its formal launch, which is planned for June 1st, and thanked all colleagues for signing up as members. The BlueLight Commercial Board had met three times already and the Company was busy recruiting staff and setting up necessary sub committees.
- MS was also delighted with the appointment of Lianne Deeming as the CEO. She had an impressive track record on both the operational and commercial side of companies and had managed significant change programmes. She will be contacting many PCCs during the next few months.
- MS further emphasised the intention for BlueLight Commercial to complement the excellent work of the Police ICT Company and for the two to work together to deliver the best outcomes for the service. To support that, the CEOs of each company would attend the Board meetings of the other.
- MS reported that the BlueLight Commercial website would be up and running on June 1st and a brochure was available setting out the role of the company. He was also grateful for the support of the PCCs on the Board and was pleased to say that they had found a suitable non-executive Director, Heather Benjamin, who had some excellent experience that she would be able to bring to the Board. In addition, the first two Regional Directors would start soon, and a small office would be set up in the West Midlands from September.

Item 2.3: Financial Updates, CSR, and Funding Formula:

- PFCC Roger Hirst (RH) provided PCCs with an update on ongoing Finance and SR work. Regular updates had been sent out to PCCs and in relation to cashflow issues, the £143m pensions grant had been issued early as had £84m of the Uplift Grant. Regarding additional cash, RH urged PCCs to make sure forces are getting their monthly returns in to the Home Office which must go through PCCs. The focus is currently on the first 12 weeks Covid-19 additional cash demand where we might expect a more rapid reimbursement, but longer term issues and demand factors will take more time.
- RH reported that work on the CSR has not yet begun and the working assumption is that we will be looking at a 1 year rollover this year. There was also an awareness that there are potential issues in collecting council tax this year. Both RH and PT were also continuing to raise the important issue of a revised funding formula. Cash reserves had increased by about £60m. It was hoped the new Strategic Change and Investment Board (SCIB) would help provide a more comprehensive investment picture in the future.

Key points raised by PCCs:

- The baseline for the one year roll over needed to include inflation, external costs, pay, pension and uplift.
- There were concerns over the loss of council tax income. RH responded that there had been no discussions on precept levels or flexibility as yet and he believed that PCCs are more likely to get borrowing freedom.
- There were concerns raised that PCCs have nothing as yet in writing from Ministers in relation to additional Covid cost reimbursement and we would need a more substantial commitment. PT mentioned that we had minutes taken of ministerial sessions where it was clear that we will get legitimate Covid costs back.

Approved/Agreed actions were:

- PCCs were asked to email RH/PT with any additional financial issues of concerns they may have.

Item 3: Update from Tricia Hayes, Director General, Home Office:

- KB welcomed Tricia Hayes (TH), the new Director General at the Home Office to the meeting. TH updated PCCs on recent developments on the Police Uplift Programme and Covid recovery planning. Regarding Operation Uplift, she confirmed that the recruitment of the 20,000 police officers is a flagship policy in the Home Office, it is the issue on which the department has had most contact with the PM, and it is a 'once in decade' opportunity. 3005 extra police officers had been recruited by April 30th 2020 and a communications campaign has been launched involving extensive TV advertising and a new website.
- An Online Assessment Centre has been created in rapid time to get new recruits through the pipeline which is now live in 8 force areas. A robust on-line evaluation process had been developed for the assessment centre and it is likely that parts of the online process will be kept and used in future. 450 further assessors have now begun their training. There is also now an option of a reduction in core training time for student officers to get them deployed more quickly.

Key points raised by PCCs:

- Comments were made about the importance of not diluting the quality standards of recruits to meet targets. TH agreed and reiterated that the Online Assessment Centre would be evaluated to ensure it was an appropriate assessment tool for new recruits.
- The severe economic impact of Covid may lead to social disorder and people defaulting on council tax payments causing funding issues for policing and the Home Office needed to be able to respond to this. TH replied that some short term tactical measures had already been put in place but bigger conversations across government were needed.
- Whilst PCCs were pleased to see that diversity is at the heart of Operation Uplift recruitment, there needed to be a central plan in place for retention too.
- KB thanked TH for her presentation.

Approved/Agreed actions were:

- The Home Office presentation on Operation Uplift will be circulated to PCCs and PCCs were asked to email TH if there were any questions or queries they had on the recruitment process.

Item 4: Keynote Address from Victoria Atkins, MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Safeguarding:

- KB welcomed Victoria Atkins, MP, and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Safeguarding to the meeting. The Minister emphasised her gratitude to PCCs for being invited to speak and for all the work they have been doing to adapt to changing circumstances and enforce lockdown measures, while still maintaining public confidence. She also noted the continuing safeguarding efforts by PCCs for the most vulnerable and the support given to victims of crime.
- The Minister informed PCCs that the Prime Minister had held a Summit on Hidden Crimes last week and thanked PCCs for their attendance. This Summit was particularly timely given that home was not always the safe space it should be. £9.8m had also been allocated to the NCA to enable work with the most dangerous offenders and a further £34m will provide effective support to Children's charities. The Minister thanked PCCs for their engagement on protecting vulnerable people in our society and in particular their collaboration in addressing and supporting cases of domestic abuse during the lockdown arising from the Covid crisis.

- The Minister reported that she has been working closely with service providers on the front line to increase provision to ensure these vital services can continue working. The Home Secretary has also launched a new public awareness campaign under the hashtag #youarenotalone and the Minister has launched new guidance to support victims of domestic abuse. The next stage of scrutiny of the Domestic Abuse Bill starts next week.
- The Minister informed PCCs that the experience of victims of rape and sexual violence as they go through the CJS also remains a key concern, and this is rightly the subject of public scrutiny too. She is determined to complete the system review that is currently being conducted, although she noted the timelines of this work have been impacted by Covid-19.
- The Minister reported that although there has been a decrease in reports of County Lines related violence due to Covid-19, multi-agency safeguarding efforts at the local level remain essential to enable vulnerable children and young people to break out of the cycle of crime. The Minister concluded by thanking PCCs for their hard work and continued efforts in safeguarding and protecting communities.
- KB thanked the Minister for her presentation.

Item 5: New police governance landscape, Home Office, Bethan Page-Jones, Deputy Director:

- KB welcomed Bethan Page-Jones (BPJ), Deputy Director at the Home Office to the meeting. BPJ updated PCCs on the new governance landscape for policing in relation to the National Policing Board, the Strategic Change and Investment Board (SCIB), and the Crime and Policing Performance Board (CPPB), and their functions. BPJ said that discussions around the decision making abilities of all of these Boards are still being considered in light of PCCs' statutory responsibilities.
- BPJ stated that the National Policing Board had been created to ensure the Home Office is able to grapple with the most important current issues, and to act as a lever for influencing other government departments. The SCIB and the CPPB were both in the process of being brought together and there had been a number of discussions with PCCs about both Boards, including at a recent PRTB meeting, but work was continuing on the detail. Both Boards were first due to meet towards the end of June to discuss ToRS, functions, and membership, although PCCs would be represented on both.
- BPJ further noted that the SCIB would need to look at all investments and funding and focus on benefits, as well as build on the Joint Portfolio Team to ensure this remained a 'jointly owned' structure. The CPPB was in development but would need to look at the extent that all forces were achieving key government objectives. In both cases, work is ongoing to look at what decisions the Boards can take and how this links to PCC responsibilities.

Key points raised by PCCs:

- PCCs raised some issues about the ToRS for some of these Boards. BPJ said these are in draft form and remain to be agreed and that these concerns were noted.
- PCCs asked if they could join these Board Meetings remotely as observers. BPJ would consider this and report back.
- PCCs were aware of a number of task forces that have been created under some of these Boards, where there seems to be little involvement of PCCs. BPJ would make sure these governance sub-structures are reviewed so they can link into PCCs.
- PCC Keith Hunter, the APCC Lead on the Performance Portfolio, reported there were a series of questions relating to performance governance that PCCs need answers on as we progress towards the first meeting of the Crime and Policing Performance Board (CPPB). These included needing to understand the relationship between the CPPB and the PCCs local statutory role, and its role in relation to local force performance; needing to see the latest iteration of the NPB Outcomes Framework to see whether PCC views have been taken on board, and wishing to inform the development of the performance dashboard currently being undertaken by the NPCC, which itself also raises questions about future data collection and whether collating it at national level will invite comparison.
- KH further pointed out that PCCs do not have the latest version of the outcomes framework but the previous version was not fully outcome based and it is not clear how this links to or measures National Policing Board asks. There is also some suggestion that the CPPB will look at specific force performance in achievement of NPB asks, but this could cross over with HMICFRS responsibilities and needs considering in light of PCC responsibilities in this area. BPJ noted that the Home Office is keen to understand how the investment in officer uplift is impacting crime, but this detail needs to be worked through.

Final points included that neither the APCC nor the NPCC have seen the most recent version of the outcomes framework, but in the meantime NPCC is working on a more detailed dashboard to sit under the framework. This poses questions about

what will be done with this data and whether it could be used to put forces on some kind of 'naughty step' without much input from PCCs, the NPCC or HMIC. NPCC are trying to get agreement to a wider set of measures but questions remain about how this links to PCC responsibilities. BPJ noted this was also being worked through.

- PCCs asked what connection is there with the Criminal Justice Board. BPJ noted the key link is through the National Policing Board but also through the Crime and Justice taskforce.
- KB thanked BPJ for her presentation and attendance.

Approved/Agreed actions were:

- The Home Office presentation on the new police governance landscape will be circulated to PCCs.
- The Home Office will consider if it would be possible to involve PCCs as observers in virtual Board meetings.
- The Home Office would review governance sub-structures around various task forces in relation to PCC involvement.

Item 6: APCC Portfolio updates and discussions:

- Time was specifically set aside during the last part of the General Meeting to discuss recent developments relating to the work of the APCC CJS Portfolio and Victims Portfolio in particular, which were discussed in some depth.
- The APCC CJS Lead David Lloyd felt there were 5 key issues that needed to be addressed urgently. These were:
 1. Data is not being properly shared across agencies and with LCJBs in particular.
 2. HMCTS must give more flexibility for local areas to innovate.
 3. The differences between local and national perspectives must be recognised.
 4. The use of technology is key.
 5. It is of concern that the police are now picking up the bill from the courts in relation to supporting videoremands.
- The APCC Deputy Lead Sue Mountstevens thanked DL for all his work in this area and stated that we now needed a step change in order to achieve more and we must get the centre to recognise there is a crisis of a backlog in our courts system. Discussions focused on the roles that both PCCs and Local Criminal Justice Boards could deliver locally in order to help tackle this crisis if greater flexibility were given regarding decision making, innovation and the potential ability to develop local solutions to local problems.
- PCC Victims Lead Julia Mulligan reported back on the busy and productive activity occurring in the Victims Portfolio during the lockdown, through work with the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice, the MHCLG, and the College of Policing. JM stated that she and SH had had a positive meeting with the MOJ the day before and that PCC issues / concerns with the MOJ funding guidance were now being addressed.
- JM further reported that she and KB had recently attended the Number 10 Hidden Harms Summit which had provided a very good opportunity to promote the impactful work that PCCs were doing to protect the most vulnerable people in our communities. Reference was also made to the 4 forces – North Yorkshire, Sussex, Devon and Cornwall, and the Met – who are currently piloting deep data dives into domestic abuse and sexual violence in their force areas data with the support of the Home Office, the APCC, the NPCC, and local partner agencies. It is intended that the first set of data results will come before the National Policing Board and will be the subject of an academic roundtable in due course. On a wider but extremely important point, concerns were also raised over the issue of victim referral into local services.

Key points raised by PCCs:

- PCCs emphasised that the impact of the backlog in the CJS is increasing and, without urgent action, is going to be massive and very difficult to reduce. This now needs to be seen as an emergency by government. Local solutions and engagement through PCCs are needed and the possibility of using other buildings for courts and evening courts needs to continue to be explored locally. The support of LCJBs are key too.

Approved/Agreed Actions were:

- The APCC led by David Lloyd and Sue Mountstevens would write to the Lord Chancellor expressing the concerns of PCCs regarding the current situation in the CJS and making a strong, robust case for greater local innovation and decision making.

Item 7: AOB and Close:

- KB thanked all external speakers, PCCs, Portfolio Leads and Deputy Leads, and APCC Staff for their contributions. KB asked if PCCs could please feedback any comments they might have on this first ever virtual General Meeting which can then be used to plan the AGM in July.