

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR LEICESTERSHIRE

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Report of	THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER
Subject	HIGHLIGHT REPORT: IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE BUDGET POSITION FUNDING AND DELIVERY OF OPERATIONAL POLICING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY
Date	THURSDAY 25 MARCH 2021 – 13:00 HRS
Author	SERGEANT MARK BRENNAN

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to highlight the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the budget position, funding and delivery of operational policing and community safety.

Recommendation

2. The Police and Crime Panel note the contents of this report.

Background

3. Since March 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic has brought new and additional demands to operational policing. It has required Leicestershire Police and partners to rapidly adapt and innovate to maintain community safety and engagement.
4. Despite this Leicestershire Police has not only maintained a good service to the people of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland but has improved the delivery of operational policing by implementing a new target operating model on March 11th, 2020. The early assessment of the impact of this new model is positive with measures showing improved public service outcomes.
5. The total cost of Covid-19 at the time of writing to Leicestershire Police is over £1.9 million of which all of this cost will be covered by government therefore protecting our budget position.

The Impact on Policing Demand

6. **25,076 Covid-19 related incidents** - This has contributed to a 13% increase in total priority response incidents between the year March 2020 - March 2021 compared to the same period the year before. This increase was particularly marked in April and May 2020 with priority incidents being between 33-36% higher than the same period in the previous year. However, priority incident demand has also risen during the November and the January 2021 lockdown by between 14-21% on previous years.

7. **Requirement to police over 300 different COVID-19 related regulations which in turn have been amended a total of 16 times since enactment** – This has required police officers and staff to respond quickly to rule changes some of which have been announced prior to any legal framework being attached. Additional complexity has come from the requirement to police separate regulations in different areas of the force such as when the city of Leicester was placed into local restrictions in June 2020.
8. **Police recorded crime initially dropping significantly but more recently returning to normal levels** – In the period April-June 2020 police recorded crime in Leicestershire was 13% down on the same period in the previous year. This included a 45% decrease in residential burglary. However, in the period July-September 2020 recorded crime was only 2% down on the same period.
9. **Domestic abuse crime and incidents increased by 10.8%** – For the year March 2020 to February 2021 total domestic abuse crimes and incidents were 10.8% higher than the same period in the previous year.

The Policing Response

10. **Identifying a command structure, convening a gold group and creating a Covid-19 Delivery Cell** - A Gold Commander Temporary Assistant Chief Constable Kerry Smith and Silver Commander Superintendent Alistair Roe were identified to lead delivery supported by a COVID operational delivery cell who inform the policing response as well as the internal response to maintain health and safety.
11. A Gold group was convened and has met weekly since March 2020 to co-ordinate the policing response locally and to incorporate learning and direction from the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC). The office of the Police and Crime Commissioner has been represented at this meeting to allow the Police and Crime Commissioner to hold the Chief Constable to account for delivery, and to represent local people.
12. **Working as a multi-agency partnership to manage the local response** - Leicestershire Police has been part of the local Strategic co-ordinating group (SCG) taking multi-agency responsibility for the management of the local response.
13. Other partnerships work has included a memorandum of understanding for the enforcement of breaches involving businesses where local authorities initially take the lead in engaging, explaining and encouraging compliance with referrals made to the police if breaches continue.
14. A partnership approach has been taken to safeguarding the highest risk domestic abuse victims where victims received targeted engagement from police or partners where lockdowns present risks of under-reporting.
15. **Utilising technology to maintain and improve service delivery** – A rapid acceleration in the use of technology took place to enable officers and staff to work effectively from home where required. This included moving partner and community meetings online, expanding use of our messaging service Neighbourhood link and social media to maintain engagement with our communities as well as increasing the scope for victim statements to be taken remotely.
16. **Targeted enforcement to address demand whilst maintaining positive community relations** – The requirement to police a public health crisis presented new challenges for policing between ensuring that new laws were adhered to while at

the same time continuing to police by consent and maintain community confidence and support.

17. The approach taken has incorporated College of Policing guidance taking a '4 Es approach' where officers and staff engage, explain, encourage and only in the last resort enforce in response to clear breaches. National research by Crest Advisory ([Policing the COVID lockdown - what the public thinks nine months on | Crest Advisory](#)) shows that this approach has maintained public support nationally with over 60% of the public surveyed supporting the police's approach on the whole.
18. Police enforcement is targeted in areas of high reports or community concern. Police officers are utilised following bespoke patrol plans developed at neighbourhood policing area level. As of 1st March 2021 2,582 fixed penalty notices have been given with 37.5% paid within 28 days (N.B. A large proportion of currently unpaid FPNs are awaiting process in the courts). This approach is supported by a co-ordinated media campaign to encourage understanding and compliance of regulations.
19. **Supporting officer and staff health, safety and welfare** - Through the provision of PPE, Covid secure working practices, the use of anti-body testing (of which Leicestershire Police were the first force to participate) and lateral flow testing, as well as a dedicated HR and wellbeing team each member of the organisation has been able to work in a safe manner throughout. Furthermore, each member of the organisation will receive a call from a wellbeing champion to discuss their personal well-being and how the organisation can help it to be maintained or improved.
20. **Planning for a future roadmap out of lockdown where demands for policing will likely increase** - Most notably this includes the return of policing of the night time economy, the European Football Championships, the return of capacity football crowds at Leicester City Football Club, the return of over 50,000 students to the area for the 2021-22 academic year, significant local events and the UN Climate Conference in Glasgow during November 2021.

Impact on Policing Delivery and Community Safety

21. The response to Covid-19 as well as the implementation of the new target operating model has led to a number of improved public outcomes between this year to the year previous including:
 - 30,000 online reports.
 - 101 calls being answered 25 seconds faster between 2019 and 2020.
 - Average response times for emergency incidents reducing by almost 3 minutes and priority incidents by almost 45 minutes.
 - Positive crime outcomes improving by 2.2%.
 - Overall victim satisfaction improving by 6.9%.
 - 75% of respondents to our January 2021 Neighbourhood Link survey reporting that we did a good or excellent job which was an improvement of 3% since May 2020.

Implications

Financial:	None
Legal:	None
Equality Impact Assessment:	None
Risks and Impact:	None
Link to Police and Crime Plan:	None
Communications:	None

List of Appendices

Not applicable.

Persons to Contact

Sergeant Mark Brennan

Tel: 0116 248 2027

Email: mark.brennan@leics.police.uk

Chief Constable Simon Cole, QPM

Tel: 0116 248 2013

Email: Simon.Cole@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk