



POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

4 JUNE 2018

REPORT OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

POLICE OPERATIONS

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide an overview of Northumbria Police operations in response to a request for further information from the Police and Crime Panel on 5 March 2019.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Northumbria Police undertakes many operations to deliver outcomes in support of the Police and Crime Plan and Force priorities. Successful delivery of operations often relies on agencies and communities working together, combining resources and information, and using a problem solving approach to provide improved outcomes for victims/communities, value for money and reduced demand.
- 2.2 Further details regarding some forcewide and local operations are provided below, including some of those highlighted within the annual Police and Crime Plan Performance report.

Domestic and Sexual Abuse

- 2.3 **Operation Encompass** was implemented by Northumbria Police in 2014 and has been core business across the Force area since 2016. It is a police and education-led process, which supports children and young people exposed to Domestic Abuse (DA). The police element of the operation is run through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASHs), which are in place across the six local authority areas. As a result, on average, 1,000 children are supported by their school each month, after experiencing DA. Feedback from schools has been very positive.
- 2.4 In support of this, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) has secured funding from the Home Office in relation to a new project, **Operation Encompass: The Next Steps**, as a collaboration across the Northumbria area. The project builds on the work of Operation Encompass and aims to educate children and school staff about DA and healthy relationships to empower young people to speak out, seek support and break the cycle of DA. This is also a form of primary prevention to change mind sets and understanding of healthy and unhealthy relationships, allowing young people to build resilience and have confidence to take action.

- 2.5 A programme of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) session guides have been developed, covering Key Stages 1-4 (ages 4-16 years), which are delivered as part of a spiral curriculum, which is continued and repeated across each key stage. As part of the project, 12 School Safeguarding Liaison Officers (SSLOs) have been introduced, with responsibility for a cluster of schools; covering almost 600 across the Force area. The SSLOs will work alongside schools to encourage the adoption of the PSHE sessions as part of their school curriculum. A briefing for school staff raises awareness and understanding of DA and its impact on young people and vulnerable adults.
- 2.6 The SSLOs will also hold drop in sessions at each school to provide advice and support to both pupils and school staff.
- 2.7 The project is funded until the end of March 2020, and it is hoped that schools embed the PSHE sessions into their curriculum to enable this work to be sustained after the project funding ends.

Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour

- 2.8 **Operation Asteroid** was initiated in response to a number of incidents relating to a large group of youths frequenting South Shields town centre and using the metro system to facilitate crime, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and violence related offences against lone individuals. Partnership activity was embedded quickly; with a delivery team established involving British Transport Police (BTP), local authority representatives, youth offending teams, Police Harm Reduction teams, Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) and Safeguarding Department. Over 30 young people from across the area command were identified as being involved, all from different backgrounds, schools, and with different offending histories.
- 2.9 Police and BTP investigations were shared, with patrols put in place and information shared around activity. Local engagement was utilised to prevent further vulnerable people being drawn into the group by identifying 'unhealthy relationships' and who the ring leaders were.
- 2.10 The operation had a significant resourcing impact on NPT deployments over a prolonged period of time. However, this was necessary due to the escalation in offending and the impact the behaviour was having on the wider community and confidence in the police. In excess of 35 arrests were made, of which 90% were dealt with positively, and over 50 dispersal orders were used which proved very successful. The investment in time and resources also saved time by seeking a longer term solution to the issue.
- 2.11 **The Mutual Gains/Perceptions Programme** is operating in Central Area Command to identify new and innovative ways of engaging with hard to reach communities. This is being undertaken in collaboration with OpenLab at Newcastle University, and aims to utilise different approaches to build social capital (trust, norms and networks) and resilience within some of the most diverse and complex communities in society.

- 2.12 The University has developed and delivered training for NPTs and partners regarding the delivery of community based events under Operation WAYS (We Asked You Said). Training was provided without cost to participants.
- 2.13 Match funding has been provided by the University and local authority to enable selected communities to seek funding for community based projects. This partnership approach builds cohesion amongst partners and the community, and reduces low level demand, empowering communities to tackle low level issues.
- 2.14 Four World Café events have been held in Gateshead with communities where perceptions of joint working between Police and the local authority are identified as being low. Activity plans have been prepared and overseen by existing or newly formed resident committees. This approach aims to ensure communities feel more empowered taking accountability for non-policing issues in their area.
- 2.15 Forcewide roll out of the scheme is intended to enable every NPT to utilise the process, supported by a cohort of experienced advisers with independent evaluation through the University. The World Café principles have recently been adopted on the Meadow Well Estate in North Tyneside in response to a rise in ASB.

Cutting Crime

- 2.16 **Operation Sentinel** was launched in January 2019 and is the response of Northumbria, Cleveland and Durham police forces to Serious and Organised Crime. The operation focusses on targeting offenders who look to profit from the misery of their victims, as well as working towards preventing such activity from taking place.
- 2.17 As part of the process, Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) are assessed to determine those who pose the greatest threat, harm and risk. Intelligence is also assessed to identify vulnerability and ensure an appropriate response is given to support victims. This enables effective tasking and deployment, and ensures resources are placed where they are needed most.
- 2.18 The three Forces also work alongside the North East Regional Specialist Operations Unit (NERSOU) and other agencies including local authority, environmental health, Probation Service, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the National Crime Agency (NCA) to utilise their skills and expertise. This enables the sharing of intelligence and coordination of activity to disrupt and dismantle OCGs, and reduces demand on individual Forces and agencies.
- 2.19 **Operation Eton** was implemented following a dispute between two rival OCGs in Newcastle, which resulted in the discharge of firearms on three occasions.
- 2.20 A multi-disciplined approach was taken with reactive and proactive enquiries initiated by Crime Department, Central Area Command and specialist resources. This resulted in the recovery of three illegally held firearms which were evidentially linked to the discharges and to the OCGs. 29 arrests were made which severely disrupted the activities of the rival OCGs.

- 2.21 In two separate trials, 10 defendants were found guilty of conspiracy relating to the criminal use of firearms. Four offenders received sentences totalling 28 years; six more defendants were convicted in March 2019 and await sentencing.
- 2.22 **Operation Vienna** is a project in Gateshead where police and local authority staff, across a number of disciplines, are embedded in one team covering part of the Bensham and Shipcote areas. The make-up of the team enables different skill sets, tools and powers to be used to respond to criminality, ASB and other issues which impact on both police and local authority resources.
- 2.23 Activity undertaken includes joint property visits, sharing of intelligence on residents and landlords, increased presence and patrols in the area, and the identification of criminality, trends and problem properties. In addition, the team are targeting a much wider aspect of community safety including organised crime, domestic violence, management of sex offenders, drug supply and ASB.
- 2.24 The multi-agency problem solving approach seeks to identify issues at an early stage and ensures the most appropriate agency responds to the issue rather than a multitude of partners attempting to tackle the issue in silos. It enables partners to tackle a wide range of issues, which create significant demand for all agencies in the area.
- 2.25 The investment by all partners will see short, medium and long term benefits in one of the highest areas of deprivation and demand in the borough.
- 2.26 **Operation Checkpoint** is a quarterly regional rural crime operation that targets travelling criminals who are committing rural and wildlife crime. This runs in conjunction with all Northern forces including Lancashire, Humberside, Cumbria, North Yorkshire, Cleveland and Durham.
- 2.27 Key to the operation is the fact that it involves community volunteers who provide static observations at key locations. The Operation runs from 6pm till 3am and suspicious vehicles or targets are stopped by officers, dedicated to the operation, following any sightings. Results are collated by the lead force and this responsibility rotates quarterly.
- 2.28 Within Northumbria's area, the number of volunteers involved in Operation Checkpoint has grown significantly over the past two years to now over 40. This has been a big success and very much the result of hard work by the forces designing out crime officer and rural neighbourhood teams.
- 2.29 The subsequent links that this has created within the community has not only helped improve levels of confidence and send a clear message to criminals but also, stimulate significant support financially for the growth of the Automatic Number Plate recognition (ANPR) infrastructure.
- 2.30 **Operation Orion** was established following a number of stranger rapes in Sunderland, where offenders were non-white and female victims were white. The investigations attracted significant media interest which led to community tensions.

- 2.31 Partnership activity was carried out with Sunderland City Council and the Home Office, which resulted in a number of positive outcomes. Engagement was carried out with asylum seekers in the community, which led to a refresh of an information leaflet which is given to asylum seekers when moving into the area. This focused on useful information and addressed key messages around consent. The document is being progressed nationally by the Home Office as best practice.
- 2.32 The operation spanned a period of 12 months and focussed on investigations, community cohesion issues and numerous marches/ protests. This placed significant demand on Southern Area Command, and required resources from Safeguarding, NPT, response and the Senior Management Team (SMT) with some additional deployments of non-area command resource, to address public order/ protest issues.
- 2.33 **Operation Murus** was a multi-agency response to tackle a significant increase in drug dealing and homelessness in Byker. A problem solving approach was utilised with partners including the local authority, Byker Community Trust, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS), and Change Grow Live to share intelligence, identify and engage with drug users. This revealed the drugs being supplied were of a high grade which posed an increased risk to users and was the cause of increased demand on emergency services.
- 2.34 Policing action centred on the drug suppliers and led to the execution of five search warrants for those who were supplying the homeless drug users, and led to the seizure of a significant amount of Heroin. Four drug dealers received custodial sentences and four closure orders were secured. The operation also led to the safeguarding of two children, who are now in the care of social services.
- 2.35 **Operation Arrow** was launched following complaints relating to street begging and drug abuse in Newcastle City Centre. Each incident represents demand on police, as officers are deployed in almost all instances.
- 2.36 As part of the operation, three Police officers worked alongside a member of local authority staff to manage offenders through pre-defined pathways of support, intervention and ultimately enforcement. This pathway approach was designed by police in consultation with harm reduction services and was signed off at a strategic level by all key stakeholders.
- 2.37 As a result of the partnership approach, there was a reduction in begging and vagrancy related incidents and calls for service.
- 2.38 Alongside Operation Arrow, is **Operation Spear** which is the response to issues of ASB and drug use in Newcastle City Centre. Operation Spear uses surveillance powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 to place officers in strategic CCTV observation points with direct lines of communication to the business community and officers on the ground. When offences are identified, officers are directed to take visible and robust action. This provides a visible response to the issues raised, and maintains community confidence in the police.

- 2.39 Officers recovered controlled substances on, in excess of, 60 occasions. Along with safeguarding adults, monitoring identified access to services in the city has not been affected by enforcement activity. As a result, there has been a reduction in drug related incidents in public, and fewer calls for service.
- 2.40 The **12 Streets** initiative was the neighbourhood policing response to improve quality of life issues and living conditions in Blyth, and provided the opportunity for the community to determine priorities for their area. The initiative was originally carried out in 2015 in the Cowpen Quay area of Blyth, which was identified as one of the most deprived and run down areas of Northumberland, particularly over an area of 12 streets. The initiative has been used as a springboard for further activity and takes the simple idea of a build-up of rubbish in a back yard and makes it every partners' business, enabling the identification of issues such as landlord absenteeism, drugs supply or concerns for vulnerabilities of local residents.
- 2.41 An additional 12 Streets initiative was carried out, and ran for a four week period in the same area of Blyth. 276 properties were visited, and residents surveyed to identify priority areas. Issues identified included fly tipping, litter, dog fouling, loud music, parking, speeding, broken lampposts, problem neighbours, absent landlords and drug activity.
- 2.42 Activity was undertaken with partner agencies including the local authority, DWP, National Health Service (NHS), Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), local supermarkets and youth clubs, to tackle the identified problems. Activity ranged from enforcement action against absentee landlords to the fixing and replacement of 76 street lights on the estate.
- 2.43 The initiative sought to re-educate and empower residents with the knowledge and ability to fix the issues they encountered where they live. 17 local residents subsequently volunteered to become involved in the Street Wardens scheme, and were educated on which partner agency to turn to should they need them.
- 2.44 This holistic model was embraced by the local community, and has been adopted as best practice in the College of Policing's review of neighbourhood policing. By working together with shared objectives, the community and local partners can agree and prioritise measures to reduce vulnerabilities at a local level.
- 2.45 In Early March the national landscape of **Knife Crime and Serious Violence** received further scrutiny in the media which resulted in a series of roundtable events at the Home Office and the Government subsequently providing a £100m fund for allocation to police forces.
- 2.46 Northumbria Police has been identified in NHS data as having the 7th highest number of Knife related admissions to A&E; 3% of the national total. Northumbria Police data also identifies a 3% rise in knife crime related offending from 2017 to 2018.

- 2.47 Northumbria Police has since been allocated £2.32m in funding for surge activity which is being driven and governed locally through the Knife Crime and Serious Violence Working Group.
- 2.48 The single year funding provision will be utilised by the force, allocating resources and equipment to tackling knife crime and serious violence through a mixture of preventative and reactive methods.
- 2.49 In addition to the national framework provided by the Home Office, the Force has a local Knife Crime and Serious Violence Strategy, which focuses on four key areas; early intervention and prevention; tackling misuse of drugs, county lines and other forms of criminal exploitation; supporting local communities and partnerships; and effective law enforcement and criminal justice response. Northumbria Police is committed to dealing with Knife Crime and Serious Violence with a holistic approach and effective interventions in each of the key areas.

Community Confidence

- 2.50 Northumbria Police continues to focus on vulnerable road users and targets those who cause a danger to others, through **Operation Dragoon**. The operation also concentrates on the criminal use of the road network and how best to deprive those criminals of access to vehicles and unlawful use of the roads.
- 2.51 Engagement with road users is a key priority, with successful campaigns carried out to highlight potential vulnerabilities and key messages. In support of this, a number of demonstrations in conjunction with Fire and Rescue Services and the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS), have been delivered to youth groups, Army Cadets, Royal Air Force and Army personnel and Cub Scouts. These impactful, thought provoking demonstrations include mock casualty extractions from vehicles and explanation and consequences of collisions.
- 2.52 Operation Dragoon also leads on the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and TISPOL European Traffic Police Network Road Safety campaigns, which are intelligence led and enable known offenders and community concerns to be targeted. This smarter working enables resources to be directed to supplement random checks.
- 2.53 Close working is undertaken with specialist departments across the Force to carry out targeted operations. For example, the team works with NERSOU and Operation Sentinel to assist in the targeting of OCGs; and with the Force Management of Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders (MOSOVO) team to target high priority and sexual and violent offenders.
- 2.54 A 'Road Sense Common Sense' presentation was developed for year 11 and sixth form students, to educate new drivers around road traffic collisions. This has been delivered to over 1,000 16-18 year olds. The presentation included short films to convey real case studies, and featured the relatives of those killed or seriously injured on the roads. It has received both international and national road safety awards in 2017, with other Forces across the country looking to create their own Operation Dragoon Road Safety Teams.