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CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT TO NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

6 JUNE 2019

1. INTRODUCTION

I welcome the Policing Board's appointment of my successor, Simon Byrne QPM as the new Chief Constable for the PSNI.

It is a huge honour to lead the officers and staff of our great organisation and I have personally conveyed my congratulations to Simon and wished him every success in his new role.

2. OPERATIONAL UPDATE

2.1 Multi-Agency District Support Hubs

The concept of a multi-agency District Support Hub is to provide early intervention and support for individuals and families in crisis. The role of the Support Hub is to facilitate, monitor and evaluate effective information sharing to enable appropriate actions to effectively manage the risks posed by offenders, ultimately increasing public safety.

The focus of the Support Hub is firmly on reducing the vulnerability for individuals. By identifying needs and risks at the earliest opportunity, this facilitates early intervention to reduce vulnerability and improve a person's wellbeing. Early intervention also enables us to reduce demand by tackling the root causes of problems.

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Currently there are five fully operational Hubs:-

- Derry City and Strabane (August 2016)
- Antrim and Newtownabbey (April 2017)
- Mid and East Antrim (September 2017)
- Causeway Coast and Glens (February 2018)
- Fermanagh & Omagh (launched January 2019)

Early indications of the success of this initiative have shown a demand in calls for service, for example in Antrim and Newtownabbey District has seen a reduction of 52%.

Mid Ulster Support Hub and Newry Mourne and Down's partners were trained in May 2019 and their first operational meeting is imminent. Ards and North Down are having ongoing discussions with partners about agreeing protocols. The remaining Districts are speaking to partners to generate agreement to create District Support Hubs.

There is no lead agency for each Support Hub and therefore further development is a collaborative process between the PSNI, Health Service, Education Authority, Local Councils, Northern Ireland Ambulance Service, Youth Justice Agency, Northern Ireland Probation Board and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

We are progressing arrangements with partner agencies to explore the further roll out of Support Hubs. A meeting took place with Department of Health in April, who undertook to assist in resourcing Support Hubs from a health perspective. All Health Trust Chief Executives were briefed in March and were impressed by the positive impact on vulnerable people and the reduction in repeat demand on services.

The involvement of Police and Community Safety Partnerships varies across districts and I would welcome the Board's support in encouraging them to become proactively involved across them all.

2.2 ATMs

Between 27 October 2018 and 30 April 2019, there were 16 ATM 'rip out' attacks in Northern Ireland, two of which were unsuccessful. A second modus operandi was used in attacks in the Greater Belfast area, where the culprits forced the ATM bunker door open and cut through the ATM safe using an angle grinder to access the money contained within. Between 8 November 2018 and 17 May 2019 there have been nine separate attacks of this kind, three of which have resulted in cash being stolen. There have also been five attacks in Southern Ireland and we are working closely with An Garda Síochána on cross border cooperation on these crimes.

Since December 2018, police have conducted 50 searches and arrested 19 people in relation to ATM attacks. Of the 19 persons arrested, 10 have been charged, 9 of which were remanded in custody. We have also seized a total of £56,000 in cash.

As well as enforcement activity, we have also been working closely with Financial Institutions and ATM providers to find long term crime prevention solutions to this problem. There is also ongoing work to ensure that owners of heavy plant machinery take responsibility for securing and immobilising their vehicles when unattended.

2.3 Murder of James Donegan

4 December 2018 - In the past two months, officers have conducted a number of arrests in Northern Ireland and other parts of the UK, relating to the murder of Jim Donegan. No admissions were made and no one has been charged. The arrests follow many months of intense investigative work, as officers seek to piece together the evidence relating to Mr Donegan's murder. The investigation continues.

2.4 Murder of Ian Ogle

31 January 2019 - During the investigation into the murder of Ian Ogle, 16 people have been arrested. A total of three persons have now been charged with murder. Another man has been released pending a report being submitted to the Public Prosecution Service. Multiple defendants are also the subject of prosecutorial consideration for other offences which are linked to the murder and other ancillary offences. A significant amount of work will be required to prepare the file of evidence.

2.5 Greenvale Hotel Incident

17 March 2019 - Police continue to investigate the tragic events at Greenvale Hotel. Two people have been arrested and remain on bail and an additional six people have been interviewed under caution. To date 1,074 witnesses have been identified of which 758 are under the age of 18. We continue to keep Lauren, Conor and Morgan's families updated on our progress. This is a complex investigation which will take time to complete. There has also been early engagement with the Public Prosecution Service regarding this investigation.

2.6 Murder of Lisa Dorrian

5 April 2019 - Specialist search officers conducted searches of underground voids and collapsed buildings on the site of a former airfield in Ballyhalbert, in the continuing search for the body of Lisa Dorrian. No items of note were found and the investigation continues. During that operation, a local man and woman were arrested and interviewed. No admissions were made and both have been released without charge.

2.7 Murder of Lyra McKee

18 April 2019 - The investigation into the murder of Lyra McKee is ongoing and to date 12 searches have been conducted. Seven persons have been arrested in connection with the murder and other public order offences. Two people have been charged with rioting, petrol bomb offences hijacking a vehicle and arson which is linked to the ongoing disorder at the time of Lyra McKee's murder. All others have been released without charge at this stage. Enquiries are ongoing to recover and examine CCTV and other footage from the area. In conjunction with Royal Mail, a letter has been sent to 5,500 households in the area appealing for information in relation to the murder. The number of submissions made via Major Incident Police Portal (MIPP) has reached 150. These are being followed up by the investigation team. The investigation is progressing well and all activity is being actively supported by local policing. The relationship between Police and Lyra's family remains very positive and they are regularly updated on the progress of the investigation.

2.8 Murder of Niall Magee

27 April 2019 - Niall Magee was stabbed during an altercation at a house in Crumlin and died in hospital of his injuries the following day. A male who was also present in the house and also sustained injuries, was charged with his murder. A number of other individuals in the house were treated for a range of injuries. Thankfully, none of the injuries were life-threatening and all have now been released from hospital. The investigation continues.

3. ORGANISATIONAL UPDATE

3.1 Annual Crime Statistics

On 17 May 2019, we published our annual crime statistics for 2018/19. During the last financial year, there were 100,995 recorded offences in Northern Ireland, equating to an increase of 2.9% or 2,875 crimes, compared to 2017/18. When considering crime trends over the past five years, the number of crimes recorded in 2018/19 remains below the average for the five previous years. For example in 2015/16 the number of recorded crimes was 104,925, this is 3,930 more than last year.

In the national context, the crime rate of 54 crimes per 1,000 population in PSNI is lower than all of its most similar forces (Devon & Cornwall, GMP, Merseyside, Northumbria, Nottinghamshire, West Midlands and West Yorkshire). Furthermore, for the period January to December 2018 each of the police forces (except GMP) recorded increases greater than PSNI. Northern Ireland therefore continues to be one of the safest places to live.

The increase in crime can be explained, in part, by changes in Home Office Counting Rules for Harassment and a change in recording practice for Making off without Payment offences. If these offences were excluded, then we have recorded a decrease of 0.4% (400 crimes).

The levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in Northern Ireland are at their lowest since the start of the time series in 2006/07. In the last financial year there were 56,503 incidents of ASB which is a 7.7% decrease on the previous 12 months. In 2006/07 100,366

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incidents of ASB were recorded compared to the 56,503 in 2018/19, a reduction of 43,863 incidents which equates to a 44% decrease. Pleasingly, nine out of the eleven Districts recorded a decrease in 2018/19 compared to the previous 12 months.

Burglary has fallen by 10.2% in 2018/19 compared to 2017/18. This is the ninth consecutive year that burglary has decreased. When Making off without Payment offences are excluded, Theft has also decreased, again this is consistent with the longer term trend. Criminal damage is also decreasing with a further reduction of 618 crimes (-3%) recorded this year. These figures demonstrate that traditional, visible crime is decreasing. Historically these have accounted for the majority of crime reported.

While the overall number of crimes is forecasted to continue to decline, more harmful crime types are increasing and, in general, require a more complex investigation involving specialist skills. This demonstrates the changing demands facing the Police Service. These crimes represent hidden demand as they are still under-reported.

PSNI is actively working to increase reporting in relation to these crime types, specifically sexual offences, domestic abuse, hate crime and cyber enabled crime. In this context, an increase in crime reporting can indicate greater confidence in policing. We believe this is the case around domestic abuse - where in 2018/19, we saw an increase of 11.4% in this type of crime on the previous 12 months. The number of recorded incidents of domestic abuse was 31,682 - an increase on the previous 12 months and the highest figure recorded since 2004/05.

The crime statistics also demonstrate the proactive activity of policing. For example, this year there was a 10.3% increase in drug offences to 7,106 - the majority of which relates to drug possession offences. We are continuing to remove more drugs from our streets, reducing the harm to our communities and bringing those responsible before the courts.

Whilst overall crime, across Northern Ireland, has increased by just under 3%, given the operational challenges, increasing complexity of crime, financial pressures and a £150m budget reduction over the past five years, this is still an encouraging outcome.

3.2 Policing With Community (PWC) Manual Launch

On Monday 20 May 2019, the Chair of the Policing Board and I launched our PwC manual. This document will act as a tool kit for how we deliver Policing with the Community to the public of Northern Ireland. The content of the manual will guide officers and staff in how to deliver community empowerment, engagement and effective problem solving. There is also guidance on 'what works' by using an evidence based approach to service delivery and solving problems in policing.

Policing with the Community is not just about Neighbourhood Policing, it is equally important for all police officer and police staff roles. It is about the enabling functions as much as public facing roles and even extends to the culture within our organisation and how we treat each other. This is about the ethos of who we are as an organisation.

3.3 Finance Update

The provisional financial out-turn for 2018-19 recorded an underspend of £0.2m (or 0.03% of budget) for Resource and an underspend of £0.2m (or 0.4% of budget) in Capital. This is an excellent outcome, consistent with recent years, demonstrating strong fiscal management for the funds made available to policing. However, the reality is that this breakeven position was only possible due to significant additional in-year funding from the Department of Justice.

These funding pressures continue into the current year, despite an improved funding settlement, providing a budget uplift of £11m (or 1.6%). While this increase is welcome and enables the PSNI to largely maintain existing service levels, the pressures in relation to Legacy Litigation and Injury on Duty Awards together with pay and price inflation continue to place significant strain on the budget.

In light of this, PSNI will continue to lobby Government for in-year funding to help alleviate the pressures and has included a formal bid for additional funding as part of June Monitoring. The June Monitoring return also included a bid to the Transformational Fund for some IT projects. However, this funding is in-year only and a short term fix.

A multi-year settlement is required to enable PSNI to transform the Service as outlined in our draft Corporate Plan to meet the challenges and changing demands of policing and to be more innovative, collaborative and sustainable into the future.

Work has already commenced on the Budget Setting process for future years. The Board's Resources Committee has received a copy of our strategic approach and budget planning assumptions for 2020-21 and beyond. Over the coming months we will continue to engage and update Board Members on progress.

3.4 Human Resource Update

The new Attendance Management Triggers have been in place for three months and early indications are reflecting a positive change. For the first four months of 2019 there has been a month on month reduction in the number of officers and staff availing of sick absence. There have been 556 fewer sickness occurrences in this time, which equates to a 13% reduction.

These new triggers offer increased automation which enhances the process by which line managers upload information onto a central system, thus enabling more effective monitoring. There is also a supportive decision making framework to ensure that line managers are reaching fair but consistent decisions. This enables decisions to be more closely monitored and reviewed, with early action being taken to address areas of concern. Steps have also been taken to introduce attendance management eligibility criteria into selection and promotion competitions.

A review of duty adjustment is entering the final stages with a number of proposed solutions being assessed; we will update the Board on the findings and proposals in due course.

A ground-breaking National Police Wellbeing Service aimed at improving mental and physical health support for officers and staff launched in the first week of May 2019. The service is called Oscar Kilo and includes mental health outreach support for police officers and staff as well as training and toolkits to improve the provision in individual

forces.

The aim of the project is to ensure that by 2025, every member of the Police Service feels confident that their welfare and wellbeing is supported by their Force; that a culture of supporting officers and staff is embedded in every Force; and that individuals have access to support when they need it.

This service has been developed using a £7.5 million investment from the Home Office's Police Transformation Fund, and has been overseen by the College of Policing working closely with the National Policing Lead for Wellbeing Chief Constable Andy Rhodes (Lancashire).

The new Long Service and Good Conduct Ceremony was held at Lisburn Civic Centre during April 2019, where the Vice Chair was the keynote speaker. Various dignitaries and representatives from the local community were invited to the proceedings. Early feedback has been positive on the new style of the event. Human Resources are currently exploring the possibility of holding subsequent ceremonies at other Civic Centres such as Craigavon later in the year. The next Ceremony is scheduled to take place at Parliament Buildings on 10 June 2019.

3.5 Report into the Law and Procedures in Serious Sexual Offences in Northern Ireland (Gillen Review)

We welcome the findings and recommendations contained in the report by Sir John Gillen following his review of the law and procedures in serious sexual offence cases.

As a Police Service we are committed to putting victims' needs at the heart of what we do and anything that can be done to improve their experience within the Criminal Justice system is a positive development. We recognise how difficult it can be for anyone to come forward to Police, especially those who are a victim of sexual violence or abuse.

We have been working closely with our partners and are already progressing a number of the recommendations, for example work on the Disclosure Improvement Plan for Northern Ireland and the PSNI Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) Strategic Working Group.

We remain committed to fully implementing all of the recommendations in order to remove avoidable delay in the Criminal Justice System and to use innovation, new technology and improved processes to ensure that victims' needs are met at a time of severe distress.

We welcome the opportunity to have been part of this inspection and part of the review team led by Sir John Gillen. The Head of Public Protection Branch, Detective Chief Superintendent Paula Hilman, will be representing the PSNI on the Department of Justice's Sexual Violence Reduction Group which has been established to ensure a coordinated approach to dealing with sexual violence with a key task of overseeing the implementation of the review.

3.6 New Command & Control System

Our new command and control system, 'Command Works', went live on 21 May 2019 across PSNI's Contact Management Centres (CMCs) in Castlereagh, Gough and Maydown. It replaced a system which had been in place for 23 years and was at end of life. Control Works is based on a Capita product - it has been used in several Police Services in Great Britain including Derbyshire Constabulary, South Wales Police and British Transport Police. PSNI has deployed the latest version of the system.

A huge amount of work has gone in to preparing for the new system, especially from ICS and our CMCs, ensuring that everybody received appropriate training and that the new system worked in collaboration with all other key pieces of technology that we use. This was a complex change process, particularly as it was against the background of maintaining business as usual and ensuring the public continued to receive an effective contact management service.

The new technology will streamline services in CMCs who deal with about 900,000 calls per year. For front line officers, Control Works will integrate with their Samsung phones, allowing them to upgrade incidents on their phones and receive priority messages without the need to return to police stations to access desk top computers.

It is a modern, intuitive and easy-to-use product which brings us up-to-date with the latest technology so that we can continue to increase our operational effectiveness, delivering first class services that support communities and help keep them safe.

The introduction of the new system represents an initial investment of £4.1m to our IT infrastructure and a total, capital and revenue, investment of £10.4m over the next 17 years.

3.7 Accreditation of Fingerprints Branch

The PSNI Scientific Support Branch has held the general requirement for competence of testing and calibration laboratories (ISO 17025) accreditation for Fingerprint Enhancement since 2015. Following a change in legislation, the PSNI Fingerprint Bureau needed to achieve accreditation for fingerprint comparison work before the end of March 2019. We were awarded accreditation for Fingerprint Comparison in February 2019. This followed significant work by the Bureau and quality team staff to meet the standard and demonstrate competence. We are only the seventh organisation in the UK to achieve accreditation to this standard for Fingerprint Comparison.

3.8 The Working Together Project

The CJINI Inspection on the Quality and Timeliness of Police files in 2015 found significant weaknesses in terms of both file quality and timeliness. This work is being progressed by a joint PPS/PSNI project team reporting to the Working Together project Board, jointly chaired by ACC Innovation & Standards and Senior Assistant Director in the Public Prosecution Service (PPS).

To date we have introduced new evidential standards for common summary offences; Police Decision Makers who provide disposal advice, review case file documents and assess anticipated plea; jointly agreed file building based upon anticipated pleas; new processes for 'no prosecution' cases; created a joint performance framework; early submission of 28 day charge files (target of 12 days which is a reduction of 33%); early service of documents on defence solicitors to encourage more effective first court appearances and a reduction in the number of adjournments.

Some of the key results include a 50% reduction in files being returned from the PPS for further information; 15% increase in files submitted within target; 31% increase in charge files submitted within target and a 35% reduction in the number of adjournments.

4. LEGACY & LEGAL UPDATE

Since my last update to the Board on 4 April 2019, Legacy Investigation Branch (LIB) has completed the review of three deaths and three reports have been delivered to families. This brings the total number of reports delivered to families to five. It is anticipated that a further four reports will be released in the near future.

LIB currently has a caseload of 1,132 incidents resulting in 1,423 deaths. Of this number 10 cases are currently under review and 14 cases are currently under investigation.

LIB are engaged with the Public Prosecution Service in respect of preparations for the trial of Soldier 'F' arising from the investigation into the events of Bloody Sunday. Preparations for trials in respect of the deaths of Aiden McAnespie, John Devine and John O'Hara are also ongoing. A trial of facts in respect of the murder of Jean McConville is due to commence in the coming months.

I recently met with the families of those who died in the Enniskillen Bomb with ACC Legacy and Legal Department and the Head of LIB. We continue to engage with victims and their representatives in order that we can continue to be responsive to victims' needs.

4.1 McQuillan Judgment

As Board members are aware, judgment was handed down in the McQuillan Judicial Review (the death of Jean Smyth) in March 2019 and an appeal has been lodged by the PSNI.

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This appeal is solely on the basis of seeking clarity on the practical independence of PSNI and to obtain judicial clarity on the repercussions of the Jean Smyth judgment on other cases involving current day investigations.

I can confirm that all of the issues identified in the judgment will be addressed to fulfil our Article 2 European Convention on Human Rights responsibilities regarding Jean Smyth.

I have met with the family of Jean Smyth to explain this position and we are currently developing a Terms of Reference to deal with the issues arising from this judgment.

4.2 Legacy Inquests

Legacy Support Unit (LSU) continues to assist the Coroner in providing disclosure for the ongoing Kingsmill and Ballymurphy inquests in addition to a number of other inquests. Work is continuing to assist the Coroner with Counsel queries in respect of a number of inquests, including the Stalker/Sampson series of inquests.

The business case, to the Department of Justice for additional funding in support of legacy inquests and legacy litigation has been partially approved. The Department has committed to provide £23m of funding to support the legacy inquest process over the next five years. Recruitment and estate works have commenced. A decision in respect of legacy litigation element remains outstanding.

5. CONCLUSION

This report provides the Policing Board with an overview of the scale and complexity of the organisational and operational challenges faced by the PSNI on a daily basis. I wish to assure the Board of the Service Executive Team's ongoing commitment to change and improvement, whilst ensuring that we maintain a responsive and professional policing service.