Item No. 5

GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Date: 30 October 2015
Subject: Police and Crime Commissioner for Greater Manchester Annual Report 2014/15

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

Each year the Police and Crime Commissioner produces an annual report outlining key activity over the past financial year.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To note and comment on the Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner’s Annual Report 2014/15.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Smyth Harper, Communications and Engagement Manager
Police and Crime Commissioner’s Office
Tel: 0161 604 7711
Email: smyth.harper@gmpcc.org.uk

WLT LEAD OFFICER:

Adam Allen, Chief Executive
Police and Crime Commissioner’s Office
Tel: 0161 604 7711
Email: adam.allen@gmpcc.org.uk
Welcome to the annual report for my first full year in office.

As Police and Crime Commissioner, in 2013/14 I began to implement the Police and Crime Plan for Greater Manchester, set the police budget, improved police accountability to the public and delivered significant savings in the cost of running my office.

I have been able to work in partnership with police, other agencies and local communities to make Greater Manchester a better and safer place.

And, crucially, I have been able to drive forward the victims’ agenda by improving services to those who need it most.

This annual report sets out some of those achievements and how we have worked together to rise to the challenges we have faced.

A plan for everyone

I published my Police and Crime Plan for Greater Manchester in March 2013 and began to deliver it in 2013/14. This document sets out the policing priorities for Greater Manchester for the next three years. I set nine priority areas for Greater Manchester Police:

- Driving down crime
- Tackling anti-social behaviour
- Protecting vulnerable people
- Putting victims at the centre
- Dealing effectively with terrorism, serious crime and organised criminality
- Dealing with civil emergencies and emerging threats
- Building confidence in policing services
- Protecting police services

As part of improvements to the accountability mechanisms for Greater Manchester Police, the service now reports regularly to me on the delivery of these priorities, as outlined below.

What is deliberately missing from my plan is targets. It has been shown that creating a targets culture has not helped policing as the temptation to chase the target rather than the criminal is often difficult to resist. It is much more important for police to recognise they are part of the local community and the focus for their work should be building safer communities rather than meeting a target which can create perverse incentives.

Partnership in practice

To make progress on all of these priorities, they must be done in partnership with other organisations. Working in partnership has to become the norm for all areas of work and in all policies if we are to meet the financial challenges we face. It is also essential to accelerate the scale, pace and ambition of partnership working.

Public services in Greater Manchester are committed to an ambitious and innovative programme of public sector reform. I chair the Justice and Rehabilitation Executive Board. The board was formed in
September to act as the strategic leadership group which links to the wider public service reform programme and provides strong leadership and decision-making for the workstream.

The work to date has focused on upscaling Intensive Community Orders across Greater Manchester, The North West Resettlement Consortium for young offenders being released from HMYOI Hindley and the design of a whole system approach for women offenders.

Working in genuine partnership generates tangible benefits for the people of Greater Manchester. From simple steps, like co-locating police services with other public sector organisations, such as has been seen in places such as Tameside and Trafford, to developing a holistic strategic public sector reform agenda which has community safety at its heart, working in partnership is the modern lifeblood of effective public services.

I also work closely with the voluntary sector. I fund services such as the St Mary’s Sexual Assault Referral Centre and support organisations such as Independent Choices, which is the Greater Manchester response to domestic violence. I also recognise that there is a gap in youth provision due to budgetary pressures on partner agencies, so have earmarked funding to set up a new Youth Aspiration Fund in 2014/15 where local organisations and services will be able to bid for funding projects which will help divert young people away from crime and empower them to be the good citizens they strive to be.

**Partnership working sidebar**

In December I signed a concordat with police, social housing providers and social landlords across Greater Manchester to improve community safety in our region. In a UK first, the agreement sees landlords from the 10 local authorities within Greater Manchester sharing information and resources with the police to help develop a more strategic approach to tackling crime and anti-social behaviour. It details how the social housing sector works with the police to develop shared business plans and use shared intelligence to deliver effective and efficient services to the public.

Communities across Greater Manchester expect to see the agencies working on their behalf, joining forces and sharing information and valuable resources – and this is precisely the kind of example of joint working that makes a difference to our communities.

**A voice for victims**

One of my key priorities places the victim at the centre of all we do. For too often in the criminal justice system as a whole the victim is often pushed to the sidelines when they should be centre-stage.

Throughout 2013/14 I have worked hard to ensure that the voice of the victim is not lost. From highlighting the challenges victims face when they become part of the criminal justice system to drive improvements, to visiting organisations that provide support to victims to enhance their profile, to providing funding to organisations that are providing services to victims, I am committed to ensuring the voice of victims are heard.

I have not been afraid to speak up on difficult and sometimes controversial issues such as domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and hate crime.
The examples on these pages give a flavour of some of the work I have carried out in 2013/14 to truly put victims at the centre.

**Sidebars**

*Domestic abuse A&E workers*

Last year, Greater Manchester Police dealt with more than 60,000 incidents of domestic abuse. The reality is that it’s the tip of the iceberg.

Domestic violence touches every part of society: male and female, rich and poor, gay and straight, black and white, old and young.

In November I launched a groundbreaking initiative that has provided a lifeline to the hidden victims of domestic violence. For the first time in the UK, Victim Support now work alongside Accident and Emergency staff in hospitals across Greater Manchester, to identify victims of domestic abuse and get them help and support much earlier, breaking the cycle of abuse that thousands have suffered in silence.

Eighty percent of those who have taken part in this project feel safer, and 98% are confident they were able to access support. Clients who accessed the service had, in the previous 12 months, had involved the police 376 times, A&E 331 times and GPs 415 times. Seventy percent of clients reported multiple types of abuse at intake, which reduced to 25% of those who exited the service.

*Mental health project*

Police deal with tens of thousands of incidents each year where mental ill-health is a factor. And lying at the heart of each and every one is a vulnerable person who needs help.

Police officers are not social workers and do not have the training to act as a mental health professional. It is absolutely right that police are the agency of first response, but all too often they are also the agency of last resort. I have been shocked at some of the stories I have been told about police officers having to take mentally-ill people from hospital to hospital who, due to a lack of either capacity or will, often refuse to take the patient. Often, police are left with no choice but to take the individual to custody. They have broken no laws, they have done nothing wrong and they are unlikely to be a danger to anyone but themselves – they are merely unwell. That is not the intention of Section 136 of the Mental Health Act, but it is the result.

To respond to this, in December I launched an innovative pilot scheme which is very simple but is proving to be very effective.

The project, running in Oldham in partnership with the NHS, means that when officers attend an incident where mental health is a factor they can ring a dedicated number where a mental health professional is able to triage the situation and provide advice support and assistance. As well as providing general advice, the specialist has access to NHS medical records and is therefore able to provide specific advice on the individual concerned if they are already receiving treatment.
It is already reaping remarkable results. There has been a two-thirds reduction in the number of people being sectioned by police and the hours of police time have been freed up. But most importantly of all, vulnerable people are getting better, more targeted support which is sees them as a person rather than an inconvenience.

I expect this innovative scheme – the first of its type in the UK – to be rolled out across Greater Manchester in 2014/15.

*Child sexual exploitation*

Child sexual exploitation is a terrible crime which blights communities not just in Greater Manchester, but across the land.

The terrible events of the Rochdale grooming case in 2012 put the issue into sharp focus. It placed an unfair focus on Rochdale – there is not an area of the country that is not affected by child sexual exploitation – but it also acted as a catalyst for change across Greater Manchester.

In December, I commissioned Ann Coffey MP to carry out a major inquiry into how agencies have responded to the challenge of child sexual exploitation since 2012. This report will look at all agencies, speak to victims, support groups and other interested parties with a view to coming up with concrete recommendations to build on and accelerate the change that has already taken place.

In January we scored a notable victory against child abusers when I successfully lobbied the government to introduce a new law which allows police to temporarily close down a premises, such as an off-license or takeaway, where it is suspected child abuse is taking place. Previously, police had to go to court to get such places shut. This important tool now means that police can take quick action where they think children area at risk. It isn’t a universal panacea to the challenge of child sexual exploitation, but it is already making a difference.

*Accountability*

Holding the police to account is one of the main duties I carry out on behalf of the people of Greater Manchester.

In Greater Manchester I have swept away the targets culture which infected policing for so long and which was so counter-productive. I now receive quarterly reports from GMP which take both qualitative and quantitative information to give a truly rounded view of how police are performing across Greater Manchester.

Prior to my election, there was a tendency for performance reports to talk up what is going well and try to use statistics and targets to downplay the bad news. These new reports shows not just the things that are going well, but highlight areas of concern and, importantly, what police are doing about it.

The reports are presented to me by the Chief Constable in a public forum where I scrutinise their contents and, where necessary, demand action to make improvements.
But accountability is not just about police producing reports. I have also introduced new-style thematic forums, which are similar in style to parliamentary-select committees. At these public forums an issue of significant public interest is taken and examined in detail by a panel which is chaired by me but which has guest members with some expertise in the area under discussion.

Evidence is taken not just from police, but also from other agencies, organisations and individuals with a stake in the topic under discussion. The aim of the forum is to take the issue under discussion and consider it in a thoughtful and meaningful way, prompting action to make improvements.

The topics under discussion have been prompted by Greater Manchester people getting in touch with me with their concerns. So, for example, the first of these forums was held in August on the topic of fraud and the panel comprised me, my deputy Jim Battle and MP Graham Brady. We selected fraud because several people had contacted my office to raise concerns, including Graham.

The Chief Constable and other senior figures from GMP attended, along with senior representatives from Action Fraud and the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau. These bodies outlined complexities around fraud investigations and what they were doing to make improvements and improve public confidence. I was able to follow up on the forum and published a progress report in January.

In October I announced a radical shake-up of how police deal with complaints and how the service tackles ethical issues. In 2014/15 I will set up an independent ethics committee, and introduce a new complaints ombudsman to deal with complaints more speedily than the current system. The need for better complaints handling is indisputable. Although I have no statutory powers to investigate police conduct, in 2013/14 I resolved 917 complaints that came into my office. Many of those correspondents have come to me after becoming frustrated with the official complaints system.

It is also important that I am held to account and the main body which does this is the Police and Crime Panel. In Greater Manchester the panel comprises the nine local authority leaders, Salford City Mayor and two independent members. The seniority of the membership demonstrates how Greater Manchester local authorities value the Commissioner’s role, and demonstrates their commitment to the community safety agenda.

Underpinning the panel is a separate steering group which works with my office, police and partner agencies. The steering group conducts specific pieces of joint work, for example securing agreement on charging for events on the highway. This allows the panel to concentrate on setting a strategic direction for local authority crime and disorder partnerships, and focus on scrutinising my work.

I believe the model adopted here in Greater Manchester is the right one. The seniority of the membership of the panel allows it to be a truly strategic group, which can also scrutinise my work with authority. Having a delivery group underpinning the panel’s strategic overview creates opportunities for further joint working, and – as has been seen here in Greater Manchester – allows for a consensus to be built on issues where agreement has previously been challenging.

However, I have campaigned for Police and Crime Panels to have enhanced powers. The ultimate sanction against any Commissioner is, of course, the ballot box and it is entirely appropriate that the final say should be the public’s. But there should be further checks and balances in the system to hold Commissioners to account who are not performing or who have strayed vastly from their manifesto so they can be removed from office.

**Financial challenges**
The Government’s continuing programme of cuts is having a significant impact on the delivery of GMP’s services. Between 2014 and 2017/18 we estimate that I will have to make an additional £136.8m-worth of savings due to the reduction in funding and the siphoning off, by the Government, of GMP money for other projects.

The only way to deliver cuts of this magnitude is through seeing a significant reduction in police officer numbers. In 2013/14 GMP lost an average of five police officers per week.

By making a modest increase in the police element of your council tax (which amounts to just under £3 for the entire year for the average Band D house), I have been able to earmark some funding to recruit 50 police officers to support neighbourhood policing teams. I have also not reduced the number of PCSOs, a commitment which I will repeat in 2014/15.

But, clearly, this does not come close to ensuring that we continue to provide an effective and efficient police service and I am, therefore, bound to challenge government – once again – to change course and rethink their policy on cutting policing in this country.

In addition to the police budget I also manage the budget for my own office. I inherited the budget plans for the former police authority, but was keen to see what efficiencies could be made to ensure my office was delivering an efficient service. In 2013/14 I spent £500k less than the former police authority – the body I replaced. I also initiated a transformation programme for my office which will deliver significant ongoing savings.

**Volunteers**

Thousands of people in Greater Manchester give up their own time to make a contribution to their neighbourhoods. People choose to do so for a variety of reasons. For some, it gives the chance to make a difference in the place they live and to the people around them. Others want to give something back to their communities. And, of course, volunteering allows people to learn new skills and meet new people.

As I travel around Greater Manchester, I meet a lot of people who volunteer, and their stories are inspirational. The sheer numbers of people who are willing to volunteer in our region is also incredibly impressive.

The opportunities to volunteer are too numerous to list here, but include being special constables, street angels or street pastors, Homewatch watch organisers and community guardians. I’m proud to support a range of groups and organisations that rely heavily on volunteers for their success which include Manchester Village Angels, Manchester Survivors, Victim Support, St Mary’s Sexual Assault Referral Centre and Independent Choices. Along with many, many other groups, these organisations are providing vital services and support to the most vulnerable across Greater Manchester. To support Homewatch I have also set up a Greater Manchester Homewatch Association which means, for the first time, committed community champions can share experiences, expertise and innovation.

Greater Manchester Police has a wonderful police cadets scheme, with more than 300 young people participating across Greater Manchester. Many are based in some of the most deprived areas of Greater Manchester, so equipping these young people with the tools of good citizenship, respect and confidence is making a positive difference. I fund this excellent scheme, as the modest investment reaps significant rewards in building cohesive communities. Of course, the scheme couldn’t run without volunteers.
I also run two volunteer schemes – one where volunteers randomly visit police stations to ensure custody facilities are up to the required standards, and an appropriate adults scheme, where volunteers provide support to young or vulnerable people who have been arrested and no parent or carer is available to sit with them during the interview process. These schemes are important to help ensure the integrity of the criminal justice process, which benefits police and society as much as it does those who have been arrested. More than 40 people volunteer for these schemes, without whom they could not run.

In 2013/14, independent custody visitors made a total of 510 visits to the 13 custody suites across Greater Manchester and met with more than 2,100 detainees. The custody visitors were able to raise issues if concern, most of which were resolved there and then. Appropriate adults made a total of 1,608 call outs during 2013/14.

Looking forward

In 2014/15 I will continue to deliver on the priorities I have been set. I will refresh the Police and Crime Plan to ensure its focus and emphasis remains in line with the needs and wishes of the people of Greater Manchester.

I will continue to ensure that victims lie at the heart of everything I do, particularly as I take responsibility for victim services in 2015.

I will continue to work with partner agencies to respond effectively to the budgetary pressures we all face, both at a strategic level through demonstrating leadership in the public sector reform agenda and a practical level by identifying and exploiting innovative opportunities to work more closely together such as sharing more services and locating more teams together.

I will continue to prioritise the neighbourhood policing model and look for ways for police to focus reducing resources where they are needed most. This will include rationalising the police estate, improving procurement processes and investing in a new IT system which will reduce GMP’s bureaucracy, free up officer time and help ensure the service is fit for the future.

I will work with the political leadership in Greater Manchester as the democratic landscape in the region changes.

I will respond effectively to new and emerging challenges, such as the break-up of the Probation Service and the implementation of new measures under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act.
Facts and figures [infographic to go on centre pages]

**MET** more than 5,000 members of the public

**ATTENDED** more than 120 community events

In the **MEDIA** more than 600 times

Twitter following **DOUBLED** to 2,830 followers

More than 1,500 tweets sent

**TWEETS** seen more than 1,000,000 times

**FACEBOOK** posts seen by 104,090 people

917 public **COMPLAINTS** resolved

40 **VOLUNTEERS** who made 510 visits to police stations and supported 1,608 vulnerable adults and children

More than 300 young people reached through funding the police **CADETS** scheme

Distributed £6.8m funds for **COMMUNITY SAFETY** projects

Supported 133 vulnerable victims of crime through Victim Support **COUNSELLING** service

Social media word cloud

[box] Events hosted: victims event, round-tables, breakfast briefings, Homewatch conference, young people’s hate crime conference,