

Annex c) – Force Management Statement Update

To provide an update on the development of the first Force Management Statement, together with an overview of its likely effect on future force business planning.

Background

The concept of Force Management Statements (FMS) was first proposed by the HMICFRS in 2017, with Dorset being one of the pilot forces trialling its development. The FMS is based on the established rail network statements and effectively asks forces to 'self-assess' in five key areas: demand, capability, capacity, serviceability, and security of supply. The demand in particular is based on a projection of the position forces expect to find themselves in, in terms of a three to four year planning horizon.

The statement itself is published on an annual basis, at the end of the financial year. The guidance provided by the HMICFRS suggests that the statement is made by the Chief Constable and is directed to the HMICFRS. The role of the PCC in the process is to agree priorities based on the assessment of demand and the four other pillars of the FMS. The FMS references the Police and Crime Plan but in no way replaces or supersedes it. Sir Tom Winsor has been very clear on this point; commenting that the development of the PCP is a democratic process which must be preserved.

The FMS will not be assessed but will be used to inform the decision-making process in terms of the risk based approach being adopted for the forthcoming integrated PEEL assessment. Effectively, a force with a comprehensive and candid FMS can expect to see a reduced level of inspection compared with a force that either does not recognise its shortcomings or has insufficient plans in place to address them.

Progress and Considerations to Date

There have been several iterations of guidance to forces which, following feedback, have reduced in terms of prescriptiveness and level of data required. The current guidance that the Force is working to for FMS1, examines several areas of core business, including protecting vulnerable people, ease of contact and prevention. In each case the key questions centre on:

- demand assessment, now and looking forward,
- capability and capacity to meet that demand, both now and moving forward,
- the degree to which any of the identified demand will not be met, and
- the serviceability (welfare and ability) of staff and assets involved in meeting that demand.

Given the three to four year planning horizon, a significant factor in determining demand, capability and capacity has been the prospect of the merger with Devon and Cornwall Police. This has provided a number of challenges. Every attempt has been made to ensure that the FMS for each force looks and feels the same and, where services are aligned, that the same message is provided. More difficult, however, is the requirement to predict future capability due to the lack of certainty firstly about the merger itself, and secondly about structures and governance. Where this is the case, there has had to be an acknowledgment of uncertainty. This is fully understood by HMICFRS who have reassured forces, particularly those that are in strategic alliances and collaborations, that they expect to see a number of gaps in the early FMS and that this should not be seen in too negative a light.

The process of gathering the information needed for the FMS has in itself been valuable. By examining issues broken down by demand, capability, capacity, etc, it has been possible to refocus both performance management and change activity. The FMS guidance provided a business planning model to help embed the new process. This has been adapted by the Force and now provides a platform for a revised force governance and planning cycle which should provide a greater connection between financial planning and operational priority setting and delivery.

The report highlights a number of issues for policing which have been experienced nationally. These include a national shortage of specialist officers, particularly those undertaking armed response roles, and detective officers. There continues to be a level of incoming demand, particularly during busy holiday periods and prolonged warm spells which has the potential to overwhelm forces. There are significant changes in the world of cyber and digital with new technology providing new ways of committing crime this adds to the much talked about increasing complexity of criminal investigation in a digital age. Finally, there is the ever present tension between the police and wider public sector in terms of supporting those in need. Experience has shown that the police tend to identify a significant amount of vulnerability in the community but frequently are faced by a lack of capacity within other agencies to deal with this demand.

Next Steps

The date of publication for FMS1 is the 16 June 2018. The force is already into the annual cycle for the development of FMS2 which will be published in May 2019.

It is proposed that the Panel receives a copy of the Chief Constable's summary FMS upon completion.