

Everybody's Business – Progress Report

David Lloyd

February 2014

Overview

In November I issued a first formal review of progress against my five-year police and crime plan, *Everybody's Business*, which launched in April 2013. This note provides an update on progress over the Winter months but should be read against the November review document, for context.

In reporting activity against the plan, I have followed the format of the original document, outlining how I have worked with other local leaders and with the community to build on successes to date, with headlines on the three development areas of my plan (business sense, public focus, offender pays).

This report also includes an update on staffing arrangements and on the process for appointing a permanent Chief Executive.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Hertfordshire remains a very safe place, having seen fantastic reductions in crime over recent years. I noted in my November statement that there will come a point where crime reduction successes start to level off but that, having taken the Chief Constable's operational advice, I felt confident in setting a plan for further crime reduction. Although there was a 6% reduction in crime in the six months to September, current data indicates that the aim that I agreed with the Chief Constable for a 2% reduction over the whole year appears appropriate. In reality, I anticipate that this target will be reached, although changes to Home Office counting rules regarding some types of crime will have an impact on the appearance of crime statistics. A separate paper covers police data and statistics – I will keep the panel briefed on progress in this regard

But mine is not a plan driven by targets and officer numbers; keeping the county safe is not a numbers game. The vision that I have set in the plan is for a real improvement in outcomes: a system centred on victims and the public; a rebalancing of the responsibility for the costs of crime; services that work well together and make business sense.

The plan that I set in April 2013 was for a five-year period. I do not intend to make constant revisions to that plan, though I will develop new themes through sub strategies (such as the recent volunteering strategy). That said, the performance metrics and operational plan through which the Chief Constable delivers my strategic aims is an annual document and needs to be updated. A public statement will be issued on this shortly and the detailed operational plan will then be put in place.

As I have often said, keeping Hertfordshire safe is everybody's business - not only a matter for the police. Work has continued to draw together community safety and criminal justice partners over the winter. My

Community Safety Board met in December to discuss crime statistics and the future of local policing; it is starting to function well as the hub for work to keep the county safe. Health and employment will be its focus at the next meeting in March. The support and engagement of the Community Safety portfolio holders in local councils who meet with me monthly (most recently at a session in North Herts) continues to be hugely valuable.

PUBLIC FOCUS

At the same time as overseeing strong performance, the Chief Constable and I have been working together to meet the financial challenges that police forces face. I have been clear that this must not be done at the expense of the services that residents have told me matter most to them. Together, we were able to protect frontline neighbourhood policing teams (and even make some modest increases) over my first year in office and recent announcements have secured the future of these arrangements for the longer term. The panel has previously seen my public statement, which lays out plans to protect local policing, even whilst freezing the policing precept was discussed at the January panel meeting. This work and the preparation of a policing and crime budget has been a central concern for my officers and me over the Winter.

As well as protecting core funding to local community safety services for the year ahead, I have given a second round of grants to some great, innovative community projects in the second tranche of my community fund. Again, demand far outstripped available funding, and I have set aside funding to make this opportunity available to other groups in the coming year.

My volunteering strategy was launched for consultation before Christmas and has been widely discussed with residents and partners at events over the Winter. Beyond formal volunteering, my message to the county is that we all have a part to play. Our strong community ties and our individual actions hold the key to keeping us safe and I am working with a number of areas of the county to develop pilot Citizen Academy programmes which will explore these themes.

Starting in December I have been running a programme of 'District Days' focusing in detail on each district and borough of the county. These have provided a valuable chance to get to grips with what is happening on policing and partnership in each area of the county. This will continue, twice monthly throughout the year as well as wider engagement with the people and places of Hertfordshire.

OFFENDER PAYS

I said in the plan that I wanted to see a fundamental shift to make those responsible for crime bear more of its costs. Much of the focus of my recent work on criminal justice matters has been on the partnership implications of the Ministry of Justice's Transforming Rehabilitation programme. This has been of pressing concern for my policy team. Though this work remains challenging, I am working with all partners to ensure a good outcome for Hertfordshire, starting with an initial engagement with potential providers on 14 February and later local engagement and events.

As I said of my Offender Pays programme in November, some of my ideas are being delivered now; others will require concerted partnership work; others are long-term reforms requiring new legislation or regulation to bring about. I am pleased with some of the early developments in this area of work, outlined in the November report. As examples, good progress is being made by the Constabulary legal team in identifying appropriate test cases to pursue offenders for the full costs where an officer is injured in the line of duty and the Constabulary have made great strides in clawing back cash and assets from criminals.

My focus on the needs of victims will be sharpened by the devolution of victim support funding to local Commissioners in October 2014. Substantial pump-priming funding from the Ministry of Justice will help me to map and understand local supply and demand. This will be a critical area of activity over the next few months.

BUSINESS SENSE

One of the largest developments in my drive to ensure a business-like and good value public sector approach has been the work of the Constabulary in finding the best ways to save money and find efficiency in the policing back office. As I detailed in January, strong financial management and clarity on the need to protect the services that matter most to the public - frontline policing teams - have meant that the Chief Constable and I have been able to deliver on this key commitment. This has included signing a three-force collaboration deal with Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire.

I will continue to explore how collaboration with police and other partners can create savings. I said in the plan that I wanted to encourage the police to recognise and maximise our assets. I have been having a close look at the police estate; in addition we have a strong brand and assets that could be made to work harder for Hertfordshire. The Chief Constable and I will need advice from business experts as we tackle this development area, bringing forward coherent plans for this area of work.

I made a commitment to support rural business in my plan. This work ties in with the new volunteering strategy and my commitment to tackling crimes against rural businesses by strengthening the rural special constabulary. The November paper also outlined substantial investments in technology to support frontline policing which have been rolling out over recent months.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Working within the budget of the old Police Authority, I have been making a number of changes to staffing arrangements in my office. The recruitment process to fill all roles on a permanent basis is not yet complete. In relation to the appointment of the Chief Executive, following receipt of the panel's recent report and feedback from the independent consultant, I intend to continue with the current arrangements, subject to agreement of all parties and bring proposals to the Panel on the way forward no later than November 2014.