Response to the Public Accounts Committee

Submission by Hampshire Constabulary

October 2018
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1. What demand pressures does your force face and do you think the Home Office is fully aware of these pressures?

Demand from high harm offences

1.1. The growth of high harm offences has had a severe impact on the force (this picture is seen across the country). These offences are more serious, more complex to solve, and require a higher number of accredited investigators. The sharp increase in Hampshire is shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013/14</th>
<th>2017/18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of cases dealt with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by investigations</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breakdown by accreditation of officer</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIP1 (Priority &amp; Volume Crime)</td>
<td>17,500</td>
<td>28,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIP1/2 (e.g. Dwelling Burglary, Robbery)</td>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIP2 (e.g. Rape, Serious Sexual Offences, Most Serious Violence, Child Abuse)</td>
<td>4,700</td>
<td>7,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seasonal demand

1.2. Demand is high throughout the year, but there is also a seasonal factor. During summer months, Hampshire has a high level of tourism and events (e.g. major festivals). Resourcing has to stretch to respond to this and, even with stringent leave policies, this has a significant impact. This seasonal demand is not reflected under the current way that police grant into the force is determined. Local council tax funding does not reflect the seasonal increase in population as it focuses on permanent residents.

1.3. 2018 was the most extreme summer ever. In July alone the force took more than 5,000 additional 999 calls. Below are two extracts from a demand review\(^1\) conducted by Assistant Chief Constable Dave Hardcastle in August 2018.

> “Over the course of recent weeks the force has experienced a number of serious crimes, which require significant resourcing, primarily from our Investigations Command, but also across other commands in support of scene

guards, community reassurance and support to the investigations. This comes on top of an already stretched command as a result of several Gold Investigation jobs and our significant ongoing efforts to solve murder of a 13 year old girl. This stretch within serious investigations has been experienced since June 2018 and is having a significant impact on resourcing of critical investigations and the rest and recovery of officers and staff. We have seen a significant increase in 999 calls and broader calls for service from the public, which has had a significant resourcing and performance impact on our non-emergency call handling and response times.”

“The developing assessment at this time is that our resource levels are at critical threshold levels and a further significant incident or increase in demand are likely to mean that the force is at a critical point in terms of being able to service the full range of policing services with the resources available.”

Demand Impact

1.4. The force had to move even more resource from roles that are valued by the public (proactive local policing teams focused on prevention and problem solving) to perform critical reactive functions (respond to and investigate the most serious crimes). The situation was so severe that the force had no option but to also put in bid to national policing for mutual aid – requesting that police officers from other areas work in Hampshire. As a result the force received 24 officers from other forces for a period of three weeks from the end of August 2018. For context, Hampshire has never before had to do this to support the delivery of its core policing response.

Home Office engagement

1.5. HMIC inspections look regularly at the effectiveness and efficiency of the force.

1.6. In January 2017 the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable of Hampshire Constabulary wrote to the Police and Fire Minister in the Home Office warning of the impact of police funding on low cost forces stating: “Recent experience suggests the risk associated with further reductions beyond £10m is unlikely to pass the scrutiny of national inspection that looks at all forces with equal eyes irrespective of financial position.” The force was planning for cuts beyond £10m. The letter called for a fair funding formula and outlined that Hampshire Constabulary was independently assessed to receive £47.7m less than its fair share of police funding. This is the equivalent of almost 1,000 police officers. Almost two thirds of the force’s funding is national. Reassurances have regularly been given to policing regarding the

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2 The HMIC Value for Money 2017: profile showed that Hampshire Constabulary receives £47.7 million less than the average force. The potential for local Police and Crime Commissioners to increase the council tax precept is welcome but this local funding has to be seen in the context that 64% of Hampshire Constabulary funding comes from the central government grant.
funding formula being reviewed but, as highlighted recently by the National Audit Office, this has not been progressed.

1.7. Hampshire Constabulary is innovative, and has been recognised by HMIC for embracing partnership opportunities and technology. It is looking forward and preparing for the future so that it is ready for the tactics that modern criminals are using. However, there is a reality that a certain number of police officers are needed to meet the demand of the day. As the Assistant Chief Constable says in his review, and the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner warned would happen in early 2017, Hampshire Constabulary is at a critical threshold in this respect.

2. Do you have sufficient officers and workforce to meet these demands, if not where do you believe you have a gap?

Demand vs resource

2.1. If the growth of high harm offences continues at current rates the force will not have sufficient officers and workforce to meet demand without additional funding. As it currently stands, proactive and preventative resource was diverted to perform response and investigative functions over the summer. The letter to the Minister in January 2017 highlighted the risk of going beyond £10m of further cuts based on projections at that time but demand has increased since then. The force has already made £8.15m of these savings and is now facing significant additional unavoidable costs such as significant new employer pension costs. In total since 2010/11 the force has reduced personnel by one quarter.

Using THOR to manage demand

2.2. The force manages its lower resource levels by using a THOR process (this means that Threat, Harm, Opportunity and Risk is assessed when each incident is reported by the public). At the current time Grade 1 emergency response requests continue to be dealt with within expected timeframes and capacity in certain areas, such as Armed Response, has been increased in recent years to reflect the changing risk profile. The funding for this has been reprioritised from within the force’s current budget. Sexual offences and victim care is another area that has been prioritised. As highlighted above, the force has seen a significant increase in the requirement for investigations into high harm offences. The force is planning with a view to allocating additional resource to tackle high harm offences and in support of the national Serious Violence Strategy, but the extent to which this is possible is related to the availability of funding.

2.3. For ‘volume crime’, such as damage or thefts from motor vehicle, action is only taken if there is strong opportunity to achieve an outcome. No further action is taken if there is a low prospect of a
successful outcome. The lower resourcing levels fall, the higher the THOR bar has to be raised. This is the best way to use resource intelligently (the force has deliberately not taken an approach where it will not investigate certain crime types as this could serve as an invitation to criminals and deny victims justice). However, the force is also aware that if the THOR bar is raised too high, the service offered does not meet public expectation in volume crime areas such as Anti-Social Behaviour and acquisitive crime (members of the public are disappointed by the level of response or investigation that can be offered to their particular case). This threshold has been reached.

2.4. If the force received fairer funding it would be able to further prioritise high harm offences and lower the THOR bar to investigate more volume crime, which would allow more crimes to be investigated overall and improve public satisfaction. This is also likely to cut reoffending. Other impacts of having to raise the THOR bar (in the summer for example) is that proactive work such as finding lower risk outstanding suspects is impacted, which brings with it a risk of reoffending and increased demand on the force.

3. If your force has a funding shortfall, have you had to take short term measures e.g. asset sales to manage your budget?

Short term measures

3.1. The force has always planned change on a strategic basis to avoid short-term decisions that would be sub-optimal and create additional risks for the public.

Examples of measures taken

3.2. Significant longer term decisions have been made to assist with the funding shortfall. For example, the Constabulary’s most significant asset, Police Headquarters in Winchester, has been sold and the capital reinvested. The Constabulary now pays a service charge to Hampshire Fire & Rescue to share an HQ building. This has had real partnership benefits, but has removed a significant asset from the balance sheet and creates an ongoing need to pay for accommodation costs from the revenue budget.

The impact of short term budgets on strategic planning

3.3. One of the factors that makes longer term planning difficult is a lack of certainty in relation to budget levels in future years. Longer term strategic planning is difficult when trying to plan for massive variation in budget depending on the scenario (more of this is covered under the Transformation Funding answer at Question 5). It is difficult to invest with confidence in line with the ambition outlined in the national 2025
Policing Vision and the Police and Crime Plan when it is unclear how much funding will be available in the next financial year. Often the final budget is unknown until weeks before that year starts.

3.4. An example of the difficulty of planning in a one year budget cycle from recent years relates to the decision by the Government to protect police funding in November 2015. This was very welcome, but Hampshire Constabulary had been prudently planning for further reductions (this believed to be the likely scenario by all commentators and within policing). In order to achieve that in the timeline required the force had not been recruiting officers to backfill vacancies. After years of budget reductions it also did not have the recruitment and training resource to respond to a sudden requirement to recruit officers.

4. Are you collaborating with other police forces and, if so, in what way are you collaborating and is this primarily to achieve efficiency savings?

4.1. Extensive collaboration already takes place. Savings have been a significant factor in driving that collaboration, but it is not the only factor.

4.2. Examples of collaboration and partnership are given below:

- Joint Operations Unit shared with Thames Valley Police to deliver roads policing, firearms capability, dog units, public order, and Operations co-ordination. This is the largest non-metropolitan joint specialist unit in the UK.

- ICT services and Information Management are hosted by Thames Valley Police as a fully collaborated function, and Contact Management is collaborated at a strategic level with the forces working together with Microsoft to deliver a new command and control system.

- Shared Services back office collaboration with Hampshire County Council and Hampshire Fire and Rescue. This has been successful and Oxfordshire County Council and three London Boroughs have now also on-boarded driving efficiency elsewhere in the public sector. The services delivered include Finance, HR, Procurement, Integrated Business Centre transactions, Occupational Health, Facilities Management, Pension Services and Internal Audit.

- Regional delivery through South East Regional Organised Crime Unit for policing Organised Crime Groups but also functions such as covert operations, technical services and protected people (e.g. witness care).
• Counter Terrorism has national and regional leadership and delivery.

• The force has sold off estate and now rents space on a number of sites from other partners such as Fire & Rescue and local councils.

• The forces in the South East Region have created something called the South East Regional Investment Programme (SERIP) to identify further opportunities that may present themselves from greater collaboration.

• Procurement contracts work through a number of different collaborations. National buying agreements exist for standard products such as stationery. The force purchases uniforms etc. through collaborated contracts and vehicles through a 17 force collaboration led by West Midlands. Forensic services are purchased through collaborated contracts. The force takes part in the ongoing work of the National Commercial Board to find any further opportunities for ‘non-pay’ savings including signing up for NUMS Lite, a new collaborated approach to purchase uniform.

• The force has appointed independent consultants to assess the ability to make further non-pay savings and exhausted those opportunities.

5. Has police transformation funding helped in meeting the challenges you face?

Examples of using Transformation Funding

5.1. The force has been successful in utilising the opportunity provided by the Transformation Fund directly in delivering innovation and improved ways of working (e.g. the roll out of Body Worn Video and developing of a new command and control system). It also benefits indirectly from investments being made in national programmes of activity, particularly in technology (e.g. Single Online Home web services for the public). In this sense transformation funding has helped along with the creation of the Policing Vision that provides an overarching framework for investment decision-making.

Funding technology and future revenue budget challenges

5.2. The model of delivering technology is changing. Transformation funding is time-limited and this means significant future funding challenges. The force is experiencing a move away from one off capital investment, with additional annual licence costs for new technology. This annual license model is increasingly required. One off funding through the Transformation Fund, especially when combined with the
issues raised earlier in relation to short term budgeting more generally, does not easily enable this kind of commitment.

5.3. The force recognises that greater technological investment and development has been needed and a national approach is the most sensible cost effective way to do that. However, this now in direct competition with police officer resourcing in an era where demand is growing (the explanation above describes that savings from ‘non-pay’ have been maximised). Relevant to this is the fact that the additional funding which is regularly cited as being available for policing is from increases in local council tax precept. There are strong views from local people and the stakeholders who represent them in terms of where additional investment is spent, favouring it being spent on police officer resource.

5.4. It is important to recognise that transformation funding is top-sliced from the police service allocation so every investment made effectively reduces the amount of funding that could be made available to PCCs for core policing.

5.5. There is a threshold point in terms of police officer resource that needs to be maintained to give Hampshire Constabulary sufficient capability to meet its local and national commitments. The force supports investment via a transformation fund but not if it means this threshold is crossed. We are now at that point.

ENDS