

## Sussex Police and Crime Panel

24 April 2015

### Non-Emergency Call Handling Arrangements

#### Report by the Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

##### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Panel last considered contact management arrangements at its meeting in June 2014. The headline performance information provided at the meeting is summarised herein. Tours of the Contact Centre were subsequently undertaken by Panel members, in Sept/Oct 2014. The Panel agreed to receive a performance update at a future Panel meeting.
- 1.2 The Commissioner will provide a verbal update on current performance and progress.

##### 2. Information provided to the Panel in June 2014

- 2.1 To provide some context to the Commissioner's update, the position in June 2014 is summarised below.
- 2.2 The Communications Department within Sussex Police is responsible for all contact management arrangements. This includes all contact through the emergency (999) and non-emergency (101) telephone numbers to the Police Contact Centre.
- 2.3 Sussex Police received 753,535 calls to the non-emergency number across the performance plan year 2013/2014. 96% of these calls were answered initially within 30 seconds by the switchboard team to triage and assess priority. 563,297 of these calls required further work and were subsequently transferred to the main contact centre. Of those calls transferred, 57% were answered within 60 seconds, with an average wait time of 2 minutes and 15 seconds. However, it was emphasised that the 57% of calls answered within 60 seconds was a reduction of 23% compared to the previous performance plan year.
- 2.4 This decline in performance was identified by the Commissioner and had been attributed by the Chief Constable to the introduction of Niche, a new crime management system. The Commissioner had privately and publically challenged the Chief Constable regarding non-emergency call handling.
- 2.5 The Panel was informed of a number of measures implemented by Sussex Police. These included:
  - Training – All staff in the Police Contact Centre were provided with additional training to assist them in becoming confident in the use of the new system.
  - Recruitment – Sussex Police recruited 30 contact handlers who joined the Force in intakes across March, April and May 2014. A further intake of 30 contact handlers was planned for June, August and September 2014. The Force was also in the process of recruiting 10 controllers.

- Process Work – There were several ongoing workstreams within Sussex Police looking at reducing calling handling times, duplication and streamlining existing processes.
- Channel Shift – Sussex Police acknowledge that more people now want the option to make reports on-line, which provides users with greater control over when they contact the Force, and removes waiting times. The Force planned to continue to facilitate this channel shift.
- Collaborative Working - Sussex Police planned to work closely with Surrey Police to align the contact management arrangements between both forces. Further work with the wider Sussex and Surrey emergency services, including the Fire and Rescue and Ambulance services, was also planned.
- Single Site Communications Department: The Communications Department moved from three individual sites to a single site at Sussex Police Headquarters, Lewes.

### 3. **Resource Implications and Value for Money**

- 3.1 The cost of producing this report has been met by Sussex Police and Crime Panel, through a grant received from the Home Office.

### 4. **Risk Management Implications**

- 4.1 A failure to adequately scrutinise the actions and decisions of the Commissioner risks breaching the applicable sections of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

#### **Contact:**

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#### **Background Papers**

None