



Home Office

National Policing Board

Minutes 7 July 2021

Title of meeting	National Policing Board Build Back Safer: Policing across the Union
Date	7 July 2021
Time	10:00 - 11:30
Venue	Virtual meeting via video conference
Chair	Kit Malthouse MP: Minister of State for Crime and Policing

Attendees

- Kit Malthouse MP: Minister of State for Crime and Policing (Chair)
- Victoria Atkins MP: Minister for Safeguarding
- Martin Hewitt QPM: Chair, National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)
- Dame Cressida Dick DBE QPM: Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service
- Roger Hirst: Interim Chair, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC)
- Bernie O'Reilly: Interim Chief Executive Officer, College of Policing
- Dame Lynne Owens: Director General, National Crime Agency (NCA)
- Sir Thomas Winsor: HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary & HM Chief Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services
- Matthew Jukes QPM: Head of UK Counter Terrorism Policing
- Rachel Watson: Acting Director General, Public Safety Group
- Paul Dean CBE: Deputy Director, Oversight and Response Unit– for Chloe Squires: Director General, Homeland Security Group

Special invitees

- Rt Hon Simon Hart MP: Secretary of State for Wales
- Robin Walker MP: Minister of State for Northern Ireland
- Keith Brown MSP: Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Veterans, Scottish Government
- Naomi Long MLA: Minister of Justice, Northern Ireland Executive
- Chief Constable Pam Kelly: Gwent Police
- Chief Constable Simon Byrne QPM: Police Service of Northern Ireland
- Chief Constable Iain Livingstone QPM: Police Scotland
- Police and Crime Commissioner Marc Jones: APCC Serious and Organised Crime Lead
- Gervase Hood OBE: Head of Civil Contingencies and National Security, Scotland Office
- Rachel Atkinson: Director, Fire, Events and Central Management, Public Safety Group
- Sarah Gawley: Deputy Director, Fire Resilience and Major Events, Public Safety Group

Welcome, introduction and actions from the previous meeting

- 1. KIT MALTHOUSE MP, MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME AND POLICING** opened by welcoming members and special invitees, who had joined to discuss matters that dominate policing across the Union. He gave apologies on behalf of the Home Secretary, explaining that she had been called overseas on urgent business. Reflecting on the poignant memory of the bombings that occurred in London on 7 July 2005, he remarked how attendees would undoubtedly each have their own memories of those tragic scenes and of the devastation that followed. Turning to the main focus of the meeting, he noted that the pandemic has highlighted the need for the four Home Nations to work as one to combat high-harm criminality across the UK. Referencing the success of the recent G7 Leaders' summit in Cornwall, he praised forces for sending officers from across the UK to help police the event.
- 2. RACHEL WATSON, ACTING DIRECTOR GENERAL, PUBLIC SAFETY GROUP** provided an update on the actions from the previous meeting. She informed attendees that the Police Uplift Programme has commissioned a rapid evidence review to synthesise the current research and evidence base on the barriers to attracting Black applicants into policing. She outlined how the Programme is engaging with HMICFRS to explore how uplift data can support Force Management Statements. She added that the Programme and Home Office Ministers have spoken to a range of staff associations and police support networks to look at what more can be done together to share insight and encourage diverse communities to consider a career in policing. **MARTIN HEWITT QPM, CHAIR, NPCC** reflected that there is significant value in working closely with staff associations. He reiterated his ambition to accelerate progress on diverse recruitment, whilst noting that this will require a lot of work from across policing.

Using lessons learned from policing during Covid-19 to 'build back safer'

- 3. THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME AND POLICING** introduced the item by applauding the fantastic work by policing throughout the pandemic. He recognised that policing had had to contend with a fast-moving picture and had to navigate different regulations across the four Home Nations. In helping beat back the virus, he noted that officers on the frontline have faced enormous strain, both professionally and personally. Notwithstanding the overall positive way in which forces responded to Covid-19, he explained the importance of learning the lessons from policing during the pandemic.
- 4. MARTIN HEWITT** presented on the learning, recovery and reform activity undertaken under Operation Talla. Emphasising that the values and tradition of British policing have been maintained throughout the pandemic, he remarked that policing during the past 16 months has been a truly collaborative effort. He praised the valuable work of the College of Policing in providing clear guidance to police forces and in contributing to Operation Talla, reflecting on the challenge of enforcing legislation delivered at pace. He thanked

the Home Secretary, Ministers and officials for their positive engagement and explained that strong partnership working, and regular knowledge-sharing, have been key. Another major area of learning centred on how the police relate to and engage our communities. Martin reflected that we need to consider the short- and long-term impact of policing during the pandemic on vulnerability, community cohesion and legitimacy. He also noted that there is a lot of learning about how to support the resilience and wellbeing of the police workforce. In closing his presentation, he outlined the next steps for embedding lessons learned across policing and asked attendees to consider the Operation Talla outputs in their own organisations and to share ongoing learning with Board members.

5. Reflecting on the pan-UK police force collaboration during the pandemic, **CHIEF CONSTABLE IAIN LIVINGSTONE QPM, POLICE SCOTLAND** remarked that despite the intense initial period of national lockdown last year, there was immediate coordination across policing in responding to the virus. He commended the development of the 4Es approach (engaging, explaining, encouraging, and only enforcing as a last resort).
6. **CHIEF CONSTABLE SIMON BYRNE QPM, POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND** reminded members that the policing of protests is an important area of learning. He remarked that the interplay between fast-paced law enforcement, civil liberties and community relations has been a central theme throughout the pandemic. He also noted that his force has seen some of the lowest levels of sickness compared to recent years, and that this is indicative of the benefits of more agile working and having a different relationship with the workforce.
7. **CHIEF CONSTABLE PAM KELLY, GWENT POLICE** echoed comments on the first-class communication and coordination across policing. She emphasised the need to ensure the rich learning from Operation Talla is available for future policing leaders. She reflected that Welsh forces have benefited from very constructive dialogue with Ministers, both in the Welsh Government and Her Majesty's Government throughout the pandemic.
8. Each of the Chiefs noted that Covid-19 has highlighted the importance of the policing mandate, and that it has been a priority to enforce regulations in a way which still ensures social cohesion. The Chiefs highlighted the importance of legitimacy, noting that policing needs to maintain public confidence as we emerge from the pandemic.
9. **VICTORIA ATKINS MP, MINISTER FOR SAFEGUARDING** thanked attendees for the innovative police work in relation to domestic abuse and violence against women and girls during the pandemic. Pointing to HMICFRS's recent *Review of policing domestic abuse during the pandemic*, she said she was looking forward to working with policing to make sure those lessons are embedded.
10. **NAOMI LONG MLA, MINISTER OF JUSTICE, NORTHERN IRELAND EXECUTIVE** agreed with the Minister for Safeguarding's remarks around the positive policing

response to domestic abuse, noting that staying at home is not a safe option for everyone. Reflecting on the theme of police legitimacy, she explained that decisions on policing's Covid-19 enforcement approach have been subject to a high level of media scrutiny. Referring to some of the civil unrest that has taken place in Northern Ireland over recent months, she highlighted that some police officers have been injured in the line of duty. She recognised the comments made by other attendees around the challenges for policing in navigating enforcement of regulations whilst maintaining positive community relations.

- 11. KEITH BROWN MSP, CABINET SECRETARY FOR JUSTICE AND VETERANS, SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT** reflected that there has been significant progress in increasing the basis of consent upon which the policing-by-consent model operates. He did however note that there had been some operational challenges, including the mass gatherings in Glasgow's George Square.
- 12.** Speaking about the pressures on policing once Covid-19 restrictions are eased, **SIR THOMAS WINSOR, HM CHIEF INSPECTOR OF CONSTABULARY** flagged the likely challenges with the changing crime mix and potential for increased serious violence, sexual violence, and public disorder. He remarked that many forces are struggling to assess future demand because their future operating context is uncertain and wider issues within the criminal justice system pose a challenge.
- 13.** Members discussed the impact of Covid-19 on delays in the criminal justice system and that, unless we resolve those issues collectively, this could be detrimental to police legitimacy. Members also commented on the broader demands on policing, such as the increasing number of mental health-related incidents in recent months.
- 14. THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME AND POLICING** closed the item by thanking all attendees for their reflections. He suggested that the Board should return to this discussion at a future meeting, to consider how the College of Policing can help embed this learning for current and future cohorts of policing leaders.
- 15. ACTION: Members to continue to engage with NPCC on Operation Talla as this work seeks to identify, disseminate, and embed learning and to return to this at a future Board meeting.**

Tackling cross-border criminality

- 16. THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME AND POLICING** introduced the item, explaining that the threat from serious and organised crime affects communities in every part of our country. He reflected on the work of Operation Venetic last year, and in particular, a raid on a benzodiazepine factory in Kent which found drugs which had been destined for Scotland. This illustrated the interconnectivity of serious and

organised crime and highlighted the importance of an integrated pan-UK approach to tackling cross-border criminality.

- 17. DAME LYNNE OWENS, DIRECTOR GENERAL, NCA** provided further details on the importance of collaboration across law enforcement in cutting crime, emphasising the link between the global, national, regional, and local threats from serious and organised crime. Using child sexual abuse and exploitation as an example, she explained that technology is an enabler for nearly all these crimes and that victims can be found in every area of the UK. She commented that criminals are making even stronger use of technologies and more sophisticated use of encryption. Highlighting the value of a joined-up approach, she reminded the Board of the importance of the work in continually modernising policing's approaches to tackling crime, especially given that victims and offenders are now often not located in the same area. Referencing some positive examples of recent collaboration with Police Scotland and the Police Service of Northern Ireland, she explained that the NCA works very closely with law enforcement partners across the UK. Finally, she commented on the benefits of continuing to discuss improving cross-UK systems for law enforcement partners to share sensitive and secret intelligence, and that we need to invest more in developing technologies that allow policing to respond to threats from a global, national, regional and local level.
- 18. THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME AND POLICING** thanked Dame Lynne Owens for her presentation. Responding to her remarks on investment, he explained that investment decisions are looked at separately within Government. Regarding better information sharing and the possible investment required, he committed to liaising separately with Ministers Naomi Long and Keith Brown.
- 19. MARTIN HEWITT** explained that we need to look at what capabilities policing needs to tackle cross-border criminality effectively, and then consider where those capabilities should best sit across the system. He remarked that while tackling drug-related crime is a major issue for all policing partners, what the system really needs is an overarching view on capabilities (rather than focusing on specific crime types). He highlighted the importance of having agile policing capabilities and capacity that can respond to high-harm threats as they emerge and evolve.
- 20. DAME CRESSIDA DICK DBE QPM, COMMISSIONER, METROPOLITAN POLICE SERVICE** echoed Martin Hewitt's comments. She remarked that county lines drug trafficking is a clear and present threat to everybody and that there has been strong police leadership on tackling it. However, she remarked that, there remain some structural challenges in England and Wales that law enforcement partners have to overcome when sharing information.
- 21. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER MARC JONES, APCC SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME LEAD** praised the NCA for its work in ensuring PCCs understand the importance of tackling serious and organised crime as PCCs will play a key role in communicating the issues to the public. He remarked that a key challenge is stabilising

the funding, capabilities and skill sets for the network of Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCUs).

22. **CHIEF CONSTABLE SIMON BYRNE** commented that borders and immigration partners have a part to play in tackling cross-border criminality. Speaking in broader terms, he remarked that there is scope to learn from how the counter-terrorism community approaches investigatory and intelligence development.
23. Speaking from a counter terrorism perspective, **MATTHEW JUKES** reflected on the need to nurture and protect the UK's relationships with international partners, such as Interpol and Europol. At a UK-state level, he reaffirmed counter terrorism policing's commitment to maintaining a four-nation approach to tackling criminality. Referencing the 2019 terrorist attack at Fishmongers' Hall, he also stressed the importance of looking at lifetime offender management, mental health provision and the importance of local information sharing. Lastly, he explained the value in cohering around a tackling cross-border criminality mission, and learning from counter terrorism when considering where roles and capabilities best sit within the system.
24. **THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME AND POLICING** thanked members for their contributions and reiterated the importance of cross-UK and cross-policing cooperation in protecting the country from high-harm crime.
25. **ACTION: Minister of State for Crime and Policing to liaise with Ministers Naomi Long and Keith Brown, regarding what more could be done on the sharing of sensitive information across the system.**

Major events and future collaboration

26. **THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME AND POLICING** introduced the item, remarking that the UK has a strong global reputation for hosting major international events, and spoke about the G7 Leaders' summit in June and the forthcoming COP26 in November.
27. **SARAH GAWLEY, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, FIRE RESILIENCE AND MAJOR EVENTS** provided further detail on how cooperation across the UK in support of major events is as important as ever in terms of mutual aid, intelligence and capability sharing. She explained that often the size and scale of hosting major events requires collaboration across Police Scotland, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, police forces in England and Wales and others including non-Home Office forces and the National Crime Agency. Such collaboration helps ensure a coordinated approach to safety and security drawing on UK-wide experience and specialisms, whilst recognising the differences in legal jurisdictions and devolution implications across the Home Nations.

- 28. MARTIN HEWITT** confirmed that there is strong appetite among policing for continuing collaboration. He commented on the engagement by Devon and Cornwall police with other forces in the run up to and during G7 and similarly by Police Scotland as they plan for COP26 and with West Midlands Police in preparation for next year's Commonwealth Games. He remarked that the NPCC and the National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC) had engaged colleagues in Police Scotland to learn lessons on recent major events. Reflecting on assets and capabilities, he explained that the Mercury IT system is an effective tool for managing police resources and mutual aid and could be enhanced to manage the deployment of national assets. He highlighted the challenge of identifying the specific skills that are needed to police certain events.
- 29.** Reflecting on police force interoperability, **CHIEF CONSTABLE IAIN LIVINGSTONE** explained that Police Scotland is committed to supporting UK partners in policing major events. He noted that the joint work that has been done across UK policing around shared doctrine, values, and training has been valuable.
- 30. DAME CRESSIDA DICK** said that we should be proud of how well policing supports major events across the UK. She agreed with others' comments that there is no shortage of volunteers for mutual aid, but she explained that the challenge was concurrency: for example, when two or more major events coincide, or events coincide with emergencies and critical incidents. This places pressure on overall capacity. Noting that whilst forces already have a culture of learning and debriefs, more could be done to make debriefs more accessible in a searchable format. She also underlined the immeasurable value in organising multi-agency debriefs that include the Government and the event organisers. This was a view shared by Martin Hewitt.
- 31. ROGER HIRST, INTERIM CHAIR, APCC** echoed the points about the need to share learning and said that feedback from the PCC for Devon and Cornwall supported the view that the G7 Leaders' summit was a success from a policing perspective. Reflecting on the need to celebrate the positive involvement of forces, he outlined the need for more positive messaging with the public around the integral role that officers play in policing set-piece events.
- 32. CHIEF CONSTABLE PAM KELLY** highlighted the need for a strategic assessment of both skills and capabilities. She explained that safely policing major events relies on well-trained and experienced staff and officers. She commented that given the twin challenges with retaining experienced officers and onboarding uplift recruits, forces should use Force Management Statements to ensure they understand where they need to invest, not just for today but also for the future.
- 33. THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME AND POLICING** thanked attendees for the productive discussion and reiterated his thanks for everything that police forces and security partners do in all four nations to help the UK host major international events. He recognised the need to develop a robust system for capturing skills and experience

from retiring officers and suggested that the Board may wish to return to this discussion at a future meeting.

- 34. ACTION:** Rachel Atkinson, Director, and Sarah Gawley, Deputy Director, to liaise with members on ways to overcome the challenges in policing concurrent events and to explore with members how policing can share more learning from post-event debriefs.

National Policing Board sub-governance update

- 35. THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME AND POLICING** provided an update on National Policing Board sub-governance. He began by reflecting on the continued success of the **Police Uplift Programme**, which is gaining momentum as we continue on our trajectory towards of the overall 20,000 target. He emphasised the need not to become complacent, particularly on diversity. He highlighted that the June **Strategic Change and Investment Board** discussed workforce matters, focusing on those specialist roles which are integral to the delivery of the National Crime and Policing Measures. He explained that the NPCC Workforce Coordination Committee will conduct a strategic assessment to further understand the workforce landscape and to build an evidence base for a future discussion at the sub-board. Lastly, he flagged that the forthcoming **Crime and Policing Performance Board** will focus on homicide.

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- 36.** No further points of business were made.

Closing

- 37. THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME AND POLICING** closed the meeting by thanking all attendees for their insightful contributions. He again expressed his gratitude to the whole of policing for their work as we have beaten back the virus over the past 16 months. He reflected that there are lessons to be learned to make sure policing has the capabilities to tackle present and future threats, but that he is looking forward to working with members as we look to build back safer for the future.