



QUESTIONS FROM POLICE & CRIME PANEL MEMBERS TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER – FRIDAY 2nd JUNE 2017

In accordance with Procedure Rule 11 (General Questions from Members of the Panel), the following questions had been submitted together with the responses from the PCC:-

Question from Alan Carter

"Would the Commissioner be willing to comment on a recent report that police in Durham (our Chief Constable's previous Force) are preparing to go live with an artificial intelligence system designed to help officers decide whether or not a suspect should be kept in custody, drawing upon five years of offending histories data. Might this system be introduced in South Yorkshire?"

[NB. A word of caution has been expressed that, although the system may prove operationally useful, it could skew decisions and potentially may infringe a person's human liberties.]"

Response

1. Durham Constabulary are working with Cambridge University to see whether an algorithm can be developed to enable custody sergeants to grade suspects as low, medium or high with respect to the risk of their re-offending. This, it is claimed, would be 'evidence based'.
2. If Durham Constabulary are piloting or pioneering this it would be wise to wait the outcome of what they are doing. Even so, whatever methods are used to assist, custody sergeants in any decisions they might make, in the final analysis the decision is still theirs.

Supplementary Question from Alan Carter

I thank the Commissioner for the response given to my written question.

In reply, I have the following observation and a request to make.

Undoubtedly, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is fast becoming a powerful technology in policing across the world.

It is widely reported that law enforcement agencies across this country are already using it in sophisticated ways for surveillance and crime prevention initiatives. These include using robots to detect and deactivate bombs; using drones for surveillance; scanning social media for illicit activity and for individuals who might be radicalised; and detecting suspects' lies whilst being questioned.

In this context, its potential future use by the Durham Constabulary's custody sergeants is actually very much "the thin end of the wedge" – although one does have a concern about its application when a person taken into custody may be suffering from mental health issues.

However, what cannot be ignored – and must be a real and genuine concern - is the potential for invading the privacy of private citizens, wrongfully targeting individuals for "suspicious" behaviour, or otherwise abusing the power of AI - even if unintentionally.

Going forward, I believe that this is something about which the Commissioner and we, as a Police and Crime Panel, should be increasingly concerned.

In a law enforcement context, perhaps we could call for a much more detailed report at a future meeting so that, as Panel Members, we might be kept abreast of relevant AI developments generally and more specifically of their introduction within the South Yorkshire Police?

From my perspective, the ultimate issue is one of protecting the safety, rights, and lives of both the public and also of the law enforcement officers who are sworn to protect them.

Response

The Commissioner confirmed that he would speak to the Force regarding the use of AI in South Yorkshire, and report back to a future Panel meeting.

A Carter thanked the Commissioner for his response.

Question 1 from Councillor Sansome

Councillor Sansome asked if there was any further information available which could be shared with Panel Members regarding the number of prosecutions which had led from the Stop and Search initiative and any background information concerning the number of people stopped and searched per local authority and any background to those numbers.

Response

The Commissioner acknowledged the request; he stated that he would look to provide this information in a future report to the Panel.

Generally, the number of Stop and Searches carried out had decreased, however, the number of successful prosecutions from carrying out Stop and Search had increased.

Question 2 from Councillor Sansome

Councillor Sansome asked if there was any information available, which could be fed-back to the Panel regarding how the Commissioner was holding the Chief Constable to account in relation to individuals prosecuted for using a mobile phone whilst driving a vehicle.

Furthermore, did the Commissioner set the Chief Constable any performance measures in this area?

Response

The Commissioner reported that, following the change in legislation, he had accompanied the Roads Traffic Policing Team to witness first-hand the work carried out by the Force in dealing with individuals driving whilst using mobile phones.

The Commissioner acknowledged Councillor Sansome's request for further information; he stated that he would look to provide this information at a future Panel meeting.

Question 3 from Councillor Sansome

Councillor Sansome asked the Commissioner for his comments in respect of the results of a survey conducted by the PCC which had revealed that nearly half the population in South Yorkshire lacked confidence in South Yorkshire Police.

Councillor Sansome asked the Commissioner to provide details of how he was holding the Chief Constable to account in relation to this matter; additionally, could the Commissioner provide Panel Members with details regarding any measures set by the Commissioner to see public trust and confidence increase.

Response

The Commissioner commented that he understood there were historic public trust and confidence issues in South Yorkshire Police and also following recent events.

In order to improve public trust and confidence, one of the main priorities he had set the new Chief Constable was to address public trust and confidence in South Yorkshire Police.

The Commissioner stated that this area would be picked-up at agenda item 13 later in today's meeting.

The Commissioner commented that, following the recent horrific terrorist attack at the Manchester Arena on 22 May 2017; there had been high visibility policing across South Yorkshire, including the presence of armed officers at a number of locations across South Yorkshire. Additionally, there had been intensive policing on the streets of South Yorkshire, which had been very well received by members of the public.

Members of the public had felt they were being protected and had felt secure during this very difficult period. The Commissioner commented that this had helped South

Yorkshire Police enormously with their relationship with the public of South Yorkshire.

Question 4 from Councillor Sansome

Councillor Sansome referred to the recent terrorist attack in Manchester; he asked the Commissioner if the Panel could be informed how he was holding the Chief Constable to account regarding the sharing of intelligence with colleagues across the UK and details of any individuals who may wish to cause harm to the people of South Yorkshire.

Response

The Commissioner explained that, following the terrorist attack in Manchester, there had been several Gold Group meetings held in South Yorkshire, (which the Commissioner had attended) to discuss planning etc.

The Commissioner commented that he had been very impressed by the way South Yorkshire Police had reacted in light of the attack. The Commissioner had also visited the Counter Terrorism Regional Headquarters to observe their operations.

The Commissioner confirmed that he would be talking to the Chief Constable on a regular basis regarding terrorist attacks. Over the last few days there had been arrests made by Counter Terrorism Officers in Sheffield (not related to the Manchester attack) and a further arrest had been made earlier that morning.

To reassure the Panel, the Commissioner confirmed that Counter Terrorism operations occurred all the time; he was sighted on the work that they carry out and had reassurances from them.

A press release from South Yorkshire Police regarding the Counter Terrorism Operation in Sheffield was circulated for Panel Members' information.