

For Consideration	
Public/Non Public*	Public
Report to:	Police and Crime Panel
Date of Meeting:	7 February 2023
Report of:	Commissioner Henry (PCC)
Report Author:	Dan Howitt
E-mail:	ExecutiveSupport@notts.police.uk
Other Contacts:	None
Agenda Item:	7

PUBLIC TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN THE POLICE

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides the Police and Crime Panel with an overview of trends in public confidence in the police in Nottinghamshire and details of activity underway to address the decline in public confidence seen locally and nationally during 2022. The panel will receive a presentation on 7 February 2023 which will provide further opportunities for discussion.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Police and Crime Panel members are invited to review, support and scrutinise the contents of this report and formal presentation and seek assurance on any specific areas of concern. The Panel is also invited to request further information where required and make relevant observations and recommendations within the scope of their role¹.

3. Public Trust and Confidence in the Police - Background

- 3.1 A range of local² and national³ indicators suggest that public trust and confidence in the police and other public services has been in steady decline over recent years. This is commonly believed⁴ to have been affected by a series of nationally high-profile cases of law breaking, misconduct and abuse of power⁵ that have raised concerns about the culture of the police service⁶, led to an increase in negative

¹ [Police and Crime Panels: A Guide to Scrutiny](#), Local Government Association, Updated 2016

² Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Survey: July 2017 to December 2022

³ *The State of the State 2022-23- from the pandemic to a cost-of-living crisis*

⁴ *Strategic review of Policing in England and Wales- The Police Foundation: March 2022*

⁵ *Included the murder of Sarah Everard (March 2021) and identification of serial rapist David Carrick in 2023*

⁶ HMICFRS "An inspection of vetting, misconduct, and misogyny in the police service": November 2022

sentiment towards the service⁷ and contributed towards reductions in feelings of safety among women and girls.

- 3.2 Whilst recognised as part of a national trend, reductions in public confidence in the police present a significant local threat which has potential to impact upon: crime reporting and identification of hidden harm; feelings of safety among local communities; levels of community engagement and the fundamental model of policing by consent. Nottinghamshire Police and PCC are therefore working to understand the drivers of public confidence and opportunities to impact upon this emerging trend at a local level.

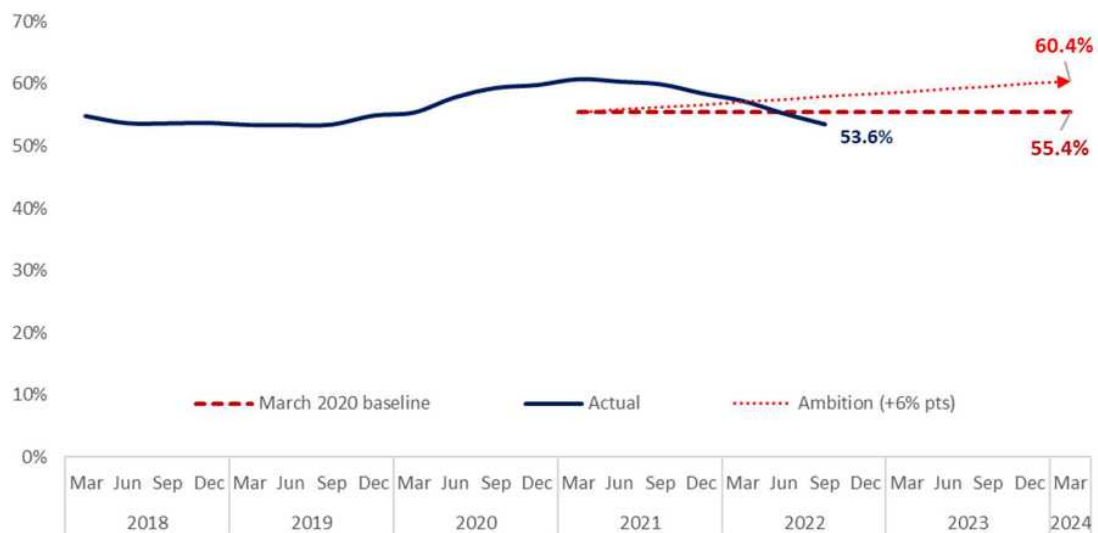
4. The Local Picture

- 4.1 Nottinghamshire Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) has been consistently monitoring public perceptions of the police in Nottinghamshire since 2017 as part of a robust social research programme.
- 4.2 All indicators of public confidence and trust in Nottinghamshire police saw an overall deterioration between March 2020 and December 2022, with overall public confidence falling from 55.3% prior to the Covid outbreak in March 2020 to 53.6% in December 2022.
- 4.3 Changes in levels of public confidence have varied by area, with South Nottinghamshire (-6.7% pts) and Nottingham City (-3.8% pts) showing the most significant reductions, whilst public confidence in Mansfield and Ashfield increased by 2.8% in 2022 compared to the pre-pandemic baseline.
- 4.4 In South Nottinghamshire, a deteriorating public confidence picture has been mirrored by reductions in the proportion of respondents feeling that the police 'understand local crime and ASB issues' and 'are dealing with issues that matter most to local people'. Similarly, in the City, reductions in public confidence have correlated with reductions in the proportion of respondents that feel the police a 'understand local crime and anti-social behaviour issues' and 'have a good reputation among local people'.
- 4.5 In Mansfield and Ashfield, around 51% of respondents stated that they had confidence in Nottinghamshire Police prior to the Covid outbreak in March 2020, with levels rising to 60% during the pandemic and remaining higher than the pre-pandemic baseline during the year to September 2022 (55%). This comparatively strong picture has been coupled with increases in the proportion of respondents feeling that the police 'are providing a visible presence where needed most' and 'are dealing with issues that matter most to local people'.

⁷ PEEL 2021/22 - An inspection of the Metropolitan Police

4.6 Lower levels of confidence are typically recorded in Bassetlaw, Newark and Sherwood, often compounded by challenges in establishing a visible presence across dispersed rural localities. Overall levels of trust and confidence in Bassetlaw, Newark and Sherwood were broadly in line with those seen pre-pandemic in the year to September 2022.

Fig 1. Taking Everything into account – I have confidence in the police in my area (% Agree) Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Survey 2018-2022. N = 21,500 over 5 years



4.7 Other research has highlighted a number of demographic groups exhibiting lower than average levels of trust and confidence in the police. These include:

- Some youth cohorts, including Black children and teenagers, as highlighted via local⁸ and national⁹ research and engagement. Many participating in local peer-led research expressed a lack of rapport with the police but recognised the impact that social media can have on shaping their perceptions. A national Crest Advisory report published in 2022 captured the views of 1,542 children and teenagers in 2022, of which 73% said they trust the police, compared with 62% in the adult survey. Among the sample, however, only 36% of Black children and teenagers (and 28% of Black Caribbean children and teenagers) stated that they trust the police compared with 75% of young White people
- New and Emerging Communities: Research¹⁰ undertaken by Nottingham Trent University in 2019 highlighted the range of barriers to engagement between the police, other service users and new and emerging communities, which include language, culture and experience of police corruption and brutality in their home

⁸ Nottinghamshire Youth Commission: Report to the police and crime commissioner, Leaders Unlocked July 2022

⁹ Forgetting voices: Policing, stop and search and the perspective of Black children, Crest Advisory, December 2022

¹⁰ New and Emerging Communities, Nottingham Trent University, August 2019

country. Respondents felt that more could be done by the police to build trust with young people from migrant communities and certain migrant groups who, due to negative treatment and stigmatisation are highly distrusting of the police.

5. Opportunities and risks

5.1 Home Affairs Committee inquiry into policing priorities undertaken in 2022 acknowledged the crisis in public confidence fueled by high profile misconduct cases and the transparency/scrutiny afforded via mass media and social media. The inquiry made recommendations for:

- Stronger engagement with communities: Arguing that community / local policing should be put back at the forefront in order to restore trust. Each force should a staff member(s) dedicated to coordinating community engagement between the force and members of the public. Specific consideration should be given to communities where public confidence has eroded over recent years.
- Greater recognition of the impact of the fear of crime: Policing efforts to build trust and confidence within the community should be informed by better understanding, awareness, and proactivity in the response to fear of crime versus presence of crime.
- The prioritisation of prevention: People must be protected from being victims of crime and must be free from fear of crime. It is important that police forces in England and Wales strike a balance between a focus on preventing and solving crime and carrying out their other functions

5.2 Analysis undertaken by the College of Policing¹¹ in 2020 also highlighted a range of converging factors that are likely to impact upon public trust and confidence and the level and complexity of issues facing the service over the coming years. These include:

- An expanding and unregulated information space: The growing volume and resonance of digital disinformation presents an escalating threat which may be compounded by the speed in which false, misleading or abusive content and 'deep fake' material information and disinformation can 'go viral'. The paper highlights a growing role for the police service in responding to fake news and propaganda, especially in the midst of a crisis where existing social tensions may be exasperated.

¹¹ *Policing in England and Wales: Future Operating Environment 2040, College of Policing, August 2020*

- The digital revolution presents both opportunities for the police and partner organisations, but also risks to the intimate connection with the public, particularly among marginalised communities already affected by digital exclusion. New technologies allow people to sidestep existing institutions and systems as the digital environment becomes increasingly complex and chaotic. This shift over the next 20 years may require the police service to find new ways of cultivating public trust in the context of populist attacks on the relevance and accountability of institutions and increasing calls for devolution of power to the regional or local level.
- Artificial intelligence has potential to become the most transformative technology of the next 20 years, enabling powerful surveillance and crime prevention tools, improving the speed in which criminals and their motives are identified, enabling neighbourhood policing teams to better understand community dynamics and improving the response to major incidents and calls for service. It is critical, however that public trust and confidence is maintained throughout policing's 'AI journey' alongside the necessary ethical frameworks and regulation.

6. Tackling the drivers of public confidence in the police in Nottinghamshire

- 6.1 The Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner have undertaken a range of activity to better understand and respond to the factors impacting upon public confidence in Nottinghamshire. This has included the commissioning of qualitative focus groups to supplement findings from the Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Survey.
- 6.2 To strengthen assurance in respect of police **integrity and professional standards**, the Commissioner continues to hold the Chief Constable to account for delivery via her weekly 1:1 meetings and monthly Accountability Board. This includes reviewing progress in addressing recommendations from HMICFRS inspections and IOPC reports. Papers and actions captured as part of the Accountability Board are proactively published on the Commissioner's website. The Commissioner also has a key role in supporting the Independent Community Scrutiny Panel and youth and adult Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) in scrutinising police processes, activity and outcomes.
- 6.3 A wide range of activity is underway to improve engagement and trust and confidence among **specific cohorts and communities**. This includes, for example, targeted work in schools via Schools Education and Intervention Officers (SEIOs), the force's Cadets programme and the work of the Nottinghamshire Youth Commission in exploring the factors affecting public confidence in the police among young people across Nottinghamshire. The OPCC is also working with the force to

ensure delivery of the national Police Race Action Plan¹² which aims to develop a police service that is trusted by Black people and where all communities are effectively protected and not over-policed.

6.4 **Quality of service** remains an important factor impacting upon residents' experience and perceptions of the police. The Commissioner continues to play a key role in monitoring and holding the Chief Constable to account for delivery of quality policing services, monitoring service satisfaction among victims of hate crime and domestic abuse via the force's quality assurance processes and tracking general satisfaction with policing services via the Police and Crime Survey. The Commissioner also has a key role in monitoring and overseeing the police complaints process.

6.5 The force and OPCC have worked extensively to improve police **visibility and community impact**, following investment in neighbourhood policing as part of the national Police Uplift Programme and 'Operation Reacher' activity, alongside targeted investment in programmes such as Safer Streets and the Safety of Women at Night Fund. The neighbourhood-level priority setting process continues to identify and address the issues impacting most on local communities as part of a multi-agency problem solving approach. PCC engagement activities such as walkabouts with neighborhood inspectors and kitchen talks are also helping to develop a richer understanding of public perception and the issues impacting upon local communities.

7. Recommendations for improvement

7.1 The OPCC's analysis of public trust and confidence in the police in Nottinghamshire identifies key recommendations for improvement in 2023. These include:

- Targeted communication and engagement activity, with a focus on areas of low or deteriorating trust and confidence, including the city and our rural communities. This should be informed by our emerging evidence of the issues impacting upon public confidence in local communities
- Continue to improve the transparency of local accountability arrangements through the promotion and pro-active publication of assurance reports, particularly in relation to the scrutiny of complaints and outcomes from independent scrutiny panels.

¹² Police Race Action Plan- Improving policing for Black people 2022

- Robust scrutiny and oversight of training and development needs and the Professional Standards implications of the rapid programme of officer recruitment seen over recent years
- Support delivery / implementation of the national Police Race Action Plan, particularly in driving improvements in workforce representation; ensuring Black communities are treated fairly and equitably and not over-policed; and in ensuring Black people are not under-protected
- Work to ensure that expectations of the police are effectively managed among victims of crime and ASB and that victims and communities receive timely high-quality feedback on the progress of their case and activity and interventions undertaken.
- Review and, if necessary, implement recommendations from key local and national reports such as the Home Affairs Committee inquiry into policing priorities, Nottinghamshire Youth Commission’s review of public confidence in the police, HMICFRS thematic review of Vetting and Misconduct and any learning from Baroness Casey’s Review of the Metropolitan Police
- Drive further improvements in the response to issues of greatest community concern via the Neighbourhood Priority setting process and PCC’s Anti-Social Behaviour Taskforce.
- Strengthen and re-invigorate Nottinghamshire’s Independent Community Scrutiny Panel and establish a Youth IAG to scrutinise police interactions and use of powers

7.2 The Commissioner will continue to monitor changing trends in public perception, trust and confidence in the police as part of her rolling programme of attitudinal research. This will be considered alongside evidence and assurance of performance in respect of integrity and professional standards, quality of service and the visibility and impact of policing in local communities.

7.3 Furthermore, the OPCC will continue to work with the police and local partners to develop our understanding the factors impacting upon public confidence in the police and other public services in Nottinghamshire. This will include further insight into variations in levels and trends in public confidence seen across the police force area and work to explore opportunities for benchmarking with other force areas.

8. Human Resources Implications
--

None - this is an information report.

9. Equality Implications

Disproportionality in perceptions and experience of policing remains an important consideration.

10. Risk Management

There are no significant risks within this report that need to be drawn to the attention of the Police and Crime Panel.

11. Policy Implications and links to the Police and Crime Plan Priorities

This paper underpins a clear ambition set out within the Make Notts Safe Plan to drive improvements in local trust and confidence in the police.

12. Changes in Legislation or other Legal Considerations

Changes to the Specified Information Order came into force on 31 May 2021 requiring Police and Crime Commissioners to publish on their websites. The Commissioner has taken steps to ensure transparency and proactive publication of key decisions and performance outcomes.

13. Background Papers (relevant for Police and Crime Panel Only)

Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Needs Assessment 2022

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Sharon Caddell, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer of the Nottinghamshire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Tel: 0115 8445998

Dan Howitt, Head of Strategy and Performance of the Nottinghamshire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, ExecutiveSupport@notts.police.uk, Tel: 0115 8445998