

ACRO Governance Board Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 16th February 2021 via Microsoft Teams

1. Attendance

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|-----|----------------------------|--|
| 1.1 | AC Martin Hewitt (MH) | National Police Chiefs' Council (<i>Chair</i>) |
| | Kate Boynton (KB) | Hampshire Constabulary |
| | Robert Price (RP) | ACRO |
| | C/Supt Tony Rowlinson (TR) | ACRO |
| | David Pennant (DP) | Immigration Enforcement |
| | Paula Pinches (PP) | National Crime Agency |
| | Steve Collins (SC) | International Crime Coordination Centre |
| | Lorraine Henderson (LH) | Police Scotland |
| | Helen Nisbet (HN) | Scottish Government |
| | Louise Cooper (LC) | Justice Northern Ireland |
| | James Payne (JP) | Hampshire OPCC |
| | Iain Hall (IH) | PSNI |
| | Susan Francis (SF) | ACRO |
| | Chloe Bowler (CB) | ACRO |
| | Tanya Smith (TS) | ACRO (<i>minute taker</i>) |
- 1.2 Apologies were received from Nikita Cannon, Kath Clarke, Robert McMurrin, Ian Johnston and ACC Peter Ayling.

2. Minutes and Action log

- 2.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 9th December 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record. These will now be published externally.
- 2.2 The action log was updated.

3. Head of ACRO Update

- 3.1 TR introduced himself as the new Head of ACRO and gave a brief resume of his work undertaken in Hampshire Constabulary prior to joining ACRO. TR is settling in well whilst learning all the different strands of ACRO and is keen to speak to all key players ACRO liaises with.

4. ACRO Finance Report

- 4.1 SF thanked the board for their support over the last year in assisting ACRO in their financial conundrums. SF reported that in the period 1st April to 31st December 2020, ACRO generated an income of £9,673,900 with expenditure of £8,786,948; giving a surplus for the financial year to date of £886,952. Total income for the period is £1,126,747 less than budgeted with income from Police Certificates 32% below budget and 21% down on last year. All police forces have been invoiced and have paid a contribution of the £2.8k towards the 2020/21 costs.

The income includes the £1.38m received under the Government income loss recovery scheme and represents a proportion of the lost income from Police Certificates and Non Police Agency work due to the pandemic for the period April to July 2020.

Total expenditure for the period is £2,495,965 less than budgeted. In particular, employee costs are £1,693,385 less than budgeted and savings of £101k in supplies and services for costs such as postage, printing supplies, certificate paper and Worldpay charges relate directly to the reduced demand earlier in the year for police certificates.

The volume of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's) continues to increase and this work is being resources primarily by additional temporary staff and overtime. This allows ACRO staff to focus on core business activities, which are now nearing pre-Covid levels. The cost to ACRO to develop, process and report on FPN's for the period 1st April – 31st December 2020 was £1m. A funding offer from the Home Office, amounting to 80% of staffing costs and 100% consumable costs. To date this would be £816k. ACRO would therefore need to absorb the difference of the £183k.

In terms of the forecast position for the current financial year, the total income is anticipated to be £14.3m, against a total income budget of £14.8m, the total expenditure is forecast to be £13.4m, saving 10% against budget of £15m. The cost of developing and processing Covid-19 FPN's is likely to circa £1.7m by the end of the financial year.

The year-end reserve level is projected to be £5,423,378, which includes the £2m surety credit that ACRO drew down. In view of the funding received under the 'Income loss recovery scheme', ACRO are now in a position to repay part of the surety and there is a proposal to pay back £1m to the OPCC. JP stated this option was discussed with ACRO prior to the meeting and the OPCC would be pleased to receive back the £1m to add to back in to the surety. JP wished to formally thank SF and the ACRO Finance Team for the excellent work they have provided over the last year on ACRO's finances. MH echoed these sentiments. All colleagues agreed with the recommendation of returning £1m and thanked the PCC for the loan of the original £2m surety.

In January 2021, Chiefs Constable's Council approved ACRO's funding request of £3.5m for 2021/22. A negotiated outcome has been reached in relation to the EU Exit. All ACRO staff currently allocated to EU Exit work will be stood down or revert to substantive posts by 31st March 2021. There will be no funding available for EU Exit activities in 2021/22. If any EU Exit work is required in the next financial year, this will need to be supported from existing resources.

5. EU Exit

5.1 Home Office Update

No update was provided on this occasion.

5.2 International Crime Coordination Centre (ICCC)

SC confirmed that following RM's retirement, ACC Peter Ayling has been appointed as the new NPCC portfolio holder for EU Exit and International Criminality. The impacts of

EU Exit are still unknown however generally work is busy for the ICC team. There has been a significant rise (20%) in phone calls for support. Whilst face to face training is unable to go ahead, the team have been utilising Zoom. There have been an 84% increase in Q3 for training which equates to around 6,500 people. The Operational guidance is being used widely by forces and in the first 12 days of January alone, there was under 600 separate pieces of guidance downloaded by forces. This is reassuring and shows forces know where to go to get the guidance they need. The International Policing App has been released and 34 forces have access to the app to date, work is progressing with the remaining forces.

5.3 Joint Operating Model Update
Closed session

6. International Services Portfolio

6.1 Closed session

6.2 Closed session

6.3 Closed session

7. National Services Portfolio

7.1 TR stated the 2020/21 financial year applications for all disclosure products up to and including 31st December 2020 are as follows:

• Police Certificates	71,280	-32% YoY
• ICPC	6,343	-28%
• Subject Access	22,044	-24%
• Unit total	99,667	-30%

7.2 TR stated that in April the difference year on year so April 2019 to April 2020 was -61% due to the pandemic, however in December the figure was down to -12% which shows there is a steady recovery in demand across the financial year. The majority

7.3 As part of ACRO's delivery in Project Soteria there is now a phase of publicising the ICPC product which in turn could bring greater volumes of ICPC's to be processed.

7.4 The demand for #NE checks rallied in the second and third quarters of this year. November and December figures were boosted by the bulk bi-annual restricted checks and service provision for the Children's and Family Court Advisory and Support Services (CAFCASS).

7.5 A new piece of business has begun with The Rail Delivery Group (RDG) who are a membership body paid for by UK Train Operating Companies (TOC). The TOC will prosecute fare evasion and the offence is required to be added to the PNC by the court for this process. ACRO are currently working through a contract to provide services for the wider RDG. This will provide a National Framework for TOC's to proceed

prosecutions for offences on the railway network, there is a potential annual income of around £390k.

7.6 ACRO continue their fundamental influence to the delivery of the enforcement element of the COVID 19 response on behalf of all 45 Police Forces nationally (England and Wales). Over the last week, the FPN team have logged 8,000 fines which is a huge increase on previous figures. ACRO Development and NPCC are collaboratively working towards the provision of a secondary Single Justice Procedure process (SJP) to be imminently implemented for post No 1 regulations from the 4th July 2020. This will not bring significant process changes for Home Office Forces however, ACRO will continue SJP file support for Ministry of Defence and British Transport Police whilst assisting Forces further more in their prosecutions of breaches in relation to Coronavirus regulations.

7.7 There is still a desire to collaborate with an external IT company to secure a database which will be utilised for all FPN work completed by ACRO. This will service all areas of processing undertaken at ACRO creating data efficiencies and data governance. This ongoing piece of work is on track with further citations made at pace to compliment the changes experienced by parliament.

8. Intelligence and Operations Portfolio

8.1 CB provided the board with an update on intelligence development within her command. Due to the sensitivities within this portfolio, this update was not minuted.

9. Development and Projects Portfolio

9.1 Closed session

10. Information Management Portfolio

10.1 TR confirmed that in 2020, a total of 2,233 applications for record deletion have been received for the calendar year. 1,716 of these have been sent to forces for review and 1139 decisions have been processed by Public Access so far.

10.2 In 2020, 923 data breaches were recorded; this equates to 0.1% of 733,814 data transactions. Five of these resulted in referrals to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO). To date all ACRO cases reviewed by the ICO have resulted in no further action. ACRO have a strong relationship with the ICO and a continual improvement plan is in place for Data Breaches.

10.3 A discussion has taken place with the Home Office PND Innovation Team. They are scoping whether the current arrangement for ACRO processing subject access requests (SAR) on behalf of police forces for the Police National Computer (PNC) could be expanded to include the Police National Database (PND) were LEDS to replace PND.

11. Central Services

11.1 Human Resources

TR stated the income from police certificates has predominantly stabilised, it has been agreed that external recruitment can now recommence. All requests for recruitment are ratified at monthly Establishment meetings to ensure that staffing levels can continue to be closely scrutinised. In terms of leavers, there are a further 7 leavers in the pipeline, of these 4 are going to other roles in Hampshire Constabulary, 2 are agency workers leaving and 1 is becoming self-employed. It is anticipated that bulk recruitment roles in force will continue to impact on ACRO's workforce numbers in 2021.

Sickness absence has reduced since the end of both Q1 and Q2, although this may increase over the coming months as Covid -19 continues to take hold. In particular, the average days lost per person is reducing steadily. The top reason for absence remains as 'Anxiety/Stress' which is believed to be Covid related. Long term sickness is decreasing gradually – it was high (4%) in April 2020. In December it stands at 1.89%. Although long term sickness cases have reduced to 2 at the end of Q3, both cases (and previous cases that have returned to work in December 2020) have been off for a significant amount of time, hence the % of long term absence in hours shows a slight increase.

ACRO's wellbeing plans for 2021 will focus on staff mental health, with planned virtual mental health workshops provided by Solent Mind. Further focus on what the AWIN group can do to further support our staff during the pandemic will be progressed. There will be some focus around DSE with reminders and practical tips on how to work safely from home.

11.2 Communications

The team have been liaising with the NPCC and ICC in relation to the comms planning for the EU Exit and preparing a Q&A briefing. ACRO staff have been regularly updated with internal blogs to keep them up to date on the developments of the EU Exit.

TR is keen for the new Communications Manager to develop the marketability of ACRO to give more external confidence. This will be worked on over the forthcoming months.

11.3 IT

TR stated that work is continuing to bring the ongoing maintenance of the hardware platform for ACRO back into Hampshire/TVP JICT support. This has now been actioned for the VMware Server Licencing. This will also ensure compliance with the National Programmes of work, which is essential as ACRO sits on the Hampshire/TVP JICT networks. Furthermore there is future appetite being scoped for the use of robotics in ACRO and some of the processes which are undertaken. MH asked RP to link in with IB from Police ICT to which RP confirmed discussions have taken place already with IB.

12. Risk Register

12.1 At the time of the meeting ACRO had the following risks identified within the Risk Register. This was noted by all colleagues.

Risk Summary							
Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Total Score	Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Total Score
ICCE44 reopened	5	4	20	IT24	4	4	16
IT21	4	4	16	IT25	2	5	10

13. Any Other Business

13.1 MH thanked ACRO for all their national assistance to the Covid-19 pandemic which was appreciated by nationwide colleagues.

14. Date of Next Meeting

14.1 The next meeting will take place on Thursday 13th May 2021 at 1100hrs.