

## **Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner – Written evidence (NTL0045)**

The Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, Katy Bourne, would like to bring to the Committee's attention two notable digital programmes that she has led on to demonstrate the important role that Police and Crime Commissioners play in driving technological innovation and reform within policing and criminal justice. Katy Bourne is previous chair of the Police ICT Company, now Police Digital Services (PDS) and is a current member of the PDS board. She is also the previous chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, Police Technology and Digital Portfolio Group.

### **Video Enabled Justice (VEJ) Programme - 2016 -2020**

The Video Enabled Justice (VEJ) Programme, was initiated and sponsored by PCC Katy Bourne in 2016 to demonstrate how technology could be better used to more efficiently co-ordinate the attendance of defendants and other court participants at remand hearings and police officers at trials by video to save operational time and cost. The programme was funded over a 4-year period by £14.2m from the Police Innovation Fund (PIF) and Police Transformation Fund (PTF) to develop and implement a solution to drive efficiencies and maximise the benefits of video in the criminal justice system. This implementation phase concluded in March 2020, with the Technology Enabled Police Witness Live Links use-case successfully implemented in Magistrates' Courts in a five-force region.

This investment allowed the VEJ Programme to capture the scale of inefficiencies impacting on police witnesses in the criminal justice system. The roll-out of the Video Enabled Justice (VEJ/GTL) solution provided, for the first time, comprehensive management information data as to the utilisation of police witnesses. These insights highlighted significant inefficiencies such as the over-warning of police witnesses, and delayed release of police witnesses to operational duties. In addition, the programme identified further opportunities to policing in terms of reducing costs arising from the presence of an in-person 'officer in the case' (OIC) at almost all Crown Court trials.

At a time when the criminal justice system was under increased pressure, the VEJ Programme identified a transformational 'invest to save' opportunity for policing through the national expansion of Technology Enabled Police Witness Live Links (Police Witness Co-ordination) and rollout of a Remote PACE Interview Solution.

Following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Lord Chief Justice gave direction for increased use of video and audio in hearings in courts across England and Wales. The VEJ Programme was commissioned by HMCTS to introduce VRH in Sussex and Surrey with the VEJ video manager solution (GTL) and to expand the operation beyond just the detainee being remote to an operating model which included remote solicitors, interpreters, probation, and youth offending teams.

Between the 1 April 2020 and 25 May 2020, more than 1,000 VRHs had taken place through the VEJ/GTL technology solution across the five-force region,

demonstrating the immediate assistance provided to the criminal justice system at an unprecedented moment. Moreover, in June 2020, 98% of detainees appeared remotely for their first appearance remand hearing in Sussex and 88% of all remand hearings had a remote CPS prosecutor attending. This data evidenced that the VEJ/GTL solution was being utilised successfully and as designed.

On the 1 May 2020, the VEP Programme received notification from the Deputy Senior Presiding Judge (DSPJ) for England and Wales that the VEJ/GTL solution should cease operating. The DSPJ cited a judicial decision for one single technology solution to be operated across all criminal jurisdictions (CVP). Although all five forces ceased use of the VEJ/GTL solution by the 31 December 2020 for VRH and Police Witness Live Links, Sussex and Surrey continued to utilise GTL and Pexip licenses to enable Defence Solicitors to join PACE interviews remotely.

The VEJ programme demonstrated the capability of CJ partners to integrate digital/video technologies to schedule and co-ordinate the appearance of court participants in a far more efficient manner and importantly identified the sizable savings that could be achieved by police forces by using the technology for other 'use cases' (operational applications) such as police officers giving evidence at trial by live link video and for co-ordinating the appearance of police, defendants, legal advisors and other representatives such as interpreters during police (PACE) interviews.

As a result of the findings of the VEJ programme, PCC Katy Bourne was successful in securing a one-year Spending Review settlement of £4m from the Home Office for a follow up programme to exploit the benefits of using the innovative digital technology for police co-ordinating the appearance and early release of police witnesses at trial and allowing police PACE interviews to be conducted remotely. Working with Police Digital Services (PDS) the new Video Enabled Policing (VEP) programme became part of the National Capabilities Programmes, hosted by the Police Digital Services.

The Home Office recognised that VEP could leverage the investment that was already being made in the roll out of the National Enabling Programmes' (NEP) and ensure that police officers would be empowered to better exploit the use of video conferencing technology, reduce bureaucracy, cost, and unproductive police time.

### **Video Enabled Policing (VEP) Programme – 2021 – Present**

The new and exciting VEP Programme sets out two transformational operating models to save police officer and staff time.

Police Witness Co-ordination – enable police officers to be far better co-ordinated and scheduled in giving evidence by video in criminal trials,

PACE Interview Co-ordination (or PACE-IC) - allow police PACE interviews to be conducted remotely, in and out of force areas.

The programme will enable forces to leverage a significant return on their investment for utilising VEP as part of the recently established infrastructure and tools of the National Enabling Programme. A key strategic objective for VEP is investing in innovation, technology, and new ways of working and VEP will maximise productivity and efficiency gains for policing and encourage greater collaboration with CJ partners.

Although technology serves as the enabling component, the programme is focused on the realisation of benefit and value to police forces, tangibly making a difference to officers, detainees, and a variety of other stakeholders. The scope of the programme covers the process re-engineering that surrounds these business activities to drive out savings and efficiency, the building of the underpinning technology that make it possible to work differently, the roll out into police forces to realise the value, and ultimately the transition of the solution into a service provided by the Police Digital Service.

At a time when the criminal justice system (CJS) is again under increased pressure, the VEP Programme has identified a transformational 'invest to save' opportunity for policing through the national expansion of the two use-cases: 1) Police Witness Co-ordination (PWC) and 2) PACE Interview Co-ordination (PACE-IC).

**Police Witness Co-ordination** - Co-designed solution between policing and CJ partners, to organise and co-ordinate both in-person and remote police witness appearances in court more efficiently. **National benefits of up to £34.3m per annum.**

Using the NEP Azure infrastructure and M365 tools, the PWC solution works with the common platform and the HMCTS Cloud Video Platform to seamlessly provide remote video testimony and attendance coordination with the CPS and HMCTS.

**PACE Interview Co-ordination** - Where a police officer is required to interview a detainee both 'in force' and 'out of force'. Through efficient and effective co-ordination, the solution will drive additional benefits through business processes and functionality, specifically designed to co-ordinate interview participants and the scheduling of interviews more efficiently. **National benefits of up to £23.7m per annum (£7.3m cashable savings).**

At the heart of the PACE-IC solution is a PowerApp that provides business logic, information integration and a seamless interface to Outlook, Calendars, Email and SMS. Leveraging the NEP Teams infrastructure, video conferencing is available to all

These solutions will be designed to enable the police and criminal justice partners to collaborate and share information more efficiently. The VEP Programme is making use of infrastructure and tools which are already available to forces within the Microsoft 365 suite, deployed by the National Enabling Programme.

The PCC is delighted to announce that the first developmental lead forces to utilise VEP will be Sussex Police and Surrey Police commencing in 2022.

## **Sussex Local Criminal Justice Board – Criminal Justice Visualisation Tool (CJVT) Pilot**

As a result of the work on VEJ, PCC Katy Bourne identified an opportunity with the business partner engaged on the programme, to develop and pilot, a tool that could be used by CJ partners to more effectively present joined up data. Therefore, PCC Bourne as chair of the Sussex LCJB secured agreement of the board to pilot a new innovative Criminal Justice Visualisation Tool that would allow CJ users to look at data collected by partners from crime to justice disposal, through a single lens. By doing so the Tool will help better identify where problems exist and drive greater efficiencies in the delivery of justice.

The ground-breaking CJVT pilot is looking to commence in October 2021 in Sussex for 1 year, following the securing of a new data sharing agreements between Sussex Police, Crown Prosecution Service, HMCTS and Probation Service. It is being observed by the Home Office and Ministry of Justice as part of the new Strategic Data Sharing initiative and co-sponsored by Police Digital Services working closely with national CJ partners.

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