

Devon and Cornwall Police Authority MINUTES

A meeting of **Devon and Cornwall Police Authority** was held on Friday 6 May 2011 at Police Headquarters, Middlemoor, Exeter starting at 10.00 hrs.

Present:

Chair: Mr M Bull

Members: Sir Simon Day, Mrs L Dunn, Mr M Hicks, Mr D Money, Mrs J Owen, Mr D Percival, Mr B Preston, Mrs L Price, Mr J Hart, Ms J Norton, Mrs L Williams.

Independent Members of Standards Committee: Mrs A Mayes.

Officers in Attendance

Police Authority:

Ms S Howl (Chief Executive), Miss J Norris (Assistant Chief Executive), Mr D Walton (Treasurer), Ms J Hall-Williams (HR Advisor), Mr D Eaton (Meetings Administrator).

Police Force:

Chief Constable S Otter, Mr S Sawyer (Deputy Chief Constable) Mr P Netherton (Assistant Chief Constable), Mrs S Taylor (Assistant Chief Constable), Ms D Simpson (Assistant Chief Constable), Mrs S Goscomb (Director of Finance and Resources).

The Chairman opened the meeting and informed the Committee that business would be suspended at 10:30am to receive Sgt Paul Glennon and Spud, the National Police Dog Champion 2011.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr M Clayton, Mr B Greenslade, Mr B Maddern, Mrs V Pengelly, Mr M Stamp, Mrs J Stanhope, Mrs J Zito.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Items Requiring Urgent Attention

The Chairman presented a report which had been prepared to inform members of the two urgent decisions that were made at the last Strategic Planning & Co-ordination Committee (SPCC), which was held on the 11 April 2011:

i) Introduction of a Revised Allowable Mileage Rate

The Chairman outlined the increase in the AMAP rate from 40p to 45p, as announced by the Government in the March Budget. As the rate paid to Police Authority staff had been tied to the rate paid to the constabulary since 2005, the approval by the constabulary of the increased rate of 45p would be applied to Police Authority staff. The Chief Executive had approved the increase of rate for Independent Custody Visitors under the authority delegated to the Chief Executive by the Constitution.

RESOLVED to note the urgent decision in respect of the increased AMAP rate as taken at the Strategic Planning and Co-ordination Committee on 11 April 2011.

ii) Financial Flexibility in the Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Chairman outlined the financial benefits of making a capitalisation application to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), and the requirement for this to be submitted by 12 May 2011.

SPCC had approved the proposal to make a capitalisation application, and to delegate the required authority to the Chair of the SPCC, the Vice Chair of the Resources Committee, and the Treasurer.

RESOLVED to note the urgent decision to make a capitalisation application as taken at the Strategic Planning and Co-ordination Committee on 11 April 2011.

4. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman referred to the briefing note on the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill which had been circulated to members, and provided a brief update on current activity in relation to the Bill, including at the Association of Police Authorities (APA), the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and within Devon and Cornwall.

5. Minutes

In response to comments from members, the Chairman proposed that consideration of the minutes be deferred until after the final item on the agenda to allow a revised version of the minutes to be brought back to the meeting.

6. Performance Report

The Deputy Chief Constable highlighted the key achievements of the Force as outlined in the report. Notable achievements included:

- The very successful performance of Devon and Cornwall Police over the past year as highlighted in the report. The Police Authority and Chief Officers had contributed to this success, but the exceptionally hard work of officers and staff throughout the Force had been the key factor underpinning the achievements of the past year.
- The key question of how good a job the Police are perceived to be doing in local areas received a very impressive 64.5% of responses at the excellent/good level. Devon and Cornwall achieved third place nationally in this category.
- One area of concern remained the figures for road traffic casualties. Although the number killed had fallen, the number of serious injuries had increased and was a cause for concern at this time of year, as the summer season traditionally brings an increase in the number of deaths and serious injuries.

Other issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- In relation to Violence with Injury the Committee were assured that the data produced in Devon and Cornwall was accurate and of the highest quality, but that the Authority could have no influence over the number of prosecutions brought by the Crown Prosecution Service compared to the number of charges brought by the Force.
- The importance attached by members both to recognising the outstanding achievements of the Force whilst continuing to retain sight of areas of potential improvement.
- The increase in the numbers for killed and seriously injured in road traffic accidents was set against the significant reductions in these figures over the last 10 years, and members were assured that the specific causes of accidents involving death and serious injury were thoroughly investigated in an attempt to establish any general causal factors.
- The extent to which figures relating to road traffic accidents and violence were influenced by the extremely complicated causal factors which were frequently involved.
- The scale of the personal and family tragedies which lay behind the figures.
- The potentially negative impact on tourism of rising road traffic accident figures.
- The committee were reassured that the Force continued to retain its focus on reversing the upward trend in the figures.
- The Committee was informed that there could be some relationship between the quality and nature of roads, and the volumes of traffic, as experienced by different counties.
- It was suggested that a report looking more deeply into the issues surrounding road traffic accident figures be brought to a future meeting of the Protective Services Committee.

In concluding this item the Chairman emphasised the positive outcomes of the report, with the first 40% plus rating for Positive Outcomes a major achievement for the Force.

8. Chief Constable's report

The Chief Constable's report provided an update to members on the major strategic and operational matters facing the Force since the last meeting of the Police Authority. Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

Blueprint Update.

- The 20 May was viewed as a pivotal moment with the introduction of changing roles and shift patterns having the most significant impact on operational staff.
- Sergeants and Inspectors would be attending briefing events, with the achievement of alignment an important objective. Although 20 May was viewed as an important moment in time, the process is ongoing, with a continuing emphasis on service to the public.
- It was anticipated that 20 May would be successful. Meetings continue to take place three times per week for planning and co-ordination purposes. In addition the Chief Officers Group oversees a 24 hours per day co-ordinating group.
- The helpful and supportive role of the Police Federation had been very welcome, particularly given the pressures on the Federation during a period of unprecedented change.

Supporting Colleagues Through Change.

- The Force had retained the services of "Right Management" to provide advice and guidance for police staff and police officers who would be leaving the organisation.
- This would be provided through a series of seminars and one to one coaching sessions.

Crime and Public Confidence.

- Attention was drawn to the six per cent reduction in total crime over the past year, and the reduction of ten per cent in acquisitive crime against the Police Authority target of five per cent.
- The rise in public confidence (excellent or good) to 64.5% was a significant achievement during a period of extensive change.
- The Force did not accept that crime figures would necessarily rise because of the impact of spending cuts, although this may happen due to other changing social factors.

"Demanding Times" HMIC report.

- The HMIC report had been intended to define the term "front line" and to measure police visibility and availability. However, the Force did not accept that the data produced had succeeded in measuring visibility.
- The shifts on which the conclusions of the report had been based had provided a disproportionately low score for availability, although the Force accepted that the deployment of staff under the existing shift pattern needed to be revised, and this was taking place. The methodology underpinning the report had been universally condemned nationally.

The Winsor Report. Part 1 of the review had been submitted in March 2011. The key proposals, concerning bonus and overtime payments, reduced allowances and the proposed new allowances were highlighted. The report was now with the Police Negotiating Board which would produce recommendations in July 2011.

The Japanese Earthquake. The role of Devon and Cornwall in supporting the "on-call region" (Wales) in responding to a Government request to establish a Casualty Bureau was outlined. This was co-ordinated through the Police National Information Co-ordination Centre (PNICC), and involved the provision of information gathering, and answering telephone enquiries. The work of Devon and Cornwall had been significant and well-received.

Operation Goodrich. This particularly difficult operation was carried out in a very professional and dignified manner, and resulted in some very positive press coverage of the operation and investigation.

Anti-Social Behaviour and Diversion Schemes. The Force would be launching three innovative diversion schemes to help reduce antisocial behaviour, alcohol-related disorder and cannabis possession on 11 May 2011. Issues discussed in consideration of this scheme included:

- The use of a Penalty Notice for Disorder (PND) for a range of minor offences in return for attendance at a challenging and interactive awareness course at a cost of £40 rather than paying the £80 fine. In response to questions from Members the Chief Constable provided additional detail on the operation of the new initiatives.
- PNDs are used mainly for alcohol-related incidents where the reduced cost provides an incentive to attend courses and change behaviour.
- Courses which are attended as a result of speeding offences are not discounted as the incentive is provided by the waving of penalty points in return for attending the course.

Meeting of the Chief Constable and the Chairman with local MPs. The Chief constable and Chairman met with MPs from the Force area on a one to one basis. This had been a useful exercise and an opportunity to brief each MP on the reorganisation of the Force and to discuss issues affecting the constituency of each MP.

TRiM National Emergency Services Award for Innovation. Trauma Risk incident Management, pioneered by the Royal Marines, was launched by the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary in 2006 in order to support staff when they have been exposed to traumatic events. The award recognised the huge effort involved on the part of Marilyn Wignall and the team of TRiM practitioners.

Operation Zephyr. Zephyr is a collaborative operation uniting the South West region to combat serious and organised crime. Since the launch of the operation more than 60 arrests had been made and assets to the value of approximately £500,000, plus £300,000 in cash, had been seized. In addition, weapons, fraudulent documentation and substantial quantities of Class A and Class B drugs had been recovered. £13 million of assets had been seized under the Proceeds of Crime Act and may be confiscated subject to further investigation. This operation provides a valuable example of the benefits of collaboration between Forces.

Staff Exchange with the Fire Service. The secondment of Group Commander Chris Bridgemen from the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service to Devon and Cornwall Police was the first of a series of secondments between organisations within the public and private sectors. This secondment is designed to promote learning and collaboration between the two services.

Additional issues raised during discussion of the Chief Constable's Report included:

- Members were informed that assets seized as part of Operation Zephyr are used to cover the costs of the assets seizure team in the first instance. A substantial percentage of the costs would have to be met by the Force if the assets seizures were not possible.
- The success of the Blueprint process was emphasised. The impact of the changes to shift patterns and the need to monitor this at committee level was considered. The Local Policing and Confidence Committee would play the major role in monitoring the impact of the changes on services, but co-ordination of the work of committees was important to avoid duplication.
- The Chief Constable emphasised the importance of both managing change and monitoring the impact of the new arrangements on the delivery of service.

9. Draft Regional Collaboration Plan

The draft plan had been approved by each of the other four police authorities. The Chairman drew attention to the continuing importance of regional collaboration regardless of the uncertainty surrounding the future of

Police Authorities. It is apparent that HMIC intend to carry out an inspection, with the likelihood that this will take place during the coming months. In consideration of this item issues discussed included:

- Concern was expressed at the absence of any obvious benefits, including financial, to Devon and Cornwall arising from collaboration.
- The requirement to engage in collaboration was not optional.
- Concern that there was a risk element arising from the report as a whole, separate to the risk associated with individual aspects.
- The Chairman assured Members that concerns were understood and had been expressed elsewhere. However, collaboration was not optional for the Authority. Benefits could not be assessed purely in financial terms, and large scale financial savings were not likely despite ministerial assertions that savings would be made. Any significant savings were likely to be in the longer term through, for example, harmonisation of IT systems.
- Given that the plan required approval by each of the five Police Authorities in the region it was inevitable that the report would be generic in nature.
- The need to recognise the political dimension of collaboration was highlighted, including the value to Devon and Cornwall of retaining a leadership role within the programme. The impressive nature of the work undertaken by Devon and Cornwall in relation to the programme was emphasised.

RESOLVED to note the report.

10. Forfeiture of Police Pensions Process Review

During consideration of this item points of discussion included:

- Clarification was requested in relation to paragraphs 29 – 31 (attendance by a pensioner at meetings of the Authority).
- Concern that the report had been received late and that, therefore, members had had little opportunity to consider the report in detail.

RESOLVED i) to approve the document in principle.
ii) to delegate to Professional Standards Committee the authority to finalise the procedure.

11. Approval Process for the Statement of Accounts

RESOLVED to approve the processes outlined in the paper

At this point the revised minutes were circulated.

RESOLVED to approve the minutes, as amended, as an accurate record of the meeting of 18 February 2011.

The meeting ended at 11:30hrs