

Devon and Cornwall Police Authority

MINUTES

A meeting of the **Planning and Consultation Committee** was held on 5 April 2006 in the Conference Room, Endeavour House, Woodwater Park, Exeter, starting at 10.00am.

Present:

Chairman Mr M Nevitt

Members: M Bull, I Doggett, M Hicks, A Malcolm, S Malloni and Mr W Thomas.

Officers in Attendance: -

Police Force Superintendent I Ansell (Force Performance Manager), P Hutton (Director of Corporate Communications) and A Poole (Principal Analyst).

Police Authority R Martin (Policy Officer) and J Norris (Assistant Chief Executive) [items 1 to 6 inc only]

PC/180 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mr G Hicks and Mr D Money.

PC/181 Declarations of Interests

No declarations of interest were made in respect of any item on the agenda.

PC/182 Minutes

- PC/170 – Mr Thomas stated he offered his apologies for the meeting on 1 February 2006.
- PC/172 - The Assistant Chief Executive confirmed she was still compiling a summary of issues raised by Police Authority Liaison Meeting chairmen for presentation to the full Authority.
- PC/176 – The Policy Officer stated that it was not yet clear whether the evaluation of community engagement with minority communities report was complete.
An initial meeting of the Race Relations Independent Advisory Group took place on 2 February 2006. The Chairman stated this issue should be kept under close review in the future.
- PC/177 – The Policy Officer stated that the Police Authority Annual Policing Plan 2006-7 and Strategic Plan 2006-9 had both been published on the Police Authority and Constabulary websites. The points made by the Members at the last Committee were all addressed.
- PC/178 – second bullet point, should be changed to read "*The Force performs well in terms of fear of crime levels*".

RESOLVED The minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2006 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

PC/183 Public Awareness of Neighbourhood Policing – Update

The Director of Corporate Communications introduced a paper outlining action taken by the Corporate Communications Department and Basic Command Units (BCUs) to raise public awareness of Neighbourhood policing. Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- A stakeholder analysis will be carried out to clarify the roles of Neighbourhood Beat Managers.
- The Force website will be improved to provide a greater level of information on Neighbourhood Policing.
- The Marketing team can only promote what is being delivered locally, it cannot direct the resources themselves.

The Committee discussed the visibility and availability of Neighbourhood Beat Managers. Through Police Authority Liaison Meetings, the public state they are paying more for extra officers but they are not being seen. It is feared that the restructuring of the neighbourhood beats within 'Meeting the Challenge' could only accentuate this. This view was supported by several Members.

The Force Performance Manager, whilst not speaking on behalf of the 'Meeting the Challenge' team, suggested that Level 2 resources needed strengthening to become a strategic force. The rise in Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) would provide a visible, recognisable presence which would supplement not replace Neighbourhood Beat Managers. This Force had the lowest precept within the region. The Chairman stated that the Committee did not accept all these arguments. The Force needed to clarify the role of a Neighbourhood Beat Manager and then market it accordingly. Concern was also expressed that the burden of the abstractions to protective services was being placed upon the BCUs rather than Headquarters. It was pointed out that police visibility was an issue the public were unlikely ever to be totally satisfied with. Also, the time spent by officers on their beats had increased.

In summary, the Chairman reminded Members that the issue of declining public awareness of Neighbourhood Policing had been brought to this Committee before. It was important that the Committee kept this issue under close scrutiny. A report on the number of hits to the Force and Authority websites would be welcomed. Also, the Chairman asked for an evaluation of the effectiveness on the distribution of merchandise (pencils, stickers etc)

- RESOLVED:**
- (a) That the report be noted.
 - (b) That a report on the number and nature of website hits be prepared for a future meeting of the Committee.
 - (c) That an evaluation be prepared of the positive impact of the distribution of pencils, stickers and other such merchandise has on raising the public awareness of neighbourhood policing.

PC/184 Consultation – A strategic document

The Chairman opened the item by thanking Tamsin Kelland for the good quality of the report. The Chairman stated this should be seen as a strategic document that this Committee should draw upon in its future deliberations.

The Assistant Chief Executive introduced a report stating it was written by Tamsin Kelland in consultation with the Force Consultation Officer. Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- This report should be seen as a new start for the work of this Committee. It was intended to complement not replace the work of the Force and in no way suggests the work the Force is doing is wrong.
- Three recommended topics for consultation have been proposed. It would be important to monitor the action taken as a result of the survey findings rather than solely concentrate on the consultation activity itself. Consultation should make a difference.

Members considered the 3 proposed consultation options.

Stop and search – The Force Performance Manager reported that a piece of research has recently been commissioned to understand the training issues, the fall in the number of stop/ stop searches, the community impact and the success rates. The value of a public stop and search survey was questioned. It could be incorporated into a wider youth survey.

Staff survey – The Force has a staff survey planned but no date has been set yet.

The Assistant Chief Executive reported that the Head of Human Resources was keen on the idea of a staff survey to allow baseline data to be set to judge performance against in the future. The Police Authority has a duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act to conduct staff surveys.

Timing of a staff survey would be critical to ensure as many staff had the opportunity to be surveyed as possible due to shift patterns, periods of holiday etc.

The Force has invested in software that would assist with the survey through Expert.

Complaints – Following debate, Members agreed this to be a good area for consultation. Only a fraction of complaints against the police were upheld. The first cycle of a complaints survey is due in shortly. This is a

sensitive piece of work that is jointly managed by the Force Consultation Unit and Professional Standards Department.

Members also considered a Member's suggestion that the Police Authority should conduct consultation into Neighbourhood Policing. The reasons for this were as reported earlier in this meeting.

The Principal Analyst reported this would be complex below BCU level. There were a number of questions within the public survey that may already cater for this.

Following extensive discussion, it was proposed and seconded that Stop and Search should be removed as one of the consultation priorities for 2006/7 and replaced with Neighbourhood Policing.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the contents of the report are noted
- (b) That the consultation priorities for 2006/2007 are 1) Neighbourhood Policing 2) Staff Survey and 3) Complaints
- (c) That every effort is made, on every consultation target, to consult with hard to reach groups
- (d) That an assessment is undertaken to identify any gaps in the monitoring systems used to identify and track how consultation results can influence and when necessary bring about change within the organisation.

PC/185 Consultation – Methodologies and Resource Implications

The Assistant Chief Executive presented a paper on possible consultation methodologies and resource implications these would incur. Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Now that the consultation priorities have been agreed, the scoping work can begin.
- The Police Authority's community engagement budget for 2006/7 is £30,000. As a marker, this is the same as the cost of the MR(UK) survey that was commissioned as part of the Meeting the Challenge business case.
- In future, the Authority's consultation priorities and budget should be set in September to help with planning for the future. Whilst there needed to be co-operation between the Authority and the Constabulary, it was emphasised that this was Authority-led consultation.
- Work for Meeting the Challenge is identifying a list of stakeholders. This could be of use to the Authority for consultation arrangements.
- A nationally-led review of PCSOs has highlighted the public's views.
- There are sensitivities around use and storage of data relating to complaints surveys.

The Assistant Chief Executive reported that the consultation priorities would be scoped and an appropriate plan be brought to the next meeting of this committee.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the contents of the report are noted
- (b) That this report is used as a guide for when future consultations are considered
- (c) That the three consultation priorities would be scoped and an appropriate plan be brought to the next meeting of this committee.

PC/186 Roles and Responsibilities of Marketing Communication Officers in BCUs

The Director of Corporate Communications introduced a paper outlining the duties of BCU Marketing Communication Officers (MCOs). Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The MCOs report to the BCU Commanders and not to the Corporate Communications Department.
- MCOs enable wider communication of information across the Force. This enables local issues to be dealt with that wouldn't always be picked up by Middlemoor.
- There is a danger that, with the roles developing differently, they may not always reflect the corporate view.

The Chairman stated that, whilst it is still early in the development of MCOs, the effectiveness of the roles should be closely monitored to ensure they are the most appropriate use of resources.

RESOLVED

- (a) The Committee noted the contents of the report.

PC/187 Quality of Service Commitment

The Director of Corporate Communications presented a paper on the progress made for delivering the Quality of Service Commitment by November 2006. Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The Director of Corporate Communications is the Force Champion for the Quality of Service Commitment.
- A further update is due to be prepared within the next couple of weeks. This will be shared with Members of this Committee.
- There is no clear marker from the Home Office on how the standards will be assessed.
- The Quality of Service Commitment is linked to several workstreams within the Force including victim and witness care, 1315 project, National Call Handling Standards and, primarily, citizen focus.

The Policy Officer stated that it is likely the Home Office would promote the Standard to the public in the Autumn. It was important the Force was in a position to deal with increased public expectations of the police.

The Chairman stated that this is an important area of police focus and should continue to be monitored closely by this Committee.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be noted.

PC/188 Continuous Improvement Database

The Force Performance Manager provided a brief report on consultation-related recommendations stored within the Continuous Improvement Database managed by the Corporate Services Department. Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The Police Authority has not debated the 2005 HMIC Baseline Assessment since it was published in October last year. At the Performance Management Committee on 28 March 2006, it was agreed that the three Members of the Performance Panel would meet on 13 April 2006 to review and discuss the progress on the recommendations.
- The Force Performance Manager provided an overview on the purpose of the Continuous Improvement Database for new Members.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 12.15pm.