

Devon and Cornwall Police Authority

MINUTES

A meeting of the **Planning and Consultation Committee** was held on 6 September 2006 in the Conference Room, Endeavour House, Woodwater Park, Exeter, starting at 10.00am.

Present:

M Bull, C Bulley, I Doggett, M Hicks, S Hughes, S Malloni, M Nevitt and Mr W Thomas.

Officers in Attendance: -

Police Force Superintendent I Ansell (Force Performance Manager)[items 1 to 8 only], Inspector J Gale (Force Diversity Unit), Acting Chief Superintendent E Marshall (Director of Corporate Communications and Customer Services) [items 1 to 6 only] and G Sims (Force Consultation Officer).

Police Authority T Kelland (Consultation Officer) and R Martin (Policy Officer)

PC/189 Election of Chairman

RESOLVED That S Malloni be elected Chairman.

PC/190 Election of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED That M Nevitt be elected Vice Chairman.

PC/191 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from G Hicks, A Malcolm, D Money and Acting Deputy Chief Constable T Melville.

PC/192 Declarations of Interests

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

PC/193 Minutes

- PC/183 Resolution (a)– The Policy Officer advised that the report on the number and nature of website hits was circulated to Members of the Committee on 19 April 2006.
- PC/183 Resolution (b)– The Policy Officer announced that the previous Director of Corporate Communications had indicated that there would be an evaluation of marketing techniques following the Royal Cornwall and Devon County Shows. However, there had been no report to date. The Director of Corporate Communications and Customer Services advised she would follow this up.

RESOLVED

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 April 2006 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

PC/194 Single Non Emergency Number

The Director of Corporate Communications and Customer Services delivered a presentation on the progress and issues associated with the introduction of the Single Non Emergency Number (SNEN) across Devon and Cornwall.

During the presentation, Members heard two recordings of 999 calls, one of which was an example of the misuse of the service. Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The project to deliver the SNEN would require a partnership approach between local authorities and the police.
- The project is not restricted to the Call Management and Communications Department and will need effective management across the Force.
- The SNEN project has a dedicated Project Manager assigned and will report to the Organisational Support Board within the Force Development Programme.
The Project Manager will explore the options for Devon and Cornwall drawing upon the sites across the country that have gone live already. This will allow the Force to determine, in consultation with its partners, the best option for Devon and Cornwall.
- The Call Management and Communications Department will continue to struggle to achieve 999-call handling targets. This is largely due to the number of 08452 777 444 calls that are received impacting on the emergency call-handling.
- Ongoing difficulties with the suitability of the accommodation occupied by the Department have meant that alternative options are being considered. This could provide additional estates solutions for the Force.

Members queried the funding available for the SNEN programme over the next few years. It was explained that the Home Office has not announced what levels of funding, if any, will be available for those partnerships in Wave 3 nor about any funding post 2008.

The Committee expressed concern of the demands that this service will place upon local authorities. The Police Service has a resilient organisational and staffing base which operates around the clock, 365 days a year. Members were worried that some local authorities would not be able to support the organisational or financial commitments of the SNEN service.

The Vice-Chairman stated the need for a Cost Benefit Analysis to be produced along with a partnership protocol to set out clear lines of responsibility.

Members asked whether Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships could be used to draw down funding to support the roll-out of SNEN. The Director of Corporate Communications and Customer Services confirmed this option would be considered.

The Policy Officer stated the Chief Executive of the Police Authority had written to his counterparts in all local authorities in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly to gauge their commitment to the SNEN and encourage support. To date, only about half the local authorities had replied.
It was also stressed that the SNEN will cause an increase in recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour which may impact on crime reduction targets.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee note the progress of the Force to commence the planning and introduction of '101' within Devon and Cornwall.

PC/195 Evaluation of Community Engagement with minority communities in the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary Force Area

The Inspector, Force Diversity Unit, presented a review by AHG Associates into Community Engagement with minority communities in Devon and Cornwall. Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The recommendations contained in the report will be addressed alongside those from an internal review undertaken by the Force.
It is hoped Independent Advisory Groups will assist the Force in taking these recommendations and actions forward.
- The Crime Department has recently created a Critical Incident Independent Advisory Group. Similarly, an advisory group is helping with the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme.
- The Race Independent Advisory Group has assisted in preparing the Force's Race Equality Scheme.

- The Force's less formal connections with minority communities are harder to quantify.

Members recognised the importance of work to reduce community tensions given the serious threats faced by the country.

Members questioned the independence of the advisory groups as they are partially funded by the police. The Force Diversity Inspector indicated that the money is provided to the Race Equality Councils and 'ring fenced' for use by Advisory Groups.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Committee note the report of AHG Associates
- (b) That the Committee note the progress made with respect to the establishment of a Race Independent Advisory Group
- (c) That the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Planning and Consultation Committee attend the Annual General Meeting of the Race Equality Council.

PC/196 Consultation Priorities 2006

The Police Authority Consultation Officer presented a report outlining the aims, target audience, methods, costs and timeline for each of the three consultation priorities for the next twelve months. Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Work has begun on the Neighbourhood Policing strand of the consultation. Face-to-face consultation is underway focusing on public opinion of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). So far this is receiving positive public comment.
The Force Diversity Inspector indicated that the strategic deployment of PCSOs was not resolved centrally. It may be premature to consult on these arrangements before a final decision has been reached.
- Consultation into complaints is progressing more slowly as changes may be required to the survey questions. The response rate to the complaints survey questionnaires is unknown.
The Chairman questioned whether the quality of service surveys could instead be sent out by the Police Authority rather than the Constabulary. The Force Performance Manager warned this could be seen as a 'back door' appeals process to the Police Authority and should be avoided.
- New computer software allows the staff survey to contain questions specifically tailored to an individual department or BCU. It also avoids the need for any manual manipulation of the data. In time, the staff survey will be co-ordinated with the Department and BCU Performance Management Reviews to provide management teams with a timely snapshot of staff opinion.
The capacity of Force IT systems needs to be considered when using this option.

The Chairman of the Performance Management Committee stated that several official reports had criticised the Force's capabilities around leadership and strategic management. The work of this survey would help address these issues in the future.

The Force Performance Manager suggested that HMIC's new BCU performance model 'Going Local 3' would assist in identifying where falls and rises were.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the contents of the report are noted

PC/197 March 2006 Public Survey

The Force Consultation Officer presented a report covering the results of the March 2006 Public Survey. Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The fear of crime questions will be taken out of the survey.
- The survey results indicate that the majority of the public base their opinion of the police from local news rather than other sources. These people also have a better opinion of the police.

- The Policy Officer indicated there was little evidence to suggest that the Force learns from the complaints that it receives.
- The Policy Officer suggested that the timing of the staff survey could provide a benchmark against which improvement could be measured before and after the recruitment of the new chief constable.

The Vice Chairman questioned how the results of this survey were fed into the BCUs.

The Force Consultation Officer indicated that the BCU analysts attend monthly Performance Enabling Practitioners Group meetings at which the survey results are discussed.

RESOLVED

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

PC/198 Local Policing Summary

The Police Authority Policy Officer provided an update and final draft of the Local Policing Summary 2006.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- It was explained that there had been several delays in the production of the Summary. These were largely due to uncertainty over the future of Devon and Cornwall Constabulary following the former Home Secretary's decision to restructure national policing. Interruptions had also been experienced due to personnel changes in the Command Team.
- The Summary will be distributed in phases to all households.
- Due to the imminent publication date, only minor changes can be made to the document at this stage.
- The Home Office is conducting a national evaluation of Local Policing Summaries. This will cover the methods and formats adopted by police authorities and forces rather than whether they have met their statutory obligations.

The Chairman stated that the Police Authority should monitor public response to the document and use this in preparing future Summaries.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the final draft of the Local Policing Summary be noted.

PC/199 Exeter College Consultation Event

The Police Authority Consultation Officer provided a brief report on an event held at Exeter College in May.

Further education students were invited to deliver presentations on a theme chosen by Police Authority Members and officers. The subject of this particular event was diversity. Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- A Member of the Committee delivered a presentation on the role of the Police Authority.
- Further Police Authority engagement with young people should be encouraged in as many consultation events as possible.
- The Vice Chairman stated that the Chairman of the Police Authority had done much positive work with young people in the past and this helped in raising awareness of the Police Authority.
- The Chairman suggested that he, the Vice Chairman and the Police Authority Consultation Officer meet to discuss further ways of increasing and widening the consultation held with young people.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 12.10pm.