

Devon and Cornwall Police Authority

MINUTES

A meeting of the **Planning and Consultation Committee** was held on 8 February 2007 in the Conference Room, Endeavour House, Woodwater Park, Exeter, starting at 10.00am.

Present:

Chairman.... S Malloni

M Bull [items 4 to 6 only], I Doggett, G Hicks [items 1-7 only], M Hicks, S Hughes, A Malcolm, M Nevitt and W Thomas.

Officers in Attendance: -

Police Force Chief Superintendent J Webster (Force Communication Manager)[item 6 only],
A/Superintendent C Singer (Force Development Manager)[item 8 only].

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

PC/209 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from C Bulley.

PC/210 Declarations of Interests

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

PC/211 Minutes

PC/204 The Chairman indicated that he is still awaiting information on how best practice is spread regarding the Youth Strategy.

RESOLVED

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

PC/212 HMIC Baseline Assessment 2006

The Chairman introduced a paper outlining areas for improvement from the HMIC Baseline Assessment 2006 that require oversight and monitoring by this Committee.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The Chairman suggested that the new Force Diversity Inspector and/ or Director of Diversity should be asked to attend the next meeting of this Committee to outline how the Force is taking forward HMIC's issues.
- The Chairman expressed concerns about way the Force is communicating Neighbourhood Policing activity and consulting with all communities across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. This would be discussed further at the next meeting of this Committee.
- Members discussed a local issue of a lack of a police response to calls from the public. Members considered this to be part of a larger problem as reported recently to the Performance Management Committee whereby Neighbourhood Beat Managers and Response officers often held workloads not significantly dis-similar to detectives.

RESOLVED: The report was noted.

PC/213 Work of the Planning and Consultation Committee

The Chairman introduced a exploring means by which the Committee can allow Committee members to acquire more expertise in Committee related subjects and become more robust in its scrutiny of the Constabulary.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The Chairman spoke of his wish to prepare a work plan for the Committee for the next 12 to 18 months. This would be dependent on Member commitment and to proceed as outlined in his report.
- Members discussed the effectiveness of PALMs. Some Members suggested they should become multi-agency meetings, as has been trialled in Mid Devon. There was general agreement that PALMs rarely discussed strategic policing issues of interest to the Police Authority. Primarily they tend to focus on low level but high volume crime and anti social behaviour.

The Policy Officer reported that at a recent PALM in East Devon, the public indicated unanimously that they would prefer these to remain police-only meetings. Members were also reminded that the Assistant Chief Executive is open to Member's proposals for different formats for PALMs.

The Chairman proposed that further discussion be delayed until the outcome of the Strategic Police Authority deliberations are finalised.

- The Chairman indicated that he would meet with the Director of Communications on a monthly basis. The Lead Member for Citizen Focus offered to produce a report for the June meeting of the Committee outlining his observations, ways to improve performance, by whom and by when.

RESOLVED The report was noted.

PC/214 Force Communication Strategy

The Chairman welcomed the Force Communications Manager to the meeting.

The Force Communications Manager provided an overview of the work of the Call Management and Communications Department.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The Chief Constable has endorsed the Force vision, mission and values.
- The Department has its own Control Strategy to ensure its work complements the work of the Force and is in line with the Force priorities.
- The Police Authority is advised of the Communication Departments weekly taskings.
- The Department works with the media to promote positive news stories.
- Members were circulated with copies of the Operation Napoli briefing sheet provided to Members. The Force Communications Manager explained that this was generated very quickly due to operational need. Discussion centred on press and media-related information circulated to Members. There was general agreement that Members should receive urgent and important news as a priority and other news and information as available. Certain messages could be circulated electronically but the volume of press articles meant this was not always possible.

The Vice-Chairman criticised the speed at which some Members are informed of important incidents. There was general agreement that it was unacceptable that Members should find out about a major incident from television or radio news rather than through the Force or Police Authority directly. The Vice-Chairman saw the Force Communications Manager as responsible for providing this information to Members.

The Policy Officer reminded Members that press cuttings are kept in the library within the Police Authority offices.

Members called for any future changes to Neighbourhood Policing marketing strategy across the Force to be approached corporately. The Force Communications Manager indicated that the Assistant Chief

Constable (Territorial Policing and Justice) had set out the corporate approach for staffing structures and policing teams across BCUs and Neighbourhood Policing. The Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable are to deliver roadshows across the Force informing staff of these new expectations.

The Chairman thanked the Force Communications Manager for his presentation.

RESOLVED

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

PC/215 Annual Policing Plan 2007-08 and Strategic Plan 2007-10

The Chairman welcomed the Force Development Manager to the meeting.

The Force Development Manager provided Members with an overview of the planning arrangements for the 2007-8 Annual Policing Plan and 2007-10 Strategic Plan.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Members were invited to comment on the draft Plans. All observations were needed by 15 February 2007 in order to be fed into the final document to be presented to the Police Authority on 16 February 2007.
- In 2008, changes introduced by the Police and Justice Act 2006 will mean existing processes will be subject to change. New guidance suggests corporate planning should include the very local Parish-level involvement.

In relation to the Plans, Members made the following comments and observations

- The length of the document. It was understood that much, if not all, of the information contained within it was a statutory requirement. However it was recognised that there are opportunities to streamline the document and possibly produce a practitioner's copy containing key messages.
- Use and readership of the document is unknown. The number of hits the Plans register on the Force and Police Authority websites can be identified.
- The Vice-Chairman stated the documents were an improvement on previous years.
- The level of detail that should be included around target performance. It was agreed that a link could be provided to more detailed information on the Home Office website.

Members were reminded to forward any further comments to the Corporate Planning Officer by 15 February 2007.

The Chairman thanked the Force Development Manager for his contribution to the meeting.

RESOLVED

- a) That the report be noted

PC/216 Police Authority Consultation Update

The Police Authority Consultation and Community Engagement Officer provided a report to keep Members informed of current and planned consultations. In addition, Members were provided with a copy of the July 2006 public survey results that had recently been prepared.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The staff survey has been delayed by about two weeks. This is due to the need to make changes to how the survey will be distributed. Original plans were for the survey to be accessed via a web-link. However, it has recently come to light that only one third of staff have access to the Internet. This will be progressed by making the survey available for staff to download from a central file.
- Members questioned the poor public recognition of Neighbourhood Policing. This has dropped from previous surveys. The Police Authority Consultation and Community Engagement Officer suggested that

this may be because Neighbourhood Policing is not currently being promoted as the revised BCU structures are still under configuration.

- The Chairman questioned the methodology and sample demographics used in the survey. It was confirmed that whilst the methodology was not prescribed, the Police Authority had a duty to consult the public to inform its priority and target setting.
To adapt the survey to better reflect the population spread and geography of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly would cost more and be difficult to split accurately along demographics.
- The Chairman explained the important role the Force Active Communities Co-ordinator. The Chairman has called on chief officers to consider putting greater resources into this preventative activity.
The Police Authority Consultation and Community Engagement Officer expressed concern that there was much consultation activity taking place across the Force that the Consultation Unit was unaware of. Whilst recognising that this met BCUs' local needs, it left gaps in a joined-up and corporate consultation strategy. Members considered this unsatisfactory. The Vice-Chairman suggested that a member of the Chief Officer Group should be asked to explain this.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 12.50pm