

Devon and Cornwall Police Authority

MINUTES

A meeting of the **Planning and Consultation Committee** was held on 20 September 2005 in the Conference Room, Endeavour House, Woodwater Park, Exeter, starting at 10.30am

Present:

Mr C Bulley, Mr M Hicks, Mr S Malloni, Mr D Money, Mr M Nevitt and Mr B Preston

Officers in Attendance: -

Police Force Deputy Chief Constable N Arnold [items 2a to 8 only], P Hutton (Director of Corporate Communications) [items 1 to 8 only], E Lewis (Police Authority Liaison Officer) and Chief Superintendent L McGrath (Commander, Strategic Development Department) [items 1 to 8 only].

Police Authority G Davey (Chief Executive) [items 1 to 7 only], T Kelland (Consultation Officer), R Martin (Policy Officer) and J Norris (Assistant Chief Executive) [item 11 only]

PC/146 Election of Chairman

RESOLVED That Mr M Nevitt be elected Chairman

The Chairman thanked Mr Money for his dedication and contribution to the work of this committee.

PC/147 Election of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED That Mr S Malloni be elected Vice Chairman

PC/148 Chairman's statement

Having regard to the special circumstances pertaining in this matter – namely the desire for a statement to be made, the Chairman was of the opinion that, despite its non-inclusion on the Agenda, the matter of the reform of policing structures in England and Wales should be considered at this meeting as a matter of urgency.

PC/149 Reform of policing structures in England and Wales

The Chief Executive provided the Committee with an update following the Home Secretary's meeting with chairmen of police authorities and chief constables on 19 September 2005.

The Home Secretary sees the strategic force model as the way forward for the future of policing in England and Wales. He wishes for police authorities and forces to put forward business cases for the restructuring of policing into strategic forces on a regional basis. This is a response to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary report 'Closing the Gap – A Review of the Fitness for Purpose of the current structure of policing in England and Wales'.

The Chief Executive reported there would now need to be an intense period of collaboration between the Authority and Force to develop a business case.

A formal letter from the Home Secretary is expected later this week. It is anticipated the Home Secretary will expect responses from authorities and forces by the end of this year.

The point was made that whilst Devon and Cornwall Constabulary is in a strong position, the Authority could not afford to be complacent. The Authority must proactively engage in the debate as the Home Secretary is still to be convinced of the value of police authorities.

The Chairman of the Police Authority stated that he, along with the Chief Executive, the Chief Constable and Director of Corporate Communications had kept Members, officers, staff and the media as updated of developing issues as possible. This will continue to be the case. The importance of the Authority and Constabulary working together was again highlighted.

Members suggested that these issues be communicated to the public through the Police Authority Liaison Meetings.

The Chairman stated the importance of engaging with communities to ensure they feel effectively policed.

The Chief Executive stated that the Authority awaited receipt of the Home Secretary's letter. A regional meeting of police authorities will take place on 23 September which will be crucial to identify the approach other authorities and forces are considering.

PC/150 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mr M Bull, Mr I Doggett, Mr G Hicks and Mr W Thomas.

PC/151 Declarations of Interests

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

PC/152 Minutes

- PC/143 - With reference to 'negative comments' these are placed onto the Continuous Improvement Database and tracked.

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2005 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

PC/153 Quality of Service Commitment

The Director of Corporate Communications presented a paper on the progress made with delivering the standards required by the Quality of Service Commitment by November 2006.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Regular meetings had taken place between the Director of Corporate Communications, Chief Executive and Chairman of the Police Authority.
- The areas identified as needing further development are large projects that require breaking down into smaller pieces of work. The Force is compliant with certain aspects of the Standard but has gaps to close in other areas.
The Deputy Chief Constable stated that the progress update was overly negative as it referred to work undertaken some months ago and more progress had been made. Also, costing details were yet to be determined.
- The Director of Corporate Communications has been identified as the Force Champion for the Quality of Service Commitment.
- The Director of Corporate Communications requested that the Police Authority contact the Home Office to seek clear guidance on the scope or definition on how forces will be measured and against which criteria the measurement will take place. This follows failed attempts by the Constabulary to seek clarity in this matter.

The Chief Executive suggested this request could be channelled through the Association of Police Authorities.

- The Chairman questioned where performance management was picked up within the work plan. The Director of Corporate Communications stated this was still work in progress and links would need to be made.

The Commander, Strategic Development Department, stated that the ongoing review of the strategic meeting structure would assist in making these links.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report is noted.
- (b) That the updated implementation plan is noted.
- (c) To note that the Director of Corporate Communications is the Force Lead/ Champion for the Quality of Service Commitment.
- (d) That the Police Authority will ask the Home Office for an agreed definition / scope for Quality of Service measurement criteria.

PC/154 Preparation of the Annual Policing Plan 2006-2007 and Strategic Plan 2006-2009

The Policy Officer presented a paper putting the case for the establishment of a working group to oversee the preparation of the Annual Policing Plan 2006-2007 and Strategic Plan 2006-2009.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The Chief Executive stated this Working Group would allow work to proceed quicker than in previous years.
The Chairman of the Police Authority indicated that in the past there had been delays caused by attempting to deliver this work through the entire Committee.
The Chairman of the Planning and Consultation Committee challenged whether a sub-group was needed given that this Committee has already been delegated powers to oversee the development of the Plans.
Members agreed that a smaller group would be favourable as it would be able to react quicker to the demands of the planning process.
The Chief Executive suggested that, due to several Members of this Committee being absent from the meeting, an invitation should be extended to all Members of this Committee to be part of the Working Group. The final membership of the group would then be decided by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning and Consultation Committee.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Policing Plan Working Group is established as outlined in the report;
- (b) That membership of the group would be decided by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning and Consultation Committee.

PC/155 Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 - Section 157: Publication of Information to the Public

The Chief Executive provided an update on the status of the Serious Organised Crime and Policing Act which places a duty on police authorities to provide a 'local policing summary' to all taxpayers. The legislation takes effect from 1 April 2006 but it is unclear as to what the summaries must contain. Home Office guidance is expected in late October 2005. However, the Association of Police Authorities has requested that the guidance be as flexible as possible to allow for local variations to meet community needs.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The Home Office is giving consideration to consolidating the requirements on police authorities to prepare Annual Policing Plans, Strategic Policing Plans, Annual Reports and council tax leaflet information into a less bureaucratic information source.
- The term 'local' is not defined however, it is not expected to be below basic command unit level.
- There remains an option for a generic summary to be produced with a basic command unit level section dependent on where people live.
- At this time it seems unlikely that the local policing summaries can be circulated with the council tax leaflets.
- The Deputy Chief Constable spoke of the resource implications of this new requirement. It was recommended that every effort should be made to use the current council tax leaflet to carry this information rather than generate a separate publication.
The Deputy Chief Constable challenged whether the summary will need to be produced in April 2006. The legislation takes effect from 1 April 2006 but this could be interpreted as requiring information for the 2006-2007 financial year meaning a summary to be circulated in early 2007.
- The Chairman warned that care needed to be taken in preparing local summaries. Much information was already in the public domain and an additional document may not be received well particularly at a time when council tax bills are received by the public.

RESOLVED

That the report is noted.

PC/156 Local Priorities – Annual Plan 2006/ 2007

The Commander, Strategic Development Department, presented a paper on preparation of the draft Force targets for 2006/07 and seeking clarity in regard to local priorities.

It was suggested that in the past Members indicated a wish for local priorities to be centred at neighbourhood beat level. This was challenged as departing from co-terminosity with existing local authority boundaries and could lead to difficulties in securing funding streams. Instead it was proposed that local priorities should be based at Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships level.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships are established and recognised structures that should secure engagement from partners.
- Force consultation methods can be built around the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership model.
- The Deputy Chief Constable stated that last year there was no agreement as to what the term 'local priority' referred to. The Force and Authority work with many partners. Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships are a natural method for delivering this.
- The Chairman questioned if there was an overall Force strategy to deal with the various planning and target setting arrangements that the Force undertake. The Deputy Chief Constable stated there was not at present.

The Commander, Strategic Development Department stated that, assuming agreement that local priorities would be set at Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership level, Force targets would be

aligned as such. These targets would then be brought to this Committee for approval on 15 November 2005 for agreement prior to sign off by the full Authority early in the new year.

The Chairman summed up by reiterating that Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership were established frameworks which demonstrate local engagement and which are best suited to local priorities. Timescales were short though and real progress needs to be made urgently.

The Policy Officer suggested the decision by this Committee on this issue needed ratifying by the full Authority. The Chairman of the Police Authority stated this was unnecessary.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report is noted
- (b) That local priorities for 2006-2007 are to be set at Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership level.

PC/157 Youth Consultation Exercise

The Police Authority Consultation Officer presented the findings from a consultation exercise in conjunction with an organisation called 'Your Turn', a division of the organisation Common Purpose, which was carried out with young people in May this year.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Members agreed that the findings from the survey were both interesting and valuable. It was recognised that engaging with young people is difficult. For example, few young people attend Police Authority Liaison Meetings.
The Chairman of the Police Authority reminded the Committee that Police Authority Liaison Meetings held in Plymouth often attracted a good number of young people.
- Members were surprised at the high number of young people that reported to have been stopped or stopped and searched. The Committee felt it would be useful if national figures were available for comparison.
- Members expressed concern at the figures indicating that young people had little trust in the police. The Vice-Chairman stated that the role profile for Neighbourhood Beat Managers states officers should make contact with schools and other educational establishments.
The Chairman of the Police Authority noted that there will always be tensions between police and young people. However it was suggested that at a future meeting of this Committee, a representative from the Constabulary give a presentation on Force policy on engagement with young people, schools and educational establishments. This followed a lack of clarity around this issue following the roll-out of Neighbourhood Beat policing and uncertainty over the future of youth intervention teams.
The Committee agreed to this.
- Members indicated the results from this survey were reflected in other, similar pieces of work carried out in the region.
- The Chairman congratulated the Consultation Unit for carrying out this piece of work and encouraged further innovative surveys.
- The Vice-Chairman enquired whether future consultations with young people could be integrated into school lessons such as citizenship classes. The Police Authority Consultation Officer suggested this could be resource intensive considering staffing levels in the Consultation Unit. The Chairman recognised this but stressed that logistical issues should not be allowed to restrict work of this type.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report is noted

PC/158 Current Consultation Activity (March to December 2005)

The Police Authority Consultation Officer presented a report detailing the calendar of consultation activity until the end of the year.

Members were invited to indicate which reports they would like presented to this Committee at future meetings.

It was noted that the Firearms and Explosives Licensing survey had been postponed due to staffing issues within the Consultation Unit. However, this work will be completed, probably in November. The results of this survey will be circulated to Members.

The Chairman questioned if any cost benefit or outcome measurements were undertaken as part of the consultation programme. The Police Authority Consultation Officer indicated no such analysis was completed.

The Chairman of the Police Authority stated that much of the Consultation Unit's work was dictated by the Home Office. The Consultation Unit had a small staff but produced good quality work.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be noted.

PC/159 Review of Police Authority Liaison Meetings Pilot Schemes and Recent Innovations

The Assistant Chief Executive introduced a report informing the Committee of recent developments with Police Authority Liaison Meetings.

Approximately 12 months ago, the Authority decided that Liaison Meetings needed to be improved. Much work has been progressed since then but a few issues still require resolving.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The leaflet circulated to the public at the meetings has been re-designed. This has met with favourable comment from Members and the public. Advertising posters will now be improved too.
- Questionnaires distributed to the public seeking questions about local policing issues are being mis-interpreted by some. This has resulted in an unexpected extra workload for the Authority office.
- The Sector-based meetings in North and East Devon have proved to be successful. A decision will be required soon on whether to roll these out across the other basic command units. The Chairman reported that the thematic meetings held in Exeter had also been well received by both Members and the public.
- Planning for next year's meetings was well underway.
- The Chairman of the Police Authority suggested that this Committee should give a strong steer to the Authority on the direction consultation should take in the future. It was important that time was spent conducting valuable consultation exercises to optimise the benefits to the Authority.
- The Chairman recognised the amount of work that had been put into improving the quality of the Liaison meetings but stated that the issue deserved more discussion and should be revisited at the next meeting of this Committee.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the sector level meetings in North and East Devon Basic Command Unit continue;

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- (b) that in Exeter, working in partnership with the City Council continues and special Police Authority Liaison Meetings be arranged for specific topics and areas as required;
- (c) that a report on the pilot meetings in Mid Devon be made to a future meeting of this Committee;
- (d) that Police Authority Liaison Meeting Chairmen consider arranging appropriate presentations for their meetings;
- (e) That this report should be added to the agenda of the next meeting of this Committee to allow more discussion of the issues.

The meeting closed at 1300 hours.