

Devon and Cornwall Police Authority

MINUTES

A meeting of the **Performance Management Committee** was held on Wednesday 10 September 2008 in the Conference Room, Endeavour House, Woodwater Park, Exeter starting at 10.00am.

Present:

Chairman Mr M Bull

Mrs L Dunn, Mr M Hicks, Mr M Hodge, Ms J Norton and Mrs J Owen

Officers in Attendance: -

Police Force

Assistant Chief Constable P Netherton (Territorial Policing) [items 1-4], Assistant Chief Constable D Simpson (Crime and Operations) and Dr R Bullock (Force Performance Analyst).

Police Authority

Mr R Martin (Policy Officer)

PM/521 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr C Bulley, Mr G Hicks and Mr C Wallin.

The Chairman welcomed the two Assistant Chief Constables to their first Performance Management Committee.

PM/522 Declarations of Interests

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

PM/523 Minutes

Issues raised during this item included:

PM/515 – the last paragraph should read "The Committee also recorded its thanks...."

RESOLVED that, subject to the above amendment, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 June 2008 be confirmed as a correct record.

PM/520 – The ACC indicated that it would now be quite appropriate for the Task and Finish Group to initiate its work. The Committee therefore agreed to recommend recommending the Task and Finish Group into Protective Services. This had been temporarily halted due to the Exeter bombing incident in July and the work pressures this had created for the Force.

The Chairman indicated that revisions had been made to the original plans for Task and Finish Groups within the Police Authority. The Chairman of the Police Authority was currently making amendments to the plans which should be finalised shortly.

The Assistant Chief Constable (Crime and Operations) reported that Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) have indicated that it will not be carrying out its planned inspection of critical incident management, public order and civil contingencies originally planned for later this year. The Force's response to the Exeter bombing in July had proven the Constabulary's ability to deal with such incidents and had been part of the reason for cancelling the further inspection.

PM/ 524 Performance towards the Annual Policing Plan (Targets)

The Chairman advised the Committee that the Force's forensic data management system, SOCRATES, was now in use. Live data from the month of July had been entered onto the system but a second month's data would be required before any comparative analysis could realistically begin.

This report provided details of the Force's performance against the Annual Policing Plan Targets for the period April to July 2008 and was presented by the Force Performance Analyst.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Satisfaction rates are improving well and on course for achieving target. The Force is now 5th of 43 forces for the percentage of victims of racist incidents who are satisfied overall with the service provided by the police.
- The target to exceed 40% of people who believe the police are tackling the crime and anti-social behaviour that matters in their area is currently at 80.4%. It was stressed that this figure was based on the survey of only 232 people over two months. It is unclear whether this level of performance is sustainable during the remainder of the year.

Members questioned why actual performance was so far above the target figure. It was reported that the target of 40% was based on a 5% uplift from the 35% figure reported in the most recent British Crime Survey. This was the best estimate that could be proposed at the time for approval by the Police Authority.

Members were interested to see whether recent police operations such as the evening curfew in Redruth during the summer months would have an impact on these figures further.

- Recent reductions in serious acquisitive and serious violent crime have slowed and violent crime has now seen a small rise. This is mainly due to an increase in the number of Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH) with intent offences. Whilst the rise is small (13 offences) this equates to a 2% increase in serious violence overall.

There has also been a rise in burglary recently.

The Committee questioned how much of the fall in overall crime was due to the actions of the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary and how much was a result of a fall in crime experienced in most parts of the country over the last 18 months or so.

The Assistant Chief Constable (Crime and Operations) stated that the Force relied on the National Intelligence Model for the assessment, analysis and management of crime. Additionally, the Constabulary constantly assesses how other police forces are performing against similar indicators.

Members were updated on the changing picture regarding serious drug crime in Devon and Cornwall. This emphasised how events happening overseas could eventually impact on local communities. Sanction detection rates are just below the 30% target at 27.6%. Good improvements continue to be made in Plymouth.

Members were advised of the range of sanction detection disposal types available to the police. This included offences Taken Into Consideration (TICs) which can occasionally result in a surge of detections recorded.

The Force Performance Analyst stated that some Local Policing Areas (LPAs) were not utilising the full range of disposal options available to them. This was being addressed.

The Committee were again demonstrated the value of the Lead Indicator approach to manage performance across a range of activities. This methodology was explained in detail at the July meeting of this Committee.

The Chairman stated how the Lead Indicators snapshot chart provided a powerful tool to see where supervision and management was weaker. This led to a wider debate about the predicted benefits of SOCRATES, which had recently gone live across the Force.

User satisfaction was showing acceptable performance in the areas of 'follow-up' and 'treatment'. However, there were some concerns over the 'Ease of Contact' and 'Actions' elements of the measure. The Committee was presented with further analysis of the sub- elements that contribute to the overall 'Ease of Contact' indicator.

Following concerns expressed by this Committee last year, the Force has reduced the number of outstanding warrants from 360 to within a few of the target of 270. Of these 83 have been outstanding for 12 months or longer.

The Chairman thanked the Force Performance Analyst for the report.

RESOLVED To note the report.

PM/525 Sexual Offences - Development of Rape Investigation and Performance

The Assistant Chief Constable (Crime and Operations) provided Members with an update on the Force strategy to reduce sexual offences and increase detection rates, particularly in relation to rape.

Nationally rape has seen an 8% decrease, yet Devon and Cornwall has seen a similar percentage point increase. The reasons for this are not fully understood but it is widely recognised that building greater confidence in the positive approach the police take will encourage more victims and witnesses to come forward to the police. Members appreciated that it was essential to work closely with partners, particularly the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to achieve success in this area.

Devon and Cornwall Constabulary is regarded nationally as having excellent policies and procedures for tackling sexual offences. The Assistant Chief Constable stated that the challenge was to translate this into better performance.

The Strategy looks to challenge the "culture of disbelief" to develop one where the victim's needs are better understood and they are treated more sensitively. In part this will be addressed by a senior Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) advisor on rape providing training to supervisory officers in the Force. It was recognised that a cultural change is required and achieving that takes investment in training and time.

Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) are proving effective across the Force. However, different approaches are being adopted and it will take time to see which emerges as the best model. For example, in Plymouth, Scenes of Crime Officers (SOCOs) are based in the SARC. Cornwall and Isles of Scilly BCU has a dedicated Rape Investigation Team. In time it will be necessary to assess which approach provides the best return on investment.

Members questioned why Cornwall and Isles of Scilly BCU was seeing better domestic abuse sanction detections performance than Devon BCU yet the latter had the well established Against Domestic Violence and Abuse (ADVA) partnership up and running.

The Assistant Chief Constable suggested that this could be due to dynamic supervision and the expectation that a strong case file should be prepared and robustly presented to the CPS. It was recognised that there appeared to be different evidence threshold judgements adopted by CPS across Devon and Cornwall.

Current performance for domestic abuse sanction detections has risen to 45.7%. This is as a result of a lot of hard work by officers and staff across the Force and with partners. It will now be necessary for another push to drive performance further towards the target of 50%.

The Chairman thanked the Assistant Chief Constable for the report and stated the Committee was encouraged by the effort being put into achieving cultural change.

RESOLVED To note the report.

PM/526 Policing Green Paper

The Force Performance Analyst presented a brief report outlining the aspects of the recent Policing Green Paper that may affect the Police Authority's role in performance management.

Members had the opportunity to discuss the Green Paper at the Members' Seminar on 6 September 2008.

The main points of interest in terms of performance were:

- The Home Office proposes one 'super' target focusing on public confidence. However, Members recognised that there would still be other performance standards that would be required such as the call handling targets as part of the new Policing Pledge.
- The proposal to remove the grade scores from future Assessment of Policing and Community Safety (APACS) publications. Indeed Members were advised that Ministers have decided not to publish grade scores for the 2007/2008 assessments due out in October this year.
- The Green Paper establishes the need for information about crime and community safety to be provided at a far smaller geographic level.

The proposals suggest that there will be up to a 50% drop in the amount of data called for centrally by the Home Office.

Whilst this was welcomed by Members, it was also recognised that much of the data that is currently collected for submission to the Home Office would still be needed for performance management purposes locally.

RESOLVED to note the report.

PM/527 NCRS/ NSIR

The Lead Member for National Crime Recording Standard and the National Standard of Incident Recording, Lynne Dunn, provided an update on the work she had undertaken since the last meeting.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Much work has been done throughout the Force to reinforce the message that all logs had to be crimed within 72 hours. However, the Lead Member emphasised that this still remained an area the Force needed to continue to improve on.
- The Lead Member mentioned that the Deputy Chief Constable had written to the regional Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary to raise some unease over inconsistencies in the grading process for the recent Detections Audit. It was stressed that there was no suggestion that Devon and Cornwall Constabulary had been graded wrongly.
- The recent National Policing Improvement Agency Baseline Review of the National Standard for Incident Recording recommended that Forces should review the number of staff able to close incidents and seek to limit this to a minimum. This was strongly endorsed by the Lead Member

The Chairman thanked the Lead Member for her report and continuing work in this area.

RESOLVED To note the report.

PM/528 Closed items - exclusion of the press and public

RESOLVED that the item detailed in the table below be considered as closed items:

Minute number	Report Title	Relevant Act	Relevant section
PM/529	Public Satisfaction	Local Government act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information Act 1985)	Information intended for future publication (s.22)
PM/530	HMIC Detections Audit	Local Government act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information Act 1985)	Information intended for future publication (s.22)

PM/529 Public Satisfaction

The Assistant Chief Constable (Territorial Policing) provided Members with a briefing on the work in development to improve public satisfaction through the delivery of a Contact Strategy for the Constabulary.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The Contact Strategy includes a deployment and customer service element. The deployment strategy will attempt to breakdown perceived barriers for a more effective use of resources. For example, deploying officers from outside the BCU within which the incident occurs to incidents wherever they happen, to more flexible and effective use of traffic officers.
- The use of business process re-engineering principles for the better use of resources.
- More effective use of reception desks and drop-in centres across the Force.
- Harnessing modern technologies to improve communication and engagement.

Members welcomed the work underway but stressed the importance of ensuring that call management is appropriately addressed. The Police Authority had long taken a keen interest in call handling and had been promised improvements on many occasions that had somewhat failed to materialise for one reason or another. This had not been helped by the regular change of senior management within the Call Management environment. This often meant that new approaches and innovative ways of working did not have time to bed in.

The Committee felt it was important that lessons were learnt from the past and that call handling staff were managed properly, provided with adequate training for the expanding workloads they are being expected to fulfil and fully recognised as highly important and skilled staff who were critical to improving public satisfaction and confidence of the Force.

The Chairman summed up the discussions in three points:

1. That there should be a consistency of management within the call handling unit with senior management being given sufficient time to apply the improvements that needed to be made.
2. Continue to better understand balancing resources to demand, particularly in terms of the extra requirements being placed on call handling staff, for example as part of improving the forensics chain.
3. Invest in the facilities and environment in which this part of the organisation works and thereby to demonstrate to staff that they are important and highly valued.

RESOLVED To note the report.

PM/530 HMIC Detections Audit

The Force Performance Analyst presented a paper which identified the results and gradings received by the Force in the recent audit of detections by HMIC.

An Action Plan has been prepared by the Force and has been seen by the Lead Member for NCRS/ NSIR.

Members were satisfied that this item had been further discussed earlier in the meeting during the item on NCRS/ NSIR.

RESOLVED To note the report.

The meeting closed at 1220 hours.