

Devon and Cornwall Police Authority

MINUTES

A meeting of the **Performance Management Committee** was held on Wednesday 25th March 2009 in the Conference Room, Endeavour House, Woodwater Park, Exeter starting at 10.00am.

Present:

Chairman: Mr M Bull

Members: Mrs L Dunn, Mr M Hicks, Ms J Norton, Mrs L Williams

Officers in Attendance: -

Police Force

Deputy Chief Constable T Melville, Assistant Chief Constable D Simpson, Mr R Bullock

Police Authority

Mr R Martin (Acting Chief Executive), Mrs G Clifton (Administrator)

PM/548 Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Mr G Hicks and Mr J Rowe

PM/549 Declarations of Interests

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

PM/550 Minutes

There were two typographical errors on page 7 but otherwise and following corrections the Minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting held on 28th January 2009.

PM/551 Performance Summary

This report summarised the performance of Devon and Cornwall Constabulary to meet the targets set by the Authority in its Annual Plan. Issues discussed during this item included:

- Recorded Serious Acquisitive Crime had dropped by 10.6% exceeding the target of 2%. Burglary had increased, peaking at 8% at one point but was now down to a 4.8% rise. The overall trend, however, was downwards. There were 'pockets' such as Torbay that contributed to this rise but an Action Plan had been drawn up to increase support in this area to tackle the problem.
- Devon and Cornwall Constabulary was now 19th lowest in the country for Serious Violent Crime having been 16th at the beginning of the year. The increase was mainly due to an increase in Serious Assault, particularly causing grievous bodily harm with intent. Spikes in the chart were mostly random but certain times of the year were associated with a rise in violent crime e.g. New Year's Eve. The figures next year would be more comparable following the re-classification of certain crimes. Next year's target was to achieve a reduction of 15%.
- The chart presented to the meeting, which covered the period up to 8th March 2009, showed a reduction in the numbers of Total Crime Sanction Detections of 29.8%. At the time of the meeting the target of 30% had been achieved. There had been a steady increase in the number of Sanction Detections month on month over the last two years. This was a cause of much satisfaction given the many changes to the management of Forensics and seemed to indicate that the predicted drop in performance while the many changes were implemented was over. The Force was congratulated on this progress.
- The usage of crimes 'Taken into Consideration' (TIC) had risen from 4% to 9% over the last three months, which is comparable with other police forces. The proportion of crime scenes attended by Forensics had risen and the conversion rate of identification to detection had increased to over 60%. There would be more focus on TICs in the future requiring someone to be tasked and properly resourced. In addition, re-arrest of prisoners for other crimes on leaving prison sent a powerful message to others in relation to the

benefits of offenders admitting offences that could be TIC. The target for Domestic Abuse Sanction Detections was a challenging one. The numbers of crimes had increased over the year but there are many more detections compared to last year.

- Recorded Sexual Offences had increased by 2.3% compared to last year. By 23rd March 2009 the Force had achieved a 29.5% sanction detection rate, just short of the 30% target. It was noted that the rate was higher for sexual assaults on males. This was probably due to the confidence of the victims in coming forward.
- For Public Confidence Devon and Cornwall Constabulary was second highest in the country. The latest British Crime Survey (BCS) results showed a confidence rate of 53.2%; the long term target is a very stringent one at 65.2%. The level of the target had been queried by both the Constabulary and the Police Authority but had not been changed as a result. The Local Survey shows a higher rate of 80.4%, but the surveys cover a greater number of people.
- The Constabulary was currently 13th in the country for Overall Satisfaction. All BCUs had seen an increase in satisfaction and it was hoped to finish the year higher than last year. Plymouth BCU had achieved a rate of 84% which was within the 2% tolerance limits of the 86% target.
- The User Satisfaction survey showed the average satisfaction levels for Burglary, RTCs, Vehicle and Violent Crime. Of the four areas covered "Follow up" and "Treatment" were generally good but Overall Satisfaction did not always reflect this. One reason can be that although each incident was treated favourably, if there had been multiple incidents customers generally felt dissatisfied. The three Plymouth LPAs could not be separately reported due to the fact that RTC data had not been separately recorded. This was now being done and new figures would be provided once twelve months' data was available. There had been an improving trend of overall satisfaction over the last three to four months.
- For User Satisfaction (Racist Incidents) Devon and Cornwall was currently 9th in the country. The "Treatment" element highlighted problems in Cornwall and Overall Satisfaction was generally low. However, the number of respondents to the survey had been very low. Members were concerned that, as there were so few incidents officers would not get sufficient experience in dealing with them. A 12-point Action Plan had been produced that involved members of the diversity community meeting victims and feeding back issues to the officer involved and the key issues emerging back to the team. The Constabulary agreed to bring a report to the next meeting on how the action plans were working.

RESOLVED (i) To note the report;
(ii) that a report on the Action Plan be brought to the next meeting.

PM/552 ACPO Rape Support Programme 2008

RESOLVED to discuss this as a closed item.

PM/553 Forensics Task and Finish Group

RESOLVED to discuss this as a closed item.

PM/554 Restorative Outcomes

The report outlined how 'positive outcomes' would be measured and reported against the Authority target to deliver a positive outcome in 33% of all crime investigations. Issues discussed included:

- Offences brought to justice included those resolved by way of conviction, caution, taken into consideration or penalty notice. The target was that 30% of crimes would be resolved this way in the coming year.
- Restorative Justice (RJ) allowed crimes to be resolved in a different manner agreed with the victim. Around 100 crimes had been resolved in this way. An example of which would be a victim receiving an apology for an incident of criminal damage and for the offender to accept what they had done. It avoided criminalising people when the victim did not want that to happen. There were not hard and fast rules or a list of crimes that might be resolved in this way. Such disposals would be monitored to check that RJ was

being used appropriately. There was a need to communicate to the wider community that this resolution was available, but it was agreed that certain crimes should not be included e.g. repeat offences.

RESOLVED to note the report

PM/555 National Crime Recording Standard and National Standard of Incident Recording compliance update

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:

- They were looking at areas where more pressure needed to be applied.
- There was to be a review of the process of log closures, which aimed to increase the number of people that could close logs to avoid duplication of effort and free up supervisors' time.
- Currently 10% of logs were dip sampled by supervisors but there were plans for a wider more independent audit. Training sessions would highlight the importance of accurately closing off logs and improving the quality of the data.
- Operation Quest had piloted a solution whereby details of an incident could be automatically populated across systems when a member of the public called in.

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

RESOLVED to note the report.

PM/556 Consideration to Excluding the Press and the Public

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

Agenda Item	Report Title	Relevant Act	Relevant Section
5	ACPO Rape Support Programme 2008	Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (access to information) Act 1985	Schedule 12A, paragraph 7, Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.
6	Forensics Task and Finish Group	Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (access to information) Act 1985	Schedule 12A, paragraph 3, Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

PM/557 ACPO Rape Support Programme 2008

It was decided to discuss this item in the closed session in light of the confidential nature of the information contained in the report. The following issues were discussed:

- The detection rate for all sexual offences was 29.5% which is a significant improvement towards the target of 30%. Devon and Cornwall Constabulary was now 18th in the country compared with its previous place of 34th. There had been significant progress in the four areas monitored.
- The greatest increase in numbers of crimes had been in Plymouth BCU. They had set up investigative teams to address this. Being a largely urban area the types of crime differed from the rest of the region.
- Sanction detection was not always an appropriate measure for this crime; it was more important that the victim was treated properly and got the help they needed. There was technically only one Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in the region, which currently fulfilled the criterion even though that SARC did not cover the whole region. However, the geography of Devon and Cornwall was such that this was not ideal. The five PCTs in the counties had been approached but could not provide funding for more centres. If victims were treated properly right from the beginning it could save Health Authorities as much as

£70,000 (per case) on follow up treatment. It can also help increase detection rates as the proper forensic evidence can be taken for that incident and future use.

- Plymouth was offering to cover the whole of Devon and Cornwall but this would have to go out to tender. It would not resolve the access issue and when they had the capability to accept self referrals without police involvement it would be difficult for victims to know where to go.
- The Authority asked for an update at the September meeting with proposal for a different approach if no progress had been made.

RESOLVED (i) to note the report
(ii) that a follow up report would be provided to the September meeting.

PM/558 Forensics Task and Finish Group

It was resolved to discuss this item in the closed session due to the commercial contract information contained in the report. The following issues were discussed:

- The Group had been out with Scenes of Crime Officers (SOCOs) and visited the Forensic Unit. The department was being restructured building in a career structure and changing the way that staff were deployed. The changes also include a new process for potentially effective performance management.
- SOCOs were scientific professionals but did not always recognise the other benefits that they can bring to victims. They could contribute to customer satisfaction rates by attending crime scenes quickly, in particular vehicle crime which had the lowest satisfaction rate. They could also contribute to 'visible policing' by wearing uniforms or driving marked cars but there had been some opposition to this. However, it was a limited resource with fewer SOCOs (39 in the new structure) than other forces and covering a much larger geographical area. There was a possibility of using PCSOs with appropriate training for some crimes who could call in the SOCOs if deemed necessary.
- Operation Quest is addressing the issue of vehicle crime by ensuring that the right information is taken and asking victims if they would like a visit by a member of the Neighbourhood Policing Team or a PCSO to reassure them. There are no specific timescales for these initiatives but a rise in sanction detection rates is expected as a consequence.
- The current location of the photographic unit at Heavitree Police Station is inadequate. Members asked that consideration be given to relocate it to Middlemoor within the Scientific Support Unit when Heavitree Road Police Station is replaced.
- The new software system to manage the use of all forensics processes (SOCRATES) was supposed to be implemented by the end of March 2009 but there has been some slippage in the timetable. Work is underway to identify what is needed to complete the project and the final completion date will be available shortly. The Force was also procuring a 'system integrator' that would allow different systems to communicate with each other.
- The cross-force collaboration agreement to provide specialist services had resulted in the predicted saving of £200,000 for Devon and Cornwall but it maybe even higher. This figure was likely to increase for the next year. It was suggested that some proportion of this could be reinvested in Scientific Services as an incentive. Members paid tribute to the staff in this department for the dedication they had shown throughout the reorganisation and with the extra work load they had been given. They had recently received a Divisional Commander's Commendation because they had volunteered not to take annual leave during the summer period as this was the busiest time.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 12.35