

## Devon and Cornwall Police Authority

### MINUTES

A meeting of the **Performance Management Committee** was held on Monday 16 July 2007 in the Conference Room, Endeavour House, Woodwater Park, Exeter starting at 11.00am.

#### **Present:**

Chairman ..... M Bull  
C Bulley [items 1-7 only], M Hicks and C Wallin.

#### **Officers in Attendance: -**

**Police Force** Chief Superintendent I Ansell (Head of Professional Standards & Performance Department) [items 7 & 8 only], G Oakden (Force Crime and Incident Registrar) [items 7 & 8 only], Acting Assistant Chief Constable (Crime & Operations) R Pennington [item 5 only], A Poole (Acting Head of Performance and Analysis) [items 7 & 8 only] and Acting Assistant Chief Constable (Territorial Policing & Justice) R Spencer [items 4 - 6 only].

**Police Authority** R Martin (Policy Officer).

#### **PM/457 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Sir S Day and W Thomas.

#### **PM/458 Declarations of Interests**

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

#### **PM/459 Chairman's Statement**

The Chairman stated that, to prevent keeping officers longer than necessary, item 6 would be taken before item 5 on the agenda.

#### **PM/460 Minutes**

PM/451 – The Chairman stated that he had been in discussion with the Deputy Chief Constable regarding several issues including decriminalised parking enforcement. It had been agreed that it was not appropriate to present a report to this Committee at this stage. However, as the matter had received increasing public comment at several Police Authority Liaison Meetings, the Chairman had suggested that the Constabulary enters into urgent discussions with the appropriate Authorities and takes proactive measures to prevent a public relations issue developing further.

PM/452 – Following discussions with the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Constable it had been decided, despite suggestions by HMIC, that the Police Authority would not, on a routine basis, wish to attend the fortnightly Performance Improvement and Tasking meetings. It was felt this was both unnecessary and unachievable on a fortnightly basis. The minutes of the Performance Improvement and Tasking meetings are circulated to Members of the Committee regularly and the Committee Chairman held regular meetings with the Deputy Chief Constable. The Committee was briefed on these issues at each Committee.

PM/453 – Members were reminded that on 29 June, the Police Authority ratified the performance priority areas as: Leadership, Neighbourhood Policing, Communications, Detections (including forensics), Human Resources with the addition of protective services.

Members stated that the recent Cornwall and Isles of Scilly BCU meeting used these priorities as the basis for the agenda.

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PM/454 – An update on Major Crime Investigation Teams and their impact on detection performance would be presented to the Committee in September.

PM/456 – The Chairman has raised reservations with the Deputy Chief Constable regarding the review of the role of Forensic Investigation Quality Managers. These doubts were shared by the Deputy Chief Constable who has instructed further work. Members will remain briefed as matters develop.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2007 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **PM/461 Magistrates' Court Act Offences Backlog**

The Chairman outlined the developments that had occurred since this item was last discussed by the Committee in January. The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly BCU Commander had stated then, that by the end of June 2007 the number of offences would be reduced to no more than 300.

The BCU Commander had now submitted a paper indicating that the backlog was at 168 as of 25 June 2007. The Chairman stated that this report was deficient in various ways and voiced his irritation that the report tended to mislead the Committee. The report did not provide sufficient detail on the way in which the reduction had been reached.

In order to clarify detail lacking from the report, the Policy Officer had requested further data from the Force Performance Department. This gave light to some concerns around working practices and processes adopted across the BCUs. As a result, the Deputy Chief Constable tasked the Acting Assistant Chief Constable (Territorial Policing & Justice) to investigate the matter further and resolve it. For this reason, the A/ACC had been instructed to attend the Committee instead of the BCU Commander.

The A/ACC joined the meeting. He explained that there were issues lying behind the BCU Commander's report concerning the way different processes have been adopted by the different BCUs. There appears to be a variety of working practices developed locally and staff deployed in back-office functions. This is compounded by funding complexities, again arranged locally. The A/ACC would also look into Members' concerns that the backlog in Cornwall and Isles of Scilly BCU had been reduced through the over-reliance on cautions. However, he reassured the Committee that the backlog had been dealt with ethically and committed to inform the Police Authority when the further detail was available.

The Commander, Criminal Justice Department has been tasked with reviewing the arrangements across BCUs and addressing wider concerns of corporacy.

Members were anxious that reports presented to the Police Authority must be clear and comprehensive. The Chairman stated it was the sole concern of the Committee that this whole area of concern was resolved and systems put in place to ensure that they cannot recur.

The Chairman thanked the A/ACC for his honest assessment of the issues.

### **PM/462 Code of Practice for Victims of Crime**

The Acting Assistant Chief Constable (Territorial Policing & Justice) presented a report indicating compliance with the Victims Code of Practice, established in April 2006.

The Force is reviewing where this work best sits in terms of Chief Officer responsibility. Current thinking is that it may become part of the Citizen Focus portfolio.

Despite the Victims' Code having been in place for over a year, Members questioned the scarcity of data available. Whilst procedures exist for building victim contact into crime investigation processes, concern was expressed that no tangible evidence was provided. Proactivity in this area should bring about positive contribution to victim satisfaction levels which continue to remain poor when compared nationally.

Members of the Chief Officers Group contact victims of crime randomly to verify the standard of service received. Senior officers take victim care seriously and will take appropriate action when necessary to ensure procedures are being complied with properly.

The A/ACC advised that he would provide further detail on compliance as it became known. This would be provided to the Policy Officer for onward distribution.

The Chairman thanked the A/ACC for the update.

#### **PM/463 Rape Detections**

The Acting Assistant Chief Constable (Crime & Operations) provided Members with an updated version of the Rape Action Plan. This had previously been presented to Members at the Committee in March 2007 but had undergone some changes following review.

The A/ACC suggested that a key element of the Action Plan was the daily monitoring of activity. The current rape detection rate is approximately 12% against a Force target of 30%. Performance towards this target is monitored via the Performance Improvement and Tasking meetings.

The Chairman asked when a significant improvement in rape detections would be seen. The A/ACC stated that a gradual improvement would hopefully be seen through better working practices with partners. Police are traditionally seen as having an enforcement role. There is a need for victims to be confident to come forward and that once they have done so, there be suitable facilities to cater for them. It was hoped that by April 2008, these developments would bring about positive improvement in the detection rate.

The Chairman thanked the A/ACC for the report and asked for an update in April 2008.

#### **PM/464 Data Quality Review 2006/2007 National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) and National Standard of Incident Recording (NSIR)**

The Head of the Professional Standards & Performance Department, Acting Head of Performance & Analysis and Force Crime & Incident Registrar were welcomed to the meeting.

The Chairman opened the item by explaining that the Audit Commission's report into Data Quality management in the Constabulary and Police Authority was referred to this Committee by the Corporate Governance Committee which met on 5 June. The report makes several recommendations about the way the Authority's Lead Member engages with NCRS and NSIR issues, training and governance arrangements.

The Head of Professional Standards & Performance provided a brief review of current NCRS and NSIR arrangements. NCRS is longer established and performance is graded as "excellent". NSIR is less well defined and would benefit from greater objectivity by staff using closure codes. It is currently graded as "poor". The Force took part in the pilot study several years ago but performance has deteriorated since

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then. The Call Management and Communications Department have an improvement plan in place dealing specifically with NSIR issues. Again this plan will be monitored by the Performance Improvement and Tasking meetings where Commanders will be held to account for their contribution to improving compliance.

Members stressed the importance of accurate data quality as it related directly to the reliability of target information.

The Committee discussed the recommendations raised in the Audit Commission's report.

*Recommendation 8 - Ensure that the lead member for NCRS and NSIR performance sits on the Performance Management Committee to ensure a co-ordinated response to performance issues.*

It was agreed that it was important that the Lead Member should be a member of this Committee. This was probably not a realistic expectation of the current Lead Member due to his many other commitments but the Chairman would discuss this with him. If the current Lead Member did indeed feel that he could not take on that commitment it might be appropriate for a suitable new Lead Member to be identified for NCRS and NSIR. This was not a criticism of the incumbent Lead Member but in recognition of his workload. The Chairman undertook to pursue these matters with both the Lead Member and the Chairman of the Police Authority with a view to meeting the expectations of the Audit Commission recommendation.

*Recommendation 9 - Develop a protocol to be agreed between the Authority and the Force which sets out expectations and requirements for data quality.*

It was not felt that a formal Protocol was necessary. The Committee felt that its expectations would be clear and the issues behind the Commission addressed by re-affirmation of the 90% target for NSIR compliance as the performance expectation of the Authority in respect of this area of work.

*Recommendation 10 - Undertake a skills mix of members to link competencies to roles and responsibilities and ensure that these are set out and communicated.*

The role of the Lead Member would be critical to this. Once the suggested actions in relation to "Recommendation 8" (see above) had been addressed, training could be delivered and reporting arrangements would be clarified.

*Recommendation 11 - Extend the provision of on-line training for Members in key areas to facilitate learning.*

The Policy Officer confirmed he is looking into the provision of training. There appears to be a lack of such training available either through the APA or Audit Commission. Initially it was proposed that the Force Crime and Incident Registrar be requested to deliver an overview to Committee Members on the principles of crime and incident recording with further training on scrutiny arrangements delivered as and when available.

*Recommendation 14 - Ensure that the results of all external reviews are reported to the Police Authority to enable members to challenge*

It was felt that the Lead Member role, operating effectively, would adequately cover this area.

### **PM/465 Performance against the Annual Policing Plan (Targets)**

The Head of Professional Standards & Performance Department presented a report detailing performance towards the Force targets for 2007/8. Members were shown selected slides from a presentation to be delivered by the Deputy Chief Constable at the Performance Improvement & Tasking meeting on 17 July 2007.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The Target to reduce British Crime Survey comparator crime is on target at a 5.1% reduction against a 5% reduction target.
- Crime in Mid Devon accounts for approximately 16% of all crime in North & East Devon BCU. Plans are in hand to address this problem area.
- Criminal damage continues to reduce generally across the Force. This area saw increases last year and affects the Local Domain target.
- Violence in a public place is increasing. Figures are somewhat skewed by the inclusion of harassment which in some cases can be a result of early intervention by an officer. Again, this is assessed under the Local Domain targets.
- Sanction detections are marginally below the target of 27%. The Committee was reminded that even if the target were met, comparative performance would mean the Force is not placed in the top quartile. A push for achievement beyond the target is important. The Chairman spoke again of the need for corporate standards in crime detection practices, central control and accountability to see improved and sustained performance. This again touched on issues around the FIQM role. He expressed confidence that the Deputy Chief Constable would continue to press for this.
- Domestic violence detections are seeing wide variations in performance across the BCUs with Plymouth BCU performing well below the Force average. It was noted the Plymouth BCU Commander would be challenged at the Performance Improvement and Tasking meeting on his BCU's DV detection rate. The Policy Officer enquired whether Head Cams had had an impact on this area of performance. However, it was explained that the current assessment of the Head Cams pilot had not conclusively found this to be so. This may have been due to the limited nature of the review.
- Road Traffic Collisions resulting in death or serious injury have increased on last year's figures. Members were presented with figures detailing the severity of collisions across the Force.
- The non-emergency call answering target is on course to be met by year-end. The Call Management and Communications Department are responding to greater workloads due, in part, to the increased use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and NSIR. However, to balance this, fewer logs are being created. The Chairman indicated that he knew that the Force is currently reviewing working practices as well as capacity in this area.
- It is unlikely the 999-call answering target will be met. Performance currently stands at 87.3% and is steadily declining from a peak in November last year. The Acting Head of Performance and Analysis spoke of the poor results from the victim satisfaction survey for anti-social behaviour. The Force was placed no higher than 30<sup>th</sup> nationally in any of the 5 categories, and last in the country for 'Ease of Contact'. Members were briefed on the difficulties in comparing data more regularly as this measure of satisfaction is not yet collected as a Statutory Performance Indicator. Taking steps to improve performance is exacerbated by a lack of comparative BCU-based data. Members spoke of the close links here to the victims' code discussed earlier in the meeting.

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The Chairman summarised by praising the thorough way in which performance was being analysed and addressed by the Deputy Chief Constable. There was, though, a balance to be struck between the Committee wishing to take positive action to improve performance whilst allowing the Force the time to manage the issues.

The Chairman thanked the Head of the Professional Standards & Performance Department and his staff for the update.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee noted the Force's performance against the annual policing plan targets 2007/2008.

In drawing the meeting to a close, the Chairman stated that much of the Committee's work recently had been focused on the BCUs. It was right that other areas of the Force should also be better scrutinised by the Committee too. It was suggested that the Criminal Justice Department was of particular interest to the Performance Management Committee at this time due to its critical links in the chain of crime detection processes and its impact on sanction detection and satisfaction performance. Members heard that the Lead Member for Criminal Justice had reduced his work in this area recently but now may be an appropriate time to reinstate this. The Chairman would discuss with the Chairman of the Authority the possibility of assigning a piece of work on a Task and Finish basis in this area.

The Policy Officer urged Members to ensure this work fits clearly with the performance priorities of the Authority. The Committee agreed that this was the case currently.

The Chairman thanked Members for their contribution to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 2.05pm.