

## Devon and Cornwall Police Authority

### MINUTES

A meeting of the **Performance Management Committee** was held on Tuesday 27 March 2007 in the Conference Room, Endeavour House, Woodwater Park, Exeter starting at 10.00am.

#### Present:

Chairman ..... M Bull  
S Malloni [not item 7] and C Wallin.

#### Officers in Attendance: -

**Police Force** Assistant Chief Constable (Operations) R Stowe [item 4 only], Chief Superintendent J Webster (Commander, Citizen Focus Department) [item 6 only], Superintendent I Ansell (Force Performance Manager) [item 5 only] and Inspector A Hyland (Call Management and Communications Department) [item 6 only].

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

#### PM/439 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from C Bulley, J Currie, Sir S Day, M Hicks, D Money and W Thomas.

#### PM/440 Declarations of Interests

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

#### PM/441 Minutes

The Chairman asked that the following be added to the bullet-pointed list under minute PM/434:

*"The A/ACC also indicated that he had recently discovered that both the NBM's and Response Officers were carrying a crime investigation caseload not significantly less than the BCU detectives. This may have impacted on reducing the visibility of those officers in their communities. This would also be pursued with the BCU Commanders."*

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2007 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the amendment above.

#### PM/442 Chairman's Statements

The Chairman gave his thanks to Simon Malloni for his commitment and contribution to this Committee in the past.

The Chairman expressed his frustration with the very poor attendance at this meeting. He called for this issue to be raised with the Chairman of the Police Authority and the Chief Executive.

Having regard to the special circumstances pertaining in this matter – namely the desire for a discussion to be held, the Chairman was of the opinion that, despite its non-inclusion on the Agenda, the matter of Police Authority scrutiny of BCU performance should be considered at this meeting as a matter of urgency.

#### PM/443 Rape Detections

The Assistant Chief Constable (Operations) joined the meeting and delivered a presentation, which had not been circulated in advance, on the Force approach to tackling rape offences and its actions in response to the recent HMIC publication 'Without Consent'.  
Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

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- Matters relating to work being progressed by the Force concurrently with ACPO and HMIC activity aimed at addressing Police performance in relation to rape offences.
- Rape is a difficult offence to address. The majority of offences are committed by partners or ex-partners of the victims. The offence is understood to go largely unreported. "Stranger rape" is very rare.
- The number of recorded rape offences by the end of March 2007 is predicted to be approximately 417 (of these only about 6 or so will be 'stranger rapes'), although it was stressed by the Assistant Chief Constable that the recorded crime rate is not an accurate nor desirable measure of the offence. Instead, the ACC stated that police activity is thought to be best focussed on detecting known offences.
- Rape has a very high attrition rate. Nationally, between a half and two-thirds of reported rapes do not proceed beyond an investigation. Incidents of 'no criming' nationally stands at over 20%. In this Force the figure is 7%. Due to this variance, the Assistant Chief Constable suggested the local figure may be inaccurate and an audit is to be carried out.
- As a result of positive police action, the detection rate for rape has improved significantly over the last few months. However, it remains well below the national average of approximately 20%. The reasons for this are unclear. The sanction detection rate for rape is falling but the proportion of these resulting in convictions has increased. This compares well with the national average figure. The Crown Prosecution Service is reluctant to prosecute in some cases where there is not a reasonable chance of conviction. In addition, the sometimes adversarial nature of the criminal justice system can further hinder securing convictions.
- The Force "Lead" on rape will sit within the portfolio of the Assistant Chief Constable (Operations).
- Assistance to victims is provided by partner agencies such as Victim Support and the NHS. The Assistant Chief Constable stressed that ongoing victim care was not within the remit of the police.

The Assistant Chief Constable updated the Committee of the work in progress to address the recommendations made in the HMIC report 'Without Consent'. The Force has accepted all recommendations from the study but recognised some needed to be addressed with greater urgency than others. In particular, developing more effective relationships with the Crown Prosecution Service was considered vital.

Members were provided with a brief overview of facilities available to victims of rape across the Force. The relatively low numbers of rape meant 24/7 facilities could not be justified in all parts of the Force.

The Chairman thanked the Assistant Chief Constable for the presentation and called for an update on performance improvement as a result of the Action Plan at a future meeting of this Committee.

As the Assistant Chief Constable was soon to take up a new post in London, the Chairman also took the opportunity to thank him for his contribution to this Committee in the past and in particular his efforts to drive forward the objective of improvement in forensics performance over the last few years.

### **PM/444 Police Authority scrutiny of BCU performance**

The Chairman led a discussion on ways the Police Authority could improve scrutiny of BCU performance.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The existing BCU Commander meetings should be reviewed to provide a greater focus on local performance. Information should be provided to Members in advance of the meetings and should illustrate both Force and BCU performance for comparison.

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- A BCU meeting Chairman should be appointed for a 12 month period rather than rotating at each meeting.
- Agenda preparation should continue to be controlled by the Police Authority, with the option for BCU Commanders to raise issues of local concern.
- The issue of BCU Commander meetings is being considered by the Greenslade Working Party and is likely to be a key part of the imminent Police Authority Strategic Plan.

### **PM/445 Performance against the Annual Policing Plan (Targets)**

The Force Performance Manager joined the meeting and presented a report detailing performance towards the Force targets for 2006/7.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The Force is unlikely to achieve the target of 80% for satisfaction with the overall service provided. Although seeing an improvement, the Force still resides at the bottom of its Most Similar Family (MSF) group. The Chief Constable has placed Citizen Focus as his top priority for 2007/ 2008. Several new streams of work are underway and the satisfaction target raised to 82% for next year at the behest of the Chief Constable.
- Performance for satisfaction of victims of racist incidents has not improved as much as had been hoped for. Effort will now concentrate on the individual service to victims reinforced by intrusive supervision throughout the process.
- Overall crime has remained stable and the Force is placed in the middle of its MSF and 9<sup>th</sup> lowest nationally. No areas of British Crime Survey performance currently reside within the bottom quartile. The Force Performance Manager suggested that targeting prolific and priority offenders had seen positive results.
- The increased visibility of community-based officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) could cause more crime to be reported to the police in 2007/08.
- Members suggested the drop in domestic burglary and theft from vehicles could be the result of a general economic upturn making acquisitive crime less rewarding.
- The sanction detection rate is stable just below the target of 27% at 25.5%. The Force Performance Manager suggested only a substantial change in working practices and processes would push this up further. Following on from a report to the last meeting of this Committee from Assistant Chief Constable (Territorial Policing and Justice), work is in hand to understand the caseloads of Neighbourhood Beat Managers, Response officers and detectives better. Balancing resources and workloads across the policing disciplines is an important step to bring about performance improvements.
- The Chairman reminded Members that the Assistant Chief Constable had reported at the last meeting that some Neighbourhood Beat Managers and Response officers held caseloads similar in volume terms to detective officers and that this may have a detrimental effect on the drive for higher visibility policing.
- The Force Performance Manager reported that steady improvements in some aspects of forensics performance continue to be seen. Scene attendance is now within the top quartile nationally. This is a significant change. This is thought to be a result of more joined-up processes, new corporate standards in scene attendance and a clear understanding of individual responsibility. It was considered important that performance does not take a dip at the beginning of the new financial year, as has been the case in recent years. A sustained push will be needed throughout the year in order to meet targets.
- The Deputy Chief Constable has given a clear message to BCU Commanders that they are expected to continue to deliver the improvements in forensics seen recently. This is reinforced through rigorous performance management from the centre.

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- The Chairman relayed his disappointment at the Force's failure to deliver even more significant forensics improvement. New resources have been made available, including 4 new Forensics Investigation Quality Managers (FIQMs) for BCUs but there appears little evidence of the contribution these additional staff have made to performance yet. This development though had taken a very long time to come to fruition as a result of a prolonged delay through the processes of job definition, remuneration levels and the appointment process. The Chairman again suggested that enhanced supervision and management practices Forcewide were key to bringing about positive improvement. The Force Performance Manager stated he would pass this on to the Deputy Chief Constable.
- Incidents of criminal damage have risen. This is possibly due to the public having more opportunities to report offences following the gradual introduction of PCSOs. The Chairman challenged whether there was sufficient working with partners to reduce criminal damage and violence. Greater focus in CDRPs and Local Action Groups could make a contribution here. The Force Performance Manager described activity to raise awareness amongst licensed premises of the responsibilities they have in addressing crime. The preferred police response is to eradicate problems before they worsen.
- The Force Performance Manager briefed the Committee on a very recent Home Office decision not to allow administrative detections to count within the overall Force detection rate in 2007/08. This would primarily effect the detection rate for domestic violence incidents and would, under current performance levels, reduce the domestic violence detection rate by approximately 2.8% and the overall detection rate by about 1.3%. The Committee was asked whether, in light of this decision, the Police Authority wished to review the domestic violence target for 2007/ 2008.  
The Chairman indicated that it was the responsibility of the Planning and Consultation Committee to set the targets and it should be for that Committee to determine what action, if any, to take.  
The Policy Officer agreed to raise this issue with the Vice Chairman of the Planning and Consultation Committee as soon as possible.

The Chairman thanked the Force Performance Manager for the report.

**RESOLVED**

- i. That the Committee noted the Force's performance against the annual policing plan targets 2006/2007.
- ii. That the Committee expresses its disappointment that the Force has failed to deliver more significant improvements in forensics performance yet to impact on the sanction detection rate. This despite the thorough review of, and significant investment in, the forensic support function.

**PM/446 Call Management**

The Chairman welcomed the Commander, Citizen Focus Department, to the meeting and requested his presentation be brief due to time constraints. The Chairman confirmed the Committee was less concerned with primary call handling of 999 and non-emergency calls but more focussed on the secondary call handling service with the Force Enquiry Centre and Cental Data Inputting Bureau. The Commander, Citizen Focus Department was therefore asked to focus his presentation on this area.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Results from applying the industry-standard Erlang C formula, suggest the Force is under-staffed to achieve performance targets. The staffing compliment of 366 is considered inadequate, yet no new resources are available. Additionally, recruiting and retainment of staff in Exeter is difficult due to high

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employment rates. This is less problematic in Plymouth but there is little or no new staffing capacity at this site. It is unlikely all 366 posts will be filled.

- The Chief Constable has stated that he considers call management has a critical role in citizen focus and in improving satisfaction and confidence levels.
- The Commander, Citizen Focus Department, proposed that the only way to bring about a step change in performance within the existing budget was to increase the operator to supervisor staff ratio by rationalising the telephony and radio operation services.
- An initial plan has been approved in principle by the Chief Officer Group. This will be presented to the Police Authority for consideration.

The Chairman was heartened that the Force was considering a radical solution to address this area of performance which had been fluctuating for some time but was consistently producing results below 'target level'. He felt the issues faced by the call management function required a bold solution. 'Tinkering' was unlikely to result in significant improvement.

**RESOLVED**

- i. That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 12.45pm.