

## Devon and Cornwall Police Authority

### MINUTES

A meeting of the **Performance Management Committee** was held on Tuesday 30 January 2007 in the Conference Room, Endeavour House, Woodwater Park, Exeter starting at 10.00am.

#### **Present:**

Chairman ..... M Bull  
C Bulley [items 1-7], J Currie, Sir S Day, M Hicks, S Malloni, D Money [not item 7] and C Wallin.

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

**Police Force** Superintendent I Ansell (Force Performance Manager) [items 7-9 only], R Bullock (Force Performance Analyst)[items 7-9 only], Chief Superintendent R Cooper (Cornwall & Isles of Scilly BCU Commander) [item 6 only] and Acting Assistant Chief Constable (Territorial Policing and Justice) R Spencer [item 5 only].

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

#### **PM/430 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from W Thomas.

#### **PM/431 Declarations of Interests**

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

#### **PM/432 Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2006 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### **PM/433 Meeting arrangements**

The Chairman welcomed everyone and explained this would be the first in a new style of meeting for this Committee. It followed discussions with the Deputy Chief Constable around the way in which the Police Authority wished to do its business from now on. There is a clear sign up from Members that the Police Authority should become far more performance focussed. From now on, this Committee would concentrate on a small number of issues per meeting examining these rigorously in detail and following them up thoroughly, when necessary. Senior officers would be requested to attend the Committee to account for performance. This would be done with the appropriate senior officers only and without any other officers or staff present. This would ensure two things, firstly that the officer was fully briefed and aware of the issues in question and secondly, to allow for more open and honest discussions than may be possible if colleagues were present.

The Chairman was keen to point out that it was the Deputy Chief Constable who had selected those who should be called to account at this meeting.

The Chairman indicated that the beginning of each meeting would be held without any Constabulary staff or officers present to allow the Members to discuss and agree the approach to be taken to each item.

The Deputy Chief Constable has given his support to this overall approach.

The Chairman also informed Members that he has arranged to meet with the Deputy Chief Constable regularly. These meetings will ensure and review follow-up actions for the meetings and assist preparation around future agendas and agreement on

who the appropriate officers or staff to attend would be. The Policy Officer would also attend these meetings which are co-ordinated to fall approximately halfway between Committee dates.

Finally, the Chairman touched on the recent issue of a BCU Commander meeting at which the BCU Commander was not available.

#### **PM/434 Crime Detection and the Impact of the Major Crime investigation Team**

The Chairman outlined the background to the reason this issue being brought to the Committee.

In February 2005, the Police Authority approved funding for 100 new police officers, of which 80 would be detectives to form the Major Crime Investigation Team (MCIT). The purpose of this team was to investigate major crime, reduce detective abstractions from BCUs to assist in these investigations and, as a consequence, to improve volume crime detection. The Chairman stated he had spoken with the Head of Crime who had suggested that six months was an appropriate period to have allowed from the MCIT being established on 1 April 2006 before assessing its impact upon volume crime sanction detection performance.

In the meantime, the Force Performance Analyst had prepared a briefing paper on the impact of the MCIT on BCU detective abstractions and the impact of this on volume crime detections in BCU's. A copy had been circulated with the agenda for this meeting. This clearly reports that despite 63 of the detectives being in place causing the abstractions from the BCUs to reduce by 66% there appeared to be little, if any, improvement in volume crime detection performance.

At this point Acting Assistant Chief Constable (Territorial Policing and Justice) was invited to join the meeting. The Chairman thanked the A/ACC for attending and outlined the approach the Members would take and received the A/ACC's agreement with this.

The A/ACC expanded on the reports circulated with the agenda.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The A/ACC raised with the Chief Constable in September 2006 the apparent lack of business benefits for the appointment of 80 detectives. At the time, the Force was prioritising the development of Neighbourhood Policing to the possible cost of detection performance.
- There is an issue emerging that response and neighbourhood officers are holding an inappropriately high number and type of crimes when compared to detective officers. This had been reinforced through the A/ACC's impromptu visits to police stations. The A/ACC is exploring the reasons behind this by looking at individual caseloads for officers. The Committee agreed it would not be appropriate for the Police Authority to have sight of this level of detail.  
On 31 January 2007, the A/ACC will task the BCU Commanders to reduce the workload capacity of both response and neighbourhood beat officers. This will inevitably mean the detectives' workloads will increase. The A/ACC stressed that the deployment of detectives was well meant but, at times, not best suited to balance workloads.
- The A/ACC also indicated that he had recently discovered that both 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.

- The movement of detectives to the MCIT has resulted in the BCUs having a less experienced base of detective officers.  
The Deputy Chief Constable has tasked the A/ACC with reviewing the Professionalising the Investigative Performance (PiP) process to ensure it adequately covers the basic investigative standards.
- The A/ACC agreed entirely that BCU-based detective performance should be better given the capacity released by the MCIT. Supervision by sergeants and inspectors was also raised as needing improving. In outlying stations, some staff do not see their supervisors as regularly as is required. The A/ACC indicated that improvement would be seen to be having an effect from 1 April 2007.

The A/ACC proceeded to talk about scenes of crime officers and their workload levels. The Deputy Chief Constable has directed that each Crime Scene Technician should visit a minimum of 3 scenes per day on average. This would increase the forensic lifts which should ultimately deliver better detection rates. It would also serve to increase satisfaction levels and raise visibility. The A/ACC will challenge BCU Commanders over this area of performance and use it to assess resource levels as appropriate. This would be alongside the assessment of the staffing levels across the Neighbourhood Policing, Response, Partnerships and detective disciplines, the results of which will be known by 31 March 2007.

- Members stated that Police Authority had provided significant investment in resources to improve detection performance in recent years. The Committee was keen to ensure the extra detectives would result in significant improvements.
- The Committee was also pleased to hear that improvement was being directed without the formation of work groups but through the A/ACC's personal involvement and determination to see improvement. However, the Committee questioned how the situation had arisen.  
The A/ACC suggested it was due to a plethora of new initiatives, legislation and bureaucracy from the Government. It was anticipated the Force would also see a period of stability over the next few years with a renewed focus on performance. The Deputy Chief Constable and Chief Constable were keen to drive down bureaucracy and make sure processes are conducted correctly the first time. This piece of work is due for completion on 31 March 2007.

The A/ACC summarised by saying that the activity he has described along with the renewed vigor and drive from the very top of the organisation would see improvements. There would be some difficult operational decisions needed.

The Chairman thanked the A/ACC for his open and frank approach and for his honesty in answering Members questions. This should set a good precedent for future working on shared objectives.

The Chairman reported the Committee's wish to follow up on these issues and asked the A/ACC to return in due course to discuss them again when further performance data was available.

## **RESOLVED**

- i. That the reports be noted.

- ii. That the A/ACC is requested to return to a future meeting of this committee to account for sanction detection performance changes.
- iii. The Policy Officer to contact the Force Performance Analyst to ascertain how soon after 1 April 2007 performance data will be available to illustrate improvement in this area and that the date for the next Committee focus on this issue would then be set.

### **PM/435 Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, Magistrates Courts Act (MCA) Work Backlog**

The Chairman outlined the background to the reason that this issue was being brought to the Committee.

The Chairman had attended a Performance Practitioners Group meeting in November 2006 and learned from a representative of the Criminal Justice Department that Cornwall & Isles of Scilly BCU had a large backlog of cases that had not been presented to Magistrates' Court because the mandatory 6 month time limit had expired both in the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 years. This was possibly an impediment to driving up sanction detection performance.

The Chairman had subsequently spoken at length with the Cornwall & Isles of Scilly BCU Commander about this issue.

At this point Cornwall & Isles of Scilly BCU Commander was invited to join the meeting. The Chairman thanked him for attending and outlined the approach the Members would take and received the BCU Commander's agreement with this.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The BCU Commander apologised for any difficulties Members may have experienced in contacting him.
- The BCU Commander shares the Police Authority's desire to drive up sanction detection performance. Supervisors and the Senior Management Team are being briefed on the Chief Constable's aspirations.
- In late 2005, due to staffing shortages in the relevant part of the BCU and the consequent backlog of work, a temporary change in working practices was adopted. This resulted in only serious offences and those resulting in a victim being prioritised and summonses issued. All other offences were dealt with by issuing a warning letter. He said that no offences went outside the 6-month timescale and none were "written off". Although unable to identify the exact number of offences this referred to, the BCU Commander declared that the vast majority of the offences were minor traffic violations. These would not have been classed as a sanction detection.

The problem appeared to arise following a transfer of staff from the Criminal Justice Department to the BCU. This transfer was not properly managed and resulted in a shortfall in the number of staff that the BCU Commander assumed he was receiving. A Chief Inspector had now been tasked with managing the situation and this was seeing appropriate improvements.

The Chairman stated that whilst he noted that no cases had apparently reached the 6-month time limit, some were very close. He also repeated that the Authority was not willing to accept excuses based on arguments about the performance data being unreliable, comparative performance figures being challenged on the grounds that the other authorities or BCU's were "cheating", or that the BCU's did

not have sufficient resources. Much of the issues were around how resources were managed and performance was monitored.

- The BCU Commander reported that additional staff had been drafted in to assist with reducing the backlog. As of today, the backlog stood at 824. The target was to reduce this to 300 or less by the 30 June 2007.

It was reported that an increase in work had been put upon the unit by the Safety Camera Partnership. The BCU Commander indicated he would seek to secure some resource from the Partnership to assist in the extra work it generated.

Members questioned the justification for this as the BCU itself can place an extra burden on other areas of the Criminal Justice System through the Force passing over to the Courts numbers on unpaid Penalty Notices for Disorder (PNDs).

The Chairman thanked the BCU Commander for this update. He called for a further report to be prepared in July 2007 detailing the position with the backlog of cases up to 30 June 2007. The Chairman would then decided whether the situation was firmly under control or if it needed to come back to the Committee for further debate.

#### **RESOLVED**

- i. That the report be noted.
- ii. That the BCU Commander is requested to prepare a report in due course, outlining the position with the backlog of cases as at 30 June 2007.
- iii. The Chairman to review the report at (ii) and identify whether the BCU Commander be asked to attend the July meeting of this Committee.

#### **PM/436 Performance against the Annual Policing Plan (Targets)**

The Force Performance Analyst presented a report detailing performance towards the Force targets for 2006/7.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- New satisfaction survey information is due soon. A lot of work is ongoing to improve on this area of performance. The Chief Constable's message of a citizen-focussed service has prioritised this target for 2007.
- Sanction detections are stable but the number of offences brought to justice has continued to improve. The time lag in offences coming to court is thought to be the reason behind the apparent inconsistency between these two statements.
- A £500,000 seizure has been reported towards the asset recovery target. The Force Performance Analyst is working to predict the assets that are likely to be forthcoming in the near future. There is a need for the Force to make this more central to the day to day business of the Force and to concentrate on making smaller as well as larger seizures.
- It is predicted that the target to increase the number of drug offences brought to justice will not be achieved.
- The target to answer 90% of 999 calls within 10 seconds is not likely to be met. The non-emergency call target should just be achieved. The Force Performance Manager reported that the Director of Communications had been called to account for this at the last Performance Management Group. Members indicated that this issue continues to be raised regularly by the public as one of concern.

The Chairman suggested it was time the Committee studied this area in depth once again and called for it to be considered at the next meeting.

- The target for 60% of uniformed officers' time to be spent on visible activity is being met. Imminently, scenes of crime officers will be counted within this sample because the Deputy Chief Constable is seeking these people to become uniformed. This should make a beneficial contribution to increasing the visibility target performance.
- Criminal damage levels and its relationship to the perception of anti-social behaviour is off target but a reduction over the last few months. This reduction was seen as a result of proactive engagement by BCUs and a greater awareness by officers.
- A discussion was held around forensic performance. The key to improvement continues to be seen as greater attendance at scenes by examiners and technicians. Scenes of crime officers have been tasked with visiting an average of at least 3 scenes per day. These also need to be the right scenes to increase the opportunity for forensic lifts. Studying scenes of crime officers' work profiles identifies times when their activity could be better directed. Supervision focus is to be given to this.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

#### **PM/437HMIC Baseline Assessment 2006 Action Plans**

The Force Performance Manager presented the Committee with Action Plans prepared in response to the HMIC Baseline Assessment 2006.

The Chairman indicated that the Action Plans were not up to date. The Force Performance Manager stated that the Continuous Improvement Database officer was sick and a more timely update was not accessible at this stage.

The Committee indicated that the Action Plans around Leadership were progressing well and the Authority had fewer concerns about this area following the recent Chief Officer appointments.

The Chairman stated that the area of greatest concern in the HMIC BA was that of Human Resources. The body of work necessary as a result of the action plan was large yet it was not the job of this Committee to oversee its progression. However, this Committee should reasonably satisfy itself that the Action Plan was being addressed appropriately by the Police Authority's Human Resources Committee. It was noted that a robust meeting of the HR Committee had very recently been held on these issues which did appear to be being pursued with commitment.

#### **RESOLVED**

- i. That the report be noted.

#### **PM/438National Crime Recording Standard/ National Standard of Incident Recording compliance**

The Force Performance Manager presented the Committee with an update report on the Force's compliance with NCRS and NSIR standards.

NCRS was assessed by the Audit Commission as fully compliant. This is a credit to the work of the Force Crime Registrar and his team.

NSIR compliance is less satisfactory. Changes adopted from the 13/15 (log management) Project had impacted on closing OIS logs and has impacted on performance. Current performance is 79% which, whilst reasonable nationally, attracts a 'poor' grading. Despite this, since the grading in September 2006, the Force had improved to 82%, equivalent to a 'fair' grading.

The Chairman thanked the Force Performance Manager and Force Performance Analyst for their contribution to the meeting.

The Chairman thanked Members for their contribution to the meeting. Members indicated their satisfaction with the rigour of the new approach taken at this meeting.

The Vice Chairman indicated that the next meeting of this Committee clashed with the Assistant Chief Constable appointment process. However, it appeared that the Vice Chairman was the only Member of this Committee on the appointment panel so the Committee would be held as planned.

The meeting closed at 1.00pm.