

CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY

COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Community and Race Relations Committee held on Thursday 13 April 2006 in Conference Room 1, Police Headquarters, Carleton Hall, Penrith commencing at 2 p.m.

PRESENT

Ms J Lashmar (Chair)

Mr M Ash
Mrs C Egan

Mr R Watson
Mr J Woolley

Also Present:

Acting Chief Constable (Mrs C Twigg)
Constabulary Race and Diversity Adviser (Ms P Bell)
Performance Management & Policy Advisor (Miss M Saunders)
Deputy Clerk (Mr S Edwards)

PART 1 – ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

31. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mrs L Slavin.

32. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED, that, under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Agenda Item No.10 “Grievances” on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of Part 1 to the Act.

33. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of any personal interests relating to any item on the Agenda.

34. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26 January 2006 had been circulated with the Agenda.

RESOLVED, that the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2006 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

35. POLICE AUTHORITY RACE EQUALITY SCHEME ACTION PLAN – UPDATE

The Deputy Clerk presented a report by the Clerk/ Chief Executive appended to which was a copy of the Police Authority's Race Equality Scheme Action Plan amended to reflect actions undertaken since the last meeting of the Committee. Members were reminded that the Action Plan was submitted to each meeting of the Committee to enable Members to monitor progress effectively.

Reference was made to the importance of providing impact assessment training to take forward the impact assessments required under the Action Plan. The Chair advised that the APA could provide such training locally and suggested it might be worth exploring the possibility of linking with Lancashire Police Authority on this matter. The Deputy Clerk reported that he had attended an impact assessment training session provided by the Constabulary on 11 April.

Reference was made to work being undertaken by the Authority with young people and Members suggested that a link be built in to work being reported through the Consultation Working Group.

It was noted that links were being developed with Lancashire Police Authority's Independent Custody Visiting Scheme ahead of the proposed amalgamation in 2007.

Member suggested that actions identified for 2007 might need to be built into the scoping exercises for the development of the new Strategic Police Authority.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted and the Action Plan amended to reflect comments made by Members.

36. CONSTABULARY RACE AND DIVERSITY EQUALITY SCHEME ACTION PLAN - UPDATE

The Acting Chief Constable presented a report, appended to which was a copy of the Constabulary Race and Diversity Equality Scheme Action Plan for Members information.

Members again noted that many matters contained within the Action Plan would need to be addressed as part of the scoping exercise for the forthcoming amalgamation with Lancashire.

Members raised various matters with the Acting Chief Constable to which she responded as appropriate.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

37. USE OF STOP AND STOP/SEARCH POWERS WITHIN CUMBRIA

The Acting Chief Constable presented a report to Members that complied with the requirement to report the impact/success of “stops” on criminality on a six monthly basis. The current report contained data from the period September 2005 to February 2006 inclusive, as well as a commentary on the value of the tactics on tackling criminality in Cumbria.

The use of the powers had remained relatively constant and there was very little disproportionality based upon ethnicity of persons stopped. Stop and search continued to be a valuable tactic to prevent and detect crime.

Members welcomed the report.

RESOLVED, that

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the Committee continue to monitor the use of Stop and Stop/Search powers by the Constabulary.

38. MONITORING RACE RELATED OFFENCES

The Performance Management and Policy Advisor presented a report by the Clerk/Chief Executive the purpose of which was to bring to the attention of the Committee the Audit and Performance Committee’s role in monitoring crimes related to race. “Racially aggravated crimes” and “crimes with a racial interest marker “ were both monitored by the Audit and Performance Committee. For Members information appended to the report were an extract from the report to be considered by the Audit and Performance Committee on 20 April 2006 dealing with “racially aggravated offences” and a copy of the exception report on “racially aggravated offences” submitted to the Audit and Performance Committee by the Constabulary on 3 November 2005.

In considered the report Members noted that overall the numbers involved were not large and expressed their desire to avoid duplication of work between this Committee and the Audit and Performance Committee. As such they proposed that monitoring of race related offences should remain with the Audit and Performance Committee but that if any specific issue arose during the Audit and Performance Committee’s consideration of these matters then they could be referred to the Community and Race Relations Committee together with a covering report to enable the Committee to consider them in more depth.

RESOLVED, that monitoring of race related offences remain with the Audit and Performance Committee, but any specific matters raised by that Committee be referred to the Community and Race Relations Committee if necessary.

39. MEMBERS' REPORT BACK

The Chair reported on her recent attendance at an APA Policy Group meeting which had been addressed by Mr Robin Field-Smith, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary. He had provided a briefing on a recent meeting with the Home Office and highlighted matters relating to the CRE, DDA, Gender Equality and the specific duties falling on all police authorities as a result of legislation in these areas.

The Chair also reported on her recent attendance at a meeting of the Barrow Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. Amongst the issues considered had been the seeking of volunteers for Streetsafe; the fact that a recent survey in Barrow appeared to indicate that few people were aware of the fact that they were served by an LPT or were aware of their local police officer's name; and that quite often people considered to be members of minority groups by others did not see themselves as a member of a minority group.

Member commended the Constabulary for the work it was undertaking to seek the views of people within Cumbria in general, and minority groups in particular. They noted that it was only possible for the Authority and Constabulary to work in an open way to build relationships and trust and that, hopefully, from this would flow improved relationships and understanding. They were pleased to note some positive work being undertaken in the Penrith area, notably the establishment of a network/support group for eastern Europeans resident in the area.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

PART II – ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

40. GRIEVANCES

The Acting Chief Constable presented the grievance statistics report which showed the number of grievances lodged in the current year to date and compared these with those logged in the previous two financial years.

Members noted that the introduction of the Constabulary's anti bullying policy meant that bullying would now be dealt with through that channel rather than through the grievance procedure. Use of that policy would be picked up in future reports.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 3.25 pm