

CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY

COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Community and Race Relations Committee held at 4.10 pm on Monday 31 January 2005 in Conference Room 1, Police Headquarters, Carleton Hall, Penrith.

PRESENT

Ms J Lashmar (Chair)

Ms K E Brandwood
Mr R Watson

Mrs C A Egan
Mr J Woolley

Also present:

Clerk & Chief Executive
Assistant Chief Constable (Operations)
Superintendent T Thwaites
Deputy Clerk to the Police Authority

PART 1 - ITEMS TAKEN IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs L Slavin.

26. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items on the agenda for which the press and public were to be excluded.

27. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

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

28. MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November 2004 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

29. INTERIM RACE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN FOR THE POLICE SERVICE

A copy of the Interim Race Equality Action Plan for the Police Service, which had been published in December 2004, had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting. The Action Plan had been produced by ACPO, the Home

Office, APA, Centrex and HMIC and had been developed as part of the police service's response to the findings of the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) interim report as part of its formal investigation into the police service in England and Wales. In addition, the Action Plan sought to incorporate the police service's ongoing response to recommendations made in a number of previous enquiries and reports including the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and the "Diversity Matters" and "Breaking Through" documents. The Action Plan contained a range of actions some of which were national and some of which were local. Local actions were either for the Constabulary or the Authority or required joint action by both the Authority and the Constabulary.

The Action Plan was divided into five sections as follows:

- (a) **Leadership and Resources:** To ensure that the promotion of race equality and diversity was incorporated into all aspects and levels of leadership within the Police Service and to identify and secure the resources necessary to promote race equality and diversity.
- (b) **Staffing and internal environment:** To ensure that all staff understood, were committed to, and were involved in the delivery and management of race equality and diversity.
- (c) **Partnerships and Community Engagement:** To work with partner agencies and communities to identify needs and deliver responsive and appropriate services to diverse communities.
- (d) **Monitoring and Performance Management:** To ensure delivery of race equality and diversity outcomes through effective monitoring and performance management processes.
- (e) **Communication and Marketing:** To ensure the effective communication of a national vision and strategy for equality and diversity in the police service.

The Assistant Chief Constable advised that the Constabulary was pressing ahead to ensure that it achieved all the targets set for it within the Action Plan.

In considering the Action Plan Members expressed the view that the Police Authority was well positioned to respond to the Action Plan having recently developed a new Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan. However, there were items within the interim Race Equality Action Plan which would need to be incorporated within the Authority's own Action Plan. Members were somewhat concerned that the APA, through the Interim Race Equality Action Plan, appeared to have committed all police authorities to specific actions. The APA had also committed itself to various actions within the Action Plan. Members also noted that ACPO was arranging a seminar for police forces but they were unaware of whether the APA was arranging anything similar for police authorities. They suggested that it would be appropriate for the Clerk and Chief Executive to contact the APA to express concern that it was

committing authorities to actions without consultation and suggesting that the APA might usefully arrange a seminar for the benefit of all police authorities in this crucial area of activity.

RESOLVED, that the Interim Race Equality Action Plan be noted.

30. UPDATE ON THE CONSTABULARY RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

Superintendent Thwaites advised Members that all forces were required to renew their Race Equality Schemes by May 2005. Work was ongoing within the Constabulary to achieve this target, though the storms of 7/8 January had impacted on the work.

Amongst the key issues being addressed was a drive to highlight equality work within the Constabulary to raise awareness and increase involvement at all levels, and a strong lead was being provided in this area by the ACPO team. In addition consultation targets were a key priority over the next 12 months, including the possibility of work towards setting up bodies similar to IAG's. It was also proposed to extend and develop the Equality Steering Groups in Areas and within Operational Support.

He advised that the latest draft of the Constabulary's RES could be made available to Members if required. He undertook to ensure that the Chair was briefed as work progressed.

RESOLVED, that the update be noted.

31. EXTENSION OF STOP AND SEARCH TO INCLUDE "ENCOUNTERS"

Superintendent Thwaites introduced a report by the Chief Constable, a copy of which had been circulated to all Members.

The Home Secretary had set a date of 1 April 2005 by which all forces must record "stops" as well as "stop and searches." This was a major extension of the recording requirement and the national impression, based in part upon the experiences of pilot forces, was that it would create more paperwork, data entry and processing for forces. However it would also present a challenge to police authorities in ensuring that the public were aware of the new powers and their rights.

The definition of the new power was "when an officer requests a person in a public place to account for themselves, i.e their actions, behaviour, presence in an area or possession of anything, a record of the encounter must be completed at the time and a copy given to the person who has been questioned."

The Constabulary had established a working group to consider amendments to forms, changes in data handling and guidance to officers. Appropriate

training was being arranged, though it was anticipated it would not involve much change for police officers in their day-to-day work.

The Assistant Chief Constable advised that the key to successfully introducing this change was communication, much of which could be done through the media. It was essential that the messages put out by the Constabulary were consistent and that everyone received the same message.

Superintendent Thwaites advised Members that the APA would be issuing guidance and publicity material to police authorities, probably in late February or early March, to reinvigorate local publicity campaigns. This would assist the Authority with its role of raising awareness on this area of police activity. He also considered that it would represent an appropriate item for the next round of Police Community Liaison Forum meetings.

The Clerk and Chief Executive advised that guidance issued by the Home Office was very clear about the role of police authorities. It included the appointment of a Lead Member on stop and search, the implementation of an action plan, consultation with local communities on this area of police activity and consideration of methods to receive feedback from the community on the operation of the power. In addition, the Lead Member should monitor on a quarterly basis stop and search data produced by the Constabulary to ensure proportionality in the operation of the power and to hold the Constabulary to account for any inappropriate use of the power. The Authority was envisaged as acting as a bridge between the Constabulary and the community.

Members considered that the Constabulary already used this power in a proportionate manner, and noted that only 14 members of the black and minority ethnic community had been stopped in Cumbria in the previous year.

RESOLVED, that the Clerk and Chief Executive, in consultation with the Constabulary, make the necessary arrangements for a publicity campaign to raise awareness of the “stop and search” provisions.

32. REVIEW OF CONSTABULARY PROGRESS ON RACE AND DIVERSITY ISSUES AND A SUGGESTED WAY FORWARD

The Assistant Chief Constable presented a report, the purpose of which was to review progress made on Race and Diversity issues in 2004 and to suggest a way forward and some targets for 2005. The paper had also been presented to the Constabulary’s Operations Board.

RESOLVED, That the report be noted.

35. POLICE AUTHORITY RACE EQUALITY SCHEME ACTION PLAN

The Clerk and Chief Executive reminded Members that an important element of the Committee's work was monitoring progress against the Authority's Race Equality Scheme Action Plan. To this end a copy of the Action Plan had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting and he took Members through the Action Plan indicating those items which had been addressed.

Members noted the actions achieved against the targets set out in the Action Plan. In doing so they noted that the target of developing Race and Diversity structures within the Authority and mapping out routes of communication and responsibility had not yet been achieved and they urged that this be undertaken as a matter of priority. They suggested that, once completed, the result of the exercise should be placed on the Authority's web site. In addition, it was suggested that the Evening News & Star (Carlisle) and the Advertiser (Barrow) be added to the list of newspapers in which the Authority advertised the Action Plan.

It was noted that the Authority would need to review its Race Equality Scheme in May 2005.

A Member suggested that at a future date it would be appropriate to conduct a Best Value Review into the Authority's Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan so that the public in Cumbria could be re-assured that not only was the Authority's Scheme compliant with the CRE's criteria but that it also represented good value.

Members also noted the importance of making progress in undertaking impact assessments of both Authority and Force strategies and policies.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted and the actions undertaken against the Action Plan be noted.

34. FUNCTIONS AND POLICIES RELEVANT TO THE GENERAL DUTY OF THE RACE RELATIONS (AMENDMENT) ACT

The Clerk and Chief Executive presented a report appended to which was a document forming part of the ACPO/APA response to the action contained within the Interim Race Equality Action Plan to identify and prioritise a list of functions and common policy areas that were most relevant to the promotion of race equality. The list appended to the report dealt with functions and policies of forces. When the APA produced a similar list for police authorities then that too would be submitted to the Committee.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

35. MULTI AGENCY CONSULTATION WITH BME IN CUMBRIA

The Chair advised that the Cumbria Joint Agency Group, of which both the Constabulary and the Authority were members, was seeking funding to conduct a multi-agency consultation with the BME community in Cumbria. This was in addition to the recent Cumbria attitudes survey conducted by the County Council and Constabulary and, unlike that survey, it would focus specifically on the BME community.

The Clerk and Chief Executive advised that following discussions with the County Council's Equality Officer the Authority had been asked to make a £1500 contribution to the work which would entitle it to full access to findings arising from the consultation.

The Assistant Chief Constable advised that the Constabulary was also contributing to this work.

Members considered that it was appropriate for the Authority to contribute to this activity and agreed that an appropriate recommendation be made to the Authority.

RECOMMENDED: That the Authority approve a contribution of £1500 towards the cost of multi-agency consultation with the BME community in Cumbria.

The meeting ended at 5.50 pm