

Cumbria Police Authority

23 March 2010
Agenda Item No. 13
Part I

Report by the Chief Constable.

Regional Collaboration – Single Non Emergency Number (SNEN)

BACKGROUND:

In 2005 there was extensive government research into the prospect of police forces and local authority service providers operating a SNEN or 'one stop shop' system. Various areas of the country took up the funding opportunities offered by the government and several pilot sites were commenced. There were problems encountered in the first wave of SNEN resulting in withdrawal of any further rolling out of the concept.

This paper provides an update on the SNEN concept and outlines the drivers nationally for Police Authorities and Constabularies to reconsider this as a method of public contact.

The principal driver for change is the desire by the region to examine collaborative working arrangements. The SNEN concept lends itself to this process and has been selected by the Regional ACPO Collaboration Group as a potential project. ACC Hopkins GMP is presenting a scoping report to the next regional ACPO meeting on April 30 2010.

RECOMMENDATION (s):

1. *Members to note the report.*

DETAIL:

Nationally in 2010 the only area of the country to operate a SNEN is Wales, with all 4 Welsh forces using the concept. There is however no local authority involvement in this process.

Within the North West Region Greater Manchester Police have been leading the re-examination of the SNEN. They have been progressing this via the Regional Communications Centre Managers meetings in line with the desire from the Regional ACPO Collaboration Group to look again at the SNEN concept.

The benefits to the customer of having a SNEN relate to the cost of the calls, these are in effect a flat rate 10p per minute no matter which telephone method used (pay as you go, land line, contract phone).

Each force within the region has different telephony platforms and technical architecture which is in different product life cycle stages. For Cumbria the next 6 months will see the introduction of STORM and ASPIRE. Therefore, the decision to implement a SNEN as a regional collaboration is a complex one and would require a detailed scoping exercise.

Future Implications for the Constabulary

Cumbria Constabulary currently uses the 0845 number. This has attracted a lot of negative public concerns regarding the premium rate callers are charged to dial the Constabulary. The other concern expressed by some members of the public is the income generation the 0845 number provides for the Constabulary. This is currently 0.25p per minute which is used to maintain the service.

There is a low/no cost option available to the Constabulary to change the 0845 number to a '03' number. Opal the current supplier of the 0845 number have indicated informally that they would supply a '03' number if all external calls were to be routed via them. The '03' number is politically more advantageous as it removes the costing concerns associated with the 0845 number. IT department estimates there would be approximately two weeks project management time for one person to change the number. This would also need to be balanced against the associated marketing and media work to change the primary contact number.

The change to a '03' number should in any case be given serious consideration and can be done independently from any regional collaboration work.

Each force will still need to maintain an alternative method of telephone contact as SNEN geographically routes the calls. So this means if a caller were physically in Manchester for example and wished to contact Lancashire Constabulary and dialed the SNEN they would be routed to Manchester rather than Lancashire.

There is a potential negative impact of having two methods of contacting the Constabulary which needs to be given careful consideration. One option does still remain in that the Constabulary can change to a '03' number and not collaborate in the SNEN work.

The indicative financial to the Constabulary are shown below:

- A Set up fee to each force of £50K.
- Annual service charge £10-20K dependant on population size.
- Call charges 1.1p per minute. Estimate for Cumbria is 11-13k per year.
- Marketing and media costs of £5K (Cumbria estimate).

Total costs are in the region of £88K.

	845	03'	SNEN
Cost to Police	None	None	1.1p/min
Cost to the public			
Land Line per min	5p	Free	10p
Mobile Contract	5p	Free	10p
Mobile 'Pay as you Go'	60p	60p	10p

The table above shows a comparison of costs associated with the different methods of contacting the Constabulary. It can be seen that a SNEN provides a flat 10p rate but the cost of this is transferred to the Constabulary in the 1.1p per minute for each call made. The '03' number on the other hand compares very favorably with the exception of callers who use 'Pay as you Go' mobiles.

Current Home Office Consultation

The Home Office are now consulting the APA and ACPO are asking for a response in relation to the following points:

1. 101 is adopted as a **SNEN for Police only** linked to a requirement for all forces to implement it by early 2012, based on a new contract being in place for April 2011. That new contract would have been set up to provide stability for at least 3 years (probably longer) and linked to a cost base that is sustainable for forces and competitive with other numbering options. There would be an option for forces who wished to do so to facilitate partnership working but this would not be a requirement.
2. 101 is **discontinued** at a national level with no renewal of the infrastructure contract and forces or regions who wish to adopt it (or continue to use it) would need to enter into local contractual arrangements for that infrastructure.

The ACPO regional collaboration group is considering SNEN at their next meeting in order to progress a potential scoping exercise. This will be subject to a further update once the outcome is known.

The Constabulary is currently evaluating a move to a '03' number needs to be as there are greater benefits the public over the current 0845 number. This will be subject to a further verbal update in due course.

Craig Mackey
Chief Constable

March 5 2010

Background papers (Section 100(d) of the Local Government (Access to Information Act) 1985 refs) :

Human Rights Implications:

Non identified.

Race Equality / Diversity Implications:

In terms of financial diversity both the '03' and SNEN numbers provide a positive benefit to the public as call costs are reduced.

Risk Management Implications:

If the SNEN is project managed using appropriate project management methodology then risks would be considered and mitigated within the governance of the project.

If the Constabulary were to progress the '03' number there are minimal risks associated with the introduction of this number.