

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY

AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Audit and Performance Committee held on Thursday 20 April 2006 in Conference Room 1, Police Headquarters, Carleton Hall, Penrith commencing at 11.00am.

PRESENT

Mrs L Slavin (Chair)

Mr M Ash
Mrs C A Egan
Mr J Mallinson

Mrs L L Shaw
Mr W Smith
Mr R Watson

Also present:

Acting Deputy Chief Constable (Mr G Sunderland)
Acting Assistant Chief Constable (Mr P Kirkbride)
Superintendent J Rush
Police Authority Performance Management and Policy Officer (Miss M Saunders)
Deputy Clerk (Mr S Edwards)

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

88. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence, all Members being present.

89. 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 the following Agenda Items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Paragraphs indicated of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act –

Item No	Item	Paragraph No
24	Civil Claims	1
25	Grievances	1
26	Police Negotating Board Overtime/ Work Life Balance Scheme	7

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90. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of personal interests in any of the items on the Agenda.

91. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 February 2006 had been circulated.

The Chair advised that Mrs Egan would be attending the next Constabulary Performance Development Conference in her place.

RESOLVED, that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 February 2006 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

92. FORCE PERFORMANCE

A copy of the Performance report prepared by the Clerk/Chief Executive and Chief Constable had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

The Acting Deputy Chief Constable informed Members that the current iQUANTA figures were excellent, and the best achieved by the Constabulary to date. At the present time HMIC was in Force as part of the operational baseline assessment and feedback to date on the figures had been positive. The fact that the change in performance illustrated by the iQuanta data had been gradual rather than abrupt was a positive sign which indicated that the trend should be sustainable.

The Chair also referred positively to the Constabulary's current performance.

The Committee then worked through the report. With reference to **violent crime** the Acting Deputy Chief Constable advised that Cumbria was no longer the worst in its Most Similar Force (MSF) group and was improving. Given the gradual improvement in this area he was confident that by the next quarter Cumbria would be below the MSF average. The figures were beginning to bear out the view expressed by both the Constabulary and Authority that Cumbria was not more violent than its comparators and that the large recent increases reflected the under recording of this category of crime before the introduction of NCRS. Now that it was possible to compare year on year increases with like for like information.

In addition action was being taken at BCU level which would help to continue the reduction in violent crimes.

Members raised the question of domestic violence, figures for which were contained within the overall figure for violent crime. They noted there had been a slight increase on the figure for the previous year.

The Acting Deputy Chief Constable advised that at the most recent Performance Development Conference (PDC) the violent crime figure had been broken down to clearly show incidents of domestic violence. He advised Members that the

measure for performance was the number of reported repeat incidents of domestic violence. He also referred to links with witness care programmes.

Domestic violence was an area where a multi agency approach would produce the most beneficial results.

The Chair asked that a report on domestic violence be included on the agenda for the June meeting of the Committee.

The Acting Deputy Chief Constable then reported on the issue of **criminal damage**. He responded to a point made by a Member that the proposed percentage decrease in criminal damage represented an extremely challenging target. Originally it had been proposed that the target should be to maintain current levels of criminal damage but he had considered that this was inappropriate and that the Constabulary should be seeking to drive down incidents of criminal damage, which had never been given priority as an area of activity in the past. He then referred to the Respect Campaign launched by the Prime Minister and which the Constabulary was launching at a local level the following Monday. He outlined for Members the various elements of the campaign which would run for some months. A Respect Group had been established within the Constabulary of which he was the Chair and which was attended by the three BCU commanders and the Chief Superintendent responsible for Operational Support. The programme of events would be divided into monthly areas and each individual BCU would have three weekly campaigns per month, with the fourth week in the month being set aside for a county wide event.

In the past the Constabulary had been doing much good work in this area but it had not been given sufficient profile to enable the public to be aware of the Constabulary's activities.

The Acting Deputy Chief Constable invited the Police Authority to be represented at the launch on the following Monday and the Chair indicated that she would be available to attend.

In response to a question from a Member the Acting Deputy Chief Constable advised that "Street Safe" would be incorporated within the Respect campaign.

The Performance Management and Policy Advisor reminded Members that she had produced a paper on the Respect campaign some time previously.

Members, and in particular the Magistrate Members, made reference to the assertion by the Acting Deputy Chief Constable that the Constabulary were able to issue fines to under 18's, which was contrary to the position in Magistrate Courts. The Chair advised it would be helpful if the Acting Deputy Chief Constable could provide her with some further information outside of the meeting so that she could take this matter up within the Courts Service.

The Chair also asked that a further report updating Members on progress with the Respect initiative be made to the June meeting of the Committee.

Members then gave consideration to racially aggravated offences noting that even though numbers overall remained small there had been an increase. They considered that it would be helpful if the report submitted to them could include a breakdown of those which involved physical violence and those which entailed verbal abuse. Superintendent Rush advised that at BCU level all hate crimes were prioritised and he personally saw papers relating to every one in North Cumbria. These were offences which were given priority and the aggregation of the data available provided information that considering each item in isolation did not provide. The Acting Deputy Chief Constable advised that as a one off measure he would produce a breakdown of racially aggravated offences for the next meeting of the Committee.

Members noted that the **quality of life measures** detailed within the report contained very positive responses. This was an area measured by public perception and those perceptions could be coloured by the demographic makeup of the area. Overall fear of crime within Cumbria remained low.

Members stated that they would be interested to see the impact of the Respect Campaign on public perceptions, as sometimes raising awareness of issues could serve to undermine confidence as well as raising awareness.

Consideration was then given to **call handling**. Members noted that 11.6% of non urgent calls were abandoned, which was cause of some concern. They then discussed the introduction of the single contact number for the Constabulary (0845 3300247). They noted that the Constabulary had not advertised its introduction and that whilst publicising it was a matter for future consideration there was currently no planned date, in particular as it was not known if the number would change upon amalgamation with Lancashire. Members suggested that even in these circumstances there was a case for publicising Cumbria's current number and for this to be adopted by Lancashire following amalgamation. Publicising the number, and providing a viable alternative to 999 calls could reduce the number of unnecessary 999 calls received by the Constabulary.

Members suggested that consideration of contact numbers should be included within one of the workstreams for the amalgamation project.

Members referred to staffing issues within the communications centre during the summer of 2005 and sought assurances from the Acting Deputy Chief Constable that measures were in place to prevent a repetition of those problems during the forthcoming summer.

In response to a Member the Acting Deputy Chief Constable undertook to provide details of the actual numbers of call received by the communications centre during an average day as part of his report to the next meeting of the Committee. He also undertook to provide figures for 999 and non 999 call received in a average month.

In concluding consideration of the report Members again referred to the excellent overall performance being achieved by the Constabulary which was reflected in the many positive aspects to the report. It was important to remember this context when the focus for discussion in the Committee was on areas of concern which

could lead to positive aspects of the Constabulary's performance being overlooked.

RESOLVED, that the report be received

93. NORTH CUMBRIA BCU PERFORMANCE

The Chair reminded Members that this item was included on the agenda as Members wished to keep an overview of performance within the North Cumbria BCU following the signing off of the action plan developed following the HMIC inspection and the subsequent reinspection of the BCU in October 2005.

Superintendent Rush presented the report to Members, appended to which were iQuanta tables illustrating overall performance and performance with regard to burglary dwelling, robbery, violent crime, vehicle crime, sanctioned detections and other disposals, criminal damage, burglary other than domestic, the supply of class A drugs, and killed and serious injury accidents.

The report also contained details of structural and procedural changes implemented within the BCU that had impacted positively on performance.

The BCU used an information based approach to tackling crime and had introduced a performance framework down to LPT level. The BCU now contained well managed teams focusing on specific priorities and each LPT had its own dedicated problem solver. They were able to identify priority locations for issues, such as anti social behaviour hot spots. They also worked in conjunction with staff within local authorities and this had helped bring a greater focus to the work of the BCU.

Members welcomed the report and the very many positive messages which it contained.

RESOLVED, that the report be received.

(Note: Mr J Mallinson left the meeting at this point)

94. BASELINE ASSESSMENT 2005 – PRIORITY FRAMEWORKS PROGRESS UPDATE

The Acting Deputy Chief Constable presented a report that provided Members with detail on progress against the priority frameworks resulting from the Baseline Assessment 2005. He advised that the information contained within this report would be overtaken by the 2006 Baseline Assessment which was currently being undertaken.

Members noted that the Human Resource Management and Training and Development action plans were being regularly reported to the Personnel Committee.

The Chair asked that following the June meeting reports be submitted on the 2006 Baseline Assessment to future meetings of the Audit and Performance Committee.

RESOLVED , that the report be noted.

95. BEST VALUE IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

Members considered a report by the Acting Chief Constable. Members were advised that in the light of the voluntary amalgamation with Lancashire each outstanding Best Value recommendation would need to be evaluated for relevance and viability by the new Strategic Constabulary, and that the most efficient and effective means of achieving this would be to link in with the change programme resulting from the amalgamation. Recommendations would be re-evaluated and updated or closed as appropriate.

The report also recommended that Members approve the closure of the Driver Training, Management of Patrol and Stores and Procurement Best Value Reviews.

RESOLVED , that

- (1) the approach to reviewing outstanding Best Value recommendations, as outlined above, be approved;
- (2) the following reviews be closed –
 - Driver Training
 - Management of Patrol
 - Stores and Procurement
- (3) that the submission of changes agreed at Best Value Board on 7 March 2006 be approved as follows –
 - close specific improvement actions
 - extend deadlines for completion of actions
 - note progress on implementing Best Value improvement actions

96. AUDIT COMMISSION REVIEW OF CRIME RECORDING OCTOBER 2005 AND THE FORTHCOMING HMIC (QUALITY ASSURANCE OF PPAF MEASURES) DETECTION AUDIT 2006 - UPDATE

The Acting Deputy Chief Constable presented a report by the Acting Chief Constable which informed the Committee of initial feedback from the Audit Commission on the findings of their October 2005 review. The report also contained information on the strategy proposals aimed at reducing intensive checking processes and provided the Committee with an update on the current crime reporting/recording statistics. The report also provided information on the 2006 HMIC detection audit, including framework and reporting arrangements.

The Acting Deputy Chief Constable provided Members with detail of the pilot scheme operated in West Cumbria which was currently subject to a Best Value style review by Strategic Development. The intention was ultimately to role out the pilot across the Constabulary in the Autumn so that the new processes would be in

place before 1 April 2007. The Constabulary had taken account of practices and procedures within Lancashire with a view to ensuring that the new processes adopted in Cumbria would not need to change on amalgamation.

With reference to the HMIC detection audit Members asked that this matter be picked up at the September meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED , that the report be noted.

97. ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ORDERS

The Chair welcomed the report for the Committee from the Acting Chief Constable which followed on from discussions at the last meeting of the Committee.

In response to a question from a Member concerning the difference in figures between West Cumbria and those for South and North Cumbria the Acting Deputy Chief Constable advised that the West Cumbria BCU had a dedicated anti social behaviour unit which already worked closely with the National Respect Group. This had had a positive impact and it was the intention to roll out similar units in the North and South of the County.

Members noted the importance of CDRP's which would be enhanced under the Police and Justice Bill. They considered that it would be helpful to have a County wide record and also suggested that in the future a Strategic Police Authority should be setting guidelines for activity in this particular area. They also suggested that it would be appropriate to receive feedback from Authority Members on CDRP's.

RESOLVED , that the report be noted.

(Note: the Committee adjourned for lunch from 1.20pm to 1.55pm when the same Members were present. In addition to the officers present in the morning, with the exception of Supt Rush, the following officers were in attendance in the afternoon –

Treasurer (Mr D Thomas)
Head of Financial Services (Mr R Marshall)
Audit Manager, Cumbria County Council (Mr P Usher))

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

A report by the Acting Chief Constable had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

Members noted that this report had also been considered by the Community and Race Relations Committee.

RESOLVED, that the position be noted and the Committee continue to monitor the Constabulary's use of these powers.

99. ACTIVITY BASED COSTING

The Chair advised Members that this item had been included on the agenda as a follow up to issues raised at the last meeting of the Committee.

The Acting Deputy Chief Constable introduced a report by the Acting Chief Constable that provided the Committee with information on the way Activity Based Costing (ABC) was being used in each Area. The examples included within the report were from early in the development of the process within the Constabulary. He was anxious that ABC was used as a driver of performance and not just as a performance indicator. He was looking to ensure that the Constabulary's processes were outcome based.

Members welcomed the report and considered that the data produced through ABC could provide valuable support for assertions made by both the Authority and the Constabulary and would prove useful during the forthcoming amalgamation process.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

100. ACTIVITY BASED COSTING: AUDIT COMMISSION REPORT

Members received a report by the Acting Chief Constable which explained the current position concerning the publication of the Audit Commission report reviewing Activity Based Costing within the Constabulary.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

101. POLICE NORTH AREA BCU FOLLOW UP

The Audit Manager presented a report that summarised the findings from a follow up review of the North Cumbria BCU conducted in March 2006 to a previous review of Financial Management, Planning, Performance Management and Risk Management which had been carried out in December 2004. In December 2004 the overall assessment had been "satisfactory". As a result of the follow up review planning, performance and risk management arrangements in the North Area BCU were now generally regarded as "good", and most of the recommendations from the initial review had been implemented. The new action plan developed following the March 2006 review simply addressed those issues still outstanding from the December 2004 review.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

102. PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT (SOUTH AND WEST AREA BCU'S)

The Audit Manager presented a report on a review undertaken of the controls in place over planning and performance management at BCU level in South and West Cumbria. The overall assessment as a result of the review was "good".

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

103. CUSTODY MANAGEMENT

The Audit Manager advised that this audit had been conducted to assess the controls in place to manage a key risk area as identified in the Constabulary's Risk Register and had been included in the audit plan following discussions with the Constabulary's Director of Legal Services and the Head of Professional Standards. The review was intended to assess how effectively the control strategy was implemented in practice.

The audit review was based on a review of custody records and discussions with local senior custody managers at South BCU (Barrow and Kendal Police Stations) and West BCU (Workington Police Station).

The overall evaluation for the review was "fair". Mr Usher drew Members attention to the findings of the review which were contained within the report.

The Acting Assistant Chief Constable advised that custody was a high risk area and that some of the issues highlighted in the audit report highlighted issues of compliance with the requirements of PACE. The case and custody system which was now coming on line would help address some of the issues, as would the National Code of Practice on Safer Detention and Handling of Persons in Custody.

The Acting Deputy Chief Constable advised that to a degree the audit report was now an historical document but he was grateful that the review had served to highlight issues of which the Constabulary was already aware and addressing.

Members expressed concern at some of the issues raised in the report, particularly as custody had been identified as a high risk area. Members were mindful that they owed a duty of care to their own staff and their safety was as important as the welfare of detainees.

The Acting Deputy Chief Constable advised that an update report on this matter would be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

(Note: The Acting Deputy Chief Constable left the meeting at this point.)

104. EFFICIENCY PLAN YEAR END UPDATE 2005/06

The Treasurer presented a report by the Acting Chief Constable which detailed the cashable and non cashable efficiencies achieved against the Constabulary's efficiency plan for 2005/06.

In considering the report a Member referred to the fact that the Committee had not recently had the opportunity to discuss progress against the Front Line Policing Action Plan. The Chair suggested that a paper be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED, that the year end position against the Constabulary's cashable and non cashable efficiency targets be noted.

105. BUDGET VARIANCE REPORT 2005/06

The Treasurer presented the final 2005/06 Budget Variance report which set out the expected financial position for the Constabulary for 2005/06 based on actual spending and commitments up to the end of January 2006, plus estimates for the remainder of the financial year.

Overall it was forecast that net expenditure, after accounting for transfers to and from earmarked balances would come inside the approved budget by £0.766 million.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

106. ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT REGULATIONS 2006 (SI 2006/564)

The Treasurer presented a report prepared jointly with the Acting Chief Constable which informed the Committee of the implications of the most recent changes to the Accounts and Audit Regulations which had come into effect on 1 April 2006.

RESOLVED, that the implications of the most recent changes to the Accounts and Audit Regulations, as they effect the governance of the Authority's financial affairs be noted.

107. POLICE NEGOTIATING BOARD (PNB) OVERTIME/ LIFE BALANCE SCHEME

The Treasurer presented a report prepared jointly with the Acting Chief Constable, the purpose of which was to advise Members of the latest prediction of overtime expected to be incurred during 2005/06 as part of the PNB scheme to reduce overtime by 15% over three years as part of a life/ balance initiative . The report indicated that the Constabulary remained on course to meet the target for the current financial year and, therefore, meet the overriding reduction required by the scheme.

This report would be the last submitted to the Committee as part of this scheme and it was not clear at the present time how it would continue in the future. It was

suggested that the Committee may wish to continue monitoring this area of activity, possibly by receiving quarterly reports.

RESOLVED, that

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) that reports be submitted to the Committee on a quarterly basis monitoring life/balance issues.

108. PAYROLL AND TRAVEL

The Audit Manager presented a report of an audit conducted in February 2006 into the payroll and payment of travel and subsistence costs.

Payroll was the largest area of expenditure for the Constabulary and there was a high volume of transactions. As a result the controls over the system were subject to annual review by Internal Audit.

The overall assessment as a result of the audit was "good", as had been the case in all similar audits in recent years.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

109. CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND ACCOUNTING

The Audit Manager presented the report of a review, the purpose of which was to examine the preparation and monitoring of the Constabulary's Capital programme and to assess the adequacy of supporting capital records, particularly for acquisitions, capital charges and disposals. Testing of specific capital entries in the accounts was not part of the review as this was covered on an annual basis by the Audit Commission.

The overall evaluation for the area reviewed was "good".

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

110. PROPOSED INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2006/07

The Audit Manager advised Members that the annual report for audits undertaken in 2005/06 would be submitted to the next meeting. The report currently before the Committee was the proposed Internal Audit Plan for 2006/07 which had been prepared in the light of the forthcoming amalgamation with Lancashire, scheduled to take place on 1 April 2007. Even allowing for adapting the plan to take account of the amalgamation process it was still a comprehensive programme of work.

In response to a question by a Member the Treasurer advised that the development of an audit plan for the new Strategic Police Authority was part of the

work programmed for the development of that Authority and would be dealt with at an early date.

RESOLVED, that

- (1) the report be received;
- (2) the Internal Audit Plan for 2006/07, together with associated costs, be approved.

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

111. CIVIL CLAIMS

The Acting Assistant Chief Constable presented a report by the Acting Chief Constable concerning the number and value of active civil claims against the Constabulary.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

112. GRIEVANCES

The Acting Assistant Chief Constable presented a report by the Acting Chief Constable presenting grievance statistics for the current year to date, and a comparison with those lodged in the previous two financial years.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

113. POLICE NEGOTIATING BOARD – OVERTIME/ WORK – LIFE BALANCE SCHEME

The papers for this item were for information only.

The meeting ended at 3.30pm.