

**CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY**  
**AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Audit and Performance Committee held on Monday 13 June 2005 at Police Headquarters, Carleton Hall, Penrith commencing at 2.00pm.

**PRESENT**

Mr M Ash  
Mr J Mallinson  
Mrs L L Shaw

Mrs L Slavin  
Mr W Smith  
Mr R Watson

**Also present:**

Clerk & Chief Executive  
Police Authority Treasurer  
Police Authority Performance Management & Policy Officer  
Assistant Chief Constable (Organisational Development & Partnerships)  
Constabulary Director of Finance & Resources  
Chief Superintendent A Davidson, Commander North Cumbria BCU  
Superintendent T Thwaites, Partnerships & Crime Reduction  
Constabulary Crime Manager  
Mr R McGahon, Audit Commission  
Mr P Usher, Audit Manager, Cumbria County Council  
Mr M Roper, Senior Auditor, Cumbria County Council  
Deputy Clerk

**PART 1 – ITEMS TAKEN IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**1. MEMBERSHIP**

Members noted the membership of the Committee as agreed by the Police Authority at its Annual Meeting on 1 June 2005, as follows-

Mr M Ash  
Mrs C A Egan  
Mr J Mallinson  
Mrs L L Shaw

Mrs L Slavin  
Mr W Smith  
Mr R Watson

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs C A Egan.

### 3. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Members were reminded that at the Authority's Annual Meeting in June 2003 it had been agreed that the Authority's Vice Chair "shall be appointed as Chairman of such major Committee of the Authority whose business appears most appropriate to the exigencies of the time and the skills/experience of the office holder". As Vice Chair of the Police Authority Mrs L Slavin chaired the Audit and Performance Committee.

**RESOLVED,** that Mrs L Slavin be appointed as Chair of the Committee for the ensuing year.

Mrs L Slavin in the Chair.

### 4. EXCLUSION OF 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 for the following 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 of the Act:-

Item No.	Item	Paragraph No.
19	Community Tension Assessments	14
20	Police Negotiating Board Overtime/Work – Life Balance Scheme	14

### 5. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

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

### 6. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3 March 2005 had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

Tabled at the meeting, further to matters considered at the meeting on 3 March, were the following –

- Letter from the Home Office, dated 22 March, concerning Front Line Policing Measure and Most Similar Forces in iQuanta.
- Letter to the Association of Police Authorities, dated 12 April, concerning Home Office classification of violent crime.
- Schedule of the 2005/06 external inspection programme of Cumbria Constabulary, as at 31 March 2005.

**RESOLVED,** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3 March 2005 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

## **7. VIOLENT CRIME**

Members received a briefing with regard to Violent Crime from the Force Crime Manager.

Members noted that whilst there was an increase in the amount of recorded violent crime the majority of that increase was in low-level nuisance and disorder. Within the increase there was also an element of inappropriate and over recording. Concerns about the breadth and implications of the classification had already been aired via the letter to Association of Police Authorities referred to above. From a reassurance point of view, emphasis was placed on how it included criminal behaviour where no physical contact actually occurred, a point the general public might not realise when reading reports of a rise in violent crime.

Violent Crime had been an issue considered at the most recent Force Performance Development Conference and each Basic Command Unit (BCU) had developed a Violent Crime Action Plan and when figures became available later in the month it would be possible to ascertain whether the introduction of the Action Plans had had any impact on the figures.

It was noted that the Home Office was considering removing some types of offence from the overall category of violent crime, which would have an impact on the statistics.

**RESOLVED,** that the report be noted.

(**Note:** The Force Crime Manager left the meeting at this point).

## **8. FORCE PERFORMANCE**

The Chair advised Members that, at Appendix A with the papers circulated, was the normal force performance report considered by Members. Appendix B, by contrast, comprised of the slides considered at the last Force Performance Development Conference. (From the Authority, only the Chair of the Authority and the Chair of the Committee attends the Force Performance Development Conferences).

She reminded Members that for some time consideration had been given to the format in which force performance information was submitted to the Committee. It was now the intention that the Authority's Performance Management & Policy Adviser would be arranging a meeting with the Members of the Committee to consider both the format and content of the performance information the Committee would like to receive, before discussions with the Constabulary on this subject. Beyond the provision of information to the Committee, there was also a need to ensure that other Members were also briefed and this was a matter which was currently receiving consideration. She was confident that an improved system would be in place by the September meeting of the Committee.

The Assistant Chief Constable (Organisational Development & Partnerships) put into context for Members the Performance Development slides.

Members gave consideration to the Force performance report covering the twelve-month period to March 2005.

The Assistant Chief Constable then presented the Efficiency Plan for the year 2004/05. The report, which had been circulated with the Agenda papers, summarised performance against the two per-cent efficiency target for 2004/05. The Constabulary had achieved 'cashable' efficiencies of £768,053 and 'non-cashable' efficiencies of £3,800,676; a total of £4,568,720 against a target of £1,913,992. These efficiencies had been achieved without affecting front-line policing.

Members noted that the efficiency regime had been changed from 1 April 2005. In the current year, the Constabulary had been set a 3% efficiency target, 1½% of which had to be 'cashable'.

Members congratulated the Constabulary on its performance with regard to efficiency targets.

**RESOLVED,** that

- (1) the Force Performance report to March 2005 be noted
- (2) the Performance Development Conference Slides be noted; and
- (3) the Efficiency Plan performance report for 2004-05 be noted.

## **9. OFFENCES BROUGHT TO JUSTICE**

The Chair reminded Members that they had received a presentation on offences brought to justice at their last meeting and the purpose of the current presentation was to update Members on performance since March.

Superintendent Thwaites delivered his presentation, copies of his slides having been circulated with the Agenda for the meeting.

It was noted that Cumbria's performance placed it second in its family of Most Similar Forces (MSF), and third in terms of performance across the whole of England. In terms of public confidence the most recent data from the British Crime Survey (BCS) showed Cumbria ranked second in the country.

Superintendent Thwaites advised Members that at the seminar before the Police Authority meeting on 28 June they would receive a presentation on partnership activity in the round, and the Agenda itself was to include an item on the Cumbria Criminal Justice Board and the Constabulary Criminal Justice Unit.

Members thanked Superintendent Thwaites for his presentation.

**RESOLVED,** that the presentation be received.

(Note: Superintendent Thwaites left the meeting at this point)

## **10. NORTH CUMBRIA ACTION PLAN**

Chief Superintendent Davidson made a presentation to Members which updated on action and performance against the action plan adopted after the follow-up inspection by HMIC of North Cumbria BCU in February 2005. The slides for the presentation and an annotated action plan had been circulated with the Agenda for the meeting.

Following the presentation, Members noted that as a result of discussions with HMIC the latter would no longer be making a return visit 90 days after the February 2005 follow-up inspection, but would be returning in July to monitor action and performance against their recommendations.

Members welcomed the presentation and congratulated the Officers on the considerable amount of work and achievement since the inspection.

**RESOLVED,** that the report be received.

(Note: Chief Superintendent Davidson left the meeting at this point)

## **11. BEST VALUE IMPLEMENTATION - UPDATE**

The Assistant Chief Constable presented a report which provided Members with an update on the implementation of improvement actions arising from Best Value Reviews.

In presenting the report he advised Members that the number of outstanding recommendations had been reduced from 45 to 28 since February 2005 and the Best Value Board was recommending to the Committee the formal signing-off of the reviews into Crime Management and Recording, Ill Health and Injury Pensions, Firearms and Scientific Support.

With reference to the Anti-Bureaucracy Review, Members were advised that further time was to be allocated to this Review as the Constabulary believed there were more efficient ways of dealing with this particular issue.

**RESOLVED,** that

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) progress on implementing Best Value improvement actions be noted;

- (3) the Best Value Board's recommendation with regard to the closure of specific improvement actions and the extensions of deadlines for completion of some actions as detailed in the report be approved;
- (4) the Best Value reviews on Crime Management and Recording, Ill Health and Injury Pensions, Firearms and Scientific Support be formally closed.

## **12. VEHICLE RECOVERY SCHEME - UPDATE**

The Assistant Chief Constable submitted a report providing Members with an update on the position with regard to the main issues identified in a review of the vehicle recovery scheme conducted in May 2004.

Since the last meeting of the Committee, the remaining outstanding recommendations from that review had been concluded.

**RESOLVED,** that

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the action plan be signed off.

## **13. POLICE NEGOTIATING BOARD (PNB) OVERTIME/WORK LIFE BALANCE SCHEME**

The Director of Finance and Resources introduced a report, the purpose of which was to advise Members of the year-end position of overtime incurred during 2004/05. This was part of the Police Negotiating Board (PNB) Scheme to reduce overtime by 15% over 3 years to 2005-06, as part of a national "work life balance" initiative. The report indicated that the target reduction for 2004/05 had been exceeded and the Constabulary had made considerable progress towards meeting the three-year target.

Members noted that the supporting papers for this item, which contained detailed and confidential information, had been circulated separately in Part Two of the agenda.

**RESOLVED,** that the report be noted.

## **14. POLICE – CAPITA PROPERTY IMPREST ACCOUNT**

The County Council's Audit Manager advised the Committee that CAPITA – Symonds were responsible for arranging maintenance work on behalf of the Constabulary. An "imprest" bank account had been set up by the Police Authority Treasurer for Cumbria Police, which enabled the transfer of monies to CAPITA – Symonds for the payment of creditors. A review of the controls operating over the

system had been requested by the Constabulary. The overall evaluation of the review was “good”; on a scale of “good”, “satisfactory”, and “weak”.

**RESOLVED,** that the report be noted.

## **15. PRUDENTIAL CODE FOR CAPITAL FINANCE**

Cumbria County Council’s Audit Manager reported to Members on a review of the statutory arrangements for capital finance introduced in 2004. To a degree this had been an academic exercise as the Police Authority had not undertaken any borrowing since being established as a separate authority. However there was a likelihood that the Authority would need to undertake some borrowing in the next few years.

The Auditors had evaluated the controls as “good” and had made only two recommendations, both of which had been accepted by the Treasurer and the Director of Finance and Resources, respectively:

R1 An amendment to Financial Regulations and the Scheme of Delegation to make specific reference to the Prudential Code on Capital Finance, and

R2 Consideration to formally documenting the processes for approving and reviewing the Prudential Indicators, possibly as part of the Treasury Management Report.

The Treasurer informed Members that the Authority’s Officers were currently working to develop a new set of financial regulations which it was intended would be submitted to the Police Authority in September 2005 and which would incorporate the required reference to the Prudential Code on Capital Finance.

**RESOLVED,** that the report be noted.

## **16. TENDERING**

Cumbria County Council’s Audit Manager presented a report of a review which had been undertaken to ensure that, where applicable, the Authority’s Standing Order procedures had been correctly followed before awarding high value contracts.

The Constabulary currently held a contract with CAPITA for the tendering of building contracts, with CAPITA responsible for preparing pre-tendering estimates and job specifications; inviting companies to tender; checking submitted tenders for accuracy; preparing contracts; and corresponding with unsuccessful contractors. The Constabulary had approved a business case for the implementation of ‘Bluelight’, an e-tendering system specifically designed for emergency services procurement. The system would be introduced in the coming financial year and would have a significant impact on the tendering process and associated tasks.

The overall evaluation as a result of the review was “satisfactory”.

Most areas covered by the review had received a “good” or “satisfactory” grading. However a “weak” grading had been given to that part of the process which required the completion of a “contract signature request form”, giving approval from Finance and Legal Services for all contracts arising from a formal tendering process. It was accepted that such forms were being completed but the administrative process for retaining the forms appeared to be inadequate. The Director of Legal Services, Procurement Manager, and Estates & Facilities Manager had agreed the current process should be reviewed and clarified.

Other areas which needed to be addressed were the arrangements for witnessing the opening of tenders, currently conducted by the Legal Services Department, and clarification for the responsibility for approval of tenders. This last was a matter which could be addressed through a future revision to the Authority’s Standing Orders.

**RESOLVED,** that the report be noted.

## **17. ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2004/05**

Cumbria County Council’s Audit Manager presented a report which set out findings from reviews conducted as part of the 2004/05 internal audit plan and gave an overall opinion of the Constabulary’s system of internal control, based on internal audit reviews conducted during the year.

Based on the systems reviewed in 2004/05, and the evidence of the tests performed, systems of control were operating well. This conclusion was based on an assessment of controls operating by sample testing at a particular point in time.

Internal audit activity for the year was summarised in appendix 1 to the report circulated with the agenda. The overall evaluations awarded to reviews were –

<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Number of Reviews</b>
Good	10
Satisfactory	6
Weak	0

The original estimated cost for internal audit for 2004-05 was £38, 400 (based on 160 days work, at a daily rate of £240. 155 days had been used in 2004/05, though at the year end there was still some work in progress to be finalised. A small provision for this had been included in the 2005/06 plan. Progress on the review of NSPIS HR had been deferred as the pilot scheme to utilise data from the Duty Management System to pay overtime had had its timescale revised.

**RESOLVED,** that the report be noted.

## **18. PROPOSED INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2005/6**

Cumbria County Council's Audit Manager presented a report setting out the proposed audit plan for 2005/06. The report assessed that 160 days would be required to conduct the work at an annual cost of £38,400.

With regard to the proposal to conduct a review of corporate performance management, the Assistant Chief Constable advised that this was currently reviewed by HMIC on a monthly and quarterly basis and asked whether this could either be removed from the plan or given a 'light touch'. In response, the Audit Manager advised that he acknowledged the point made and would compare the Audit Unit's proposed programme with that of HMIC. However his proposed reviews would focus on process and systems and this was an area in which the Internal Auditor had to be satisfied before he could give his Opinion in support of the Statement of Internal Controls (SIC). In support of this Mr McGahon advised that, when the Audit Commission was working on the Statement of Internal Controls, they did rely upon the work which had been conducted by the Management Audit Unit.

**RESOLVED,** that

- (1) the report be received;
- (2) the internal audit plan for 2005/06 be approved, subject to discussions between the Audit Manager and HMIC with regard to the corporate performance management element of the plan.

## **19. AUDIT COMMISSION AUDIT PLAN 2005/06**

Mr McGahon presented the Audit Commission's audit plan for 2005/06, which set out the audit work which it proposed to undertake in the coming year. The plan had been drawn up from the Audit Commission's risk-based approach to audit planning and reflected –

- The impact of the new Code of Audit Practise which came into effect in April 2005;
- Local risks and improvement priorities;
- Current national risks relevant to local circumstances; and
- The impact of International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

The total, estimated fee for the audit work planned for 2005/06 was £65,975, which represented a decrease on the 2004/05 fee of £70,840. The fee was based on the Audit Commission's fee guidance contained within its operational plan and reflected both national risks identified by the Audit Commission and local risk assessment.

Changes to the plan and fee might be necessary if the Audit Commission's risk assessment changed during the course of the audit, and formal notification of any change would be given.

Mr McGahon advised that Mr Mark Heap had replaced Mrs Fiona Daley as the District Auditor with responsibility for Cumbria Police. Mr Heap intended to attend the September meeting of the Committee, to report on the audit of the Authority's accounts for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005.

**RESOLVED,** that the report be received.

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

### **20. COMMUNITY TENSION ASSESSMENTS**

The Assistant Chief Constable presented a report attached to which were Force-wide and BCU community tension assessments.

Members welcomed the report but expressed the view that they did not require the information in such detail at future meetings. They suggested that it would be appropriate for reports to be submitted to them on an exception basis in future.

**RESOLVED,** that the report be noted.

### **21. POLICE NEGOTIATING BOARD OVERTIME/WORK LIFE BALANCE SCHEME**

The papers circulated were for information only.

The meeting ended at 5.00 p.m.