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**CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY**

**AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Audit and Performance Committee held on Thursday 3 November 2005 in Conference Room 1, Police Headquarters, Carleton Hall, Penrith commencing at 10.00am.

**PRESENT**

Mrs L Slavin (Chair)

Mr M Ash  
Mr J Mallinson

Mrs L L Shaw  
Mr W Smith

**Also present:**

Treasurer (Mr D Thomas)  
Police Authority Performance Management & Policy Officer (Miss M Saunders)  
Deputy Chief Constable (Mrs C Twigg)  
Assistant Chief Constable (Operations)(Mr G Sunderland)  
Constabulary Director of Finance & Resources (Mr M Thompson)  
Constabulary Procurement Officer (Mr A Butcher)  
Commander, North Cumbria BCU (Chief Supt A Davidson)  
Audit Manager, Cumbria County Council (Mr P Usher)  
Deputy Clerk (Mr S Edwards)

Before the formal start of the meeting the Chair informed Members that Crime Recording would in future be included on the Committee's Agenda as a standing item given the importance of this area of activity.

**52. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs C A Egan and Mr R Watson.

**53. 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 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-

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| Item Number | Item  | Paragraph |
|-------------|---|-----------|
| 19          | Front Line Policing Measures 2004/05                            | 14        |
| 20          | IT Network Controls   | 14        |
| 21          | Police Negotiating Board Overtime Work –<br>Life Balance Scheme | 14        |

#### **54. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS**

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

#### **55. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 September 2005 had been circulated with the Agenda.

With reference to Minute No.42, Audit Committee Principals in Local Government, the Treasurer reminded Members that the Authority had approved the Committee's recommendation to incorporate the Statement of Purpose into the Committee's Terms of Reference.

**RESOLVED,** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 September 2005 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **56. PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Chair of the Committee drew Members attention to the new format adopted for the Performance Report and thanked the Authority's Performance Management and Policy Officer for her hard work in developing the new format and bringing it to the Committee. She felt certain that the format adopted would continue to develop and evolve over the coming months.

She also drew Members attention to the handbook produced by the Performance Management and Policy Officer which would be invaluable to Members in interpreting the Report.

The Chair also reported that in addition to herself and Mrs Egan, Mr Ash, Mr Mallinson and Mrs Shaw now also had their own iQuanta accounts.

The new format of Performance Report contained exception reports produced by the Constabulary when performance was off target or there was some other reason for concern. The Assistant Chief Constable (Operations) presented exception reports on notifiable offences, violent crime, domestic burglary, robbery, vehicle theft, criminal damage incidents, racially aggravated crime and call handling. He also brought to the attention of Members concerns with traffic measures.

A Member asked for a definition of Section 4 and 5 offences and the Performance Management and Policy Officer undertook to provide this for all Members.

In considering **violent crime** it was noted that more was being recorded nationally. In Cumbria officers were being scrupulous in recording every offence and this could go some way to explaining the apparent disparity in performance between Cumbria and other Forces. Furthermore a large proportion of the offences recorded were low level offence which would once not have been regarded as violent crime. Indeed many of the offences referred to as violent crime did not involve physical contact.

With reference to **racially aggravated offences** the Assistant Chief Constable advised that as part of the Constabulary's drive to increase confidence in the police amongst the BME community it was encouraging greater reporting and recording of crimes which would have an impact upon the figures for this type of offence. However, there had been an increase since the London bombings in July.

A Member advised the Committee that the number of people from an ethnic minority resident in Cumbria had doubled since 2001, which could also have an impact on the figures.

With regard to **domestic burglary** while the Force was second best in its group of Most Similar Forces it was half a percent off the target it had set itself. However there was less burglary in Cumbria now than at the same time last year.

With reference to **notifiable offences** a target of a 15% reduction had been set by CDRP's and Government Office North West.

The Assistant Chief Constable informed Members that **call handling** performance for the year to date had not achieved the target of 90% of all calls to be answered within target times, currently 10 seconds for 999 calls and 20 seconds for non 999 calls. The performance had been 86.5% for 999 calls and 85.2% for non 999 calls. Over the period of time in question the Communications Centre had experience staff shortages due to a combination of factors, and performance had improved from September onwards and targets had been met with 90.8% of 999 calls answered within target time and 90.3% of non 999 calls. Even when not meeting the locally set target of 90% the Communications Centre was performing above the national target of 85% of calls answered within target time.

Members expressed some concern that if particular difficulties were always faced over the summer period then it was for management to ensure that appropriate measures were put in place in advance to ensure that the target standard of service could be achieved throughout the year. Members asked for a further report to be submitted to their next meeting.

At Constabulary level the current year to date figures showed that there had been a 6.4% increase in **criminal damage** offences compared to the same period last year, though month on month performance in August and September had seen a reduction of 11.3 % at Constabulary level. This was a difficult offence to detect due to its random nature and at Constabulary level priority had been given to other crime categories. However, at LPT level criminal damage received a considerable amount of focus as it had been identified widely as an issue of concern. Each BCU had criminal damage as part of its Control Strategy.

Consideration was then given to **road traffic matters** and the numbers of people killed and seriously injured on the roads in Cumbria. This was an area of serious concern for the Constabulary and one on which it was taking a robust approach.

Members then gave consideration to **robbery**, which was off target by six offences, most of which were low level and **theft of motor vehicles** which was four percent off target. Theft of motor vehicles appeared to be a particular problem in North and West Cumbria but did not appear to be an issue in South Cumbria.

The Assistant Chief Constable then updated Members with regard to crime recording and advised that recent audit tests had shown that the Constabulary was now 96% compliant which should mean that the Constabulary would move from "red" to "excellent". This represented a tremendous achievement by all those involved and in particular the Crime Registrar and Communications Centre staff.

Members welcomed the Assistant Chief Constable's report. They noted the cost to the Constabulary in staff time in auditing and checking this information.

Members expressed their appreciation for the new report format stating that, in particular, they found the introduction of exception reports both helpful and informative.

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

(NOTE: During the course of the item the Committee adjourned due to the activation of the fire alarm from 10.40am to 10.55am and 11.00am to 11.05am.)

## **57. EFFICIENCY PLAN UPDATE**

The Deputy Chief Constable presented a report by the Chief Constable which provided an update on progress to achieving the 3% efficiency target for 2005/06. A detailed update of the 2005/06 Efficiency Plan was appended to the report.

At the present time the Constabulary was on course to fully achieve its cashable and non cashable efficiency targets for the year.

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

## **58. ACTIVITY BASED COSTING**

The Assistant Chief Constable presented a report which provided Members with an update on progress on the Activity Based Costing (ABC) project.

The Deputy Chief Constable advised the Committee that the real issue with ABC was how to make it work for the benefit of the Constabulary. At the next Performance Development Conference each BCU Commander would bring an example of how they were using the data produced through ABC to alter the way the BCU operated. The data produced by ABC enabled the Constabulary to look at how it used its resources and also provided the opportunity to drill down through

the organisation to look at that information at a very low level. Initially the data had only been used at strategic level but now BCU Commanders were starting to make use of the data and, overall, it was enabling the Constabulary to establish the link between resource usage and performance.

Perhaps the most useful element of ABC was that rather than providing answers it gave an opportunity to identify issues and ask questions where previously managers had only had budgets to work with. It also allowed managers to make comparisons, for example between different LPT's. However, at the present time it was not really possible to use the data to compare Forces and, to some extent, it was difficult to compare at BCU level, even within Cumbria.

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

#### **59. ANNUAL PROCUREMENT REPORT 2004/05**

The Constabulary Procurement Manager presented his second Annual Report setting out the work of the procurement function within the Constabulary. The report set out in some detail the work of the unit, including the contribution made to regional procurement activity. The report also highlighted the evolving national organisations that had responsibility for procurement, as the profile of the procurement function increased and the context of the efficiency regime in general and the expectations for police procurement as set out in the Gershon report.

The report provided a flavour of the diverse areas of work which the procurement team had become involved in the twelve month period covered by the report and the relevance of that work in supporting policing operations. Particular reference was made to the work of the procurement team in the period after the storms in Carlisle in January 2005.

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

(Note: The Procurement Manager left the meeting at this point)

#### **60. NORTH CUMBRIA BCU HMIC ACTION PLAN - UPDATE**

A report by the Chief Constable had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting summarising the HMIC's recommendations and demonstrating how key outputs had impacted upon those recommendations.

Chief Superintendent Davidson advised Members that HMIC had revisited the BCU in the previous week and had reviewed the six recommendations. Initial feedback was that all the recommendations had been met, which would normally lead to HMIC signing off their involvement with the BCU, but the indications were that they would continue their involvement to satisfy themselves that the improvements were translated into improved performance.

With regard to performance, overall all categories of crime were down by 1%, and some individual crime categories were down by considerably more than that.

However, there had been an increase in violent crime by 2% and vehicle crime by 12%. Overall however performance within the BCU had improved.

Members congratulated Chief Superintendent Davidson for the performance of the North Cumbria BCU noting that iQuanta figures showed that performance within the BCU was clearly improving to the extent that it was possible for all to see that the picture in North Cumbria was now very positive. This was particularly commendable as it had been achieved against a particularly difficult background following the flooding in Carlisle in January 2005.

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

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

## **61. BEST VALUE IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE**

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

Two new reviews had been added, namely empowered BCU's and Operational Support and Communications Centre. These two Reviews contained a total of eighteen recommendations.

The following reviews had been formally closed –

- Crime Management and Recording
- Ill Health and Injury Pensions
- Firearms
- Scientific Support
- Community Safety
- Public Order
- Health Management
- Training

**RESOLVED** , that the recommendations of the Best Value Board, as set out in the report, be approved as follows –

- (a) Specific improvement actions be closed;
- (b) Deadlines for completion of actions be extended as appropriate;
- (c) Progress on implementing Best Value improvement actions be noted.

## **62. VIOLENT CRIME**

The Assistant Chief Constable reminded Members that at the last meeting the Committee had suggested that it would be helpful for them to receive an explanatory report to improve understanding of the true position regarding violent crime. He presented a report aimed at meeting this request.

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

### **63. USE OF STOP AND STOP/SEARCH POWERS WITHIN CUMBRIA**

The Assistant Chief Constable presented a report by the Chief Constable which provided data on the use of the new “stop” powers and the “stop and search” powers over the period April – June 2005.

The same report had been submitted to the Community and Race Relations Committee.

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

### **64. BUDGET VARIANCE REPORT 2005/06**

The Treasurer presented the second quarterly budget monitoring report for 2005/06 which was based on actual spending and commitments for the first half of the financial year, plus estimates for the remaining period. It incorporated the decision made at the special meeting of the Authority in August in relation to funding an amended capital programme and the resulting effect on the revenue budget. It showed, in the approved style, details of significant variations from budget. Overall it was expected that at the year end spending would be inside the approved budget by £275,000.

However, the report did not reflect the statement by the Authority ‘s insurers that they were not prepared to meet the full cost of the insurance claims submitted in the aftermath of the damage caused by the floods in Carlisle in January 2005. The financial implications of this decision were still being evaluated, not least in the terms of the impact on the budget for the current year. It was the intention that this would be reported to the meeting of the Authority on 10 November.

A Member referred to the increase in the cost of hiring vehicles shown in the report and the Constabulary’s Director of Finance and Resources advised that offsetting savings were detailed elsewhere in the report.

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

### **65. POLICE NEGOTIATING BOARD (PNB)/OVERTIME/LIFEBALANCE SCHEME**

The Treasurer advised Members that the Constabulary was now in the third and final year over which the PNB scheme to reduce overtime by 15% as part of a life/balance initiative was taking place. The report submitted to the Committee indicated that based on the information currently available the Constabulary was on course to meet the target for the financial year and thus meet the overriding reduction required by the scheme. However, there had been an increase in overtime costs over the last three month period. This had reduced the headroom between the target and predictions for the financial year. BCU Commanders had

been alerted to the need to monitor overtime closely for the remainder of the financial year to ensure that the target was not exceeded.

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

#### **66. ACPO BENCHMARKING STUDY OF THE FINANCE FUNCTION**

The Treasurer presented a report produced jointly with the Chief Constable, the purpose of which was to formally report to the Committee the results of the ACPO sponsored benchmarking exercise of the finance function. The results had been reported to the Constabulary's Resources and Standards Board on 21 September. The study was predominately a comparison of costs within the police service in England and Wales, although some data sets did allow an assessment of performance to be made in a number of functional areas.

The overall results appeared to be encouraging, with overall costs below the adjusted average for the service as a whole and, perhaps of more relevance, lower than the adjusted average for the comparator group of smaller forces. The results had been recognised as "good" by HMIC in the most recent Finance and Resources assessment and would reflect in the 2006 Baseline score for the "Use of Resources" section.

The report emphasised that benchmarking was not an end in itself but was a means to investigating particular areas identified in the analysis. To that end, it had been agreed to produce an improvement plan which would incorporate areas where realisable and measurable improvements in performance were possible.

Members referred to the fact that the exercise had highlighted that Cumbria was paying more than average for its audit function to which both the Treasurer and Audit Manager responded.

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

#### **67. WEST AREA BCU FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

The Audit Manager presented a report of the routine financial audit of the West Cumbria BCU conducted during September 2005. This was a good report, and all the minor issues that had been raised during the last similar audit had been actioned.

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

#### **68. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

The Audit Manager presented a report of a review undertaken to assess the management of the property services contract currently operated by the Constabulary. Testing was performed to ensure adequate monitoring was performed of service delivery and appropriate documentation was in place for the

contract. Additional testing was performed to ensure the accuracy of payments to the contractor.

The Audit Manager advised that he personally had some concerns that this review had been graded "good" as he believed, given the recommendations contained within the report, that "satisfactory" would have been a more appropriate grading.

The Treasurer advised that notwithstanding the grading there was no dispute between the Constabulary and the Auditors with regard to the recommendations and if these were actioned then it would take forward this particular area of activity.

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

(Note: Mr Ash left the meeting at this point)

## **69. BASELINE ASSESSMENT REPORT 2005**

The Deputy Chief Constable presented the Annual HMIC Baseline Assessment Report published on 27 October 2005. The report was the HMIC's assessment of the Constabulary's performance in 2004/05.

Given the recent publication of this lengthy document the Constabulary was still undertaking analysing it and a more detailed report on its implications would be submitted to the Authority on 10 November.

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

## **PART TWO – MATTERS CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

### **70. FRONT LINE POLICE MEASURE 2004/05**

The Assistant Chief Constable presented a report which updated Members on performance in 2005 and progress on the action plan agreed by the Authority to achieve the targets set as part of the Frontline Policing Measure. The report also set out the impact on non-cashable efficiencies for 2004/05.

In response to a question from a Member the Assistant Chief Constable advised that there was no national target for the Frontline Policing Measure and he did not know what targets had been set by other Forces.

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

### **71. IT NETWORK SECURITY AND CONTROLS**

The Deputy Chief Constable reminded Members that a follow up review by the Auditors into Network Security Controls had been undertaken earlier in the year. The review report was appended to the report by the Chief Constable submitted to the Committee. The report highlighted the additional work required to formalise

and document current procedures. It recognised that in practical terms the Constabulary ran a secure and well managed environment, though this had to be fully documented to ensure that due process was followed and resilience was embedded in the process.

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

**72. POLICE NEGOTIATING BOARD OVERTIME/WORK LIFE BALANCE SCHEME**

The papers under this Agenda item were circulated for information only.

The meeting ended at 12.45pm.

**Chair:**..... **Date:** .....