

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

**CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY**

**AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Audit and Performance Committee held on Monday 4 December 2006 in Conference Room 1, Police Headquarters, Carleton Hall, Penrith commencing at 10.00am.

**PRESENT**

Mrs L Slavin (Chair)

Mr M Ash  
Mr R S Cole  
Mrs C A Egan

Mr W Smith  
Mr R Watson

**Also present:**

Treasurer (Mr D Thomas)  
Acting Deputy Chief Constable (Mr G Sunderland)  
Acting Assistant Chief Constable (Mr P Kirkbride)  
Constabulary Director of Finance and Resources (Mr M Thompson)  
Mr R McGahon (Audit Commission)  
Mr P Usher (Audit Manager, Cumbria County Council)  
Deputy Clerk (Mr S Edwards)

The Chair advised all those present that this would be the last meeting of the Committee as following the review of committee structures undertaken by the Authority, the business of the Committee would be divided between the newly established Governance Committee and the Policing Plan and Performance Committee. Both of those Committees would come into being with effect from January 2007. She considered that the Committee had come a long way over the last few years and she thanked all those that had been involved for their endeavours.

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

**26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs L L Shaw.

**27. URGENT BUSINESS AND EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**(a) Urgent Business**

The Chair advised Members that there were no items of Urgent Business.

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**(b) 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 Agenda Item No 23, Grievances, on the grounds it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

**28. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS**

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

**29. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 September 2006 had been circulated with the Agenda for the meeting.

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

**30. FORCE PERFORMANCE**

Before considering the report, Members reflected upon the benefits of attending the Constabulary's Performance Development Conferences and weighed the advantages of rotating attendance against the need for continuity. All those Members that had attended considered it beneficial to have done so with one particular benefit referred to being that it provided Members with context within which to consider the performance reports considered by the Committee.

It was suggested that it would be helpful if Members could also be invited to attend as observers, and not participants, at the BCU reviews. The Acting Deputy Chief Constable advised that this should not present any problem to the Constabulary and he would raise the matter with Chief Officer colleagues.

Members noted that the performance element of the Committee's role would be moving to the Policing Plan and Performance Committee from January 2007.

The Acting Deputy Chief Constable then introduced the Performance Report, which again showed that the Constabulary was performing exceptionally well. In the key areas of domestic burglary, robbery and vehicle crime the Constabulary was best in its Most Similar Force (MSF) group. With regard to **violent crime**, the Constabulary was now below the MSF average, whereas 12 months previously it had had the worst figures for the MSF. The Constabulary's performance with regard to violent crime was now almost on target and a considerable improvement had been achieved in the previous 12 months. This had been in the form of a steady reduction which made him optimistic that it was sustainable. In response to a question from a Member, he advised that, overall, the trend within the MSF was

downward, though nationally the trend within the violent crime category was an upward one. However, it had to be borne in mind that there was an issue of definition with regard to violent crime with many violent offences within the category involving no physical contact.

Consideration was then given to the target for violent crime and the Acting Deputy Chief Constable provided Members with an explanation for the differing targets set for each BCU.

A Member suggested that it would be helpful, if possible, to align meetings of the Committee with the quarterly Performance Development Conferences to facilitate the crossover of information.

Members then considered **racially aggravated offences**. Whilst it was worrying that the numbers had increased, overall the figures were still low. Cumbria Constabulary had encouraged reporting of racially aggravated offences, which was, in part, the reason why there was an increase, which was itself a positive outcome. In addition, there were now more members of BME communities within Cumbria, which was also likely to have an impact on the number of reported offences. The Constabulary was committed to individually monitoring each offence and the establishment of Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) within each area where this issue could be considered in parallel with the Constabulary's own Confidence and Equality Board meant that a considerable amount of attention was paid to this particular aspect activity.

The Acting Deputy Chief Constable reminded Members that detailed attention was paid to this particular type of offence by the Authority's Community and Race Relations Committee.

Members then gave consideration to the Constabulary's performance with regard to **call handling**. Members noted that there had been a year on year 8% increase in the number of 999 calls handled, with just over 36,000 being dealt with in the current year. Members noted that there had been a number of occasions when the call handling system had malfunctioned, which had impacted on the ability to deal with non-999 calls. Members expressed concern at these technical failures and asked that the Constabulary attempt to quantify these incidents in terms of length of downtime within future reports. Members also suggested that it would be appropriate for the Performance Committee to receive a separate report on call handling detailing information with regard to the impact on performance of technical failures. This was the sort of information the Authority would require when it came to consider the replacement, or otherwise, of the current telephony system.

The Acting Deputy Chief Constable reminded Members that the immediate replacement of a telephony system had been taken out of the Capital Programme within the last 12 months, but would need to be reviewed when the impact of the Effective Contact Management Programme became known. He undertook to provide a report and presentation to the first meeting of the Performance Committee on the Effective Contact Management Programme.

The Treasurer advised Members that the telephony system had not been completely withdrawn from the Capital Programme, but was being held in abeyance until such time as the service contractors were unable to service the equipment or operational demands required its replacement. With the understanding of at least a two-year period of advance notice of withdrawal of service, the Treasurer suggested that provision for the replacement switch should remain within the third year of the rolling capital programme.

The Acting Deputy Chief Constable advised that **criminal damage** was continuing to improve against the annual target. Since it had last been reported to the Committee in September, it had continued to reduce on a month on month basis and the Constabulary was currently 2% (129 offences) over target, a reduction from the position in July of 5.6% (183 offences) over target. The Respect campaign continued to have a positive impact upon levels of criminal damage within the County. Members were pleased to note that detection rates for criminal damage had improved, and suggested it would be interesting to know how much criminal damage was in practical terms undetectable.

Members then considered **driver referrals**. Whilst discussing this matter, reference was made to the process for selection of offenders referred to the scheme and the possibility of extending it to speeding motorists. The latter suggestion was not considered to be appropriate in Cumbria.

Members noted the continued success of the **Respect** campaign. They noted that the next phase of the campaign was to move into partnership working and to encourage increased branding to continue to raise awareness.

Members noted Force **satisfaction** levels for the period April to June 2006, which were very positive, though there were still some issues with regard to satisfaction levels with follow up. It was suggested that it would be appropriate for a report on this matter to be submitted to the Performance Committee.

Members then considered **attendance at work**, and were pleased to note that police officer attendance was on target. However, there were some concerns with regard to attendance for PCSOs, particularly in South Cumbria, and for police staff based at Headquarters. Members asked that the Personnel Committee give particular attention to PCSO attendance when considering the sickness absence figures at their forthcoming meeting.

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

### **31. HOME OFFICE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK**

The Acting Deputy Chief Constable presented a report by the Chief Constable which provided Members with the up to date position with regard changes to the performance framework proposed by the Home Office.

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

**32. CRIME RECORDING/DETECTIONS**

The Acting Deputy Chief Constable introduced a report, the purpose of which was to advise Members of the impending Audit Commission and HMIC reviews and to update them on current action plans.

Members noted that this was another area of Constabulary activity where the Effective Contact Management Project could have a significant beneficial impact.

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

**33. CRIME REPORTING AND RECORDING POLICY UPDATE – VULNERABLE PEOPLE**

The Chair reminded Members that it was necessary to update the Crime Reporting and Recording Policy annually and the report submitted by the Chief Constable provided Members with detail on a current issue within this area of activity.

The Acting Deputy Chief Constable referred to the paper circulated which, in addition to updating Members on the work in hand with regard to updating the Crime Reporting and Recording scheme to reflect the needs of vulnerable and intimidated victims, provided an explanation of the terms “vulnerable and intimidated” and highlighted how the changes were already reflected within current Constabulary practice. He advised that once introduced it would be monitored and considered at quarterly PDC conferences.

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

**34. 2005/06 BASELINE ASSESSMENT**

The Acting Deputy Chief Constable advised that most Members would be aware of the Baseline Assessment which had been published in late October 2006. It had not contained any surprises for the Constabulary and the areas identified for improvement were being managed within the Performance Management Framework and would be monitored through appropriate action plans.

Members referred to performance in training, development and organisational learning, which it was noted had been monitored for some time by the Personnel Committee.

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

**35. LOCAL DOMAIN TARGETS UPDATE – YEAR TO DATE**

The Acting Deputy Chief Constable presented a report which provided an update on the agreed Local Domain Targets for 2006/07. The targets had been approved by the Policing Plan and Best Value Committee in February 2006.

The information provided within the report expanded upon that provided within the Performance Report considered earlier in the meeting (Minute No 30 refers).

In discussing the item, Members expressed the view that it would be necessary to be “smarter” in terms of identifying Local Domain Targets for 2007/08 to ensure that they were appropriate and did not conflict with other targets. The process in 2006/07 had been a learning experience and it was important that the lessons learnt were put into practice. The process would need to start in January or February to enable it to be completed satisfactorily.

Mr McGahon advised that both the Authority and Constabulary had improved with regard to their target setting, in that they were now looking to develop targets based on the impact which could be achieved by introducing that specific target. He reminded Members it was important to ensure that any targets set were both challenging and achievable and that review of targets set was an ongoing process throughout the year.

Members considered that this was a priority matter for the new Policing Plan and Performance Committee, and needed to be considered in the context of other targets set by the Authority, Constabulary and partners.

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

### **36. SATISFACTION LEVELS**

The Acting Deputy Chief Constable presented a report to Members which highlighted and explained the variations in satisfaction levels across the three BCUs within Cumbria and identified areas of good practice.

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

### **37. EFFICIENCY PLAN 2006/07 – QUARTER TWO UPDATE**

The Director of Finance and Resources presented a report which provided Members with an update on progress to achieving the 3% efficiency target set for 2006/07. At the current stage of the financial year, the Constabulary was on course to fully achieve its cashable and non-cashable efficiency targets.

A detailed self-assessment providing a progress report about the 2006/07 Efficiency Plan was attached to the report from the Chief Constable.

In response to a question, Members noted that there had been no movement from the Home Office with regard to the Frontline Policing Measure.

The Treasurer cautioned Members that cashable efficiencies, as detailed in the report, did not always equate to budget savings. This was an important consideration as the Medium Term Financial Forecast did envisage substantial savings in each of the forthcoming financial years and the introduction of that process would make the report before Members of increased significance in future years.

**RESOLVED,** that the current position and planned actions as set out in the report be noted.

### **38. BEST VALUE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT**

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

The report contained a list of reviews which had been formally closed, namely Crime Management and Recording; Ill Health and Injury Pensions; Firearms; Scientific Support; Community Safety; Public Order; Health Management; and Training. In addition, the Committee was asked to formally approve the closure of the reviews into Driver Training and Management of Patrol.

**RESOLVED,** that

- (1) formal approval be given to the Best Value Board's recommendations to –
  - (a) close specific improvement actions;
  - (b) extend deadlines for completion of actions; and
  - (c) note progress on implementing Best Value improvement actions; and
- (2) the formal closure of the following reviews be approved –
  - (a) Driver Training; and
  - (b) Management of Patrol.

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

The Acting Deputy Chief Constable presented a report which provided data on the use of stop and stop/search powers in Cumbria for the period April to August 2006, which was the most recent data available, as well as a commentary on the use of the tactics in Cumbria. This report had also been submitted to the Community and Race Relations Committee.

In considering the report, a Member commented that it would be helpful if data on the number of arrests resulting from stops and stop/searches could be included in the report.

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

### **40. POLICE OVERTIME MONITORING**

The Treasurer introduced a report prepared jointly with the Constabulary which had been produced in response to the Committee's request that monitoring information on overtime expenditure continued to be supplied to provide assurance that progress made to reduce overtime by 15% over three years as part of the

Police Negotiating Body (PNB) scheme to improve work/life balance was continued following the conclusion of the formal scheme in March 2006.

From a financial point of view, it was important to monitor overtime as the budget had been significantly reduced as a result of the success of the PNB scheme, and the report demonstrated that overtime was still running below the notional target which would have applied for 2006-07 had the PNB scheme been extended by a further year.

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

#### **41. BUDGET VARIANCE REPORT 2006-07**

The Treasurer presented a report prepared jointly with the Chief Constable which set out the expected financial position of the Constabulary for 2006/07 based on actual spending and commitments for the six months to the end of September 2006, plus estimates for the remainder of the financial year. Total forecast net expenditure after accounting for transfers to and from earmarked balances was substantially lower than had previously been reported and was projected to come inside the approved budget by £2.214 million, compared with £0.817 million projected at the end of July.

The Constabulary was currently looking at proposals to recommend that the Authority "in principle" earmark elements of the 2006/07 surplus for specific purposes, such as to contribute to the Capital Fund to support future years' Capital Programmes and thus reduce pressure on future annual budgets. Such plans needed to be evaluated and prioritised in the context of future budget demands to finance both enhanced protective services capability and major capital projects, which were set out in the Medium Term Financial Forecast, and would be articulated in more detail later in the budget process. Definitive recommendations would be made to the Authority as part of the budget reporting.

In considering the report, Members made specific reference to costs incurred in outsourcing some elements of vehicle maintenance work and expressed continued concerns with regard to the difficulties in the recruitment of IT staff.

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

#### **42. AUDIT COMMISSION – AUDIT PLAN 2006/07**

Mr McGahon presented the Audit Plan for 2006/07 which set out the audit work that the Audit Commission proposed to undertake in 2006/07. The Plan had been prepared from the Commission's risk based approach to audit planning and reflected the Commission's responsibility under the Code of Audit Practice, work specified by the Commission for 2006/07, local risks and improvement priorities and current national risks relevant to local circumstances in Cumbria.

For 2006/07 the Audit Commission had changed its fee scale structure and the total estimate for the Authority for 2006/07 was £66,150. This fee included all work

identified in the Plan, unless it was specifically excluded. Full details were included in Appendix 1 to the Plan. In addition the Authority would pay an additional fee for work involved in auditing the Authority submission for the Whole of Government Accounts, and in 2007-08 and future years it was anticipated that there would be an additional fee of between £5,000 and £10,000 for the work involved in evaluating the Authority's Police Use of Resources (PURE) as part of the value for money programme.

Mr McGahon worked through the Audit Plan and Members raised questions with him, to which he responded as appropriate.

**RESOLVED,** that the Audit Plan be received.

### **43. POLICE USE OF RESOURCES (PURE) EVALUATION**

The Treasurer presented a report submitted jointly with the Chief Constable, the purpose of which was to outline the background to, and results of, the first Police Use of Resources (PURE) evaluation undertaken by the Audit Commission earlier in the year. The report described the expectation, at the time of the evaluation, that the proposed merger with Lancashire would reduce the value of the assessment and described an agreed "light touch approach" which had been adopted by the Commission. The report also set out the results of the evaluation which, overall, had led to an assessment of "fair". Finally, the report described some improvements which the Commission were looking to bring about for the 2006/07 evaluation and summarised a number of developments already being undertaken within the Constabulary and Authority in areas identified from the 2005/06 work.

Mr McGahon advised that, at the time of the proposed merger, the Auditors had taken the view a light touch was appropriate to minimise the time impact of the evaluation on staff already heavily involved in the merger process.

He considered that "fair" was a very positive score for the Authority and was one which could be moved forward. He considered that it was important for Members to remember that the organisation only had limited resources and it was therefore important to focus on areas where a difference could be made to what was being done. The Police Authority did deal with risk but the formal side of strategic risk management still required further work.

He stressed that to improve on its current score it would be necessary for the Authority to give real consideration to balancing inputs against potential benefits.

He concluded by thanking the officers for their assistance in undertaking the assessment.

Members acknowledged that "fair" was a creditable score, particularly as Cumbria was a small Authority with limited resources. Given the circumstances in which the

report was prepared, with a less than normal Authority or Constabulary input, it was clear that it had been produced objectively and this made it an even more valuable document.

Members did suggest that it would be helpful if some information could be provided which enabled them to assess this performance against the performance of other Authorities but Mr McGahon advised that this was not information which was currently available to him.

In response to a point raised by a Member the Treasurer advised that in order to undertake benchmarking, it would be necessary for a group of police authorities to come together to work as a “benchmarking club”. The amount of effort and agreement required in such an undertaking should not be underestimated.

The Treasurer advised Members that the Annual Audit letter to the Police Authority was to be submitted to the meeting of the Authority on 20 December.

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

#### **44. OPERATIONAL SUPPORT PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

Mr Usher presented the report of an audit carried out to review the controls in place over planning and performance management arrangements in Operational Support. It was not a review of the actual performance of Operational Support, but assessed the adequacy of systems that were in place to enable managers to perform. The audit had been included in the annual Audit Plan agreed by the Police Authority, as these controls were a key part of the Authority’s overall Statement of Internal Control (SIC). Effective performance management had also been highlighted as a major risk for the Constabulary.

Since the last internal audit review of Operational Support in December 2004, there had been significant changes in management within the Department.

As a result of the audit, planning had been evaluated as “satisfactory” and performance management as “fair”.

As a result of the audit, nine recommendations had been made and they were set out in the Action Plan appended to the report. One of the recommendations was a “grade 1” recommendation. The Acting Deputy Chief Constable informed Members that the Constabulary supported the findings of the audit review.

A Member asked that at the next meeting reassurances that items within the Action Plan had been implemented be reported to the Committee.

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

#### **45. OPERATIONAL SUPPORT FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

Mr Usher reported that the audit, which was the subject of the report before Members, had been carried out in September 2006. As with the audit previously reported (Minute No 44 refers) there had been significant changes in management within Operational Support since the last internal review in December 2004.

The overall evaluation for all of the seven areas reviewed was satisfactory, with four of the areas under review being evaluated as “good”.

The Director of Finance and Resources advised that he was pleased with the report, which reflected the work undertaken within the Department by a relatively new finance team to address issues raised previously.

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

#### **46. TENDERING**

Mr Usher reported that this was one of a series of regular reviews into tendering. Since the last audit, the Constabulary had obtained the use of Blue-Light, a web-based e-tendering system. The system was based on a framework agreement exercise developed by Devon and Cornwall Constabulary and contained a number of inbuilt controls to ensure due diligence was correctly applied to the tendering process.

The audit had resulted in an evaluation of “satisfactory” for the Constabulary’s tendering processes.

Members noted the recommendation contained within the review that Standing Order procedures should be reviewed and updated. The Treasurer advised that, ideally, this would occur every year in time for presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Authority in June. He reminded Members that a major reworking of Financial Regulations had been postponed at the onset of the merger process, but, as he had reported at the last meeting, it was his intention to report to an early meeting of the Authority with a view to having the revised Financial Regulations in place in time for the new financial year.

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

#### **47. TREASURY MANAGEMENT, CAPITAL PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT, ASSET REGISTERS AND IMPRESSED ACCOUNT**

Mr Usher presented what was the annual review of these particular areas of activity, all of which had been included within the 2006/07 Internal Audit Plan. The evaluation for each of the areas reviewed was “good”.

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

**PART 2 – ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**48. GRIEVANCES**

The Acting Assistant Chief Constable presented a report which gave the number of grievances lodged in the current financial year and compared this information with those lodged in the previous two financial years. The report included a breakdown of those lodging grievances. As well as providing an overview of the subject of the grievance the gender and race of complainants was also specified. The statistics provided were further subdivided between police officers and police staff.

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

The Meeting ended at 1.05pm