

**Cumbria Police Authority
Audit and Performance Committee**

7 February 2006

Agenda Item No 8a



Report by the Chief Constable to update the Committee on the Audit Commission review of Crime Recording October 2005.

Summary

To advise the Police Authority of initial Audit Commission feedback on the findings of the October 2005 review, inclusive of strategy proposals aimed at reducing intensive checking processes and to update the Committee on current crime reporting/recording statistics.

Recommendation

- That members of the Committee note the contents of this report.

Audit Commission. Review of Crime Recording

The Audit Commission feedback provides the Committee with an initial summary of the findings from the NCRS review and recognises the progress made by the Constabulary/Police Authority to implement the 2004 action plan. In particular the report highlights the improvements in leadership, processes and training that contributed to very good data test results being achieved across all of the crime categories examined. Critical to this success was the Force Crime Registrar's move to implement an intensive daily checking process for crime related incidents but in the long term this is recognised by the Constabulary/Police Authority to be both financially and operationally unsustainable. In addition the Audit Commission views "blanket checking of logs for NCRS compliance as not an effective use of resources other than as a short-term measure alongside other, more sustainable developments" and "acts as a potential disincentive for officers to get recording decisions right first time."

A recommendation is made for the Constabulary to bring forward plans to reduce checking processes as part of a managed strategy and to prioritise a

full risk assessment of crime recording to inform decisions made on future training, resourcing and audit needs.

Crime Reporting/Recording Statistics

The third quarter of the financial year 2005-06 saw continued progress within crime recording with little or no backlog in crimes awaiting input. In answering **2,531** calls in November Crime Input Bureau staff averaged **4.74** minutes per call and missed only **40 calls (1.6%)** on first contact. December saw **2,511** calls answered at an average of **4.05** minutes per call with **65 (2.6%)** calls unanswered.

Comparisons made in relation to meeting the NCRS 72 rule have shown significant improvement. Compliance between Apr-Dec 2004 was **49.6%** rising to **90.2%** over the same 2005 period, with figures of **94.2%** and **95.5%** respectively for the months of November and December. This improvement is reflected in the figures for recording crime within 48 hours, which stood at **81.9%** for Apr-Dec 2005. Again the statistics for November and December were encouraging at **88.2%** and **89.5%** respectively.

The use of the telephone by officers as the method of reporting crime also saw a gradual improvement from **40%** in September 2005, rising to **48.0%** by December. A continued improvement is expected in this method of reporting over the coming year.

Conclusion

In July 2005 the Force Crime Registrar reported on the improvements made by the Constabulary within the sphere of crime recording with the caveat that the organisation relied heavily on both his department and Crime/Help desks to both identify and instigate enquiries to meet NCRS compliance. The Audit Commission findings confirmed this view necessitating a sustainable plan for change. That said, the Constabulary/Police Authority has shown considerable improvement over the last year, culminating in the findings documented within this report.

Michael Baxter
Chief Constable