

Cumbria Police Authority

Audit and Performance Committee

7 September 2006

Agenda Item No

Police Overtime Monitoring

A report by the Chief Constable and Treasurer

1. Summary

- 1.1 At the June meeting of the Committee members received the final report on the Constabulary's performance in relation to the Police Negotiating Body (PNB) scheme to reduce overtime by 15% over three years as part of a 'work / life' balance initiative. The report showed that the Constabulary came £144k inside the target at the end of 2005/06 and thus met the overriding reduction required by the scheme.
- 1.2 This report has been produced in response to members' request that monitoring information on overtime expenditure continues to be supplied to provide assurance that the progress made under the PNB Scheme is continued.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report.

3. Details

- 3.1 To remind members, forces were required to reduce overtime by 15% over the three years ended 31 March 2006 as part of a national requirement set out by the Police Negotiating Board. This requirement was part of a wider series of reforms to police pay and allowances, originating from the Police Reform Act and was intended to promote a better work / life balance for officers. The three-year scheme ended at the end of 2005-06 and, as set out above, expenditure on 'relevant' overtime was £144k inside the prescribed target figure for the Constabulary.
- 3.2 Since the end of the financial year, efforts have been made to enquire how Constabulary overtime is to be monitored externally to ensure that the reduced reliance on overtime will be continued and that the gains from the last three years are not to be lost. Unfortunately, no formal guidance has been forthcoming, although, with the focus of many in the service firmly on amalgamation until very recently, it is easy to understand how this issue might have been put to one side.

- 3.3 Recognising that the requirement to report to HMIC about overtime levels ended on 31 March, members expressed some interest in continuing to receive statements about force overtime and it was agreed that regular reports would be prepared, albeit in a more simple format than those dictated by the national scheme which exempted a number of areas of overtime and which were resource intensive to produce and consolidate.
- 3.4 The data used in constructing this report has been extracted from the Constabulary's monthly management accounts process. Whilst the format is somewhat less detailed than the formal reporting requirements of the PNB scheme, the overall figures are broadly equivalent, showing details of overtime expenditure for each BCU and other departments including local operations, although it excludes additional payments for duties performed on Public Holidays, as was the position under the PNB regime.
- 3.5 The table below shows actual and forecast overtime expenditure in comparison with budget on a departmental basis as at the end of July, which incorporates overtime expenditure for the first three months of the year, as overtime is paid one month in arrears: -

	Revised Budget £'s	Actual Expenditure £'s	Forecast Outturn £'s	Variance £'s
North	412,398	118,480	409,398	-3,000
South	215,476	77,483	235,000	19,524
West	138,240	56,782	185,000	46,760
Operational Support	106,963	36,285	135,560	28,597
Other	75,934	50,767	76,275	341
Total	949,011	339,797	1,041,233	92,222

- 3.6 The table in paragraph 3.5 above shows forecast overtime expenditure amounting to £1.041m, which is £92k above the revised budget for overtime of £0.949m. As reported elsewhere on the agenda, additional commitments to police overtime have been made in some areas to cover police officer vacancies caused principally because there are different profiles for recruitment and departure, and in particular where only the recruitment profile can be planned with any degree of accuracy. Other contributory factors for the variances revolve, in the main, around the cost of overtime supporting additional policing operations, and, in addition, on a non-recurring basis, additional costs of providing a visible police presence during the world cup.

- 3.7 It is possible to undertake a broad comparison of where the current projection of overtime as summarised above might sit if the PNB scheme had continued into the current year. It is broadly based, reflecting that a small value of overtime set out above would not have counted against previous target because it was funded from a variety of special external funds or was in relation to mutual aid. The comparison would be as follows. A target of relevant overtime for 2006-07, indexed from the 2005-06 figure would amount to about £1.32m. The actual projection for 2006-07, as set out above amounts to £1.04m, less an estimate of overtime which was previously not counted against the 'target', say £50k, leaving a net figure of £0.99m, which is £0.33m inside the 'target' figure. This is broadly in line with reports during the early part of 2005-06, although, as members will recall, the amount of headroom between the target and projection did reduce towards the end of 2005-06, resulting in a final position, which was £144k inside the target.
- 3.8 Finally, and as a reminder to members, as set out above, the projections are based on only three months actual spending (as overtime is paid monthly in arrears), so there is ample time for the position to change. No abnormal additional overtime commitments are planned and overall police officer numbers are programmed to be close to the establishment figure, which ought to reduce the reliance on overtime to cover police officer vacancies. However, and as set out in previous reports, the figures do not include specific provision to meet any overtime costs arising from a major incident, which has the potential to significantly alter the whole shape of the projection.

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