

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

**CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY**

**AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Audit and Performance Committee held on Tuesday 7 September 2006 in Conference Room 1, Police Headquarters, Carleton Hall, Penrith commencing at 11.00am.

**PRESENT**

Mr M Ash  
Mr R S Cole  
Mrs C A Egan

Mrs L Slavin  
Mr W Smith  
Mr R Watson

**Also present:**

Clerk/ Chief Executive (Mr C R Alcock)  
Treasurer (Mr D Thomas)  
Deputy Chief Constable (Mrs C Twigg)  
Assistant Chief Constable (Mr G Sunderland)  
Mr R McGahon (Audit Commission)  
Mr P Usher (Audit Manager, Cumbria County Council)  
Deputy Clerk (Mr S Edwards)

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

**1. MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of the Committee, as agreed at the Annual Meeting of the Police Authority on 28 June 2006, was noted as follows –

Mr M Ash, Mr R S Cole, Mrs C A Egan, Mrs L L Shaw, Mr W Smith; the Police Authority Chairman (Mr R Watson) and Vice Chair (Mrs L Slavin) were ex officio Members of the Committee.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs L L Shaw.

**3. CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE**

The Clerk/Chief Executive reminded Members that the Authority's Standing Orders required that the Vice Chair of the Authority be appointed as Chair of one of the Authority's major committees (Standing Order No 2.4 refers). In accordance with Standing Orders, the Vice Chair, Mrs Slavin, was to be appointed Chair of the Committee.

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**RESOLVED,** that Mrs L Slavin be appointed Chair of the Committee until the next Annual Meeting.

(Mrs Slavin in the Chair)

Mrs Slavin welcomed Mr Cole to his first meeting of the Committee. She also noted that this was the last meeting that Mr McGahon would be attending as the Audit Commission's representative. She thanked him for his help and support to both the Authority and Constabulary over recent years.

#### **4. URGENT BUSINESS AND EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

##### **(a) Urgent Business**

The Chair advised Members that there were no items of urgent business.

##### **(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 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 to the Act –

| <b>Item No</b> | <b>Item</b>                           | <b>Paragraph No</b> |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 22             | Civil Claims                          | 12                  |
| 24             | Annual Procurement Report 2005-06     | 7 and 10            |
| 25             | Annual Audit Letter of Representation | 12                  |

#### **5. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS**

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

#### **6. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 22 and 28 June 2006 had been circulated.

The Chair referred to the reference at the start of the Minutes for the meeting on 22 June to the attendance at the meeting by a representative from Lancashire Police Authority. The Minutes suggested that the Chair had already attended a meeting in Lancashire, which was not the case. However, she still hoped to be able to attend a meeting in Lancashire, as it would provide valuable experience.

The Chair then referred to Minute No 124, Custody Management, and asked how the issues identified would be monitored. Mr Usher advised that the Management Audit Unit would be undertaking a follow up inspection of the custody system in January 2007 and this matter would be revisited after that.

**RESOLVED,** that the Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 22 and 28 June 2006 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## 7. FORCE PERFORMANCE

The Assistant Chief Constable introduced the Force Performance Report and advised that overall Force performance was very good, both in terms of actual performance and in comparison with the Constabulary's family of Most Similar Forces.

Members then worked through the report, following the pattern set in previous meetings by focusing on the Exception Reports. The first particular area Members focused on was **theft of motor vehicles**. As requested by Members at the last meeting, motor vehicle thefts were broken down into three categories, namely high value vehicles, mini motos/quads and "joy-riding" type vehicle thefts. It was noted that there were not many high value vehicle thefts nor, despite the public perception, were there many quad bike thefts. In addition, the Constabulary had a good recovery rate for stolen vehicles. However, this particular type of offence was 5% below target (16 offences).

In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Chief Constable advised that, in the main, older cars tended to be the ones most frequently stolen, as more modern cars had better security devices fitted as standard.

The Assistant Chief Constable advised that, since the last Exception Report in May 2006, **criminal damage** had continued to reduce month on month and the Constabulary had improved its year to date target position, moving to 3.1% (137 offences) outside the year to date target, as compared to 5.6% (183 offences) in May. In addition, the RESPECT Campaign, which had been launched on April 24, was beginning to have an effect on levels of criminal damage, with a 17.3% reduction in reported criminal damage in the period April to July 2006. Over the same period, there had been a 4.9% (812 incidents) increase in anti-social behaviour incidents, a significant factor being the World Cup.

The 2005/06 target to reduce criminal damage by 5% had been allocated to BCUs based on their 2005/06 performance. Based on the profile of rises in criminal damage, this would be a particularly stretching target for 2006/07.

Criminal damage continued to account for one third of all crime within the County, and it was therefore self-evident that any measures which reduced this particular type of crime would have an effect on the overall figures for the County. It was also the case that incidences of criminal damage tended to have a disproportionate impact in increasing fear of crime. The Constabulary was continuing with its efforts

to reduce this category of crime and was constantly monitoring performance, which was moving in the right direction.

The Assistant Chief Constable, in response to a question, updated Members on the position with regard to Fixed Penalty Notices in the West, which had led to a reduction in violent crime and criminal damage, although not all of the reduction could be attributed to that one measure.

He advised Members that research within the County had shown that criminal damage occurred in tight geographical areas and that the same applied to violent crime and anti-social behaviour. The Constabulary was working on completing profiles for the whole County which would, ultimately, enable better targeting by the Constabulary. The introduction of PCSOs had also had an impact.

Consideration was then given to measures undertaken by the Constabulary to work with schools, including an initiative at Ullswater Community College.

The Assistant Chief Constable advised Members that the Constabulary monitored every single reported **robbery**. No particular patterns had been identified.

**Violent crime** continued to reduce and the challenging target which the Constabulary had set itself would be difficult to achieve. However, less people had been assaulted in the current year than in the previous year. The number of offences continued to reduce.

Members then considered the position with regard to **domestic violence** and noted that positive action was being taken in response to the vast majority of offences reported. Whilst there had not been a dramatic impact in terms of numbers charged, interventions made were generally more positive.

With reference to the number of people **killed and seriously injured** (KSI), the Assistant Chief Constable advised that he was sure Members were all aware of recent tragedies within the County. He assured them that a considerable amount of work was going on in Cumbria, not just by the Constabulary but with partners. Whilst it was no consolation, in reality the number of young people killed was no higher than at the same time in the previous year and, overall, numbers were falling and were on target. However, that did not mean that one fatality was not one too many.

In considering this matter, Members believed that there was a clear case for better education of young drivers. In addition the ability of younger people to obtain higher performance vehicles than had been the case in the past was also felt to be something which might be impacting upon the figures. They noted that the condition and loading of vehicles did have an impact on incidents.

In considering the current position with regard to **call handling**, Members noted that, as always, the Constabulary was near to the challenging targets it had set. It was also undertaking a call handling project, which would be completed by the end of the year. The possibility of a positive impact from the 101 Project was also

noted. Members were also advised that the Constabulary did not receive many complaints with reference to call handling.

In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Chief Constable reminded Members that a replacement telephony system had been withdrawn from the programme as part of the amalgamation project, but this was something that might be revisited at a future date. The Deputy Chief Constable advised that the Constabulary did require a new command and control system.

Members then referred to the steady increase in calls over recent years and the Assistant Chief Constable undertook to provide actual figures, rather than simply percentages, at the next meeting of the Committee.

Members then gave consideration to the completion of files and noted that this would be a topic considered at the next Performance Development Conference.

Further issues considered by Members when considering the Performance Report included young offenders brought to justice, the RESPECT Campaign, public satisfaction levels with the Constabulary and figures for reported racist incidents.

Both the Chair of the Committee and the Chair of the Authority commended the Constabulary for its excellent performance over recent months.

The Chair then referred to the fact that the APA was considering how police authorities would monitor Level Two criminality. She suggested that it would be appropriate for the next meeting of the Committee to receive a report setting out what was covered by Level Two criminality and to give some initial consideration as to how this would be monitored.

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

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

## **8. LOCAL PRIORITIES MONITORING REPORT**

The Assistant Chief Constable presented a report that provided an update on the agreed Local Domain Targets for 2006/07, which had been approved by the Policing Plan and Best Value Committee in February 2006. The three areas chosen were –

Youth Disorder  
Anti-social Behaviour  
Anti-Social use of Motor Vehicles

Members then considered performance against those targets.

Members noted the current position and stressed the importance of learning lessons from the first year of operation of the Local Domain. They expressed their willingness to work with the Constabulary to take forward this area of activity.

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

## **9. CRIME REPORTING**

The Assistant Chief Constable presented a report by the Chief Constable, the purpose of which was to advise Members of the findings from the Constabulary's own internal sanctioned detection audit carried out between 22 May and 12 June 2006 and the results of the HMIC audit of sanctioned detections carried out within the Constabulary in June 2006. The report contained key findings, together with a series of recommendations which were listed in the HMIC report as areas for improvement. Overall, the position was satisfactory and HMIC had graded the Constabulary as "good" following the audit.

Members welcomed the positive nature of the report, but referred to comments made by HMIC with regard to processes which, if improved, could further improve performance. The Assistant Chief Constable advised that BCU commanders were fully aware of the need to increase performance whenever possible.

Reference was then made to work being undertaken on effective contact management and the Assistant Chief Constable advised that the project was on track with no slippage. However, it would probably not be implemented in October. He would continue to have a dialogue with the Audit Commission on this matter, and had advised them in 2005 what was proposed and what had been done to date by the Constabulary had been fully documented. He would update the Committee on the position at its next meeting.

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

## **10. BASELINE ASSESSMENT 2006**

The Deputy Chief Constable introduced a report by the Chief Constable which provided Members with an update on the current position with regard to the Baseline Assessment 2006. It was anticipated that the final report would be published in October 2006.

The Chair stated that it would be appropriate for those areas of improvement identified as part of the Baseline Assessment to be considered by the relevant Authority Committee, rather than for all reports to be channelled through the Audit and Performance Committee.

The Deputy Chief Constable agreed with this view, and stated that the Police Authority as a whole would be briefed on the overall position.

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

## **11. ABC 2005/06 AND 2006/07**

The Assistant Chief Constable advised that the Constabulary was going to re-run the recently conducted ABC exercise again in November, making appropriate

changes and undertaking further training before the survey was conducted. This should produce more accurate and meaningful results.

Members noted that, as this was no longer a project managed by the Programme Management Unit, it was not being reported to the Programme Management Working Group.

The Chair asked for an update on progress at the next meeting of the Committee followed by a final report in the New Year.

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

## **12. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE AMALGAMATION PROCESS ON THE FRONTLINE POLICING MEASURE 2006/07**

The Deputy Chief Constable presented a report which provided the Committee with an assessment of the potential impact of the amalgamation process on the Frontline Policing Measure and the Frontline Policing Action Plan for 2006/07.

**RESOLVED,** that the potential impact on the Frontline Policing Measure and Frontline Policing Action Plan for 2006/07 of the amalgamation process be noted.

(NOTE: The Committee adjourned for lunch from 1.00pm to 1.35pm, when the same Members and Officers were present, with the exception of Mr Watson. The Constabulary's Director of Finance and Resources (Mr M Thompson) and the Head of Financial Services (Mr R Marshall) joined the meeting.

## **13. CRIMINAL DAMAGE – RECORDING OF OFFENCES AT LOCAL AUTHORITY/HOUSING ASSOCIATION OWNED PROPERTY**

This item had been withdrawn.

## **14. CUMBRIA COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STRUCTURE**

The Assistant Chief Constable reminded Members that they had requested this item at the last meeting of the Committee. The Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership, part of the Cumbria Strategic Partnership, had identified four indicators to improve services for domestic violence victims –

- Increase the number of domestic violence incidents reported annually to the police.
- Increase the percentage of domestic violence incidents where an arrest was made relating to the incident.
- Reduce the percentage of partner on partner violence.
- Increase the number of convictions for domestic violence.

Members commented that the targets did not appear to be linked and that some could impact adversely on others. This point was accepted by the Assistant Chief Constable, who advised Members that the first indicator was set nationally.

Members then commented on the fact that whilst they welcomed the introduction of the indicators, the bulk of the burden for achieving and monitoring them appeared to fall on the Police rather than on other partners.

**RESOLVED,** that the report be noted and the performance targets referred to above accepted as fit for purpose.

### **15. BCU LEVEL PARTNERSHIP WORKING TO TACKLE VIOLENT CRIME**

The Assistant Chief Constable presented a report which provided an overview of the work being undertaken within the Basic Command Units with partner agencies to tackle violent crime. This item had been requested by Members at the last meeting of the Committee.

Members welcomed what they considered to be a very informative report.

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

### **16. BEST VALUE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS – UPDATE REPORT**

The Deputy Chief Constable reminded Members that Best Value progress updates had been postponed so that work could begin on the amalgamation project. Now the merger process had ceased, an internal project had been established to determine how the Constabulary could meet the challenges of Closing the Gap. As a result, Best Value staff had begun work on establishing the relevance of current outstanding recommendations to ensure that they aligned with the objectives of this project. A further report would be submitted to the Committee at the appropriate time.

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

### **17. POLICE OVERTIME MONITORING**

The Constabulary Director of Finance and Resources reminded the Committee that at the June meeting they had received the final report on the Constabulary's performance in relation to the PNB Scheme to reduce overtime by 15% over three years to 31 March 2006, as part of a work/life balance scheme. The report had shown that the Constabulary had come £144,000 inside the target at the end of 2005/06 and thus had met the overriding reduction required by the scheme.

At that meeting Members had indicated a desire to continue to receive monitoring information on overtime expenditure to provide assurance that the overtime reduction achieved under the PNB Scheme was maintained in future years.

He presented the first such report, prepared jointly by the Chief Constable and Treasurer, to the Committee.

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

## **18. BUDGET VARIANCE REPORT 2006/07**

The Treasurer presented a report prepared jointly with the Chief Constable that set out the expected financial position of the Constabulary for 2006/07 based on actual spending and commitments up to the end of July 2006, plus estimates for the remainder of the financial year.

Overall, it was forecast that net expenditure after accounting for transfers to and from earmarked balances would come inside the approved budget by £817,000.

Members noted issues with regard to the recruitment of specialist staff within the Information Directorate.

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

## **19. MAIN FINANCIAL SYSTEMS**

Mr Usher introduced a report of a review of creditor payments, debtors, income, main accounting system and budget monitoring undertaken by the Management Audit Unit. The report had been circulated with the Agenda for the meeting.

The controls for all the areas had been evaluated at "good". The only area of concern highlighted in the report related to the outstanding review of Financial Regulations.

The Treasurer advised that approximately one year ago he had procured a substantial piece of work designed to produce new and updated Financial Regulations for the Authority. However, this work had been overtaken by the amalgamation process and the work had at that stage been re-aligned to serve the needs of the amalgamated Authorities. This work would now have to be revisited, though it was important to stress that the Authority was not starting at the beginning of the process as had previously been the case. He hoped to be able to report to the Committee in January 2007 so that new Financial Regulations could be formally in place for the new financial year.

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

## **20. RISK MANAGEMENT**

Mr Usher reminded Members that a review of risk management arrangements had been carried out in February 2005. The report now before the Committee reviewed progress made in implementing and imbedding risk management since that time.

He advised that progress had been made on risk management since February 2005, but some areas had been deferred, pending the anticipated merger with Lancashire. The Constabulary had decided that its risk management

arrangements required a review by a specialist independent consultant and a report from the consultants was accepted by the Chief Officer Group in June 2006. The Constabulary's approach to risk management was now being amended in the light of the consultant's report and the Constabulary's Strategic Risk Group was taking this forward.

Following discussions with both the Police Authority and Constabulary, he had graded progress on risk management as "satisfactory".

Members noted the report, for which they were grateful. The Police Authority wished to take forward this area of activity, as did the Constabulary. A Member of the Authority currently attended the Constabulary's Strategic Risk Group and the Authority had now established its own group which would meet before the end of the calendar year to develop a Risk Management Strategy Statement as a precursor to a full risk analysis for entry into the risk register.

The Deputy Chief Constable welcomed Authority's attendance at the Strategic Risk Group and indicated that it would be appropriate for representatives of the Authority to undertake training being arranged by the Constabulary.

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

## **21. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REPORT**

Mr McGahon introduced the Annual Governance Report which built on the SAS610. He informed the Committee that it was of paramount importance that those Members who approved the final accounts also had governance of those accounts.

He set out the purpose of the report, which was to –

- Reach a mutual understanding of the scope of the audit and the respective responsibilities of the auditor and the Committee;
- Share information to assist both the auditor and those charged with governance to fulfil their respective responsibilities; and
- Provide the Committee with recommendations for improvement arising from the audit process.

Mr McGahon then appraised Members of the scope of the report and drew their attention to the key messages included within the report.

He then drew attention to concerns in relation to the outstanding need for a re-valuation of some police houses, the current status of some former police houses and the accounting treatment of those properties within the accounts.

The Treasurer advised that he and colleagues had met with, and discussed, the issue of the accounting treatment of former police properties with Mr McGahon. Whilst this matter was important in accounting terms, in reality it had no impact on the Constabulary's overall financial position. It could be addressed within the

remaining timescale, which would allow the Audit Commission to provide an unqualified opinion on the accounts.

Mr McGahon advised that he was not anticipating that the ultimate outcome would be anything other than an “unqualified” opinion.

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

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

### **22. CIVIL CLAIMS**

Members considered a report by the Chief Constable detailing the number and value of active civil claims against the Constabulary, both public liability and employer liability, and the number of civil claims that had been settled or otherwise completed since the last report to the Committee.

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

### **23. POLICE OVERTIME MONITORING REPORT**

This report had been withdrawn, all issues relating to overtime monitoring having been dealt with in Part 1 of the meeting (Minute No 17, Police Overtime Monitoring Report, refers).

### **24. ANNUAL PROCUREMENT REPORT**

Members considered the Annual Procurement Report for 2006/07 which set out the work of the Procurement Team within the Finance and Resources Directorate. It detailed the activities the Procurement Team were involved in and a range of successful outcomes which flowed from the direct work of the team and also the efforts of the team working alongside colleagues across the Constabulary. The report described a number of regional procurement collaborative exercises which the Cumbrian team had led on behalf of the North West Region.

The report also emphasised the diverse areas of work in which the Procurement Team had been involved and the relevance of that work in supporting policing operations.

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

### **25. ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER OF REPRESENTATION**

Members considered for approval the annual Letter of Representation prepared by the Treasurer to be submitted to the District Auditor in respect of matters that had a bearing on his audit of the Statement of Accounts for the year to March 2006.

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Following a change in regulations the Letter of Representation now required the formal approval of the Authority's Audit Committee.

**RESOLVED,** that the letter be approved.

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