

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

**CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY**

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Personnel Committee held on Monday 4 December 2006 in Conference Room 1, Police Headquarters, Carleton Hall, Penrith commencing at 2.00am.

**PRESENT**

Mr R Watson (Chairman)

Mr J Bland  
Mrs M Johnson

Mrs L Slavin  
Mr J Woolley

**Also present:**

Chief Executive (Mr C R Alcock)  
Acting Assistant Chief Constable (Mr P Kirkbride)  
Acting Director of Personnel and Development (Ms J Bancroft)  
Deputy Clerk (Mr S Edwards)

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

**33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence, all Members being present.

**34. 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 for Agenda Item No 14, Employment Tribunals, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

**35. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS**

There were no disclosures of personal interest in relation to any item on the Agenda.

Whilst not a personal interest as defined by the Code of Conduct, Mr Woolley informed the Committee that he sat on Industrial Tribunals, though he was not allowed to do so in relation to any policing matters.

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### **36. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 October 2006 had been circulated with the Agenda.

The Chief Executive referred to Minute No 32, Police Appeals Tribunal, and advised that he had that day received a further fax in relation to this matter which required a response by the following day. Consideration of this matter arising would be taken in Part 2.

**RESOLVED,** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 October 2006 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **37. SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORT**

The Acting Director of Personnel and Development presented sickness absence reports for the first two quarters of 2006/07, covering the period 1 April 2006 to 30 September 2006.

The position with regard to absence for both police officers and police staff was currently satisfactory, with both under the national average. Police staff absence was projected to be within the target set by the Force, whilst police officers were just outside that target. The Constabulary was optimistic that at the year end it would meet the local targets, and the Acting Director advised Members of some of the initiatives currently in place to assist towards achieving the target.

Specific consideration was given to the position with regard to sickness in the West Cumbria BCU and a Member referred to a meeting she had recently attended, at which she had been very impressed with the approach being taken by the BCU Commander.

Consideration was then given to sickness levels amongst Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). It was noted that the figures before Members related to a period when only a small number of PCSOs were in post. This meant that the figures could be adversely affected by relatively few absences. Members asked that, as the number of PCSOs had now increased, the matter be monitored and a report specifically dealing with PCSO sickness be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

Those Members of the Committee who also sat as Members of the Audit and Performance Committee referred to the charts for demonstrating absence trends over time submitted to that Committee and suggested that it might be helpful to present similar charts to the Personnel Committee.

**RESOLVED,** that

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) a report specifically dealing with PCSO attendance be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

### **38. TRAINING FUNCTION SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The Acting Assistant Chief Constable reminded Members that at the last meeting of the Committee they had requested information on the baseline assessment of training, the results of work undertaken by external consultants in relation to the Training function and a revised version of the Service Improvement Plan. Appended to the report now before Members were a summary of the areas for improvement from the HMIC Baseline Inspection Report and the Service Improvement Plan, which summarised the actions to be taken to address the areas for improvement.

The Assistant Chief Constable advised Members that the Constabulary had challenged the “poor” grading given to the Training function by HMIC and was currently looking to identify resources to help address the issues detailed in the Service Improvement Plan. He advised Members that HMIC would be inspecting the Training Function again, early in 2007, to assess progress.

Members expressed disappointment at the grading issued by the HMIC, and noted the work undertaken by the Training function in particular, and the Constabulary in general, to address concerns previously identified by HMIC. Members expressed the view that the quality of the training provided by the Training function was of an excellent standard and that the concerns expressed by HMIC continued to focus on policy and quality assurance. Training appeared to be one further area of activity where the inspection focus was on process and procedure rather than outcomes and delivery.

**RESOLVED,** that the areas for improvement from the HMIC Baseline Inspection Report and the Service Improvement Plan developed in response to those areas for improvement and a recent review of training be noted.

### **39. APPROACH TO POLICE AUTHORITY MONITORING OF THE TRAINING FUNCTION**

Members considered a paper by the Chief Constable which described a possible approach to Police Authority involvement in relation to the Training function which would both demonstrate the active involvement of the Authority in oversight of the function and help manage the function’s continuous improvement. The approach described in the report would help to address recommendations made in the latest HMIC Baseline Assessment of the Training function related to Police Authority involvement and oversight and more active community involvement. The paper envisaged Authority Members acting as “critical friends” conducting quarterly monitoring visits to the training section to audit progress against the EFQM framework used by HMIC to inspect the function.

Members gave consideration to the proposal within the report and discussed with the officers present the mechanics of implementing the proposal. It was noted that the Authority’s two Lead Members already met regularly with the Head of Training.

With specific reference to the suggestion that Police Authority Members contact the Training function at any time to arrange either formal or informal visits to look at any aspect of the function's operation, Members suggested that it would be helpful if the Training function could take a proactive approach in arranging a programme of such visits.

**RESOLVED,** that

- (1) the principle of implementing formal quarterly monitoring visits to the Training function by the Authority's two Lead Members using the HMIC EFQM inspection framework be approved;
- (2) the two Lead Members for training discuss with the Training Manager the development of a programme of formal/informal visits to the Training function to look at various aspects of the function's operation; and
- (3) the two Lead Members for training, in consultation with the Training Manager, develop the protocol for inspection set out within the Chief Constable's report.

#### **40. POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS (PCSOs) DEPLOYMENT STRATEGY**

The Acting Head of Personnel and Development presented a report by the Chief Constable which set out details of the management and deployment issues in relation to the PCSOs currently being recruited.

Members noted that the Constabulary was currently recruiting and deploying approximately 15 PCSOs a month towards a final target of 35 PCSOs in each BCU by 30 April 2007. Details of their most effective deployment was still to be agreed through the PCSO Development Group, Chief Officers and BCU Commanders.

New PCSOs received their initial training at Police Headquarters before being attached to the Professional Development Units in BCUs. They were line managed by LPT Sergeants, with a strong tutorial link in the early stages.

The PCSO Development Group referred to above had been established to ensure that all emerging issues with regard to the deployment of PCSOs were dealt with as a matter of priority. The Group had representation from BCU Senior Management Teams, Recruiting, Training, Neighbourhood Policing, Estates and Facilities, Radio Services, Procurement and Finance. In addition, a PCSO Consultation Group was currently being convened to ensure full representation and a member of this group would attend the Development Group.

Members welcomed the report.

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

#### **41. DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT – UPDATE**

The Acting Assistant Chief Constable presented a report which provided Members with an update on the work the Constabulary was undertaking to ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act.

The Chief Executive advised Members that the Police Authority also had a legal duty to comply with the Act, including the publication of a Disability Equality Scheme and supporting Action Plan. As a matter of priority work was ongoing on the development of such a scheme and he thanked the Constabulary's Diversity Team, and in particular the Constabulary's Diversity Adviser, for their assistance in taking this matter forward. He assured Members that, once the Scheme was in place, the Authority would continue to consult and to develop the Scheme to ensure that it was a living document fully embedded in the work of the Authority.

He asked that the Committee delegate to him, in consultation with the Chair, authority to finalise the scheme. Progress against the Scheme's Action Plan would, in future, be considered by the Communities, Equality and Diversity Committee.

**RESOLVED,** that

- (1) the report submitted by the Chief Constable be noted; and
- (2) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, to finalise and publish the Authority's Disability Equality Scheme.

#### **42. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT AND LAY JUSTICE MEMBERS TO THE AUTHORITY**

The Deputy Clerk presented a report by the Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to inform the Committee of progress to date with the appointment of Independent Members and to advise of actions required over the coming months with regard to the further stages of the appointment process for Independent Members and the appointment of a Lay Justice to the vacancy on the Authority.

Members were advised that, by the closing date for submission of applications for the Independent Member posts, 109 had been received. These had been considered by the Independent Selection Panel for Cumbria at a meeting on 8 November and a long list of 20 applicants had been submitted to the Home Secretary by the required date of 1 December. It was anticipated that the Home Secretary would return his shortlist of 10 applicants to the Authority by 26 January 2007.

Members were advised that it would be necessary to arrange a meeting of the Personnel Committee to interview the 10 shortlisted applicants. The Committee's

recommendation with regard to the 5 Independent Member appointments would then be submitted to the Police Authority on 31 March 2007 for approval.

With regard to the Lay Justice vacancy, an advert had been circulated to all Lay Justices within Cumbria and the closing date for applications had been set at 10 January 2007. A meeting of the Independent Selection Panel had been arranged for the morning of 16 January to undertake a shortlisting exercise of the applications received. The Committee was asked to agree a date in February to interview the shortlisted applicants to enable the necessary recommendation for appointment to be made to the Police Authority on 21 March.

Finally, Members were advised that the Police and Justice Act removed Lay Justices as a separate category of membership on the Police Authority with effect from 31 March 2008. In these circumstances, it would be necessary for the Authority to undertake a recruitment process for three Independent Members during the autumn of 2007.

**RESOLVED,** that

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the Committee meet on 6 and 7 February 2007 to interview shortlisted applicants for the Independent Member and Lay Justice position on the Police Authority.

#### **43. PNB UPDATE**

The Acting Director of Personnel and Development advised Members that the police federated ranks pay claim had been agreed at 3%. The police staff pay claim had not yet been agreed, but it was anticipated that agreement would be reached by the end of the year.

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

#### **44. PROMOTION PROCESSES 2006-07**

The Acting Director of Personnel and Development presented a report by the Chief Constable which detailed promotion processes currently being undertaken by the Constabulary. All the processes listed within the report had been advertised both internally and externally.

Members thanked the Acting Director for the report. A Member referred to previous requests to the Constabulary that the Authority be invited to attend Chief Superintendent interview panels as observers. It was considered that it would be beneficial for the Authority to observe this stage of the appointment process for these senior positions within the Constabulary.

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

#### **45. HEALTH AND SAFETY INSPECTIONS**

In line with the request received from the Committee at its last meeting, the Acting Assistant Chief Constable provided Members with a verbal update on the recent Health and Safety Executive inspections of the West Cumbria BCU and of Crime Scene Investigators. He highlighted to Members the issues raised by the HSE and provided information on the way the Constabulary would be responding.

In answer to a request from a Member that it would be appropriate for the Committee to see the action plans developed by the Constabulary in response to the inspections, he advised that the HSE formal report had not yet been received but that the legal responsibility for responding and acting on the recommendation lay with the Chief Constable. In these circumstances, he agreed to submit the HSE report to the Committee once it had been received, for Members' information only.

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

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

#### **46. EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNALS**

The Acting Assistant Chief Constable provided Members with verbal reports on two pending employment tribunals.

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

#### **47. MINUTES, 5 OCTOBER 2006 – MATTERS ARISING**

The Chief Executive referred Members to Minute No 32, Police Appeals Tribunal, of the meeting held on 5 October 2006. He had now received a further faxed letter in relation to this appeal, requesting a seven day extension to the twenty one days allowed within the Regulations to formally lodge the full particulars of the appeal.

In considering the request, Members noted that the appellant's solicitors had received and/or requested extensions at most stages within the process. They also noted that the Constabulary had been generous in its interpretation of timescales throughout the process and that there was no requirement under the Regulations to grant an extension. The solicitors in question were a large national firm with considerable resources. The committee had previously (5th October) refused a similar request from them for an extension on the basis set out above and it noted the reason proffered for granting their client an extension was again thin, this time appearing to be based on a change in the individual solicitor acting sometime around 6th November and his successor's suggestion that the period laid down in regulation was of itself inadequate.

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**RESOLVED**, that the application for an extension by seven days for the period in which to lodge particulars of the appeal be not approved.

The Meeting ended at 3.25pm.

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