

CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY

POLICING PLAN AND BEST VALUE COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Policing Plan and Best Value Committee held on Tuesday 17 October 2006 in Conference Room 1, Police Headquarters, Carleton Hall, Penrith commencing at 10.00am.

PRESENT

Mr R S Cole
Ms S Donnelly
Mrs P M Halfpenny

Mr W Smith
Mr R Watson

Also present:

Treasurer (Mr D Thomas)
Assistant Chief Constable (Mr N Rhodes)
Acting Director of Corporate Development (Ms J Saunston)
Deputy Clerk (Mr S Edwards)

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

1. MEMBERSHIP

Members noted the membership of the Committee as agreed at the meeting of the Police Authority on 28 June 2006.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs C A Egan, Mrs L Slavin and Mr J Woolley.

3. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

RESOLVED, that
(1) Mr J Woolley be appointed as Chair of the Committee for the ensuing year;
(2) In the absence of the Chair, Mr R Watson be appointed Chair for the meeting.

(Mr Watson in the Chair)

4. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items on the Agenda for which the press and public were to be excluded.

5. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

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

6. MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 June 2006 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

7. PUBLIC CONSULTATION SURVEY 2006

The Assistant Chief Constable presented a report by the Chief Constable which outlined the findings of the Public Consultation Survey 2006. Members were reminded that the Consultation Working Group had approved the Community Voice Consultation Questionnaire for distribution. The report before Members presented an analysis of the responses to the survey.

In summary the survey highlighted improvements in service quality, public satisfaction and the knowledge of the name of local officer whilst areas for concern included the fact that the number of BME respondents was not representative of the population, visibility levels and contact issues.

The Acting Director of Corporate Development advised that this year there had been a significantly improved response from young people, and she made specific reference to work undertaken in Barrow by Ms Lashmar which had contributed to this increase. She also referred to the fact that to address the relatively low BME response to the survey the Consultation Working Group had approved the translation of the Annual Survey into the three most common BME languages within the county – Chinese, Bengali, Polish – and the results of that separate consultation would be fed into the planning process at a future date.

Particularly pleasing within the survey was the increase in the overall satisfaction with the service provided by the Constabulary from 82% to 87% in the current year and the significant increase in the number of respondents knowing the name of their local officer, up from 21% in 2005 to 48% in the current year.

There had been a significant reduction in public satisfaction with police officer visibility with an overall reduction from 58% in 2005 to 42.1% in 2006. As the question posed in the consultation was specifically aimed at the names of police officers, and therefore excluded police community support officers, it perhaps no longer reflected the current policing situation within the County. Furthermore the survey had coincided with media coverage regarding the

proposed amalgamation with Lancashire and it was possible that dissatisfaction with those proposals had impacted upon responses to this question.

Satisfaction with the ease of contact by telephone had also reduced from 2005 to 2006. However as the survey had been completed before the circulation of Local Policing Summaries, which included full contact details, then it was possible that this had now been addressed. There was scope to include questions in the next Community Voice survey slot to evaluate contact issues again following the distribution of the Local Summaries.

Members noted the positive tone overall of the responses to the consultation exercise and considered that the relatively few areas for concern had to be considered in the overall context, which was positive. They raised various specific matters, including the possible future impact of the 101 service, police visibility, marketing and satisfaction levels with the representatives of the Constabulary who responded as appropriate.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

8. INTERIM WORK ON DRIVERS FOR PRIORITIES 2007/08

Members considered a report that was the first stage in an iterative Policing Plan priority setting process for 2007/08. It provided initial information on internal and external drivers with priorities based on the intelligence available to September 2006. Furthermore the report considered the match between national and local drivers and, using this analysis, arrived at a long list of potential strategic priorities, based on current information. Members were advised that these priorities would be updated and redefined as new information was received in the period up to January 2007.

Emerging themes as at the end of September 2006 were Neighbourhood Policing, Anti Social Behaviour, Violent Crime and Core Business (focused on public service agreement domains 1 and 2).

Continued work to develop and refine the priorities included the annual partnership conference, the national policing plan, staff consultation, further environmental scanning, drivers for targets based on performance information and performance against existing targets.

Members referred to the need to address the protective services gap as identified by HMIC in September 2005, and of ensuring that in addressing that particular area it was important to bear in mind the priorities as identified by the public and the need to safeguard those areas of activity at which the Constabulary was already excellent.

The Treasurer referred to the proposals in the Police and Justice Bill which would, if implemented, see the introduction from 2008 of a single rolling three year plan to replace many of the existing separate plans which together formed the planning process. At the same time processes had been put in

place to merge the planning and financial processes which, by the 2007/08 planning year should enable both the single plan and the budget to be presented and agreed simultaneously by the Authority. This would bring together for the first time in the public eye both the cost of services and the services being provided, and provide a more comprehensive platform to the Authority in promoting and accounting for both.

In response to comments from Members the Assistant Chief Constable advised that the process of identifying priorities was, in essence, about identifying what people needed and then working to meet that need.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

9. INTEGRATING PLANNING, BUDGETING AND EFFICIENCY 2007/08

The Assistant Chief Constable presented a report which drew together the identified milestones in relation to planning, budgeting and efficiency for 2007/08. The key planning, budgeting and efficiency products required through the planning cycle were presented in a schedule for 2007/08 for Members information.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

10. QUALITY OF SERVICE COMMITMENT UPDATE

The Assistant Chief Constable reminded Members that the Constabulary was working towards compliance with the standards set out in the Quality of Service Commitment Guidance, which specified a minimum standard for customer service. The report by the Chief Constable circulated with the agenda reviewed the current position, provided an update on progress and identified a set of new “quick win” actions to address gaps in the current action plan to meet the minimum standard.

The actions arising focused on raising awareness and the visibility of the quality of service commitment with a limited programme of internal and external marketing and some minor modifications to existing induction programmes.

The Acting Director of Corporate Development advised that the original action plan had contained 15 actions most of which were now completed. The plan had been review in the post amalgamation period and the new actions referred to by the Assistant Chief Constable had been identified during that time and included within the plan.

Members expressed their pleasure that work on the Quality of Service Commitment had continued throughout the amalgamation process. They were particularly please that, despite all the uncertainties of the time, the Constabulary’s staff had been intent on focusing on improving services to the communities within Cumbria. This demonstrated the quality of the work force

within the Constabulary. Members asked that their comments be passed on to staff within the Constabulary.

RESOLVED, that
(1) progress to date, as set out in the report, be noted;
(2) action required to achieve compliance by November 2006 be noted.

The Meeting ended at 11.15am