

**CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY**

**POLICING PLAN AND BEST VALUE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Policing Plan and Best Value Committee held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2005 in Conference Room 1, Police Headquarters, Carleton Hall, Penrith commencing at 10 am.

**PRESENT**

Mr C S Moth (Chair)

Mrs P M Halfpenny  
Mrs L Slavin

Mr W Smith  
Mr R Watson

**Also present:**

Clerk and Chief Executive (Mr C R Alcock)  
Treasurer (Mr D Thomas)  
Assistant Chief Constable (Organisational Development and Partnerships)(Mr N Rhodes)  
Head of Strategic Planning (Insp G Rutherford)  
Performance and Planning Administrator (Mr L Richardson)  
Deputy Clerk (Mr S Edwards)

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

**27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr J Woolley.

**28. ADMISSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

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

**29. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS**

There were no disclosures of any personal interests relating to any item on the agenda.

**30. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2005 had been circulated with the Agenda. The Chairman highlighted a typographical error in Minute No.23, "Communication Centre Best Value Review – Final Report and Improvement Action Plan "- in the fifth paragraph the word "view" should read "review".

**RESOLVED,** that, with the amendment detailed above, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2005 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **31. POLICE FORCE STRUCTURES – AUTHORITY ACTION PLAN**

The Clerk and Chief Executive introduced a report which set out for Members the background to the review of Police Force Structures currently being undertaken, and appended to which were the timescales set by the Home Secretary for the process and the key actions for Police Authorities as identified by the Association of Police Authorities. He tabled a proposed action plan for the Police Authority which had been developed taking into account both the key actions identified by APA and the timetables set by the Home Secretary.

The Assistant Chief Constable briefed Members on the work undertaken to date by the Constabulary with regard to developing options for submission to the Home Secretary by 28<sup>th</sup> October. This work had included meetings held on a regional level, some of which had also been attended by representatives of the Police Authority. It was through this process that the initial range of options had been refined to those on which Forces and Authorities in the North West were focusing their attention as being the most viable on which to devote further work. There had been sound reasons for not taking forward those options which had been discounted, including the option of a regional force for the North West of England. He advised that other regions were going through a similar process to that being adopted in the North West, and it was possible that different regions would produce different alternatives, which would range from proposals for regional forces to stand alone options where forces within a region were of sufficient size for that to be an acceptable option.

In considering the action plan, reference was made to the challenging timescale within which the work was to be undertaken. The shortness of the timescale for undertaking the work meant that it was imperative that options which could not realistically be taken forward should not receive excessive attention or development work.

In response to a question from a Member concerning a regional option for the North West, the Assistant Chief Constable advised that some of the sub regional options within the North West would be bigger than some whole regions in other parts of the country. He felt confident, as a policing professional, that the options currently being considered for Cumbria represented the best options for the people of Cumbria.

The Assistant Chief Constable then outlined the process to be followed over the following week to develop the identified options for submission to the Police Authority on 27<sup>th</sup> October.

Members highlighted the importance of governance and accountability in the development of new structures and the need to ensure that the people of Cumbria received adequate representation on any new Police Authority and that appropriate structures were in place to ensure local accountability of any new police force.

With reference to the proposal in the action plan to ensure that Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships were aware of the proposals it was suggested that it would be appropriate for presentations to be made to CDRPs, rather than information being sent by e-mail or post.

**RESOLVED,** that the action plan developed to take forward the Authority's work on Police Force structures be agreed.

(Note: the Committee adjourned from 11.15am to 11.20am, at which point the Assistant Chief Constable left the meeting.)

## **32. ANNUAL POLICING PLAN - IMPROVEMENTS TO FORMAT**

The Head of Strategic Planning submitted a report which put forward suggestions for improving the format and style of the Policing Plan, including reducing the size and complexity of next year's Annual Policing Plan; increasing its relevance and local flavour by including summaries of BCU plans; and involving BCUs earlier in the planning process, thereby contributing to better performance, greater corporacy and ownership.

The report had been submitted to the Constabulary's Chief Officer Group which had agreed to support it in principle.

The Head of Strategic Planning circulated a copy of Bedfordshire Police Authority's Annual Policing Plan 2005-06, which was seen as a good example of the revised format the Constabulary was suggesting.

All Members indicated their support for the proposed move to A5 size for the Policing Plan, which would fit the size of other similar documents, such as the Annual Report. However, in doing so, they noted that the smaller format did not lend itself to the presentation of the financial information which was required within the Policing Plan. Members also suggested that it would be appropriate to seek the Plain English Society's Crystal Mark to ensure that the Annual Policing Plan was produced in an accessible written style.

The Head of Strategic Planning undertook to keep Members informed of developments as the Policing Plan progressed.

**RESOLVED,** that, in principle, the Committee support a reduced size for the Annual Policing Plan similar in style and format to that produced by Bedfordshire Police Authority.

(Note: the Head of Strategic Planning and Performance and Planning Administrator left the meeting at this point).

### **33. POLICE AUTHORITY IMPROVEMENT AND ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK – TIMETABLE**

The Clerk and Chief Executive presented a report which proposed the adoption of a revised Action Plan to take forward the Police Authority Self Assessment and Improvement Framework (PASAIF) in the light of the work now being generated with regard to the review of Police Force Structures.

Members welcomed the draft Action Plan as submitted and considered that it would be appropriate to review the actions proposed at the Action Planning Day on 7<sup>th</sup> September in the light of the Force Structure review. Having considered all the factors, they believed that it would be appropriate to delay action on some items within the Action Plan.

Members then gave detailed consideration to each item included within the Action Plan, as identified and prioritised at the Action Planning Day on 7<sup>th</sup> September. In doing so, they came to the following conclusions –

- Police Authority Vision and Values – remains a priority and should be continued.
- Risk Management – has become a higher priority since early September and should be continued, with the establishment of a Police Authority Member Working Group to take forward this area of activity.
- Review of Budget and Planning Process – this would occur as part of the current budget process and should be continued.

Members concluded that the following issues should be put on hold until the outcome of the Review of Force Structures is known:-

- Committee Structure Review
- Revised Best Value Strategy/Policy Handbook
- Review of Partnership Involvement
- Consultation, Publicity and Profile
- Members' communication needs

Members considered that their recommendations should be submitted to the Police Authority on 10<sup>th</sup> November for approval.

In making these recommendations, they emphasised the importance of continuing with the key elements of the Police Authority Self Assessment and Improvement Framework, and their continued commitment to the Framework. However, they believed that it was appropriate to amend the Action Plan in the current circumstances, with the Review of Police Force Structures requiring the immediate attention of the Authority and its Officers.

**RESOLVED,** That the Police Authority be RECOMMENDED to amend, as suggested above, the Action Plan produced as a result of the Action Planning Day on 7<sup>th</sup> September.

**34. POLICE AUTHORITY IMPROVEMENT AND ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK – VISION AND VALUES**

The Clerk and Chief Executive presented a report which proposed a way forward for the work on Vision and Values, as requested by Members on 7<sup>th</sup> September.

Members noted that the Authority had already adopted Member and Lead Member roles and they considered that these should be re-endorsed by the Authority. They also considered that the Authority should be recommended to adopt the Vision for the Authority as set out in the report, as follows –

“Our vision is to help Cumbria Constabulary to be one of the country’s leading police forces, inspiring trust and confidence so that the people of Cumbria feel safe, satisfied and reassured.”

In considering the third element of this action, the Committee considered that was not appropriate, in the present circumstances, to continue with work to develop a Members’ Handbook as originally envisaged. However Officers suggested that it would be possible to produce a Handbook for Members using existing material such as the Scheme of Delegation and Standing Orders. Members welcomed this proposal and asked that the Clerk and Chief Executive submit to the next meeting of the Committee a possible list of contents for the Handbook.

**RESOLVED,** that ,

- (1) The Police Authority be RECOMMENDED to adopt the following vision statement –

“Our vision is to help Cumbria Constabulary to be one of the country’s leading police forces, inspiring trust and confidence so that the people of Cumbria feel safe, satisfied and reassured.”;

- (2) The Police Authority be RECOMMENDED to re-endorse the roles of Authority Member and Lead Member as previously agreed by the Authority in March 2004.

**The Meeting ended at 12.10pm**