

CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY

POLICING PLAN AND BEST VALUE COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Policing Plan and Best Value Committee held at 10.00 am on Thursday 24th February 2005 at Police Headquarters, Carleton Hall, Penrith.

PRESENT

Mr C S Moth (Chair)

Mr T Heslop
Mr W Smith
Mr J Woolley

Mrs L L Shaw
Mr R Watson

Also present:

Clerk & Chief Executive
Police Authority Treasurer
Assistant Chief Constable (Organisational Development and Partnerships)
Director of Strategic Development
Inspector (Strategic Planning, Corporate Development)
Deputy Clerk

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

33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs L Slavin

34. ADMISSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

35. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

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

36. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 19th January 2005 had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

With reference to Minute No.31, "Police Authority Improvement and Assessment Framework," the Clerk & Chief Executive advised that, following the last meeting, he had written to HMIC to seek confirmation of their inspection programme (and thereby whether they intended to inspect the Authority in May 2005) but had not received a reply. He had also provided a written question to the APA seeking clarification of the status of the Police Authority Improvement and Assessment Framework but again had

not received a written reply, although telephone advice had been obtained when followed-up.

The Treasurer then referred to Minute No. 32, "Budget and Planning Cycles", and reminded Members that, at the 10th February budget-setting meeting of the full Authority, a budget cycle had been agreed for 2005/6. Meeting the requirements of the cycle would be a challenge, as would dovetailing those other activities which should ideally be ready as part of the budget process, such as the preparation of the Efficiency Plan, and other strategic plans, into the system. He would be engaging in dialogue with the Constabulary before they reported to this Committee in April.

The Director of Strategic Development advised that at the next meeting of the Committee she would be submitting a detailed plan identifying key milestones for the planning process.

The Chair stated that everyone conceded the importance of dovetailing all the various processes, which were inextricably interlinked, but acknowledged that achieving such a level of dovetailing was a difficult task. It was important that any programme developed was achievable.

RESOLVED, that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19 January 2005 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

37. EFFICIENCY PLAN 2005-2008

The Director of Strategic Development presented a report by the Acting Chief Constable which proposed a detailed Action Plan to achieve the 3% efficiency targets required by the Home Office. Of these efficiencies, 1.5% had to be cashable. The detailed plan was to be submitted to the Home Office by 28 February.

The proposed local efficiency strategy was underpinned by previous efficiency work and the Police Service Efficiency Strategy. In particular it drew on: the implementation of efficiencies from Review 2004; the Front Line Policing Action Plan; the introduction of collaborative working with neighbouring forces; improvements and efficiency in corporate services and from new technologies; the maximisation of efficiencies from Best Value Reviews; and procurement savings.

The Police Service Efficiency Strategy envisaged that forces would find their largest efficiencies within the areas of procurement, corporate services, collaborative working, new technologies and Front Line Policing.

Members noted that the Home Office had asked for the development of 3-year programmes and that it was now possible to carry forward excess savings into future years.

The Treasurer expressed some concern that the presentation of the plan appeared to suggest that savings achieved in one area were allocated to specific activities, rather than all savings being amalgamated and then used for the Constabulary and

Authority's highest priority areas of re-investment. The Director of Corporate Development advised that this was the format required by the Home Office. However, the Assistant Chief Constable noted the concerns expressed by the Treasurer and suggested that it would be appropriate to add a statement to the effect that professional judgement would be exercised with regard to all re-investment of efficiency savings, in order to retain flexibility over Cumbria's scarce resources.

Members welcomed the move from 1 year to 3 year efficiency planning. However, whilst acknowledging that it was important to identify savings and to encourage re-investment of resources into priority areas, they expressed some concern at the level of detail required by the Home Office. They also felt that greater Authority involvement in the development of the Efficiency Plan, and ultimately ownership of the Plan, was required as important judgements were necessary on the acceptability of the consequences of the proposed efficiency savings.

RESOLVED, that the Efficiency Plan as circulated with the agenda for the meeting, but subject to amendment to reflect Member comments, be approved for submission to the Home Office.

38. FRONT LINE POLICING MEASURE

The Director of Strategic Development presented a paper proposing a detailed Action Plan to achieve the Front Line Policing Target agreed by the Committee in September 2002. The report also detailed a subsidiary measure on visible patrol.

Members were reminded that the Front Line Policing Measure was part of the Policing Performance Assessment Framework for 2005/06 and was defined as a percentage of police officer time spent on front line duties. Cumbria had achieved 64.51% in 2003/04: second in its 'family of forces'. The Authority had agreed that Cumbria would work to achieve the national target of 72.5% by 2008.

However, this could not be achieved simply by releasing police officers from back office posts, as Cumbria already had high levels of civilianisation and relatively few police officers in 'back office' posts. In addition, the definitions adopted by the Home Office (for example in classifying Custody Sergeants fulfilling a statutory role as 'back office' posts) made it even more difficult for Cumbria to release whole officers to the front line. Therefore the proposed approach was to maximise the percentage of police officer time spent on visible patrol.

The Director believed that the proposals contained with the Action Plan were realistic and achievable.

Members noted the proposals contained with the Action Plan. They considered that the approach being adopted was the only practical one available to the Constabulary, given that the present budget position would not allow for any further civilisation, even if that were practical.

In response to a question from Members, the Director of Strategic Development advised that Area Commanders had been tasked with ensuring that police officers fully understood the proposals contained within the Action Plan and how they applied

to them as individuals. This particular element of activity formed part of the re-launch of 'ABC' (Activity Based Costing) within the Constabulary and had full Police Federation support.

RESOLVED, that:

- 1) the Front Line Policing Action Plan, as set out in Appendix 1 to the Acting Chief Constable's Report, be approved for submission to the Home Office;
- 2) the subsidiary target for visible patrol be approved, bearing in mind that it was not yet possible to set a target for the measure which included police staff, due to a lack of information from the Home Office.

39. DRAFT ANNUAL POLICING PLAN 2005/06

Before Members considered the Draft Annual Policing Plan, the Assistant Chief Constable tabled a paper, the purpose of which was to summarise target-setting proposals for the next 3 year period. The paper set out –

- 1) The headline targets for the current year
- 2) The methodology behind each headline target.
- 3) The details for each target at Force, BCU and, where applicable, CDRP level.

Members were advised that CDRPs had set their own targets, based on the requirement to comply with PSA1 by reducing crime by 15%. It might be beneficial to hold further discussions with CDRPs concerning targets, to assess whether further alignment between targets could be achieved, as at the present time there was some variation in some of the targets being set.

The primary targets were for burglary/dwelling, theft of vehicle, theft from a vehicle, robbery, violent crime, road traffic collisions, Class A drug supply and sanctioned detection rates. Other areas for consideration were citizen focus measures, front line policing measure, attendance at work and efficiency.

The targets proposed were stretching and could be supported with hard figures which would enable BCU Commanders to be held to account for targets. The fact that, in most areas, the Constabulary's performance was sound made improvement more challenging.

The Assistant Chief Constable then gave a 'Powerpoint' presentation to Members on target-setting.

Members raised various matters with the Assistant Chief Constable following the presentation. In doing so they noted that the Constabulary had not set an overall reduction target, as volume reductions could be achieved in areas other than those

which were seen as a priority and it was important to focus on key areas of performance.

Members thanked the Assistant Chief Constable for his presentation.

During the course of their discussion, Members expressed concern with regard to the targets set by CDRPs, and concluded that more dialogue was required between the Authority, Constabulary and CDRPs for future target-setting exercises. The importance of ensuring that the Authority's Members on CDRPs were fully briefed was noted. The Assistant Chief Constable advised that BCU Commanders should challenge CDRP targets in their area, if they were not aligned to those being set by the Constabulary, given the scientific approach adopted by the Constabulary for the establishment of its own targets.

Inspector Pannone then presented Members with the most recent draft of the Authority's Annual Policing Plan, which had been amended since the January meeting of the Committee in order to ensure that it complied with guidance issued by the Home Office and Audit Commission.

He also circulated a draft of "Blueprint for Policing in Cumbria," a pamphlet which, at the last meeting of the Committee, the Assistant Chief Constable had suggested might be produced for circulation to members of the Constabulary and for placing at public access points, in order to provide clear and concise details of the Constabulary's priorities. The pamphlet had been considered by the Consultation Working Group on 22 February, though it had not been possible to update it to take account of comments and suggestions made at that meeting.

Members then made various comments on the Draft Annual Policing Plan 2005/06 and the draft pamphlet. It was suggested that something similar to the draft pamphlet could be circulated to all council tax-payers with council tax bills in future years. The Assistant Chief Constable advised that, with effect from 2006, the Authority would be required to circulate a summary of the Policing Plan to all households within the force area. Members suggested that feedback should be obtained on the draft pamphlet in the current year so that it could be tailored to meet recipients' needs in future years.

The Draft Annual Policing Plan would be submitted to the Police Authority on 22 March for final approval.

RESOLVED, that:

- 1) the Draft Annual Policing Plan, amended to take account of Members comments, be submitted to the Authority on 22 March for approval and posted on the Authority and Constabulary web sites by 31 March 2005;
- 2) subject to any necessary amendment to take account of comments made by the Consultation Working Group and the Committee, the draft pamphlet "Blueprint for Policing in Cumbria," be further developed prior to publication.

**40. CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY AND CUMBRIA
CONSTABULARY DRAFT STRATEGY PLAN 2005/08**

In presenting a report by the Acting Chief Constable, Inspector Pannone reminded Members that the first draft of the Strategy Plan 2005/08 had been considered by the Committee on 19 January 2005, when it had been approved as a basis for further work, prior to submission to the Home Office by 28 February 2005.

Additional work having been undertaken on the Strategy Plan since the January meeting of the Committee (to ensure both compliance with Home Office and Audit Commission guidance and sufficient consistency with Constabulary and Authority partner plans), Members were therefore being asked to consider a further draft of the Strategy Plan circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

Inspector Pannone advised that the Strategy Plan, once approved by the Home Office, would be submitted to the Police Authority on 22 March for approval prior to posting on the Constabulary and Authority web sites.

RESOLVED, that the draft Strategy Plan 2005/08 be approved and submitted to the Home Office for consideration and approval by no later than 28 February 2005.

**41. POLICE AUTHORITY IMPROVEMENT & ASSESSMENT
FRAMEWORK**

Copies of the outcomes of the Leadership & Strategy and the Community Engagement Working Groups had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting.

The Clerk & Chief Executive advised of the need to convene further meetings of all three Working Groups so they can formulate Action Plans in the light of their initial work on the assessment framework. It was recommended these meetings were convened before the next meeting of the Police Authority, on 22 March 2005, so that there would be sufficient time to report their outcomes to the Policing Plan & Best Value Committee on 1 April.

RESOLVED, that meetings of the three Working Groups be convened and the outcomes of their deliberations on the development of Action Plans reported to the meeting of the Committee on 1 April 2005.

42. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair was unable to attend the meeting of the Committee scheduled for 1 April 2005 and asked whether consideration be given to an alternative date, in the week beginning 21 March. Unfortunately, Members were unable to identify any alternative date and so it was agreed that the meeting would still be held on the scheduled date.

RESOLVED, that the next meeting of the Committee be held on Friday 1 April 2005 commencing at 10 am.

The meeting ended at 12.40pm.