

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 Friday 1st April 2005 at Police Headquarters, Carleton Hall, Penrith.

PRESENT

Mr R Watson (Chairman)

Mrs L Slavin

Mr W Smith

Also present:

Police Authority Treasurer
Assistant Chief Constable (Organisational Development and Partnerships)
Director of Strategic Development
Best Value Manager
Police Authority Performance Measurement and Policy Advisor
Deputy Clerk

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

43. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr T Heslop, Mr C S Moth, Mrs L L Shaw and Mr J Wooley.

44. ADMISSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

45. DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

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

46. MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 February 2005 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

47. PLANNING CYCLE 2005/06

The Director of Strategic Development presented a report which set out proposed planning processes to align with the budget cycles for 2005/06.

In presenting the report the Director reminded the Committee that it had requested improvements to planning arrangements which would integrate performance, financial and efficiency planning; integrate with NIM cycles; support the role of the Police Authority in developing and setting priorities and targets; and facilitate earlier decision making about priorities and budgets. These changes would align resource allocations to priorities and targets and so support the Best Value use of resources and performance improvements. In addition they would address best practice set out in the Police Authority Assessment and Improvement Framework, HMIC's Baseline Assessment and Police Standards Unit Performance Management Handbook.

The Constabulary already produced three year Strategy and Efficiency Plans. It was anticipated that financial settlements, and therefore Authority budgets, would also move to a three year cycle for 2006/07.

The Police Authority, at the budget setting meeting on 10 February 2005, had agreed key dates for the development of the budget during the year 2005/06, and requested that the key planning processes be aligned to these dates.

The Director presented a timetable, a copy of which was appended to the report, developed in consultation with the Director of Finance and Resources, which sought to address an understanding of both what the Constabulary wished its resources to achieve and how those resources were deployed to achieve the desired results. The approach was iterative, with draft planning at mid point 2005/06 based on the available strategic and financial information, which would be subject to revision as new information was received through January 2006.

She believed that the proposed timetable was challenging but achievable.

The Treasurer concurred that the proposal was a substantial challenge and cautioned against under estimating the ease of achieving it. Other people had attempted to achieve a similar alignment of planning and budget cycles and had not been successful, and he hoped that it would be possible to learn from their experiences while developing the process within Cumbria. He suggested that it would be appropriate to develop an internal business plan to deliver the timetable, which would take account of known factors and allow items which were not currently known to be absorbed. It was also important to bear in mind that to some extent the proposed cycle was dependent on external factors and the provision of external information, for example from the Government on grant allocations.

The Director of Strategic Development drew to Members attention the need to programme a meeting of the Committee into the diary in October to enable a key date in the cycle to be achieved.

Overall this was the start of a learning process which could be improved over time.

In the course of discussing the report a Member referred to the practice in another Authority of inviting CDRP Chairs to planning meetings as part of the planning process and engagement with CDRPs. It was suggested that this might be an approach which could be adopted in Cumbria, to ensure that CDRPs were fully involved and engaged.

The Assistant Chief Constable noted the suggestion and advised Members that the Constabulary's Director of Partnerships was working to develop relationships with all partner organisations, including CDRPs and a presentation was proposed for the

June meeting of the Police Authority. He acknowledged the importance of CDRPs and the need to ensure that they were focussed and aligned with the Authority.

RESOLVED, that the proposed planning cycles in support of the budget cycle for 2005/06 be approved.

48. BEST VALUE EVALUATION

The Director of Strategic Development presented a report which set out a way forward for the evaluation of outcomes achieved by the implementation of Best Value improvement plans. This subject had been considered at the meeting of the Best Value Board in March 2005.

Appended to the report was a draft of the proposed evaluation process and a copy of an evaluation self assessment questionnaire.

As the proposed evaluation framework was a wholly new process it was suggested that it be piloted on the Community Safety Best Value Review by June 2005. This would enable the process to be improved before it was rolled out across other improvement plans.

Implementing an effective process would help ensure that it informed other key corporate systems such as budget, efficiency and performance management.

Members welcomed the proposals set out with in the report.

In considering the proposals it was noted that whilst this Committee developed the Best Value Performance Plan and monitored progress on Best Value Reviews the Audit and Performance Committee was responsible for monitoring the outcome of Best Value Reviews, together with the delivery of any resulting Action Plan, once they had been signed off by the Police Authority. Members gave consideration to this split in responsibility and reaffirmed the view previously reached by the Authority that this was the most appropriate way to deal with this process.

RESOLVED, that the first draft Best Value Evaluation Framework and proposed pilot arrangements be approved.

49. CURRENT BEST VALUE REVIEWS

In introducing the item the Assistant Chief Constable advised the Committee that in future it was the Constabulary's intention to submit written reports to update Members on the position with current Best Value reviews.

He then outlined for Members the current position with regard to the resourcing of the Best Value review team and proposals to maximise those resources.

Members expressed some concern at the position and noted that this situation had occurred before. It was noted that staffing within Best Value teams was an issue in Authorities other than Cumbria.

The Best Value Manager then updated Members on work on the empowered BCUs, Operational Support and Communications Centre Best Value reviews.

RESOLVED, That the report be noted.

**50. POLICE AUTHORITY IMPROVEMENT AND ASSESSMENT
FRAMEWORK**

Members received a verbal update on the current position with regard to the Police Authority Improvement and Assessment Framework (PASAIF). Members noted the attendance at the last round of Working Group meetings and suggested that the way forward might be to hold an away day for all Members at which the action planning could be addressed.

RESOLVED, that the position be noted.

The meeting ended at 10.50am.