

Warwickshire Police Authority – 23 April 2008

Report of the Lead for Diversity and Staff Development

Summary

This report provides an update on the work of the Lead for Diversity and Staff Development, the Diversity and Equality Panel and related areas.

Recommendation

That Members note the report.

1. Introduction

Although a meeting of the Diversity and Equality Panel scheduled for January 2008 was cancelled, the work of the Panel in ensuring that the Authority's policies on equality and diversity continued and progress has been made in a number of areas. This report is somewhat lengthy but is intended to bring the Authority up to date with activities that have been undertaken on their behalf. I continue to represent the Authority on a number of bodies to which reference is made in my report. Any useful lessons gleaned, or new developments concerned with equality diversity or human rights and policing are addressed through the Authority's scrutiny and/or development roles.

2. National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA)

At the time of his visit to the Authority, Ray Powell was the Acting Operational Head of Equality, Diversity and Human Rights at the Agency. The meeting was initially planned to take place at the Diversity and Equality Panel in January but this was postponed. However, it was decided that Members of the Panel who were available would meet with Mr Powell. The purpose of the meeting was to establish what the Police Authority could learn from the NPIA overview of the national position as far as equality, diversity and human rights are concerned in the drive to embed these issues throughout the Authority and the Force.

Among the issues discussed were

(1) Scrutiny

It was felt that Police Authorities nationally needed to be constantly mindful of their role in scrutinizing the performance of their forces. IPCC investigations have implied that scrutiny is not effective and impact assessments need to be rigorously carried out. We are reminded that monitoring is not just simply putting a tick in a box. Authorities have a duty to ensure the efficacy of their policies. Diversity includes individuals who are mentally ill and happen to come into contact with the police. Mental health and policing is an area of concern and Police Authorities need to be aware of their responsibilities to offenders who are mentally ill. In Warwickshire, the Authority and the Force have started to address this issue. The Diversity and Equality Panel and the Force Diversity Unit recognise that this issue also

involves the workforce and much more needs to be done in this area. It is on the work agenda of both groups and the Authority will be kept abreast of any progress.

(2) Section 95 of the Criminal Justice Act

Disproportionality in Stop and Search continues to be an area of concern nationally. The issue is currently on the Authority's agenda and more detailed reference is made later in my report.

(3) Black and Minority Ethnic Groups Satisfaction Gap

Though small, the gap of 1% is causing concern. This is a situation that applies to all Forces including Warwickshire. Since this discussion the Force has reported that this matter is being looked at and it is possible that the next figures will show an improvement.

(4) Police Workforce Model on Gender & Ethnicity

This work tool is not compulsory but it is said to be working effectively in Leicestershire which has a substantial percentage of minorities within their population.

(5) Gender Modelling

Retention and progression of women in the police force is a major issue nationally. It has been reported that Promotion Boards have not been useful in promoting the interest of women in these areas.

(6) Community Engagement

In addition to the need to engage with communities generally, there is incidence of the new emerging communities, who bring with them certain new problems as well as facing problems in this society. It may be that PCSOs could be involved but to what extent and how is still a matter for debate.

(7) Black Police Association (BPA)

The BPA have had to contend with a year in which all the executive members stood down and a new executive team elected. There is a general feeling that the BPA has little support from Police Authorities despite the fact that the Association contributes much to assist police forces around the country in different ways. From Sir Ronnie Flannagan's report it emerged that many Police Authorities are unaware of the aims of the BPA.

(7) Equality Standard

An equality standard for police forces is being designed by the NPIA to be introduced in 2009. HMIC are involved in the design and they will be ensuring that the standards are maintained, once they are implemented.

(8) Computer Package

A package has been developed that will identify the reasons for disproportional treatment in Stop and Search. The package will be on trial in five or six forces before being released for wider use.

3. Governance

I attend a number of Force meetings on behalf of the Authority, participating in discussions, questioning and challenging constructively and, where applicable, provide feedback and information on concerns which emerge from national meetings.

4. Force Training and Development Meeting

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss and agree what goes forward in the training plan. It is important that the process conforms to the regulations set down by the Home Office and assurance has been given to me that this is the case. The training needs prediction and what is deliverable has been strictly adhered to in this the first year of the three year prediction period. Prediction (*involves forecast on expenditure*) is based on the requirements indicated by the Force's Training Panel and is performance related. Demands are kept as low as is legally possible, because of the cost element, but the Authority needs to be assured that officers are adequately trained to deliver safe and effective policing.

Among the issues of concern expressed at the meeting was the increasing demands placed on police forces requiring new training opportunities for officers. Although the Force Training and Development Group prioritise the Training Panel's requests, important areas such as Stop and Search, Misconduct Regulations and Management of Policy Information 100 (MOPI) demand that training opportunities are provided. MOPI regulations resulted from the Bishard Inquiry on the murder of the school girls in Cambridgeshire. MOPI training has recently started in Force and the Authority will be kept updated. At some time in the near future, consideration and a decision will be needed on training on corporate manslaughter and its implications for both the Authority and the Force.

The incidence of non attendance at planned courses (which were based on needs analysis,) was high and warranted attention. Some improvement has been recorded since a system was put in place whereby non-attendance is followed through by a senior officer and this is beginning to have an impact.

Abstraction of officers from their policing duties remains an issue, although the situation has been made easier as abstraction costs are now built into the training budget plans.

A risk assessment on each course is carried out and this is based on the Home Office direction and data which includes strategic, priority, necessity and time requirement.

The training plan has balanced the amount of training that is mandatory with the budget and the needs of 150 Forward.

Initially, it was somewhat unclear to me if and where diversity issues featured in the training plan, but I can now assure the Authority that in most cases diversity in the widest sense is on the way to becoming an integral part of training in the Force.

The Training Plan was agreed at a meeting of the Force Training Panel on the 31 January 2008 at which I was present. The internal part of the Plan is now up and running while the external training will not commence until the final budget has been allocated. Although I have overseen the development of the Training Plan on behalf of the Authority, it is proposed that it should be submitted to the Authority's next meeting for ratification.

5. South Warwickshire Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership

Two meetings have been held since my last report. The most important issues discussed were the strategic assessments from Stratford and Warwick CDRPs which allowed decisions to be taken on priorities for 2008/9, for recommendation to the Local Area Agreement Safer Communities Block meeting. This recommendation will go towards helping the South Warwickshire Partnership to produce a Community Safety Plan which is a statutory duty. It was agreed that Serious Violent Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (including criminal damage) would be the main priorities, although the incidences of alcohol and substance abuse were causing anxiety across South Warwickshire.

6. Merger of the South Warwickshire and Warwick Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships

Approval for the merger of the two CDRPs which was rejected last year was re-submitted as there is an improvement in performance. This is reason for optimism and, after being checked by the West Midlands Government Office, the submission will go to the Home Office for approval. If there are no further objections there should be a result in June.

7. Diversity and Equality Panel

(1) Gypsies and Travellers

We have asked ACC Bill Holland and CI Mike Slemensek to produce a report setting out the profile of gypsies and travellers in the county, the issues for Warwickshire Police and the effect of gypsies and travellers migrating across the border from Leicestershire.

(2) DNA Database

At our next meeting, CC Keith Bristow and ACC Lewis Benjamin will give a presentation on DNA, its collection, use and storage. Any Member who is interested in this very important topic is invited to attend our meeting on the 11 June. Please contact Neil Gulliver for details.

(3) Delivering Improved Outcomes to Young Black People in the Criminal Justice System

We considered a report from the Ministry of Justice in terms of what actions the Authority and the Force could take to address the issues highlighted in the paper. While it was recognised that these problems were societal, other agencies also had a role to play. However, there are three key areas which the Authority and the Force should take into consideration –

- (i) The lack of black police officers to which young people could relate.
- (ii) Strengthening the police links with Positive About Young People.
- (iii) Training Police Officers to be able to empathise with young black people and to understand their culture and language.

The Local Criminal Justice Board is regarded as the lead for development of a strategy which needs to be developed by September of this year. It was agreed that Chief Inspector Slemensek would liaise with the LCJB to make them aware of the Authority and the Force position.

Discussions will also be held with the County Council's Positive About Young People Manager on how the Force can work more closely with them to help young black people.

(4) Combined Equality Schemes

Nationally, it has been decided that the various individual equality schemes, of which there are several, should be brought together into a new Combined Equality Scheme by the 31 May 2008. This new system is a more rational approach to diversity and equality within the Force. While all equality schemes will be brought together in a single document, no individual schemes will be in subjugation to another but each scheme, especially in the case of race, will retain its own identity. Diversity and equality are dynamic areas of social policy and these changes occur periodically. Success lies in being responsive and, at times, proactive.

The Panel is of the opinion that it is impractical to produce a new Combined Equality Scheme by the required date and therefore propose to review the current schemes and then to produce a Combined Scheme later in the year. This new Scheme will be submitted to the Authority for approval at that time.

(5) Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs)

The Panel continues to monitor the way that the IAGs operate. We have been impressed with the way the IAGs have developed and the positive contribution that they make to policing in the County.

However, it was noted that the IAGs may be getting too close to the Force – a potentially undesirable situation. We were reassured by Chief Inspector Slemensek that the original intention to maintain a reasonable distance between the IAGs and the Force remained unchanged and this would be achieved by ensuring a regular turnover in membership.

Feedback from the IAGs confirmed our view that there was a need to encourage more women and BME officers to apply to join the Firearms Team. It was agreed that an officer from that team should be invited to a future meeting of the Diversity and Equality Panel to inform and discuss the relevant issues. There are approximately 70 people involved in the various IAGs and this forms one of the effective sources for consultation and communication.

(6) Natural Born Leaders



A group of Warwickshire young people brought together by Inspector Faz Chishty and other BME members of the Force participated in a training programme on leadership last autumn. After the course the group were asked to consider a number of issues relating to the reduction of crime and disorder during the intervening period and they were invited to return to present their findings and their suggestions to the team and the officers involved in the initial training.

This was an exciting initiative involving young people in a positive way. The young people unprompted, looked at such issues as anti social behaviour, its causes and some possible remedies; lack of interaction between the young and older members of society, and ways of overcoming this; alienation of the unemployed; safer communities and other topics of societal concerns. A very lively and articulate group, they were also very streetwise and were as forceful with their comments about the shortcomings of policing as they were complimentary when it was warranted. Of interest was the fact that during their discussions when the question of funding for the projects they were suggesting emerged, positive ideas of raising their own funds were suggested. ACC Bill Holland, who was present at both the initial session and the follow up, was no doubt impressed by the perceptiveness and forthright honesty with which they delivered their views on the defects of policing the streets and communities, as well as by their imaginative suggestions for improvements in police-community relations.

This exercise was well worthwhile as this is a group of youngsters that the Force, with the support of the Authority should cultivate through the channels that have already been established by Faz Chishty and his colleagues.

My only regret is that this group did not include black youngsters from the african-caribbean community.

(7) Gender Support Group

This is a new group which gives support to members of the Force. It addresses the needs of male and female members of staff in a number of areas e.g. professional development, domestic violence linked with professional development, gender related illnesses – awareness and prevention.

There are other very new important areas such as support for women on maternity leave to keep them abreast of developments and changes while they are on leave. Detective Inspector Gill Young is the lead for this group and I have been invited to attend Group meetings on behalf of the Authority.

(8) Stop and Search

Stop and Search is a controversial area of policing and one in which the Authority can feel some pride at the progress that has been made. From the factual but dismal first full report that was presented to the Authority, has emerged working practices that are thought to be ahead of most forces in the country. Perfection has not yet been achieved and despite the progress, neither the Force nor the Diversity and Equality Panel are complacent.

A stringent action plan drawn up by the Force is in operation and this is monitored by the Force Diversity Unit in the first instance with periodic reports to the Diversity and Equality Panel. The major theme underlying the use of stop and search as a tool of detection and crime prevention is that “morally correct behaviour is the key to success” (*CI Slemensek*)

The Force understands the negative impact that disproportionality has had on policing and through an intensive and modernised training programme, supervisors and managers have been made aware of their roles in creating and maintaining high standards.

Lessons that the Authority and the Force can learn are many, but importantly examples are:-

- (i) Commitment to fairness, equality and high standards from the leadership
- (ii) Clear and Effective leadership within the force
- (iii) Support of the Authority
- (iv) Consultation within the Force and through the Central IAG.

Stop and Search will not be taken off the agenda as it will always be an important tool in protecting our communities and its integrity must be maintained.

8. Member Training and Development

This falls within the Resources and Standards Stream and will be the subject of a full report to the Authority in July. However, Members may wish to know the progress to date in this area.

A training and development plan is being drafted for discussion at the July meeting. The main purpose of the plan will be to:

- Align training and development with the Authority's objectives, priorities and code of corporate governance
- Ensure that Members have access to appropriate induction and general training for their duties as Members of the Authority
- Make provision for specific skills training for Members with particular responsibilities or duties
- Specify costs and budgetary arrangements
- Describe a process for identifying and prioritising training and development requirements.

My next step is to meet with the Stream Lead Members to discuss how specific training and development needs can be identified within their streams.

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