

Warwickshire Police Authority – 30 July 2008

Report of the Chief Executive

Summary

This report draws a number of issues to Members' attention.

Recommendation

That the Authority discusses the issues contained in the report.

1. Chief Executive

I can confirm that our new Chief Executive, Sue Howl, will commence on the 22nd September, 2008. Sue has already made a number of visits and more are planned, including a series of one to one discussions with key partners, before her official starting date.

2. Youth Crime Action Plan

On the 15th July, the Government launched the Youth Crime Action Plan which represents the first cross-government plan for dealing with the full range of issues around youth crime. This includes enforcement, target support and early prevention. The Government are planning to invest £100million for measures which will cut youth crime in the short term and improve prevention in the long term.

The Home Office, Ministry of Justice and the Department for Children, Schools and Families are involved in this initiative. Full copies of the report are available if required. I attach, for information at **Appendix 1**, the executive summary of the report, which has clear implications for partnership working between the Force, the Authority and the Children, Young People and Families Directorate of the County Council. Debbie Mullis is preparing a strategy to enable the consideration of the Plan and will be discussing with Katherine King, as the Authority Lead Member and Izzi Seccombe, as Cabinet Member, how to take this forward.

It should be noted that the Government estimate that 5% of young people are responsible for over half of youth crime and that the vast majority of young people make a positive contribution to society.

3. Crime in England and Wales 2007/08

The British Crime Survey statistics were released on the 17th July and are based upon face to face interviews with almost 47,000 people. It can provide a better reflection of the true extent of household and personal crime than police data as it includes non reported and non recorded crime. As the methodology of the survey has been consistent since 1981 it also provides the best available guide to longer term trends in crime.

It is worth noting that crime levels are at the lowest seen for twenty five years and that the risk of becoming a victim of crime has fallen to its lowest ever recorded level.

As performance is one of the central responsibilities of Police Authorities I think it is important for all Members to be aware of the facts about crime as opposed to the generalised fiction which shapes public perception. Overall crime has fallen by 18% since the 2002/03 baseline, exceeding the Public Service Agreement set for the Home Office of 15%.

I attach at **Appendix 2**, for information, a summary of the main findings of the survey. It might be helpful at a future meeting of the Authority to consider our current arrangements for monitoring performance and, in particular, formalise within the process the District/Borough performance meetings and the reporting of such meetings by the District/Borough Leads to full Authority meetings.

4. Policing Green Paper From the Neighbourhood to the National: Policing Our Communities Together

The Home Office has published the Policing Green Paper and there is now a 12 week consultation period before the Government carries out its intention to place proposals in the Queen's Speech.

It is worth recalling that the Flanagan Review of Policing, published in February 2008, led to the Home Office indicating that it would follow the review with a Green Paper which would take forward recommendations and make new suggestions about accountability. Prior to the Green Paper being published, the Department for Communities and Local Government published a White Paper on 'empowerment' and the Cabinet Office published a review by Louise Carey entitled 'Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime'.

The Green Paper seeks to pull these reviews and White Paper together and the consultation response form covers both Force and Authority issues.

I think it would be appropriate to hold a seminar on the Green Paper during the week of the 15th September – when we could 'brainstorm' responses to the consultation form and take an appropriate time to discuss the fundamental issues involved. Given that we have an Authority meeting on the 24th September followed by a budget seminar, I do not think that there will be time that day to deal properly with the Green Paper.

I will arrange for all Members to receive a copy of the Green Paper.

I also attach, at Appendices 3 and 4, briefing papers from the APA and the LGiU.

I believe that the Green Paper proposals will potentially damage the developing partnership work between Police Authorities and local government; threaten the key principle of political balance in Police Authorities and, in the absence of any risk assessment, could lead to the direct election of representatives of extremist groups. Having said that there is much in the Green Paper we could welcome as bringing to fruition the outcome of the Flanagan and Casey reviews.

5. Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008

This Bill received Royal Assent on the 8th May, 2008 and establishes a legal framework for the inspection of Police Authorities. After some delay the Home Office has identified funding to support the Audit Commission contribution to inspections during the development phase to 2010.

A pilot programme of inspections will take place over the Autumn and there will be a need to monitor developments in this area and ensure we are fully prepared for an HMIC/Audit Commission inspection.

6. APA

The new APA structure was agreed at the Plenary meeting on the 16th July. This will involve regional policy groups and I anticipate these will begin to develop in the early part of the Autumn.

Phil Blundell will continue to lead the Independent Group at the APA and in addition to other national responsibilities will be the West Midlands representative on the APA Board (previously Executive) as a Group Leader.

7. AGM

I would suggest that we aim to complete the outstanding business of the adjourned AGM at the Authority meeting in September. If this is agreed, I will circulate a letter requesting expressions of interest in particular roles, ie Professional Standards.

Enquiries: about this report should be made to Neil Gulliver on 01926 412322

Background Papers: As attached where appropriate

ERIC WOOD
Chief Executive