

Warwickshire Police Authority – 18 December 2009

Report of the Chief Executive

Summary

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

Recommendation

1. That the Lead Member for Publications and Use of Information, the Assistant Chief Executive and the Policy Officer for Protective Services be included in the list of those Member and Officers requiring vetting to SC level.
2. That approval be given to the programme of meetings for the period January 2010 to October 2011.
3. That the Police Authority's Combined Equalities Scheme and Action Plan be endorsed.

1. Policing White Paper – Protecting the Public: Supporting the Police to Succeed

The Policing White Paper, 'Protecting the Public: Supporting the Police to Succeed', was published on 02 December. It builds on the reforms laid out in last year's Green Paper, 'From the Neighbourhood to the National: Policing our Communities Together'. A copy of the Executive Summary is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Whilst policing remains a frontline service for protecting the public in an emergency, the White Paper examines how, over the next 5 years, the service will be expected to focus on prevention to tackle the problems undermining communities and provide viable reassurance. Importantly this will need to be achieved set against an increasingly tight fiscal backdrop where value for money will be fundamental.

The Strategic Policing Priorities for 2010/11 will focus the police on delivering the confidence target and working in partnership to reduce and prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and the problems caused by drug and alcohol misuse and youth offending. The White Paper also emphasises the need to deliver effective protective services such as serious organised crime and making the best use of resources.

The Government are committed to building on the introduction of neighbourhood policing and the Policing Pledge and are looking to increase the ability of local people to shape policing priorities and hold the police to account. The White Paper looks to achieve this by initiatives such as the following:

- requiring Police Authorities to nominate a lead member for each Basic Command Unit or equivalent local command unit area and enabling members of the public to sit on the local authority committees which hold CDRPs/CSPs to account

- continue to develop the new national crime mapping service, which enables anyone to type in their postcode and get accessible, regular and user-friendly information about crime in their area and how the police are responding to it.

I think the Authority has already put in place the requirements referred to in the first bullet point by appointing District Leads, part of their responsibility being to liaise with District Commanders.

The White Paper clearly recognises that the police alone cannot cut crime and puts a strong emphasis on the continued development of effective partnership working with local authorities and other local agencies.

Whilst supporting the police to deliver high quality service, the Government are also seeking to ensure that the public know how to complain or seek redress where the local police, local authority, prosecutor or court is not listening to their concerns on crime and anti-social behaviour. The White Paper therefore aims to:

- ensure that the public have ready access to clear information from every force and Police Authority on how to raise concerns and make complaints, both with front line officers and escalated to senior level if necessary
- promote HMIC's new Police Report Card on each force's performance, supported by more detailed information for the public at a more local level, including the level of the Basic Command Unit, which will allow the public to compare how the service they receive compares to other local areas
- ensure local forces hold regular public meetings several times a year – and give the public the power to request extra meetings if concerns and complaints are not resolved locally
- enable the Independent Police Complaints Commission to uphold complaints even where there has been no individual misconduct, and make recommendations to forces and police authorities.

The White Paper has also put a strong emphasis on driving value for money and improving efficiency and productivity by:

- legislating to reduce the paperwork involved in completing stop and search encounters, whilst challenging forces and Police Authorities to remove locally created bureaucracy
- ensuring each force rigorously assesses local policing need and matches its workforce to meet it, revising shift patterns to deliver at the right times for the public
- saving at least £70m per annum by 2013/14 through more effective deployment and more robust internal management of police overtime, and at least £75m per annum by 2013/14 by rationalising back-office support services
- requiring all forces and Police Authorities to procure prescribed goods and services from national procurement frameworks, including a standard 'beat car' for all forces to use and a single national uniform for police officers

- rolling out a national framework for process improvement, based on Operation Quest which has harnessed the knowledge and experience of police officers to reduce waste
- providing benchmarking information in IT approaches, working towards a single national police IT infrastructure, and ensuring mobile data devices are being used effectively and that there is more consistency in usage and functionality.

The Government clearly expects forces and Police Authorities to have explored all options for improving service provision. These options will include voluntary mergers to create larger 'strategic forces', a major transformation of the force's service delivery, use of lead force arrangements for particular functions and/or deeper or wider collaborative arrangements.

2. **Vetting Policy**

Attached as **Appendix 2** is a policy statement which summarises the decisions which the Authority has implemented since the basic vetting of all members was agreed in 2006. It also summarises the position as it is currently applied to Authority staff. It is NOT a new policy document. Members are asked to note the arrangements.

The decision about who is vetted to an enhanced level is based on the role undertaken and should be proportionate to that role. The Lead for Publications and Use of Information was a new role introduced in July of this year. The early stage of implementing the role has shown that access to the Force Strategic Assessment process is critical if the member is to fully implement the requirement to shape the priorities for the Policing Plan. A decision is required to include this role in those to be vetted to SC level.

This review of the current position has revealed the need to be more explicit about how the policy applies to staff jobs. It is recommended that the Assistant Chief Executive and the Policy Officer supporting the Protective Services are placed on the list of staff needing clearance at SC level.

3. **Dates of Meetings January 2010 – October 2011**

Members will recall at a previous Authority meeting I was asked to review the Authority's meetings calendar to allow the sequence for the streams reporting to the Authority to be adjusted to ensure that the Resources stream reported to the correct meeting. That has now been completed and a revised schedule of meetings is attached as **Appendix 3**.

As a result of the changes, there will be no stream report to the January 2010 meeting while both the Local Policing and Resources stream will be reporting to the February meeting. It has also been necessary to adjust other meetings to fit with the revised schedule of Authority meetings.

It is proposed that a letter detailing the changes will be sent to all Members as soon as possible before the Christmas break.

4. **Police Authority Combined Equality Scheme and Action Plan**

Attached at **Appendix 4** is the Authority's revised Combined Equality Scheme and Action Plan. The Scheme and Action Plan have been considered in detail by the Diversity and Equality Panel and they approved the documents on behalf of the

Authority at their meeting on 11 November. The Scheme and Action Plan are now submitted to the Authority for endorsement.

5. Police Authority Website

Members will recall that I reported to the Authority's October 2009 meeting on the detailed proposal to develop a new website for the Authority. Since then I have been working with Sasha Taylor, the Force cCommunications Officer and Netsight, the web-site provider to develop the new site. The work was initially delayed due to issues relating to the contract but these have now been resolved. Clive Parsons has been kept up-to-date with developments.

The basic structure of the site is now in place and I am working with Sasha Taylor to input the data/content onto the new site during December. We are then looking to make the new site available to Members as early as possible in January 2010 to give them an opportunity to comment and make suggestions for alterations etc. It was then proposed to launch the new website at the Authority's meeting on 20 January. However, in the light of the inspection taking place in March, I propose to launch the new site prior to the Christmas break which will give Members the opportunity to view the site and let me have any comments in the new year.

As part of the input of information, I have written to all Members asking them to provide a short biography of themselves which will be included as part of the Member details on the new site.

6. Reducing Bureaucracy in Policing

Jan Berry, the Independent Reducing Bureaucracy Advocate, has now published her full report on Reducing Bureaucracy in Policing. A copy of the Executive Summary is attached as **Appendix 5**.

The report takes a comprehensive look at the police service and identifies areas where policing has become overburdened by excessive bureaucracy and aims to build on the work of Sir Ronnie Flanagan to encourage a culture of continuous improvement and allowing systems that flow by removing duplication, inefficiency and waste. The report acknowledges a genuine desire by the Government and the police services to remove unnecessary bureaucracy.

The report highlights the following key issues:-

- there is a need to turn the 4 force pilot into a 43 force reality and empower officers to resolve minor issues in a victim led, ethical, proportionate and appropriate way, without worrying about performance league tables and sanctioned detections
- people join the police to do the right thing and make a positive difference, but systems manage to put obstacles and hurdles in their way. Rules cannot be written for every situation, officers need to gain experience in ethical decision making by resolving local problems rather than drowning them with sets of rigid rules
- forces should ensure that data collected is necessary, not duplicated, adds value and is collected in the least bureaucratic way

- strong leadership and effective communications is key. Front line officers know the problems and solutions but need support and encouragement from senior leaders to deliver sustainable improvements that remove unnecessary bureaucracy
- need to prevent unnecessary duplication across the Criminal Justice System through integrated IT, encompassing the development of electronic case files
- most police forces are not maximising the full potential of mobile data which would lead to officers being able to remain on patrol and out of police stations. The report makes clear this will take time to achieve, considering the current fiscal climate
- the opportunity to reduce the unnecessary paperwork in court files and speed up the Criminal Justice System is not being fully realised. All forces need to support and embed the principles of Streamlined Process ensuring officers have the requisite skills to précis and identify key evidence. CPS and courts must also support the process
- the service has become overly risk averse, introducing a series of gatekeepers, systems and processes to ensure nothing goes wrong rather than giving encouragement and training to get it right.

A further short update report will be published in February 2010 prior to a final report being published in late summer 2010.

If any Member would like a copy of the full report, please let me know.

7. APA Conference 2008

This year's conference was held in Nottingham and was attended by Ian Francis, Phil Robson, John Vereker, Steve Nicklin, Bob Hicks and Neil Gulliver.

The strapline for the Conference was 'Leading Through Challenging Times' and was designed to give delegates the opportunity to debate the significant issues for the policing family and in particular police authority inspection, the development of collaborative arrangements between forces and authorities, the increasingly challenging fiscal position facing the service and the changing role of the APA.

Whilst everyone was waiting in anticipation for the publication of the White Paper, there was a good opportunity to hear the views of David Hanson, Minister of State, Crime and Policing, Chris Grayling, Shadow Home Secretary; and Chris Huhme, Liberal Democrat Home Affairs Spokesperson. It was clear from the debates that the Government had no appetite to abolish police authorities – in fact they were looking to enhance their role particularly around neighbourhood policing. The Conservatives on the other hand are clearly determined to abolish police authorities and replace them with locally elected commissioners.

Denis O'Connor, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary gave an interesting presentation around the performance landscape and highlighted the important role of police authorities with their knowledge of local issues as well as being able to consider the risk and financial support required in their area to provide the right level of policing to meet local needs. He also highlighted the changing role of HMIC with a much more public facing agenda.

8. Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service Review

Members will recall that it was agreed that Ian Francis and Keith Bristow should submit a joint response to the consultation to the review on behalf of the Authority and the Force. I can confirm that the response has now been sent to the Fire and Rescue Service and copies will be available at the meeting.

9. Police Authority Staffing

As some Members will be aware, Wendy Steptoe joined the Authority on 30 November as an Administrative Assistant and will provide general support to the team.

Members may also be aware that the Authority has been seeking to appoint an additional Policy Officer to work with the Resources Stream and to manage other governance issues such as audit and risk management. The interviews are being held on 9 December and I will report the outcome at the Authority's meeting.

This appointment will ensure that we are able to provide dedicated support to all 3 governance streams.

**Sue Howl
Chief Executive**