



CHESHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY

STATUTORY PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 22 AUGUST 2006 IN CONSTABULARY HEADQUARTERS, WINSFORD

Present: D T Bateman, Chairman B Maher
 Mrs A Coomer P Nurse
 C Kirkpatrick Mrs M A Ollerenshaw
 R Giltrap

Also in attendance: Mrs A Doran
 T Boddington, Eastern Custody Visitors Panel

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| <i>Authority Officers:</i> | <i>Constabulary Officers:</i> |
| M Sellwood, Clerk & Chief Executive | G Gerrard, Deputy Chief Constable |
| Mrs A Collins, Communication & Policy Officer | Det Supt P Charlton, Head of Professional Standards |
| M Eaton, Senior Administration Officer | |
| Mrs A Gibson, Treasurership | |

Apologies: J P Findlow and Mrs S Proctor

1. MINUTES

The Chairman enquired about the progress against the HMIC baseline inspection recommendations for improvement. The Head of Professional Standards reminded Members that an oral report on progress had been given at the last meeting and a further update could be provided at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2006 be confirmed as a correct record; and
- (2) reports be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee, detailing progress against the HMIC recommendations and providing the comparative information of other Forces Professional Standards Departments.

2. CHANGE IN ORDER OF AGENDA

The Chairman requested that the order of the agenda be varied to enable agenda item 5 – Cheshire Custody Visiting Scheme: Proposed Changes to the Scheme, to be considered as the next item.

RESOLVED:

That the order of the agenda be varied.

3. CHESHIRE CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME: PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE SCHEME

The Clerk & Chief Executive submitted a report which reviewed the Custody Visiting Scheme Guidance and invited Members to consider the award of an honorarium to Panel Convenors.

Mr Boddington reported on the success of a trial operated in the Eastern Panel Area to increase the acceptance rate of custody visits by detainees. The trial involved Custody Visitors introducing themselves to detainees and enquiring if they wished to receive a visit, which would normally be undertaken by custody staff. During the three month trial period, the acceptance rate of visits was 95.4%. Members in welcoming the results of the pilot enquired about the time commitment on custody staff and the views of the other Panels, to which Mr Boddington and the Clerk & Chief Executive responded.

The Chairman expressed the Authority's appreciation to Mr Boddington, who was retiring from the Scheme, and for making the presentation.

Members considered the award of an honorarium to the three Panel Convenors and recognised the significant time commitment over and above being an active Custody Visitor, assisting in the efficient operation of the scheme and the additional expenditure incurred in co-ordinating the Panel.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the new approach to introduce Custody Visitors to detainees, as detailed in the report, be approved;
- (3) the Chief Executive advise ICVA of the success of the pilot and of the introduction the new approach;
- (4) the revised Scheme Guidance be approved subject to the comments made by the Committee being incorporated into the Guidance by the Chief Executive; and
- (5) an annual honorarium of £500 to Panel Convenors be made at the end of each custody visiting year (31 August) and backdated to include the current year, be approved.

4. COMPLAINTS AND MISCONDUCT MATTERS: QUARTERLY REPORT

The Deputy Chief Constable presented the statistical report on complaints and misconduct matters for the period April-June 2006. It was reported that during the period 129 complainants had made 190 complaints, which equated to increases of 3.7% in complainants and 5% in complaints, compared with the previous year. There had been 295 complaints made about police officers, 22 about police staff (including CSOs) and 4 about special constables.

The Committee also received detailed information on the various categories of individual complaints; the number of referrals to the Independent Police

Complaints Commission (IPCC); internal discipline cases; cases referred to the Crown Prosecution Service; complaints outstanding from previous years; statistical analysis of complaints; and key performance indicators relating to complaints which showed an increase in the number of complaints finalised.

The Head of Professional Standards made a presentation on the performance data, which was available on the Constabulary's 'Looking Glass' intranet site, which included Area performance.

Members raised a number of issues relating to the performance and that of the Constabulary's most similar forces; access to 'Looking Glass'; the reason for the high level of complaints in the Eastern Area; and the need for more data on police staff and CSOs to be included in the agenda papers. The Deputy Chief Constable responded that the increase was partly attributable to a new reporting system being trailed in the Eastern Area and that a prolific complainer had impacted on the level of complaints. The Committee and the Deputy Chief Constable discussed the data that was required by Members in advance of meetings to ensure they fulfilled their statutory scrutiny function. The Chairman requested that the Deputy Chief Constable and the Clerk & Chief Executive review the presentation of data to ensure adequate information on staff is included.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

5. DIRECTION AND CONTROL COMPLAINTS: QUARTERLY REPORT

The Deputy Chief Constable reported on direction and control complaints which showed that 19 complaints had been received during April-June 2006 compared to 30 in the previous year. The Head of Professional Standards was working to introduce measures in the Call Management Department to ensure the accurate capture of information about complaints.

The Chairman enquired about the accuracy of the recording system as it was perceived that there was a higher level of complaint about police response and communications which were reported at Forums, for example, which appeared not to have been recorded. The Deputy Chief Constable discussed the complaint procedure with Members and agreed to further consider the matter.

The Communication & Policy Officer reported on an initiative entitled 'Your Voice Counts' to be piloted in the Eastern Area for six months which would encourage the public to raise issues or concerns which would be investigated by the Constabulary or provide positive feedback about policing.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

6. HMIC REPORT: RAISING THE STANDARD

The Clerk & Chief Executive presented a briefing paper on the HMIC 'Raising the Standard' report published in June 2006. The report presented figures on

the number of complaints about the police in England and Wales for 2004/05 and how these were dealt with by police forces.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

7. COMMUNICATION, CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT: UPDATE

The Communication & Policy Officer presented an update on the actions and activity delivered against both the Communications Strategy and the Consultation and Engagement Strategy. The report highlighted the main areas of communication activity which had been introduced to raise awareness about the role and work of Authority; areas for further work; and made suggestions for change.

In considering the report, Members raised a number of issues including the welcome introduction of the Forum newsletter; and the lack of contact/communication with the local NPU Inspectors. The Communication & Policy Officer agreed to remind NPU Inspectors to regularly contact Authority Members.

Members considered how the Authority oversees the community engagement process and its impact on the direction of the Constabulary and noted as part of the review of its structures, the establishment of a Community Engagement Committee was to be considered.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

8. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

9. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as applied by the Police Act 1996 as amended, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the item of business listed below on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act in the paragraph indicated:-

| Item | Paragraph |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Review of Disciplinary Issues | (2) Information which is likely to reveal the identity of individuals |

PART 2 – MATTER CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

10. REVIEW OF DISCIPLINARY ISSUES: QUARTERLY REPORT

The Deputy Chief Constable submitted a report on the number of written warnings and hearings for police officers, staff and CSOs and an update on those officers suspended from duty.

The Committee discussed the report and raised a number of issues to which the Deputy Chief Constable and the Head of Professional Standards responded.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

Duration of Meeting: The meeting commenced at 9.30am and finished at 11.25am.