



CHESHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY

ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 13 MAY 2008 IN
CONSTABULARY HEADQUARTERS, WINSFORD

Present:

M Chapman, Chairman	E Lam
S Proctor, Vice-Chairman	B Maher
M Darby	P Nurse
A Doran	T Savage
C Kirkpatrick	

Also in attendance: S Taunton and D Woolliscroft, Custody Visiting Scheme

Authority Officers:

M Sellwood, Chief Executive
L Lunn, Treasurer
A Collins, Engagement Manager
M Eaton, Member Services Manager

Constabulary Officers:

D Baines, Assistant Chief Constable
G Shewan, Assistant Chief Constable
K Watkins, Director of Performance Development
J Roberts, Head of Safer & Stronger Communities
B Cowling, Head of Corporate Communications

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2008 be confirmed as a correct record.

2. CHESHIRE CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME: ANNUAL REPORT

The Chief Executive submitted the 2007/08 annual report for the Custody Visiting Scheme. It was reported that 272 visits had been made compared to 238 in 2006/07, with 2809 persons being detained at the time of the visits. Of the 1832 detainees selected and available to be seen, 1755 (96%) consented to a visit, compared to 1217 (84%) in 2006/07. Of the detainees seen, 722 (41%) raised issues relating to medical issues, food/drink and telephone calls. There were no significant issues raised during the year.

The Chairman welcomed the Convenors of the Eastern and Western Custody Visitor Panels, who presented their reports and visiting statistics for the period October 2007 to March 2008. The Convenors highlighted several issues in relation to custody and Operation Safeguard. Despite the challenges it was reported that prisoners being detained under Safeguard were complimentary about the treatment in Cheshire police cells.

Members in considering the visiting statistics, discussed various matters arising from the reports.

The Chairman and the Assistant Chief Constable thanked the Convenors for their attendance and for their constructive comments which proved valuable in maintaining standards and the operation of the custody suites.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

3. CHANGE IN ORDER OF AGENDA

The Chairman requested that the order of the agenda be varied to enable item 6 - Independent Advisory Group and item 5 - Counter Terrorism: Engagement Strategy to be considered earlier in the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the order of the agenda be varied.

4. INDEPENDENT ADVISORY GROUP

The Assistant Chief Constable presented a report on how the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) in Cheshire had evolved since its inception in 2003. The report also assessed adherence to the national guidance for IAGs, and sought confirmation of the procedure for providing oversight of IAG work. The report outlined the current operation of the IAG; the priorities for 2008/09; their role within 'gold groups'; recruitment and de-selection; budget; and support.

In considering the report, the Committee reiterated the fact that the IAG was jointly established to assist both the Authority and Constabulary and that this must be reflected in the IAG's terms of reference. Members discussed in detail several issues in relation to the IAG's response to the auditing and monitoring of its members' expenses; the procedure for recruitment; the IAG's engagement with the Authority; and the publication of minutes of IAG meetings. It was suggested that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee meet with the IAG Chairman to progress the issues.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the terms of reference for the IAG be amended to include the Police Authority;
- (2) oversight of the work of the IAG be provided through the Constabulary's Confidence and Equality Board, the quarterly diversity report to the Authority, and the Constabulary's Diversity Advisory Unit;
- (3) the IAGs priorities and action plan be discussed by the Chief Constable and the Authority on an annual basis and the Confidence and Equality Board monitor the IAG's terms of reference and action plan;

- (4) the procedure for auditing and monitoring IAG members' expenses as outlined in the Chief Constable's report be agreed;
- (5) the procedure for nominating, selecting and de-selecting IAG members as outlined in the Chief Constable's report, be discussed further;
- (6) the IAG be advised that anonymised minutes of their meetings be published on the Authority website in order to achieve public reassurance and accountability of their decisions and actions;
- (7) the IAG's work on developing a Code of Conduct be welcomed and that the proposed code in the format recommended in the national guidance be presented to a future meeting of Engagement Committee; and
- (8) the Constabulary ensure that when independent advice is sought within a gold group, the senior officer agree terms of reference and confidentiality rules with the advisor(s).

5. COUNTER TERRORISM: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Chief Executive submitted a report on the Authority's duty to consult communities on counter terrorism activities and to introduce a series of actions to meet this requirement.

Members considered the draft guidance produced by the Association of Police Authorities entitled 'Counter-Terrorism – Police Authority Duty to Consult Communities' which highlighted the responsibilities for police authorities. The Authority was required to ensure community engagement and communications strategies reflected the possibility of a significant terrorist or counter-terrorism event occurring within the force area, and addressed all potential circumstances

The Committee considered an assessment of the current areas of community engagement amongst diverse groups and the work being developed with Special Branch to introduce specific events and activities.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) Project "Culture Splash" be supported;
- (3) Members be invited to attend "One Extreme to Another" productions;
- (4) the Authority sponsor an "Act Now" event and offer financial support by meeting the costs of refreshments for delegates up to a maximum of £500 to be funded from the Authority's hospitality expenses budget;
- (5) the Engagement Manager arrange a focus group as part of the series of Muslim women's groups to consider policing;
- (6) the Authority participates in the 'Rap and Snap' events;

- (7) counter terrorism be included as a workshop at the Youth Conference to be held in October 2008;
- (8) Members be encouraged to attend debates at Cheshire universities in autumn 2008;
- (9) the Authority and Special Branch be involved in the regional CTU conferences;
- (10) the results of surveys outlined in the report be reported to Engagement Committee for consideration; and
- (11) the Authority issue press releases to local and regional media to advertise the events and outline their support and involvement.

6. CONSULTATION ON PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING: A DRAFT NATIONAL STRATEGY

The Treasurer submitted a report on the Government's draft Participatory Budgeting Strategy. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government had sought views on the draft strategy, particularly on its purpose as a plan to achieve the Government's ambition for participatory budgeting, to be used in all local authority areas by 2012.

Members considered the consultation document and the draft response prepared by the Treasurer. Members raised several issues relating to local accountability; the need to avoid duplication; and endorsement of the APA's view.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the consultation document be noted; and
- (2) the Treasurer review the draft response in the light of Members comments , and following consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee submit a response to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

7. LOCAL POLICING SUMMARY: 'YOUR POLICING'

The Chief Executive reported on the proposals for the production of the 'Your Policing' magazine which would include statutory elements of the annual report, and would be distributed in phases to all households in the area. The magazine would feature the work undertaken by the Constabulary and Authority; publicise the Authority's priorities for 2008/09; how the Constabulary met the previous year's priorities; and contact details.

Members in considering the draft version commented on the need for the policing priorities to be clearly identifiable; the presentation and format of some of the text; and enquired about the proposed methods of distribution.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the draft “Your Policing” be approved;
- (2) the proposed distribution of “Your Policing” as outlined in the Chief Executive’s report, be approved; and
- (3) the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Authority Chairman and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee, be authorised to finalise “Your Policing” and take the necessary arrangements to publish and distribute the report by the end of July 2008.

8. MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES: ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUNG WHITE MALES FROM AREAS OF DEPRIVATION

Prior to consideration of the item, Mrs Doran reported on the ‘Streetsafe’ initiative which was to be piloted in the Congleton area in June 2008 and enquired whether a presentation could be made to the Committee. The Assistant Chief Constable agreed to discuss arrange for a presentation on neighbourhood management including street safe to be given to the next meeting.

The Chairman submitted a report on marginalised communities, following a request by the Authority on 8 April 2008 (Minute 8). The report evidenced that a group identified as ‘young white males from deprived communities’, constituted a diverse group. The report outlined how the Authority and Constabulary needed to understand the requirements of this group, as with any diverse group, and the type of response in relation to their needs. The group were very much associated in the work of the Constabulary in terms of likely offenders; anti-social behaviour; hate crime, violent crime; bad driving and subsequently a significant reason for deployment of and consumer of resources.

Members in considering the report, raised a number of issues and discussed what further action in terms structures and accountability systems were required to ensure that the needs of this diverse and significant group were addressed. The Assistant Chief Constable outlined examples of diversionary schemes and activities which were currently being undertaken.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be received; and
- (2) the Assistant Chief Constable submit a report to the Committee on 28 August 2008, on the Constabulary’s response to the issues outlined in paragraph 31 of the Chairman’s report.

9. POLICE AUTHORITY CONTACT PLAN: QUARTERLY UPDATE

The Chief Executive submitted a quarterly update on the Authority’s Contact Plan. The report detailed the Authority’s communication, consultation and engagement activity during the last three months.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

10. CONSTABULARY PUBLIC CONTACT STRATEGY

The Head of Corporate Communications presented the Constabulary's strategy for public contact and outlined the various levels of public contact that had been undertaken across all aspects of policing in 2007/08 and the proposed activity for 2008/09.

Members raised issues about the Strategy including clarification on the completion of the templates; and the omission of County Councillors within the Key Individual Networks to which the Director of Performance Development responded.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the report be noted; and

(2) a progress report be submitted to the Committee on 11 November 2008.

11. PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY

The Chief Executive submitted a report on discussions at recent meetings of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and other partnership meetings attended by Members.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

12. SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES: QUARTERLY REPORT

The Assistant Chief Constable submitted an update on the work undertaken by the Safer & Stronger Communities Unit since the last meeting.

The Head of Safer & Stronger Communities presented the report which provided an overview of local and force wide engagement activity and focused on the use of the Vulnerable Localities Index (VLI); the Constabulary's newly created engagement strategy; community views and policing decision making based on these views.

The Chairman reported that whilst the format of the report was acceptable the information contained in the report needed further work and it was agreed that this would be progressed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman in discussion with the Head of Safer & Stronger Communities.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

13. CONSTABULARY GENDER AND DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEMES: ACTION PLANS

The Chief Constable submitted the annual report on the progress of the Constabulary's Disability and Gender Equality Scheme Action Plans. The Schemes and associated action plans were continually monitored and reviewed to ensure that they reflected changing circumstances and priorities.

RESOLVED:

That the annual report on the Disability and Gender Equality Scheme Action Plans, be approved.

14. SAFER SCHOOLS: UPDATE

(Consideration of this item was deferred until the meeting on 26 August 2008)

15. 'HAVE YOUR SAY' MEETINGS: JULY 2008

The Chief Executive reported on the proposed content of the next cycle of 'Have Your Say' meetings.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed agenda for July 2008 cycle of Have Your Say meetings, as outlined in the Chief Executive's report, be supported.

Duration of Meeting: The meeting commenced at 9.30am and finished at 12.03pm.