

ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT 2009/10

This statement sets out the position as at 31 March 2010 including improvement plans for the financial year 2010/11:

1 Scope of Responsibilities

- 1.1 The Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall Constabulary is responsible for the direction and control of the Force. In discharging these functions, the Chief Constable shall have regard to the local policing plan issued by Devon and Cornwall Police Authority. In addition, the Chief Constable will have responsibility in respect of delivering an efficient and effective police force. In this regard, the Chief Constable is responsible for ensuring that police business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Chief Constable is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of the Force and facilitating the exercise of its role, ensuring that arrangements are in place for the management of risk.

2 The Purpose of the Governance Framework

- 2.1 The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values through which the Force manages its activities. The framework enables the Chief Constable to monitor the achievement of Force objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services, including achieving value for money. The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable and foreseeable level. It cannot eliminate all risks of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can, therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Force's policies, aims and objectives. Internal control arrangements will evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them effectively, efficiently and economically. The governance framework has been in place at the Force for the year ended 31 March 2010 and up to the date of approval of the 2009/10 Statement of Accounts.

3 The Governance Framework

- 3.1 The key elements of the systems and processes that comprise the governance arrangements that have been put in place for the Force are described below.

(a) The process for setting objectives and targets.

The Force has a well developed process for setting objectives and targets. The Force Vision was developed during 2007/08 and was refreshed during 2009/10 to align to the single "Top Down" Target to deliver public confidence. The Force has worked closely with the Police Authority to develop its Mission, Vision and Values and a performance agreement has been established with the Police Authority that underpins the plans for the coming year.

As part of its responsibility towards community safety the Force recognises that the multi agency Local Area Agreements are in the final year of their 3 year performance cycle. Consequently the Force will work with its partners over the coming year to develop new partnership agreements which will drive much of the Force's activity from April 2011.

(b) Decision-making structures for establishing priorities and considering strategic issues facing the force.

The Force has clear decision making structures. In addition to the Chief Officer Group that is the principal corporate decision making body for the Force, a Programme Board has been established to manage the core business transformation programme. There is also 'The 2012 Strategy Board' which provides oversight to all the transformational activity taking place, both in the programme and in cultural change. Senior Leadership events now take place 3 times a year to provide a wider forum for considering strategic issues. In addition, the Performance Improvement and Tasking Group has delegated responsibility to deal with performance matters and to make informed resource allocation decisions against the priorities of the Force. This responsibility is discharged by reviewing intelligence, prevention and enforcement plans. All Strategic Groups have clear terms of reference, together with clear reporting lines, and a strategic meetings protocol sets out executive decision making authority.

(c) The monitoring processes by which performance against operational, financial and other strategic plans are considered and key issues identified and tasked.

The Chief Officer Group receives a quarterly Strategic Report that covers the following areas:

- Operational performance
- Environmental scanning
- Force Risk Register
- Absence monitoring
- Complaints
- Projects
- Audits and inspections
- Organisational Learning

The Chief Officer Group also receives specific monthly updates on Health & Safety.

The Chief Executive and Treasurer of the Police Authority also attend this meeting.

Progress and performance on all the above areas are considered in depth and supporting performance data are provided. Opportunities to develop good practice are considered alongside performance and additional work is commissioned where necessary.

Responsibility for improvements to Force performance lies with the Performance Improvement and Tasking Group. This group reviews, monitors and directs Force performance on a fortnightly basis. The Deputy Chief Constable who chairs the group holds relevant Chief Officers and Commanders to account for performance.

Financial performance is reported monthly to the Chief Officers Group. Robust monthly monitoring processes are in place.

(d) The risk management process by which the Force identifies and seeks to mitigate key risks.

The Force's Risk Management Strategy and Policy were updated in 2009/10 as part of the ongoing annual review process. The strategy is comprehensive and underpinned by detailed policies and procedures. In addition to maintaining risk registers at Unit/ Department & BCU level, the Force undertakes environmental scanning and produces a Strategic Assessment every six months. This includes reconciling the threats identified through the strategic assessment with those in the corporate risk register by using a

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common valuation model. This ensures business risks are reconciled against operational threats.

(e) Developing, communicating and embedding codes of conduct and defining the standards of behaviour for officers and staff.

The Force has a well established Professional Standards function. This Department has been restructured and now includes the Force Vetting Unit. This ensures improved capacity to deliver the new Police Discipline Regulations, introduced on 1st December 2008. Training has been delivered to all line managers with responsibility for police officers and a wide ranging amount of marketing material is available. A memorandum of understanding exists between the Professional Standards Department and the Police Authority relating to internal fraud investigations. Existing fraud and anti corruption policies have been reviewed in order to underpin the new legislation.

(f) Reviewing and updating Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, the scheme of delegation and supporting procedure notes/manuals, which clearly define how decisions are taken and the processes and controls required to manage risks.

Financial Regulations and a comprehensive set of Force policies relating to internal control are in place. This includes Standing Orders for Tenders and Contracts and a Scheme of Delegation.

(g) Ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations, internal policies and procedures, and that expenditure is lawful.

Environmental scanning takes place to assess and determine the Force response to legislative and other changes. Where appropriate, action plans are put in place to meet new requirements. The Force has access to the Police National Legal Database to aid the tracking of legislative changes.

The Force has clearly defined processes for ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations. There is a programme for reviewing Force policies that is centrally managed and regulated.

An Organisational Learning Database is used to track the implementation of improvement & action plans relating to any form of organisational learning irrespective of its source.

(h) Ensuring the security of the Force Assets and Information

Stewardship of assets is covered in Financial Regulations and Force policies. In addition the Force maintains asset registers for all major assets. The Force has information security and data protection policies, both of which support continuous accreditation to the ACPO Community Safety Policy. There is a commitment to enhance that level of security by applying the standards of the International Information Security Management Standard BS/ISO 27001. This ensures that adequate security measures are in place to protect subject and sensitive internal information for the long term.

(i) Processes for receiving and investigating complaints from the public, and citizen and other redress and providing reports to the Authority.

The Professional Standards Department record and monitor all complaints to ensure investigations are proportionate and to the expected standard. Monthly monitoring and reporting of complaints to the Professional Standards and Complaints Monitoring Group takes place. Where necessary, investigations may be referred to the Independent Police

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Complaints Commission (IPCC). They may, in turn, choose to conduct their own investigation, or supervise the Force's investigation.

(j) Determining the conditions of employment and remuneration of officers and staff, within appropriate national frameworks.

Human Resources policies are in place to ensure that the conditions of employment and remuneration of officers and staff are within appropriate national frameworks. The Force has adopted the national Police Staff Handbook, which governs allowances paid to police staff. As part of the Force Vision the Force has produced a clear People Strategy which defines all of our people management activities.

(k) Identifying the development needs of officers and staff in relation to their roles, supported by appropriate training.

The Force's Learning and Development Department co-ordinates learning and development for the Force. Training panels manage the priorities, risks, resources and delivery of training programmes at a local level, in order to reconcile the organisation's and individual's requirements. Individual learning is managed via the PDR process and is additionally supported by the provisions of the Sponsored Learning Panel.

(l) Establishing clear channels of communication with all sections of the community and other stakeholders on priorities and plans.

Each year, the Force and the Police Authority jointly publish a 3 year Local Policing Plan.

The Force has well developed channels for consultation and engagement. These include:

Consultation with the public and external stakeholders:

- QSR Victim survey and the Anti Social Behaviour survey;
- The Police Authority Public Survey (an annual survey of 30,000 random local residents);
- Partners and Communities Together (PACT) initiatives, where local Police Officers, local council officers and councillors, community representatives, education, faith groups, health & fire service meet to identify and solve problems;
- A Strategic Independent Advisory Group (IAG) – representing all areas of diversity works with the Force to facilitate interaction with minority groups across the Force area and to scrutinise equality and diversity.

Consultation also takes place through partnership arrangements:

- by working through Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) to establish community concerns through wide consultation;
- working within Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) to agree which improvement targets will be put forward as part of the Local Area Agreements that commenced in June 2008

In addition, the Force benefits from the role of the Police Authority members who consult widely with local people about the policing of their area and provide feedback to the Force via Police Authority Liaison Meetings.

Consultation within the Force:

- Outputs from quarterly staff surveys;
- Outputs from the Force's Cultural Audit;
- Use of action learning sets to gather information and learning from staff;

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- COG on the Road Programme; a quarterly exercise where the Chief Officer Group conducts its monthly business meeting at a location away from Headquarters. This includes the provision of various Focus Groups and staff meetings within the selected local area during the day prior to the business meeting taking place.

(m) Ensuring that we meet all equalities and diversity legislation and best practice.

Policies and procedures are in place in relation to equal opportunities and diversity, these include:

- Race Equality Scheme 2005-08
- Gender Equality Action Plan 2007-10
- Disability Action Plan 2006-09
- All supplemented by a Combined Equality Scheme launched in 2009.

The Force is seeking to improve the retention of minority officers and staff in the Force. To that end we will undertake research into police staff and how they progress through our organisation. This work will help us to understand if there are any barriers to progression for specific groups and will inform plans to tackle any issues we find. We will also be looking at how we can further encourage female officers to join our many specialist roles which have traditionally seen higher levels of male officers, for example: armed response.

This is designed to directly contribute to our aim of making our workforce representative of our diverse communities and ensuring:

- the delivery of positive interventions to improve retention of women and BME officers and staff;
- reduction of the percentage of resignations by women and BME officers and staff.

The Force works together with the Police Authority to audit its compliance with diversity and equalities legislation and ensure that it has a clear picture of the equalities impact of its activities.

(n) Measuring our impact on the environment and ensuring our policies are sustainable.

The Force is committed to reducing its carbon footprint and considering the full environmental impact of its policies. It is working in conjunction with the Authority on a defined Environmental Management Policy, which will form the bedrock of future activity. An Environmental Working Group has been established under the leadership of an ACC to drive forward the Environmental agenda, including any Action Plan required to improve performance. It has appointed specific members of staff to manage the impact of its activities on the environment, ensuring it is as environmentally sustainable as possible. An audit of environmental activity has been undertaken and a full assessment of all of the various environmental initiatives that take place is underway to enable good practice to be identified wherever possible.

(o) Incorporating good governance arrangements in respect of partnerships and other group working.

In 2008/09 the Authority undertook an audit of partnership work, and especially partnership governance. This has led to the creation of a partnership governance 'checklist' for use within all partnerships. This is in support of the Constabulary and Authority's Joint Partnership strategy.

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4 Review of Effectiveness

- 4.1 The Chief Constable has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of the governance framework and system of internal control within the Force. The review of the effectiveness is informed by the work of:
- Director of Finance and Resources;
 - Chief Officer Portfolio Holders, Department Heads and Commanders;
 - those managers within the Force who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, for example, the Force's Organisational Learning & Risk Manager;
 - the Police Authority internal audit manager.
- 4.2 A continuous and ongoing review of certain elements of the governance framework takes place throughout the year:
- the Chief Officer Group considers the operation of a number of the key governance processes (as covered by monthly Strategic Report) and recommends areas for improvement;
 - a Corporate Risk Register covering major risks is compiled and reviewed by the Chief Officer Group quarterly. Chief Officers have a quarterly face to face meeting with the Risk Manager to discuss specific areas of strategic risk;
 - the Performance Improvement and Tasking Group is responsible for a continuous review of the Force's Performance and its ability to respond to current and emerging issues;
 - the Professional Standards Department undertakes a continuous review of complaints and matters arising from confidential reporting and produce monthly reports;
 - the Police Authority Treasurer is responsible for establishing an internal audit plan that is prioritised according to risk assessment;
 - the Police Authority Performance Management Committee undertakes scrutiny of the Force performance throughout the year and the Police Authority Complaints Monitoring Group reviews complaints;
 - the Police Authority Corporate Governance Committee scrutinises the ongoing development of the governance framework and individual governance issues as it sees fit.
- 4.3 The Force is subject to a number of external audits and inspections during the year. Reports are considered by the appropriate strategic group:
- the Audit Commission's Annual Audit letter is considered by the Chief Officer Group
 - The Police Use of Resources report is considered by the Chief Officer Group
 - The Comprehensive Area Assessment report is considered by Chief Officers
 - HMIC thematic reviews, HMIC inspections and other reviews and inspections are considered by the Performance Improvement and Tasking Group.
- 4.4 In addition an annual review of governance arrangements is undertaken by senior officers of the Force. For 2009/10, the main components of this review include:
- completion of an Assurance Statement by Department Heads and Commanders and indicating the effectiveness of key controls during 2009/10 and any plans for improvement to the control framework
 - completion of a governance checklist to determine the adequacy of governance arrangements in place in the Force, this checklist draws on the core principles as laid out in the CIPFA/SOLACE guidance "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government".
 - Completion of a key controls checklist that draws on CIPFA guidance on internal control statements.

5. Outcome of the Review of Effectiveness

- 5.1 The Annual Audit letter (dated November 2009) contained the Auditors unqualified audit opinion for the year 2008/09. It stated that:

They “did not identify any significant weakness in [our] internal control arrangement”

Furthermore in assessing the way Value for Money was delivered and resources were utilised the auditor concluded that the Force had:

“adequate arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.”

- 5.2 The outcome of the Police Use of Resources review was an overall score of 3 indicating good use of resources. This should be considered against the fact that the criteria and methodology of the Use of Resources Examination was significantly amended for 2008/9 whereupon there was a greater expectation from auditors that Forces & Authorities were able to demonstrate continuous improvement in achieving their results.

A number of detailed recommendations were however made and the Force is working to improve its processes in these areas.

- 5.3 Performance paragraph [to be inserted after 31st March 2010].

- 5.4 The Information Management Strategic Group continues to provide the Force with a solid platform from which it can accredit its information management practices to the International Information Security Management Standard BS ISO 27001. The Group provides sufficient governance on information management to minimise future data loss and any subsequent embarrassment to the organisation.

- 5.5 During 2009/10 the Force completed the action plan that arose out of the Health & Safety Executive's 2007/08 inspection with just one area outstanding. This related to the link between the Force's internal computer network and the way in which it can access the National Policing Improvement Agency's National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies (NCALT) facilities. Work is however underway with our FM partners (Sunguard Public Services) to overcome these difficulties so that we can fully comply with the Health & Safety Executives recommendation.

- 5.6 The Force utilises a variety of benchmarking, Inspection & Review activities besides those conducted by HMIC, NPIA or other audit bodies. In 2009/10 these included:
- A review of the Force using the Home Office's Police Objective Analysis tool,
 - A review of the Force's Public Protection Units conducted by the Crime Department,
 - A review of the structure and resilience of the Scientific Support function conducted by the Crime Department
 - Completion of Phase 1 of the Corporate Services Transformation projects relating to the working of Finance, Procurement, HR, Leadership & Development, Equality & Diversity and ICT
 - Continuation of the Operation Quest methodology by reviewing the way in which Intelligence is handled, together with a follow up review into Customer Contact
 - Performance Management Reviews into the Basic Command Units
 - A review of the Force's Chartermark status in preparation for the transition to the Customer Services Excellence award.

The outcomes from these reviews are contained on the Force's Organisational Learning Database, which tracks the progress of relevant action plans through to closure.

- 5.7 The Police Authority's Internal Audit Manager has conducted, or overseen reviews, into the following Force activities during 2009/10 utilising a risk based audit approach:
- ICT Business Continuity
 - ACPO Community Security Policy
 - Seized monies, as held at BCUs following investigative activity
 - Environmental Management
- The outcomes from these reviews are contained on the Force's Organisational Learning Database, which tracks the progress of the action plans through to closure.
- 5.8 The changes identified in 2008/9 relating to the way the Force delivers major change continues to be embedded. Improvements during 2009/10 include:
- Tighter budgetary control over defined major projects,
 - Improved governance over finance and performance, together with an established Business & Technical Design Authority process,
 - Driving of higher standards for Project Mandate/ Business Case documentation
 - Clear linkage between the Force's change programme and the Regional Collaboration process.
 - Delivery of an electronic Firearms Assets Management system
- 5.9 The annual review of governance arrangements undertaken by senior officers of the Force indicated that there are no fundamental weaknesses in the governance framework or the system of internal control.
- 5.10 The review also recognises that some of the challenges reported last year still have activity ongoing and, where this is the case, comments are made in section 6 below. In some cases the review recognises that the work that started last year is nearly complete, while in others significant work is still underway.
- 5.11 Finally some of the areas which were highlighted as problematic last year have seen significant work completed over the course of the last twelve months to the degree that those problems have been completely resolved and the activity concluded.

6. Governance Issues and Development Programme for 2010/11 and Beyond

6.1 The Force Vision and 2012 Programme

The strategic aim of the Force is to be a top performing Force. Many aspects of the 2012 Programme have already had a positive impact on the governance arrangements of the Force, however it must be recognised that a significant change programme brings risks in terms of governance and internal control. The governance arrangements around the Strategy Board and Programme Board have been tightened, as reported above. However the size and scope of the ICT projects that make up the core programme still require meticulous project management skills and governance if they are to provide the Force with the long term benefits they envisage. Reports on the 2012 Strategy are provided to the Police Authority's Chairs Committee.

As part of the 2012 Programme a range of strategies have been produced that define the Force's position on a range of core principles. These include the Operational Policing, Public Service and People strategies. These underpin the delivery of the Programme.

In addition the Force will maintain an awareness of changes in the national policing environment, these include:

- New Policing legislation, in particular the Crime & Security Bill and the Equality Bill,
- The political landscape and forthcoming General Election,

- The publication of HMIC's Police Report Card, and its impact on Comprehensive Area Assessments.

6.2 Human Resources Issues

The Force has completed phase 1 of the Corporate Services Transformation project releasing £2m of resources from HR, Finance and ICT. This has had a major impact on the way that HR services are provided. A single central HR Department has now been established, supported by a People Services Centre to provide corporate advice on HR matters across the organisation. Attendance Management continues to improve. The current economic climate however still requires the Force to make tough decisions in respect of vacancies and posts, consequently the People Gold Group continues to function. Phases 2 & 3 of the CST project will take place during 2010.

In addition to this the Force still faces a challenge in having a truly representative mix of staff that reflects the mix of the local population and as such specific targets are likely this year to cover this area.

The Force still has some lingering difficulties relating to the previous Job Evaluation episode and these may arise again when the Force comes to undertake any future Job & Grading Review.

6.3 Resource Management

Work is underway to finalise the procurement of Duty Management software, while a revised process for the allocation of resources is also being reviewed. These two approaches will assist in the delivery of an effective resource management structure. Once the procurement has been agreed work will commence on building the relevant processes and structure that will allow the software to demonstrate real benefits, including the reduction of additional staffing costs such as overtime.

6.5 Business Continuity

The Force has been able, as a result of the impact of the Influenza pandemic, to review and restructure all of its Business Continuity Plans. Activities conducted during the summer of 2009 led to a complete re-think into the scope, purpose, inputs and outputs required from the Business Continuity process, leading to an improvement in structure. A whole range of critical posts and functions has been identified together with a complete revision of the Gold/ Silver/ Bronze functionality. The ICT Department has established a viable Disaster Recovery Facility and identified the priority services, which would require restoration in an emergency.

6.7 Partnerships

The Audit Commission's Comprehensive Area Assessment process published its reports into local partnership activity in December 2009. The results are being carefully studied across the Force with a view to improving performance in the future. However partnership activity remains an area of challenge on many fronts. Local Area Agreements will be reviewed during 2010/11 for introduction in April 2011. Restrictions on public sector finances will have an impact. The Plymouth LSP is already trying to reconcile the planning processes of the partners so that they can make the best use out of available resources.

6.8 Force Culture & Public Confidence

The Force has undertaken a Cultural Audit of its staff during the year to determine how it might meet the needs of its Vision & Mission when considered against the Home Office's single "Top Down" target. It is appreciated that the two areas are clearly linked and should be considered together. The results of the audit are currently being analysed and, where necessary, improvement plans will be created to drive activity. These plans will be contained on the Force's Organisational Learning Database, which will track the progress of the plans through to closure.

6.9 Future Strategy

The Force is well aware that in the period post March 2011 the financial position is distinctly unclear and planning is underway now to look at the way resources are best utilised. This includes the work being done by the Value For Money Group and the Force Blueprint. Later in 2010 the Force will be conducting a full review of its Medium Term Financial Strategy in order to compliment the Blueprint work. This will also be able to take account of a slightly clearer Political picture.

6.10 Regional Collaboration

Police Forces are also having to develop partnerships with their Regional colleagues. The creation of South West Police Authority Joint Committee will provide this work with the strength of governance it deserves. A specific inclusion has been drafted by the Joint Committee for inclusion in the Local Policing Plan outlining some of the work that will take place over the next three years. It will be important that this Regional work maintains good links with the Force Development programme and the governance of the two initiatives is complimentary.

Over the coming year, the Force will continue to monitor the areas outlined above to further enhance governance arrangements. The Force will work in partnership with the Police Authority to deliver these arrangements and I am satisfied that these steps will address the improvements that were identified in the review of effectiveness and I will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed
Stephen Otter
Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall Constabulary