

DRAFT

Devon and Cornwall Constabulary Annual Assurance Statement

This statement sets out the position as at 31 March 2008 including improvement plans for the financial year 2008-09:

1 Scope of Responsibilities

- 1.1 The Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall Constabulary (Force) 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 also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of the Force and facilitating the exercise of its role, which includes 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 risk 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 2008 and up to the date of approval of the 2007-08 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. A new Force Vision has been developed during 2007-08. The Constabulary has worked closely with the Police Authority to develop the Force mission, vision and values and a contract has been established with the Police Authority that underpins the plans for the next 3 years.

Improving community safety is best achieved when a wide variety of organisations and agencies work together to contribute to multi-agency agreements. Devon & Cornwall Constabulary is committed to strengthening existing inter-agency working with public, private, community and voluntary groups and coming to a shared agreement over objectives and targets.

(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 business transformation programme. The Organisational Development Group provides 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 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 monthly Strategic Report that covers the following areas:

- Operational performance
- Environmental scanning
- Force Risk Register
- Health and Safety
- Absence monitoring
- Complaints
- Projects
- Audits and inspections

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 as part of the Strategic Report. 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 Risk Management Strategy was updated in 2007-08 following a post implementation review by the Police Authority's Internal Auditor. The new strategy is comprehensive and underpinned by detailed policies and procedures. In addition to maintaining risk registers and assessing the major risks, the Force undertakes formal environmental scanning and produces a Force Strategic Assessment every six months. Work is currently being undertaken to give greater emphasis to strategic risks.

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

The Constabulary has a well established Professional Standards function and effective procedures for communicating codes of conduct and standards of behaviour. In 2007-08 the new requirements under Police Discipline Regulations which come into Force on 1 July 2008 were piloted. A memorandum of understanding between the Force Professional Standards Department and Police Authority has been agreed with regard to the reporting of internal fraud investigations.

(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. The Force is working with the Police Authority Treasurer and the Corporate Governance Committee to review and update the current Financial Regulations and updated regulations will be presented to the Police Authority for approval in June 2008. Force policies in relation to finance and internal control have also been reviewed and a new corporate operating framework is being developed for approval in June 2008.

(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. Relevant action plans are then put in place to meet new requirements. The Force also 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.

A continuous improvement database is used to track the implementation of improvement plans.

(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 an information security policy and data protection policy. As a result of national information security breaches during 2007-08 and two incidents within Force, a comprehensive audit of information security has been completed. The outcome of this audit and the action to be taken are described in sections 5 and 6 below.

(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.

(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. In 2007-08 the Force implemented the Police Staff Handbook which governs allowances paid to police staff. This brings the Force in line with national guidance on this matter. As part of the Force Vision the Force will establish an appropriate reward strategy for staff.

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

The Force 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 meet both organisational and individual requirements. Over the next five years, the Force aims to significantly enhance the learning culture across the organisation and specific plans will be developed to achieve this.

(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 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 (a random survey of 10,000 residents that took place three times in 2007-08);
- Partners and Communities Together (PACT) initiatives, where local Police Officers, local council representatives, elected councillors, community representatives, education, faith groups, health & fire service meet to identify and solve problems;
- two Independent Advisory Groups [IAGs], one focusing on disability and one for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender [LGBT] communities work with the Constabulary to facilitate interaction with minority groups across the two counties;

Consultation also takes place through partnership arrangements:

- by working through Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) to establish community concerns through wide consultation;
- working with local authority representatives and other partners in Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) to agree which improvement targets will be put forward as part of the Local Area Agreements that commence 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. Police Authority Liaison Meetings provide members of the public with an opportunity to air their views.

Consultation within the Force:

- Outputs from staff surveys
- Use of action learning sets to gather information and learning from staff.

(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 2006-9

The Force has a specific objective to improve the retention of minority officers and staff in the force. This is designed to directly contribute to our aim of making our workforce representative of our diverse communities. Direct targets are:

- 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. A working group was formed in 2007 to ensure environmental initiatives are progressed across the force. A statement on the environmental footprint of the constabulary will be included in the Annual Policing Report for the first time in 2007/8.

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

In 2007, the Force undertook a comprehensive review of Partnership arrangements and this was reported to the Police Authority Budget Working Party. This review proposed the introduction of a Partnership Governance checklist along with other measures to improve the governance of partnerships. An action plan to ensure the adoption of these arrangements is now in place and all partnerships will be covered by this framework by September 2008.

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 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;
- the Risk Register is reviewed quarterly by the Risk Review Group. A Corporate Risk Register covering the major risks is agreed and this is reviewed by members of the Chief Officer Group. The approach to risk management is being further developed to ensure a focus on strategic risks;
- 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 Annual Audit letter from the Audit Commission is considered by the Chief Officer Group
- The Police Use of Resources report is considered by the Chief Officer Group
- 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 2007-08, 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 2007-08 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.

5.0 Outcome of the Review of Effectiveness

5.1 The Annual Audit letter (dated November 2007) contained the following statement:

"Our audit work during the year shows that the Authority and Force have continued to perform well. We have completed our audit for 2006-07 and have issued unqualified audit opinions on your financial statement and on your value for money conclusion. This confirms that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing 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. The Audit Commission commented:

"The Police Authority and Force continue to perform well across the themes covered by our use of resources assessment (PURE). The Authority and Force have built on their strengths which have contributed towards maintaining a good level of performance across the board."

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

5.3 Performance indicators for the Force show a significant and upward trend in the level of performance, in particular the level of user satisfaction with the service has increased to 83.5% and exceeded the Force target for the year.

5.4 During 2007-08 the Force suffered two information security breaches. As a result of the recent incidents the Chief Constable instigated a full audit of personal and operational information security across the Force. The audit actively engaged the

Information Commissioner, Mr Richard Thomas. The audit report had a number of important observations and recommendations, in particular, that full compliance with ACPO policy will help significantly reduce potential security breaches as well as ensure adequate protection is in place for personal information. Details of the action plan to address the findings of the audit are provided at paragraph 6.4 below.

5.5 In 2007-08, an external inspection of health and safety was completed which highlighted 5 areas for improvement. Throughout 2007-08 an action plan has been developed to address these areas and in overall terms, improve the health and safety culture. It included:

- Health and Safety Policy Statement signed by Chief Constable and Chairman of Police Authority;
- development of health and Safety intranet site;
- health and safety training provided to a significant number of officers and staff;
- a draft Health and Safety Management Policy has been developed to be fully implemented in 2008-09.

5.6 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 other than those related to information security and health and safety described above. However, a number of areas for improvement/development have been identified and these are dealt with in section 6 below.

6.0 Governance Issues and Development Programme for 2008-09 and Beyond

6.1 The Force Vision and Force Development Programme

The strategic aim of the Force is to be a top performing Force. Many aspects of the Force Development Programme will have 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 Force has put in place a Programme Board and related organisational structure to manage the change and minimise the risks. In addition the Force has worked with the Police Authority to commission a report by independent consultants to review its readiness for change and its ability to implement the changes required.

In addition to developing its own plans the Force will maintain an awareness of changes in the national policing environment, these include:

- new public service agreements for 2008-11
- developments arising from Sir Ronnie Flanagan's review of policing
- the implications of the Policing Green Papers to be published in June 2008.

6.2 Human Resources Issues

There are a number of human resources issues arising from the Force Development programme. To address these, the Force has formed a People Gold Group that will guide the development of the programme from a Human Resources point of view. Among the areas that this group will address are:

- development of a fair and equitable pay structure and introduction of a formal Reward Strategy
- development of a learning culture across the organisation

- development of excellence in our leadership
- enhancing equality and diversity practice.

Formal arrangements have been established to consider the Independent Police Complaints Commission report into the handling of the job evaluation scheme by the constabulary. Some time has elapsed since the incident and the constabulary has plans in place to improve its Human Resources policies and practices. The recommendations of the report will be reviewed and any outstanding recommendations will be implemented.

6.3 Resource Management

In 2008-09, the Force will undertake a major project to improve its resource management. The main aspects of this project will be to codify significant elements of the governance framework and to provide timely management information to manage performance and compliance. Specifically, outcomes sought from the project will be to improve compliance with Force human resource policies and to uplift service delivery and to achieve better value for money in the deployment of all staff resources.

6.4 Information Security and Data Protections Issues

A full audit has been undertaken of Force security arrangements in respect of property and data. All Chief Officers are responsible for implementing the 44 recommendations of the detailed report and these range from immediate measures to long term developments. The recommendations are currently being analysed from a risk point of view and an action plan will be considered by the Chief Officer Group on 16 June 2008. The Force will give priority to the implementation of the action plan so that greater reliance can be placed on Force arrangements with regard to information and data security.

6.5 Health and Safety

A new Health and Safety Management Policy will be in place in 2008-09. This policy will build on the significant progress that was made in this area in 2007/8 considerably strengthen the level of control.

6.6 Management of Assets

We will further develop our management of assets to ensure proper stewardship and value for money. This will include the implementation of a new transport management information system from 1 April 2008. In addition, a further review of the use of vehicles will take place during the year with the aim of increasing utilisation and value for money in this area.

6.7 Business Continuity

Some weaknesses have been identified in the business continuity arrangements for the Middlemoor site. As a result, a business continuity plan for the site is being developed. In addition, loss of power at the Middlemoor site in February led to a temporary Force-wide loss of computer services. Contingency plans were implemented with no loss of service to the public. However a review of the incident has led to an action plan to improve the resilience of ICT systems. There is provision

within the ICT capital programme for 2008-09 to develop a Disaster Recovery Facility away from the Middlemoor site and this will be progressed during the year.

6.8 Financial Regulations and Financial Procedures

The Director of Finance and Resources is working with the Police Authority Chief Executive, the Police Authority Treasurer and the Corporate Governance Committee to redraft Financial Regulations, Standing Orders for Tenders and Contracts and to produce a comprehensive Scheme of Delegation. These will be presented to the Police Authority in the June 2008. In addition, the Director of Finance and Resources is revising Force policies to ensure that delegated authority for financial transactions within the Force is clear.

6.9 Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy

The Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy was approved in 2002 and it works well. However, the introduction of a new Police Code of Conduct expected in July 2008 suggests that a major revision of the strategy is required and that this should be linked to the implementation of the Police Code of Conduct. As an interim measure, an updated Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy will be prepared and presented to the Police Authority in June 2008, this will incorporate an updated Confidential Reporting policy.

6.10 Procurement

A service review of the procurement function is currently being undertaken. The aim of this review is to introduce an approach to procurement that will be value for money within a framework of compliance with organisational policies. Introduction of new processes will be linked to further development of the Force Information Management System.

6.11 Policies

The review of the effectiveness of the governance arrangements revealed some weaknesses in the processes for ensuring that all policy changes are properly dealt with. This issue will be reviewed during 2008-09 and consideration given to the introduction of a Corporate Operating Framework with the purpose to ensure policies, procedures and processes are applied corporately. Where levels of empowerment to undertake local arrangements are in place, proper limits will be applied.

6.12 Partnerships

On 4 March a timetable was presented to the Corporate Governance Committee outlining how the Force is to move to full adoption of the governance framework for partnerships by September 2008.

6.13 Risk Management

Over the last 2 years, the Force has successfully embedded risk management processes into day to day management activity. However, it is recognised that the risk management strategy needs to be enhanced to ensure strategic risks are properly identified and that the corporate risk register does not include tactical issues.

6.14 Consultation with the Public

Consultation procedures will be updated during 2008-09. During the year the force will work with the Police Authority to conduct a joint postal survey of 25,000 residents in Devon and Cornwall. This will be supplemented by ongoing telephone surveys. In addition qualitative surveys through focus groups will be used and interactive sessions will be run aimed at reaching "hard to hear" groups.

Over the coming year, the Force will take the steps 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