

**Devon and Cornwall Police Authority HR Committee
24 March 2009**

Open for the purposes of FOI
Report of Director of Human Resources

HMIC Inspection of Human Resources

Recommendation(s):

- (i) To note the improved assessment grading of 'Fair' for the HR function of the force**
- (ii) That a further report will be submitted to the next meeting, providing the force's initial full response to the report.**

Introduction

1. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) carried out, in November 2008, a follow up inspection of the human resource function (excluding Learning and Development) of Devon and Cornwall Constabulary. The force had previously been graded as 'Poor' for this area of activity in the last baseline assessment inspection undertaken in March 2006.
2. The report of the follow-up inspection has very recently been received and provides an improved assessment grading of 'Fair'. This is defined as "delivery of an acceptable level of service".
3. The inspection identifies a number of strengths, work in progress items, and areas for improvement. These are currently being reviewed to ensure the work in progress items are completed and the areas for improvement are prioritised and appropriately addressed. This aspect will be covered in the further report to be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

Background information

4. The last comprehensive baseline assessment of forces by HMIC was carried out in 2006. In that inspection of Devon and Cornwall Constabulary, the human resources function of the force was assessed as 'Poor', indicating "an unacceptable level of service", where a significant number of criteria had fallen well short of the required standard. A large number of 'areas for improvement' (AFIs) were identified.
5. Learning and Development was also covered in the baseline assessment but through a separate inspection domain. It was assessed as satisfactory and gained a 'Fair' grading.
6. An improvement programme for the HR area was created to achieve a 'fit for purpose' HR function, initially overseen and supported by HMIC. The improvement programme was revised and augmented with new requirements to meet emerging needs of the force over the latter part of 2007 by the new temporarily appointed HR Director. The appointment was made permanent through competitive selection in December 2007.
7. The HR programme has continued to evolve in line with the needs of the force, including the people and HR elements of the 2012 strategy to achieve the force's vision of becoming a top performing force.
8. Thus, the response to the 2006 HMIC assessment and work to address the identified AFIs has taken place against significant new and expanding demands upon the HR function. These have included successful implementation of the Police Staff Council Handbook to regularise the

terms and conditions of police staff in line with national agreements, and the ambitious workforce modernisation changes affecting both police officers and police staff. At the same time the HR function has continuing to deal with the considerable day-to-day business and has been planning a major restructuring of the function as part of the corporate services transformation project, which involves sizeable staffing reductions.

9. The required follow-up inspection of the HR function by HMIC was carried out in November/December 2008. It focussed primarily on assessing progress made against the AFIs identified in 2006, whilst also taking into account the changing nature of the force and the requirements upon the HR function since that time. Learning and Development were excluded. The inspection covered:
 - Strategy, planning and policy
 - Resourcing
 - Performance management
 - Recognition and reward
 - Health and wellbeing
 - Deployment
 - Consultation and engagement
 - Development
 - General/structural issues
 - Diversity (internal aspects).
10. The methodology adopted by the inspection team included a preliminary review of a large range of documents and a broad range of interviews with key stakeholders and representative focus groups of managers, officers and staff were conducted. Thus the customers of the HR function significantly informed the inspection.
11. The overall assessment of the follow up inspection has awarded an improved grading of 'Fair'. This is defined as "delivery of an acceptable level of service". This is a significant achievement against both the amount of improvement required and the additional demands placed upon and met by the HR function over this period. In her covering letter, Jane Stichbury, the HM Inspector of Constabulary, recognises that much progress has been made.
12. The report observes that a significant amount of change with new appointments to the HR senior management team has taken place. The force considers this has been a major contribution to the improvements achieved.
13. The inspection report, as is normal, identifies a number of 'strengths', 'work in progress' items and AFIs under each of the inspection areas. These are currently being reviewed against existing demands to ensure the 'work in progress' items are completed and the areas for improvement are prioritised and appropriately addressed. A final factual accuracy check is also being undertaken.
14. The report comments that the inspection team was impressed by the breadth and detail of the HR programme and that the force is being held to account by the Police Authority. It goes on to stress that there is a pressing need for the Constabulary to deliver tangible benefits and outcomes.
15. A further report to the committee containing the initial full force response to the inspection report will be submitted to the next meeting.

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