

Devon and Cornwall Police Authority

7 December 2007

Open

Report of the Chief Executive

POLICE AUTHORITY – THE WAY FORWARD (PA07/326)

RECOMMENDED that the report be noted.

Background

1. The Authority has now held two positive seminar days with the Force to discuss the Chief Constable's 5-year vision. There is a separate report at Agenda No 21 (Chief Constable's 5 year vision) reporting back on the outcome of those seminars.
2. A lot of work is being undertaken to ensure that the Authority can now work closely with the Force to provide oversight and scrutiny in relation to delivering on the vision and this report provides members with a general briefing on how matters are being progressed.
3. Importantly the 5-year vision as agreed by the Authority will now be incorporated within a 3 Year Strategic Plan (Policing Plan) which will need to be adopted by the Authority at its meeting on 15 February 2008. A group of members appointed by the Community Engagement Committee is engaged with the drafting of that Policing Plan. As previously indicated to members that Plan will also contain the Authority's Strategic Plan which is included as a separate item on this agenda No 12.
4. The Policing Plan is integral to most of the other work that is now being undertaken and there is a need to ensure that all of the work links to what is included in that Plan.
5. A Members group has already given thoughts to adopting a formal constitution for the Authority. The Constitution will
 - Set down how the Police Authority will exercise its powers and duties to ensure the provision of an effective and efficient police service for Devon and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly
 - Set down how decisions will be taken;
 - Ensure that the people responsible for decision making are clearly identifiable and that they explain the reasons for their decisions;
 - Establish a means of holding decision makers to public account;
6. Further work is being undertaken by officers to ensure that the Constitution will link with the Strategic Plan and to finalise the other working documents identified below that will be referred to in the Constitution. The work on the Constitution will also need to address the Code of Corporate Governance, which is being considered by the Corporate Governance Committee.
7. All Committees are now operating with specific Terms of Reference and the intention is that they will also be given agreed levels of delegated powers. This will enable the Authority's decision making processes to be quicker and will avoid all Committee decisions needing to be agreed by a meeting of the Authority with the inevitable time delay. It also intended that the Chairman's Group should be established as a Business Board again with specific delegated powers. The Business Board would be subject to a 'call in' system so that the wider membership will be kept suitable briefed on matters being dealt with by the Board and have the opportunity to comment.

8. A report is also being produced to set down the formal delegated powers to be given to Committees, the Authority's Chief Executive and Treasurer and the Chief Constable.
9. As agreed at the recent joint seminar a group of members is looking at working protocols around the on-going relationships between the Authority and the Force. That Group is also looking at the role and purpose of Lead Members and the linkages with BCU Commanders and heads of the major Force departments. Any formal protocol proposed by that Group will also need to be linked to the Strategic Plan and the associated Authority work arising from it.
10. Officers are drafting a business plan for the Authority again this will need to be linked to the Strategic Plan and will show how the Authority is intending to undertake its role alongside the Force.
11. Clearly all of the above are interlinked and officers are working on all of the elements, with members as appropriate, so that final decisions can be taken at the February 2008 meeting alongside adoption of the Strategic Plan.
12. The Police and Justice Act enables individual members to be given delegated powers – consideration will need to be given to how this provision is used and the Home Office have indicated that they will be monitoring the levels of delegation given to individual members.

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