

Devon and Cornwall Police Authority

MINUTES

A meeting of the **Planning and Consultation Committee** was held on 6 September 2007 in the Conference Room, Endeavour House, Woodwater Park, Exeter, starting at 10.00am.

Present:

Chairman.... B Preston

L Dunn, G Hicks, M Hicks, A Malcolm J Owen, W Thomas and C Wallin

Officers in Attendance: -

Police Authority T Kelland (Consultation & Community Engagement Officer), R Martin (Policy Officer) and J Norris (Assistant Chief Executive) [item 7 only].

PC/235 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr M Bull.

PC/236 Declarations of Interests

No declarations of interest were made in respect of any item on the agenda.

PC/237 Minutes

RESOLVED

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2007 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

PC/238 Corporate Planning Progress 2007/08

As no representative from the Force was in attendance, the Policy Officer introduced the paper outlining recent developments in the production and distribution of the Local Policing Summary and Annual Plan.

The Annual Plan has been printed for circulation to libraries, as requested by the Police Authority. Members considered that it was important that copies of the Plan should also be circulated to each Town and Parish Council across the Force area.

Members were updated on the arrangements for circulating the Local Policing Summary (LPS). A phased distribution will take place across the 720,000 households in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly beginning on 24 September and should be completed before Christmas.

The option to undertake a survey of the public to gauge opinion towards the LPS was considered by Members as desirable. The Committee called for greater clarity regarding the methodology to be adopted for this survey. The Policy Officer indicated he would confirm this and report back to Members.

The Policy Officer reported that all Members had been sent a copy of the LPS local to their area. The costs of the LPS were approximately 8 pence per copy. It was agreed this information would be added to the leaflets available at PALM meetings.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the updates covering the publication of the Annual Policing Plan 07/08, production of Local Policing Summaries and current information regarding forthcoming changes to the planning process be noted.

- (ii) That copies of the Annual Policing and Strategic plan in hard-copy should be distributed to each Town and Parish Council.
- (iii) That the post door-drop analysis of the Local Policing Summaries is agreed in principle but be subject to further information.

PC/239 Terms of Reference of the Planning and Consultation Committee

Members were presented with a report outlining arrangements to feed into the Police Authority Constitution.

The Chief Executive and Chairman have been preparing a Constitution for the Police Authority which is scheduled to be discussed at the Police Authority on 5 October. The Constitution will contain Terms of Reference for each Committee. Members were asked to consider the proposals laid out in the report.

The Policy Officer advised Members that the Chairman on the Police Authority had initially indicated that this Committee would hold responsibility for monitoring the Authority's Diversity duties. However, more recently thoughts are that diversity responsibilities should be divided between the Human Resources Committee and this Committee. The Chairman of the Police Authority proposed that internal matters of diversity regarding staff and officers are managed by the Human Resources Committee whilst outward-facing matters relating to the way the Authority engages with its diverse communities are handled by this Committee. Members agreed to this suggestion but recognised that the Terms of Reference mentioned in the report would have to change to reflect this. The Chairman asked the Policy Officer to action this and contact Members outside of the meeting.

Members commented that throughout the terms of reference:

- the word 'community' should be changed to 'communities'.
- Reference to 'Crime and Disorder Partnerships' should be changed to 'Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships'

The Policy Officer stated that calls had been made for the name of the Committee to be changed to better reflect its work. After some discussion it was agreed that the Committee should be known as the Community Engagement Committee. The Policy Officer stated he would confirm with the Chairman of the Police Authority whether this decision needs referring on for final agreement.

Since the meeting it has been agreed by the Chairman of the Police Authority that this will be taken to the Chairman's Group for discussion.

Members also discussed whether the current procedure for electing the Committee's Chairman needed changing. Members felt it inappropriate that the Full Authority should consider altering the process to select a Committee Chairman at a time when it was seeking to give more delegated authority to the Committees. Members agreed that the Committee would indicate to the Authority that it recommended the Chairman selection process should remain as it is.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the terms of reference, subject to minor changes, are recommended for inclusion in the Authority's Constitution.
- (ii) that the election process for electing a Chairman should remain as it is, in that that the Committee recommends to the full Authority who should be Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee, following an election process.
- (iii) The Committee recommends that the name of the Committee be changed to the Community Engagement Committee.

PC/240 Consultation Update

The Chairman reminded Members that this would be the Consultation and Community Engagement Officer's last Committee meeting before her departure from the Authority. The Chairman thanked her for her good work and wished her well.

The Consultation and Community Engagement Officer reported that she had been involved in joint community engagement work with Special Branch and the Counter Terrorism unit. This will initially be undertaken in Plymouth early next year.

Members questioned when the Authority would have sight of the Staff Survey. The Consultation and Community Engagement Officer advised that the findings had been seen by the Chief Constable and Chairman of the Police Authority but it had been necessary to refer the findings back to MRUK for clarification and further analysis.

The Chairman read out an undated letter he had received from the Director of Human Resources putting right an error in the report (item 6, paragraph 5) presented to Members. The correct position is that the Staff Survey action plan will be prepared once the clarified information is returned from MR UK. The further assurances are required following inconsistencies in the original findings presented to the Force. The Chairman indicated he would reply to the letter.

A Member challenged one of the questions used in the Public Survey. It was felt that question 9 – *How good a job do you think the police are doing?* was a leading question and could therefore result in a statistically inaccurate response.

Members were critical of the methods used to select the sample of 10,000 people for the Public Survey. It was considered unwise to carry out a public survey in July when many homes are occupied by tourists and fewer students are in residence. This may explain the poor response rate received to the survey. The Consultation and Community Engagement Officer indicated that she had prepared a piece of work reviewing the Public Survey methodology but this had been deferred due to her pending departure.

The Committee was critical that little improvement had been seen in the survey findings over the years. The Consultation and Community Engagement Officer confirmed that the issues arising as of most concern had remained the same over recent years. This led to comment that the Committee had not been good at holding the Force to account for this area of activity. Members discussed this in detail and there appeared a lack of clarity as to whether this part of the Authority's role was for this Committee or the Performance Management Committee. The Chairman stated he would discuss this with the chairman of the Performance Management Committee shortly.

Members felt that there was far too much detail in the report without enough analysis to bring the key issues to the fore. The Consultation and Community Engagement Officer advised that a summary report had been prepared and could be circulated to Members if required. The Chairman asked this to be done.

RESOLVED

- i) That the report be noted.

PC/241 Police Authority Liaison Meetings update

The Assistant Chief Executive joined the meeting and presented a general update regarding Police Authority Liaison Meetings.

It was reported that a member of Police Authority staff had been absent on sick leave for some months. This presented some challenges to the organisation and management of PALMs, however the Autumn schedule had recently been finalised. Six PALM Administrators have now been employed to work across the area. A member of staff from the Police Authority attends each meeting however this will be reviewed in the medium term.

The Authority is continuing with the varied approach to PALMs. The 'drop-in' style events attract good numbers of attendees but tend to be resource intensive. A study of PALM attendance does not draw many conclusions with no specific patterns or trends picked up.

Again, Members questioned whether the information received at PALMs was being used by the Authority. The Chairman suggested that the success of PALMs varied. This led to a discussion on the relative worth of PALMs and whether they were a good use of Authority resources. The Assistant Chief Executive welcomed Members' ideas on how PALMs could appeal to a wider audience or be more cost effective.

The Chairman called for further discussions to be held over the way PALMs operated, their value and how success should be measured. It was decided that an hour-long debate would directly precede the next meeting of this Committee. The Chairman requested that a quick exercise be conducted to estimate the approximate costs of PALMs. This would then feed into the debate.

Brief discussion was held on the Force roll-out of PACT (Partners and Communities Together) meetings. These police-led meetings are very localised and ask residents to identify the most important issues requiring police action. It was noted that the public could confuse PACT meetings with PALMs.

The meeting closed at 11.45am