

**Devon and Cornwall Police Authority**

**29 June 2007**

Open for the purposes of FOI  
Report of the Chief Executive & Clerk

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**Police Dog Welfare Scheme Annual Report**

**Recommendation(s):**

- (i) **That the Authority notes the content of the report.**

**Introduction / Summary**

1. This report summarises the output from the Devon and Cornwall Police Authority Police Dog Welfare Scheme for the period 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007.

**Background Information**

2. The purpose of the Police Dog Welfare Scheme is to enable an independent observation, comment and report on the conditions under which police dogs are housed, trained and transported with a view to securing greater public understanding and confidence in these matters. This arrangement also provides an independent check on the way police dog handlers carry out their responsibilities with regard to the welfare of animals in their care.
3. Devon and Cornwall Police Authority has administered a Police Dog Welfare Scheme since 1 March 2003.

**Number of Police Dogs seen during the period**

4. Animal Welfare Independent Visitors may request any police dog handler who is on duty in the area that they are visiting to attend the police station. If the dog handler is unable to attend, for example if he/she is engaged on a specific incident, a full explanation is given to the Animal Welfare Independent Visitor and the explanation is recorded by the visitor in their report.
5. The following table shows the number of police dogs seen by Animal Welfare Independent Visitor(s) during the period 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007.

Police Station	Number of dogs seen
Barnstaple	2
Camborne	7
Exeter	10
Newquay	5
Plymouth	29
Torquay	8
Launceston	15

## **Main issues arising from police dog inspections**

6. At the conclusion of each visit and before leaving the police premises, Animal Welfare Independent Visitor(s) are required to complete a report form to provide details of the visit. A completed report form includes the name of the dog seen, the name of its handler and any matters raised.

There has only been 1 issue raised throughout the course of the year

- Torquay –Van for dogs transportation, - ‘Perspex shield cracked and air con ineffective’  
The vehicle was taken to HQ Vehicle Workshops on 19 July where the damage was repaired. The vehicle is now functioning properly. The air conditioning is working correctly, and the extractor fan is operating.

General comments noted on the report forms include:

- Very active and interested in those around and surroundings.
- The handler was very enthusiastic about his dogs and their work.
- Fine young dog, in good condition
- Dogs happy, full of beans
- In excellent condition
- Fit, healthy and happy
- Plenty of water and food available
- Healthy, very alert
- Alert, but very approachable

## **Events throughout the year**

7. Mick Chidgey from Dogs Trust came to Police HQ on 19 June 2006 to deliver some refresher training to Independent Animal Welfare Visitors, the session lasted for a day and was very successful.
8. During the year, the scheme has gone through a few changes. As well as unannounced visits, dogs are also visited by arrangement at police headquarters during their training. It is hoped that further improvements to the scheme throughout 2007.

## **Retired Police Dogs**

9. The Chairman’s Group discussed options for providing support to retired police dogs that are placed with a police officer/police staff when they retire. This issue was also discussed by the wider membership some time ago. Currently officers receive no financial support.

The Chairman’s Group felt that from a budget point of view it would be inappropriate to consider making a monthly payment.

The recommended way forward was: -

- Police staff/handlers who keep a police dog when it retires will receive a one-off payment of £1,000.

It was decided consideration would be given to help with exceptional vet’s bills. However, these will be taken by the Chief executive in consultation with the Chairman.

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