

DEVON AND CORNWALL POLICE AUTHORITY

MINUTES of a meeting of the **Devon and Cornwall Police Authority** held at Police Headquarters, Middlemoor, Exeter on **Friday 21 May 2004**.

Present:

Mr L D Brokenshire, Mr M I R Bull, Mrs A Colborne, Sir Simon Day, Mr T Evans, Mrs O Dendy, Mr B C Greenslade, Mr M Hicks, Mr S M Malloni, Mr D Money, Mr M Nevitt, Mrs J Owen, Mrs C J Ryan, Mr J Smith, Mr W D Thomas and Mr C L Wallin.

APOLOGIES

Mr C Bulley, Mrs A Talbot, Mr P Tregunna

P/853 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Mrs Jill Owen was elected Chairman.

P/854 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Mr David Money was elected Vice-Chairman.

P/855 STAFFING MATTERS

The Chairman introduced and welcomed two new members of staff to the Authority. Joy Norris had been appointed as the Assistant Chief Executive and Sarah Henley had been appointed as Secretary.

Karen Strahan, Police Authority Liaison Officer had accepted a position with Devon County Council. On behalf of the Authority, the Chairman wished Karen best wishes in her new post and presented her with a leaving gift.

P/856 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

P/855 ITEMS REQUIRING URGENT ATTENTION

There were no items that in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered by the meeting as a matter of urgency.

The Chief Executive advised that he wished to discuss the date of the October Police Authority at the end of the meeting.

P/856 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 20 February 2004 were signed as a correct record.

P/857 CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT

Members considered the report of the Chief Constable and were updated on a number of incidents noted in the report.

It was with regret that Mrs Wallis reported the death of two serving members of staff.

P/857 CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT (Cont'd)

PC Steve Bissett had died from heart problems on 13 March. PC Bissett joined the Force in April 1976 and had worked as a dog handler and trainer and as a training officer in North & East Devon and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly BCUs. Most recently he was stationed in Camborne and worked in the IIMU as a briefing officer. Steve was also a member of the Cornwall & Isles of Scilly sailing section.

Police Staff member Jane Hacock had died on the 4 May following a long battle against cancer. Jane Hacock joined the Force in 1984 as a radio operator in Launceston. In 1996 Jane moved to the Plymouth control room where she remained until her illness prevented her from working. Jane leaves a husband and 13 year old son.

Jane and Steve were a credit to the Force and would be sadly missed.

Major incidents and Policing Diary

- 1.1 Operation Remora – searches for the body of Charlotte Pinkney were ongoing.
- 1.9 Firearms incident, Cornwall - The Chief Constable offered her sincere condolences to the family of the man shot dead by police following reports of threats of violence. The incident was being investigated by the newly formed IPCC and as such, it was inappropriate for the Force to comment further.
- 1.14 Robbery, Penzance – It was reported that this type of crime was rare and in general, the number of robbery crimes had decreased significantly.
- 1.16 Armed robbery, Plymouth – A member of the public had apprehended the offender of this crime and their involvement in preventing the offender's escape was praised.
- 1.18, 1.19, 1.20 Drugs arrests and seizures – Possession of cannabis remains illegal. The amount of cannabis resin seized in Callington was significant.
- 1.21, 1.22 Arson / Fire – A report on the Arson Task Force was a substantive item on the agenda.
- 1.23, 1.24, 1.27 Fatal motorcycle collisions – The Chief Constable reported that the Constabulary had a stand at Devon County Show at which the motorcycle belonging to a victim of a recent road traffic collision was displayed. It was hoped that this would act as a reminder to people of the risks of not driving with due care and attention.

The issue of the duration of some road closures following accidents was raised – in particular an incident in North Devon on the Easter Bank Holiday had resulted in considerable delays and subsequent complaints from road users. ACC Stowe advised that the level of investigation required following a road traffic accident where injury had occurred was similar to that carried out for murder inquiries and was necessary for a successful prosecution. It was accepted that there was a difficult balance between satisfying the needs of the victims and their families and those wanting to use the road. The police strove to keep road closure times to a minimum whenever possible.

It was AGREED that the Force arrange suitable publicity across the Force area to explain to the public why road closures following road traffic accidents may be required and the reasons for the length of some closures. It was hoped that this would increase the public's tolerance of these situations.

It was AGREED that a presentation by the traffic team on the subject of RTAs and the subsequent investigative requirements of the police be given to members.

- 1.32 Preparations for policing next year's football season were already underway. Plymouth's entry into the First Division would have a significant impact on policing throughout the Force area. It was confirmed that arrangements for organisations to pay for aspects of policing certain events were in place.

P/857 CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT (Cont'd)

- 1.35 Operation Nordic in Torquay had been a considerable success and the Chief Constable gave her congratulations to Chief Superintendent McGrath and his staff for this achievement.
- 1.36 Benefit fraud arrests in Saltash – a man and woman had been charged with benefit fraud offences in connection with a deception at a Post Office in Plympton.
- 1.39 Prolific burglar jailed – operation remand had resulted in the burglar John Bale being sentenced to 5 years imprisonment. His offences included 329 burglaries in the South West with 80 in Devon and Cornwall. The Chief Constable reported that in general however, the number of burglaries in Devon and Cornwall was reducing.

Operational Priorities

Crime levels stable - Levels of domestic burglary and vehicle crime in Devon and Cornwall have fallen to the lowest in six years. Domestic burglary had fallen by 16.4%. The detection rate for burglary was increasing (16.7%) exceeding the Force target.

Vehicle crime had reduced by 14% and the detection rate for this type of crime was 11.8% (10.7% last year).

Levels of robbery had decreased by 20.8%.

There had been a rise in the numbers of violent crime, however the number of murders had decreased to 16 compared with 19 in the previous 12 months.

Overall, crime levels remained stable with a 0.2% rise. The extra leap day in the year was held to account for the slight increase.

The Force would be concentrating efforts on reducing violent crimes and in particular looking at initiatives to reduce the number of alcohol related incidents.

It was queried whether it was possible to make a distinction between alcohol related crime and other crimes. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that he had attended a recent meeting regarding violent crime issues. Violent crime was on the increase nationally and was a consequence of current social attitudes – a sign of the times. Binge drinking was one of the contributors to the problem. As such, it was necessary for police forces, the Government and other agencies in partnership to respond to the way society was developing and to consider what tactical options were available to them.

It should be noted that reports of violent crime in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly had increased as a result of the extra police officers that had been put on the beat in communities, increased use of CCTV and the drive to encourage the public to report these crimes.

It was requested that Members be provided with a report at a future meeting on the Government's Alcohol Strategy and what issues were of local significance.

It was confirmed that there were not yet laws in place to enforce bars to contribute to the cost of policing but that this was one of the initiatives under discussion.

- 2.5 Crackdown on persistent fine defaulters – This was a national drive to recover unpaid fines from persistent offenders and was part of the work of the Local Criminal Justice Board.
- 2.6 Community Website whizzkid – the work undertaken by Kye Candy in producing a website for East Devon NHW scheme was commendable and a valuable community contribution.

P/857 CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT (Cont'd)

- 2.7 Prevent car crime for £1 – Tamper-proof car tax disc holders were available to buy from the Constabulary for £1 each on the Force website. Everyone was encouraged to use this device to reduce theft of tax discs from cars. It was suggested that the DVLA should be encouraged to issue the disc holders with all tax discs. There was a possibility of post offices being asked to display the holders next to their counters and this initiative would be progressed by the Deputy Chief Constable.
- 2.8 Catch a Rat – Operation Puma, to clamp down on drug related crime in Plymouth with the help of its communities, had been re-run in April and had proved very successful.
- 2.9 On the spot fines – the use of fixed penalty notices for crimes such as graffiti, vandalism and abandoned vehicles was helping to free up police officer time. Issuing fixed penalties typically took 20 minutes whilst the previous method of processing could take over 2 hours.
- 2.13 Pointing out the risks – a campaign in Cornwall to make the public aware of the dangers of spiking drinks was helping to tackle the increased number of incidents of this type of crime.
- 2.15 New seafront office – the new beach office in Dawlish would be operational during the summer season.

Awards and Commendations

The Chief Constable commented on the recent award ceremonies for long service and good conduct.

A review of award ceremonies was being undertaken and there was a suggestion for an award being made by the Police Authority.

Successes and challenges – update

4.2, 4.3 Road Traffic Collisions

The number of casualties had reduced by 24% and had exceeded the target by 3%. Performance was on target for the 10 year ACPO target reduction of 40%.

The main causes of accidents were 'negligent manoeuvre' and 'going too fast for circumstances'. Casualties were at the lowest for 4 years and all BCUs were achieving target.

It was suggested that better car design may be a factor in the reduction of casualties, however it was also possible that 'safer' cars resulted in complacency.

- 4.4 – 4.6 Neighbourhood Beat Managers – As of 30 April there were 336 NHB managers in place. A corporate guide was currently being drawn up which when complete would instruct and guide NHB managers in their role and responsibilities. The guide was being produced in consultation with NHB managers and would be modified to take account of local variances in requirements. This would ensure that every NHB Manager would have a clear portfolio of requirements.

Neighbourhood policing was being promoted by way of local press coverage which included weekly articles by NHB Managers, features on the Force website and by Community Affairs Officers in their youth work.

It was confirmed that Members would be invited to attend the Roadshows to promote the concept of Neighbourhood policing and that the programme was currently being prepared.

P/857 CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT (Cont'd)

Force Strength

Police officer strength as at March 2004 stood at 3310 officers. There had been an increase of 12 officers since the last meeting.

There had been 5 police officer medical retirements and 5 police staff medical retirements during 2003/04, both showing a reduction on the previous year and were on target. These reductions reflected the role of the Occupational Health Support Unit in which the Force had invested significantly.

4.10 – 4.15 Call handling - the investment made by the Police Authority last year had been well invested with call handling continuing to be a priority for the Force. 92.3% of 999 calls were answered within 10 seconds and 91% of non-emergency calls were answered within 30 seconds. The length of time that callers spent queuing had reduced and continued to decrease month on month.

New technology had been introduced that identified, and was able to display geographically, the location from which a call had been made. Although this was improving call handlers' ability to deal with calls from areas that they were not familiar with, it was recognised that new staff were not yet proficient in using the software. This would improve over time. Once staff were proficient it was believed that this aspect of the service provided would surpass that of a local control room.

The control room had also benefited from new technology that managed the peaks and troughs of call handling requirements and enabled management to staff the department efficiently.

It was expected that by the Autumn, significant improvements in performance would be seen.

A HMIC report highlighting the national problem of call handling was due to be published in June and in the draft, Devon & Cornwall Constabulary had been identified as best practiced in this area.

ACC Winter agreed to ensure that Officers attending local council meetings had sufficient information available to them to enable them to respond appropriately to questions about call handling performance.

It was confirmed that there was software available that could trace emergency calls made from mobile phones to a geographical area however this software was not in use by the Force. This would be looked into as would the issues around Human Rights.

Members raised the ongoing problem of the use of handheld mobile phones whilst driving. The Force had prosecuted in some cases however it was apparent that ongoing education of drivers was required.

4.17 Providing assistance – The Force was achieving target for prompt response to incidents in rural areas, but not in urban areas. The reasons for this were queried. It was thought that prioritisation, road and/or traffic problems, number of prompt response demands and Officer numbers were influencing factors. The Chief Constable stressed that this target required careful management as the priority had to be to reach incidents safely.

Mr Evans expressed an interest in knowing whether there were road network issues in Plymouth that could be influencing response times.

4.18 Recovery of assets – Criminal assets of £943,170.89 had been recovered in 2003-04. Hypothecation (retention of assets) would be introduced in 2005.

P/857 CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT (Cont'd)

Personnel

Members considered the personnel snapshot as of 30 April 2004.

It was noted that an Acting Chief Superintendent had been seconded to the IPCC.

The number of operational deployments stood at 93% which was higher than average and reflected the Constabulary's aim to put more officers on the beat.

Members were pleased to note that the recent recruitment drive for special constables had been successful and that significant efforts were being made to attract people from ethnic minority communities. It was felt however that there was a need to ensure that this welcoming ethos was reflected throughout the Force to ensure the retention of ethnic minority staff.

Spotlight on Success

The Chief Constable highlighted the letters of appreciation that had been received from members of the public.

Two successful domestic violence prosecutions, which had resulted from the police working in partnership with the CPS, were also highlighted. Magistrate members were particularly pleased to note the increasing level of cooperation between CPS, Magistrates Courts and the Police. Increasing numbers of witnesses were now agreeing to give evidence at court, and the work of the Local Criminal Justice Board in improving this situation was commended.

Members were advised that ACC Stowe was leading a piece of work to improve the way the Force kept victims and witnesses informed. The benefits of improving this information flow were to make victims and witnesses feel valued and to increase levels of satisfaction in the service provided by the police.

It was noted that video ID parades both saved cost and reduced police officer time with no decrease in performance.

RESOLVED to note the report.

P/858 NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING WEBSITE PROGRESS

ACC Melville updated Members on the progress made towards raising the profile of Neighbourhood Beat Managers. It was the Force target to increase the percentage of population who knew the name of their Neighbourhood Beat Manager by 100%.

Surveys had shown that those people who knew who their NHB Manager was had a higher level of satisfaction in the police service than those who did not. Local communities were being made aware of who their beat manager was and how to contact them through the Force website, local papers and other publications and corporate posters and business cards.

Development of NHB Manager information pages on the Force website was progressing. Plymouth BCU NHB website was complete and had already received over 19000 hits. Work was well underway for other BCU NHB Websites and the intention was that North and East Devon, South and West Devon and Cornwall would be complete in May.

Future development of the website included links from the NHB pages to local crime statistics. It was noted that increasing numbers of people had access to the internet, and Members welcomed this initiative.

RESOLVED to note the report.

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P/859 RESTORATIVE POLICING

ACC Melville presented a report which updated the Authority on the progress of Restorative Justice Policing within the Force and the Restorative Justice Training for Neighbourhood Beat Managers.

There was a Government aim to maximise the use of Restorative Justice within the Criminal Justice System. This was because this approach had demonstrated higher levels of victim confidence, involved victims, offenders and the community in dealing with offending behaviour and provided the potential both to solve problems and increase public reassurance, and had also significantly reduced the likelihood of future offending.

A bespoke accredited Restorative Justice training package for delivery to Neighbourhood Beat Managers, together with awareness training for first-line supervisors and senior managers had been researched and commissioned. The training would provide a preventative, problem-solving approach to criminal, anti-social behaviour and conflicts within the community - it would enhance the skills required to bring people together to help resolve local problems. A strategy for rollout of the training would be essential.

Mr Melville reported that at a recent seminar, Sir Charles Pollard, member of the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales had commended the Force for being one of the first in the world to take Restorative Justice concepts into community policing.

The timescale for delivery of the programme was as follows:-

07 May 2004	Senior Officers' Information Event
10 May 2004	Commencement of 'Training for Trainers'
17 May 2004	Commencement of NHB training in South and West Devon BCU
July – August 2004	Review of progress / evaluation
September 2004	Roll-out of Neighbourhood Beat Manager training across remaining three BCUs.

Members noted that the training of South and West Devon BCU pilot had now been completed and Professor Rob Morgan of Plymouth University was undertaking a robust evaluation of the ongoing work and initial results.

Chief Supt. McGrath and Donald Bligh, a past Police Authority Member, had played a leading role in promoting this style of policing. Chief Supt. McGrath was asked to comment. He had been encouraged by local support and he considered Restorative Justice to be a real opportunity to empower victims and witnesses.

It was confirmed that Restorative Justice did not bypass the Courts system, nor was driven by the Courts but was a tool for community officers to use in resolving conflicts within communities. It could be used to supplement the Courts process, as it was sometimes used as an order.

Members were advised that the training would be delivered over three days, and there was a one day training for both supervisors and managers. Following implementation, a review of the training would be undertaken.

It was agreed that there was a need to publicise the positive work being done by the Force in this area. However the training had not yet been fully delivered and it was therefore thought prudent to limit any publicity until the scheme had been soundly evaluated and had demonstrable results.

Mrs Winter reported that representatives from the Home office were due to visit the Force to discuss citizen focus and this opportunity would be taken to promote Restorative Justice and how this Force was taking the initiative forward.

Members indicated that they would be pleased to receive a presentation from Sir Charles Pollard if he was prepared to give one.

RESOLVED to note the report.

P/860 BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Members were updated on the work currently being undertaken within the Strategic Development Department on the operational strategy for Police Authority estates.

It had become apparent that the Constabulary's estate had become progressively decoupled from operational requirement and in some cases was having an impact on the delivery of police services. The services of an external consultant were employed to aid the Constabulary in the production of a long term strategy to address this problem. The outcome would have a significant impact on resources because of the accepted requirement for new buildings.

Members were advised that at a meeting planned for the 2 June, senior operational staff would meet to map out all existing estates onto a large scale map of Devon and Cornwall. This would then be used to plot positions that were considered to provide the most robust citizen focused police service. A list of property which was considered fit for operational purpose collated from worst to best to allow decisions and / or recommendations to the strategic board on spend would also be compiled. Recommendations to the Strategic Board would follow.

Members welcomed the development of this strategy.

It was confirmed that Members of the Property Sub-Committee were involved in the development of the strategy at various levels.

Mr Evans reported that Plymouth City Council were undertaking an asset management review in partnership with Health Authority and there was an opportunity for Plymouth BCU to link in with this. He indicated that he would be interested in knowing which locations in Plymouth were being considered. Mr Arnold confirmed that consultation between BCU Commanders and local Chief Executives and other partner agencies would take place. Consultation between Plymouth BCU Commander, police staff and partner agencies was already ongoing. Nevertheless, although the pros and cons of co-location had been recognised, there remained some historical strategic allegiances that were now not appropriate.

Mr Wallin reported that a seminar was planned for later in the summer to look at proposals and partner agencies would be invited and their responses sought.

It was confirmed that the strategy would be written to take into account the additional Police Community Support Officers, and other police staff; it was this issue that brought the current property problems to light.

Sir Simon requested he be allowed to visit the new police station in Salcombe.

RESOLVED to note the report.

P/861 NSPIS CASE PREPARATION AND CUSTODY

NSPIS (National Strategy for Police Information Systems) have developed applications for Case Preparation and for Custody under a Government funded scheme. The initial contract was let in 1997/98 with a £34m grant approved by the Government for delivery of both systems over a twelve month period. The project had suffered considerable delays but both systems were now due to be operational in all Forces by 2006. Devon and Cornwall Constabulary had been placed in the second of the four force implementation cohorts with NSPIS Case Preparation planned for implementation late this year and NSPIS Custody to follow shortly after.

The amount of Government funding that would now be received by the Constabulary to implement NSPIS Case Preparation was £736,000. The costs estimated to be met directly by the Constabulary were in the region of £243,000 and had been accounted for in the 2004/05 budget.

P/861 NSPIS CASE PREPARATION AND CUSTODY (Cont'd)

PITO had produced a Memorandum Of Understanding (MoU) for the implementation of NSPIS Case Preparation and Members were advised that it was necessary to obtain an early signature on the MoU to provide clarity of responsibility and liability. The document was not legally binding, however had been evaluated by the Force legal department. A copy of the MoU was available to Members on request. William Thomas, Chair of the Property Sub-Committee had been involved in this project and was already familiar with the document.

RESOLVED to approve agreement and signature of the Memorandum of Understanding for the Implementation of NSPIS Case Preparation between PITO and Devon and Cornwall Constabulary.

P/862 TREASURY MANAGEMENT

The Treasurer provided Members with an update on the progress and outcomes against the Treasury Management Strategy 2003-04.

Fund Managers

It was reported that the performance of the Investment Managers had proved disappointing with lower returns than in previous years. Both fund managers had invested in Government bonds, the capital value of which had fallen significantly during the year. It was noted however that since the Authority had employed the services of the fund managers, some £102,000 of additional income had been achieved. It was recommended that the services of the two fund managers be retained for the time being.

Day to Day cash management

The performance of Devon County Council in handling the day to day cash management for the Authority was reported as being superb. Cash returns of £136,000 for the year had been achieved. Mr Glasby reported that the current Head of Unit, Mr Ian Faulkner was retiring imminently and he wished to pass on the thanks of the Authority.

Long term borrowing

For the first time in its history, the Authority undertook long term borrowing of £2.328m in November 2003. This was to provide for capital expenditure on land and buildings and was within the borrowing limit of £7.5m. The Treasurer was pleased to report that no problems had been experienced since this undertaking was made.

Classification of specified and non-specified investments

Authorities were free to use either specified or non-specified investments, however were required to be more explicit about their use of non-specified investments because of increased risk. The Treasury Management Strategy agreed by the Authority required only specified investments to be made to reflect its attitude to risk and was intended to cover UK Government bonds and certificates of deposits with a maturity date in excess of one year. The Authority had been relying on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to issue guidance as to what constituted a specified or non-specified investment however recent clarification had shown that Government bonds and certificates of deposits were classified as unspecified. There was, therefore, a need to change the definition in the strategy.

Credit Ratings

The Authority was required to define what it considered to be a 'high' credit rating and the current Treasury Management strategy stipulated ratings of at least AA- for specified investments. For smaller cash investments, this was sometimes a problem because typically AA- rated institutions had a minimum investment threshold. There was an opportunity however for the Authority to invest in high street Building Societies but these institutions commonly had long term credit ratings of A and short term credit rating of Fitch1 and were technically excluded. The Treasurer advised that the risk associated with these investments would be low and such ratings could be treated as 'high'. In addition, Devon County Council had been using this approach for several years.

P/862 TREASURY MANAGEMENT (Cont'd)

RESOLVED

- (i) That the external investment managers be allowed to use non specified investments in respect of UK government bonds with a maturity date in excess of one year and certificates of deposit with a maturity date in excess of one year but not more than two years;
- (ii) that such investments constitute a maximum of 30% of the value of the portfolio for each fund manager;
- (iii) that, for Devon County Council, the credit ratings to be used for specified investments are A for long term and Fitch 1 for short term and that these ratings be defined as 'high' for this purpose.
- (iv) That on behalf of the Authority, the Treasurer thank Mr Ian Faulkner for his valued work in the day to day cash management undertaken for the Authority, and wish him well in his retirement.

P/863 DEVON AND CORNWALL LOCAL JUSTICE BOARD THE FIRST TWELVE MONTHS

The Chief Constable provided Members with an update on the operation of the Local Criminal Justice Board. Mrs Wallis had been elected to remain as Chair of the Board until March 2005 and was very pleased with its performance to date.

Projections showed that a number of national targets had been met including the persistent young offender pledge, narrowing the justice gap and timeliness through Court. The ineffective trial target had been particularly challenging because of the already high performance rate in this area; both the Magistrates and Crown Court were top quartile performers and remained amongst the best in the Country. This target had not been met. Mrs Wallis reported that the LCJB's plan on improving public satisfaction and improving confidence was only one of seven nationally to receive green status under a comprehensive Home Office review.

Members were already aware of the importance of the role played by LSJBs. They welcomed the update and requested that a regular report be presented to them. Because the Board met every two months it was agreed that such a report to every Police Authority meeting would prove difficult. Mrs Owen attended a meeting of the Board twice a year and Mrs Wallis and Mrs Owen would look into ways of feeding back information to all Members.

Mr Smith raised the issue of the role of young people's involvement in the scheme and the possible impact that the Children's Act may have on policing. It was suggested that Mr Smith give a presentation to Members at their seminar on 13 July on the Children's Bill and the Children's Trust in Devon.

RESOLVED to note the report.

P/864 ARSON TASK FORCE

The Devon and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Arson Task Force was established in 2001 and was comprised of the Constabulary, Cornwall County Fire Brigade, Devon Fire & Rescue Service and the Isles of Scilly Fire Brigade.

The Arson Task Force employed a problem solving approach to develop ways of tackling arson related issues, identifying best practice and disseminating to BCUs and partners. The objective of the task force was to work towards reducing the number of deliberately set fires by 10% by 2010 – a target set by the ODPM. Initially, the Arson Control Forum funded the Arson Task Force but this funding had expired in March 2004. A second bid had proved successful, with staffing costs being funded for a further 2 years until March 2006.

P/864 ARSON TASK FORCE (Cont'd)

Research had identified flaws in the way data of deliberately set fires was recorded by the Fire Service. There have been four changes made in the way data is recorded by partners since inception of the Task Force and this had resulted in recording standards higher than in many other parts of the country. This improved recording was thought to be the main contributor to the increase in the number of incidents recorded when comparing figures for 2003/4 with 2002/3. Other factors for this increase were:

- ongoing training by Arson Task Force officers to detectives and firefighters in arson recognition to ensure accurate identification of deliberate/accidental fires
- improved communication between Police and Fire Service, brought about by the continuity provided by the Arson Task Force
- last year saw the hottest, driest weather for some years, e.g. it was the warmest June since 1976; rainfall in September was 47% below the average. There is a huge correlation between weather and certain types of deliberate firesetting
- figures for 2002 are believed to be artificially low due to recording problems during periods of Fire Service industrial action.

Exeter University had been commissioned to assess these factors to see if there was a method of quantifying their effect on statistics.

Fire Service data indicated an increase of approximately 4% when comparing figures from 2003/04 with 2001 and so Devon and Cornwall were well on the way to achieving the ODPM target of arresting growth in arson by 2007.

Members noted the information about the number of arson related crimes in Devon and Cornwall from January to December 2002 and 2003 and the geographical areas that were of the most concern. Targeted initiatives were ongoing in Plymouth, Caradon and Exeter.

RESOLVED to note the report.

P/865 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Authority received reports of the Committee meetings that had taken place since the last meeting of the Authority.

1. A meeting of the Human Resources Committee was held on 11 March 2004.

Members noted the items discussed by the Committee. There were no recommendations arising from the meeting.

2. Performance Management and Audit Committee was held on 28 April 2004.

Members noted the items discussed by the Committee. There were no recommendations arising from the meeting.

Mrs Ryan commented that the report necessarily focussed on the challenging performance targets, however urged Members to note that there had been significant improvements in many areas. She thanked Officers of the Force involved in Performance Management for their work towards improving poorer performing areas in consultation with this Committee.

3. A meeting of the Planning and Consultation Committee was held on 16 March 2004.

P/865 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES (Cont'd)

Members noted the items discussed by the Committee. The following recommendation arose from the meeting:

[PC/100] Strategy for engaging the communities for Devon and Cornwall

RESOLVED that the Strategy for Engaging the Communities of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly be approved.

4. Professional Standards and Complaints Monitoring Group

Members noted that the appointment of Independent People to sit on Misconduct Panels had nearly reached its conclusion. Over 600 applications in total had been received by the five Police Authorities involved in the recruitment process. Ten candidates had been selected to serve on the regional panel. Following the receipt of satisfactory references, the appointments would be confirmed and training arranged. A suitable training programme would need to be developed by the five Police Authorities. Members requested confirmation of the selected candidates in due course.

5. A meeting of the Resources Committee was held on 24 March 2004.

The following recommendation arose from the meeting:

[R/332] Payment of Members Allowances and Expenses

RESOLVED that

- i. the proposals to change the date for payment of members' allowances and reimbursement of members' expenses be approved;
- ii. the appropriate administrative procedures, as outlined in the report, be implemented to support recommendation (i).
- iii. The Chairman of Property Sub-Committee and the Chairman of Professional Standards and Complaints Monitoring receive an additional payment of £2000 per annum for their Sub-Committee Chairmanship roles.

[R/223] Insurance Renewals

The Treasurer reported that since the meeting, the decision on the officials' indemnity had now been taken. The cover had been increased by £5m making a total of £10m at an extra cost of £14,000.

P/866 POLICE AUTHORITY LIAISON MEETINGS

Members noted the meetings that had taken place since the last meeting of the Police Authority. The following issues of note were discussed:-

- 18 May, East Looe – It was confirmed that where possible, the Force recruited local people. Transferees had a lot to offer the Force in experience and therefore there had to be a balance between recruitment from each category.
- May, Sidmouth – It was pleasing to note that a local councillor had promoted a multi-agency approach to tackling local parking difficulties.
- St Mary's, Isles of Scilly – Significant progress had been made in policing on the island and the Police Authority Liaison Meetings had played a part in this achievement. It was noted that members of the public present at the last meeting had praised Inspector Ken Wilkins for his efforts over the last few months.

P/866 POLICE AUTHORITY LIAISON MEETINGS (Cont'd)

- Councillor attendance at some meetings was considered poor. Whilst it was desirable to have councillors present and members of the public expected a certain level of councillor attendance, there was a danger of the meeting becoming less focussed on the public's views.
- 19 May, Paignton – There was significant discussion around the ASBO which had been served in the Brixham area and the possible displacement effect that may result.

P/867 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 11 of Schedule 12A of the Act, being information relating to

1. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matters arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office-holders under, the authority.

P/868 URGENCY REPORT – SPECIAL PRIORITY PAYMENTS

Members considered a report on the Special Priority Payments for police officers introduced in 2003 as part of the Government's pay reform. The Urgency Committee had agreed a list of officer posts determined to receive the awards in 2004/05.

RESOLVED to note the decision taken by the Urgency Committee.

P/869 DATE OF OCTOBER POLICE AUTHORITY MEETING

RESOLVED that the date of the October Police Authority meeting be changed to 27 October.