

Devon And Cornwall Police Authority

Minutes

A meeting of the **Devon and Cornwall Police Authority** was held at Police Headquarters, Middlemoor, Exeter on Wednesday 30 November 2005 at 10.15hrs.

Present:

Mr D Money(Chairman)

Mr J Smith(Vice-Chairman)

Mr M I R Bull, Mr C Bulley, Mr J Currie, Sir Simon Day, Mr I P A Doggett, , Mr G Hicks, Mr M Hicks, Mrs A Malcolm, Mr S Malloni, Mr M Nevitt, Mrs J Owen, Mr B Preston, Mr W D Thomas and Mr C Wallin.

P/1101 Apologies For Absence

Mr T Evans, Mr B C Greenslade and Mrs A Talbot.

P/1102 Declarations Of Interest

The following declarations of interest were received:

Name	Agenda Item	Minute number	Interest	Nature of Interest	Action
J Smith	12) Holsworthy Police Station	P/1116	Personal	Member of Devon County Council	N/A
J Owen	12) Holsworthy Police Station	P/1116	Personal	Member of Devon County Council	N/A
Sir S Day	12) Holsworthy Police Station	P/1116	Personal	Member of Devon County Council	N/A

P/1103 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

The Chairman certified that having regard to the special circumstances pertaining to the matters noted below, he was of the opinion that, despite their non-inclusion on the Agenda they should be considered at this meeting as a matter of urgency.

- Force Structures - namely the need to agree the way forward for the proposed amalgamation
- The Appointment of Lay Justice Members to the Police Authority – namely the need to put in place appropriate measures to appoint Lay Justice members to the Authority.

P/1104 Chairman's announcement

The Chairman announced that Mr Stephen Mellor, Police Authority Finance Manager, had successfully applied for the post of Director of Finance with the Norfolk Constabulary. Members wished Stephen every success in his new post.

P/1105 Force Structures

Following the initial submissions made by 31 October 2005, the Home Secretary had indicated that the following two options had been assessed as suitable for progression at this stage:-

P/1105 Force Structures (Cont'd...)

- Two Strategic Forces – Devon and Cornwall as a standalone strategic force and Avon and Somerset, Gloucester, Wiltshire and Dorset as a strategic force.
- One Regional Strategic South West Force.

Issues raised in discussing the above included:

- Members had taken part in a full discussion on the proposals at the recent Police Authority Seminar.
- There was concern that the reorganisation to achieve a Regional Strategic South West Force option would involve significant costs. A simplistic averaging of the Council Tax across the five Force areas would require an 11% increase in Devon and Cornwall.
- Devon County Council, Cornwall County Council and the Council for the Isles of Scilly were in support of the Devon and Cornwall standalone strategic force.

RESOLVED that

- i. the Police Authority fully supports the option for Devon and Cornwall to remain as a standalone strategic Force
- ii. a business case be submitted containing an action plan as to how the Force will work towards meeting the criteria for a strategic Force including, where appropriate, the option for shared services with other Forces in the region.

P/1106 Appointment of Lay Justice Members to the Police Authority

The Authority had 3 Lay Justice Members; one appointment was due to expire on 30 April 2006, and the other two on 31 March 2007.

Home Office / Association of Police Authority guidance on the recruitment and selection of Lay Justice Members of the Authority had been received and it was necessary to put appropriate measures in place to ensure that a smooth recruitment and appointment process took place.

Issues raised in discussing the above included:

- The procedure for appointing in 2007 was clarified.

RESOLVED

- i. that Mr J Smith be nominated as the Police Authority representative to serve on the selection panel for a two year period;
- ii. that the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Chairman, be given delegated authority to appoint an Interview Panel comprising 5 members;
- iii. that the Interview Panel be given delegated Authority to appoint Lay Justice members to the Authority;
- iv. that the vacancies for appointments commencing in April 2006 and April 2007 are notified to Lay Justices and, provided that the Selection and Interview Panels agree there are sufficient candidates of the required calibre, no further recruitment processes will be conducted before May 2007.

P/1107 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 14 October 2005 were signed as a correct record subject to the following amendments.

- The date of the meeting on page 1 should read "14 October 2005"
- [P/1089] Final bullet point on page 5 should read "Policing Boards – the Plymouth Policing Board had proved successful. A date had yet to be agreed for the North Devon Policing Board."
- [P/1095] First paragraph on page 8, final sentence should read "It was therefore proposed that option 4 be progressed but that all options be reconsidered in January / February 2006 before the final commitment was made."
- [P/1097] It was requested that the minute include reference to Member's concerns regarding this issue, and the substantial overspend that had resulted.

P/1108 Annual Audit Letter

Members considered the annual audit letter of the Audit Commission summarising the conclusions and significant issues arising from the recent audit of the Authority.

Representatives from the Audit Commission had recently presented the Audit Letter to Members at the Corporate Governance Committee held on 23 November.

Issues raised in discussing the above included:

- There was a general opinion that the report was comfortable reading and was reassuring.
- The dangers of wasting resources by over auditing and the expected increase in assessments of the Authority by the Audit Commission.
- The need for the Human Resources Committee to meet to discuss poor performance in this area and to put in place arrangements for improvement.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Annual Audit Letter be noted.

P/1109 Chief Constable's Report

Deaths of Serving Members

It was with regret that Mrs Wallis reported the death of PC John Adams on 23 October 2005. John was born on 15 July 1963 and joined the Constabulary on 13 July 1997. He served in Paignton and Torquay, and was latterly the Neighbourhood Beat Manager for Ellacombe. Prior to joining the Force as a Police Officer, John was a member of the Special Constabulary from March 1993 to June 1997. John leaves a widow and two children. He will be sadly missed.

Major incidents and Policing Diary / Operational Priorities

Members considered the content of the report.

Issues raised in discussing the above included:

- Firearms - at the meeting, it was reported that the number of firearms incidents reported to the police between April 2005 and October 2005 was 1280. Of the 1280 reports, 59 had resulted in a deployment of armed police officers. This equated to 5% which was the same percentage as the

P/1109 Chief Constable's Report (Cont'd..)

previous year. Leadership and Management of firearm related incidents within the Constabulary had undergone a thorough review following a recent inquest and it had been determined that the systems in place were very good. Subsequent to the meeting, more accurate data in relation to firearm deployments was provided as follows: For the 2004/05 year the total number of firearms incidents was 1256, resulting in 80 armed deployments. This equated to 6.4%. For the period April 2005 to date the total number of firearms incidents was 993, resulting in 87 armed deployments which equated to 8.8%.

- BB guns continued to be a problem.
- The number of incidents within Devon and Cornwall involving Firearms compared with those in Avon and Somerset would be ascertained and reported back to the member concerned.
- Incidents involving Samurai swords were causing concern with 43% of deployments during the summer season being in connection with Samurai swords. Work undertaken by the Constabulary with Samurai traders had been very successful and this initiative had made the news in the National press.
- Tasers had been issued to suitably trained Police Officers in Devon and Cornwall, however there had not yet been occasion for one to be used operationally.
- Robbery - An off duty police officer had witnessed an attempted burglary involving a security guard in Paignton. The guard had been attacked and the Police Officer had managed to arrest one of the offenders. At the time of the arrest, the police officer had not known whether or not the offenders were armed.
- Road traffic accidents – Luckily, the spate of accidents on the A30 during the recent spell of snowy weather had not resulted in any fatalities. It was felt that the Constabulary had handled this incident very well. Gold Control had been opened early and as a result, six rest centres had been opened quickly in the affected areas. The Constabulary's response to the incident had been recognised as good practice and was to be disseminated nationally.

Operational Priorities

Members noted the action taken by the Constabulary in preparation for and during the recent bonfire night celebrations.

The covert capture cars were proving a great success and would be moved around the Force area.

Crime had dropped significantly within the Force area. Several press releases had been issued commenting on this good news.

Members noted the good work undertaken by Sgt Munday in Slade Valley.

Awards and Commendations

Members noted the Long Service and Good Conduct Medals awarded at presentations held on 3 November 2005 in Exeter and in Plymouth and on 20 October 2005 in Torquay.

P/1109 Chief Constable's Report (Cont'd...)

Successes and Challenges

During the year to date, the Constabulary had recorded a 7.2% decrease in crime against a target of 7%. This included an 8.3% reduction in domestic burglary, a 5.4% decrease in vehicle crime and a 26% reduction in common assault. It was projected that the year-end target for British Crime Survey would be exceeded.

There were pleasing improvements for detections and sanction detections.

The average number of hours spent on the beat by Neighbourhood Beat Managers had risen to 6.5 hours.

Recovery of assets noted in the report did not include a further £0.5m recently achieved in Plymouth.

There had been an interruption to the non-emergency telephone number on the 29 November due to a fault on the system. Calls to the 999 number had not been affected.

Personnel

Members noted the personnel snapshot on 31 October 2005.

Spotlight on Success

Members noted the letters of thanks received by the Constabulary.

P/1110 Police Performance Assessments 2004/5

Members considered the police performance assessments for 2004-05 and the Baseline Assessment, both of which were published on 27 October 2005. The data for both reports had been taken during 2004 and the early part of 2005 and compared with 2003-04 data. The assessments did not therefore give an accurate indication of current performance.

Some initial figures had been challenged because they were believed flawed.

Overall, the assessments gave a comfortable picture of performance, with many areas achieving a 'stable' or 'improving' rating. Some areas of performance were disappointing, for example Human Resources. Since the assessment, the Constabulary had employed a new Head of Human Resources and good progress was now being made in this area. The Chair of Human Resources was also actively looking at performance.

Issues raised in discussing the above included:

- The 149 areas for improvement contained in the Baseline Assessment were recorded and managed on the Continuous Improvement Database.
- There were significant concerns about the weakness of the assessment systems used in preparing the reports.

P/1110 Police Performance Assessments 2004/5 (Cont'd...)

- There was concern about violent crime, which was shown as deteriorating but in fact was an improving performance area. Members requested a report for a future meeting to update them on violent crime.

P/1111 Risk Management in the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary

Risk Management within the Constabulary was improving and significant progress had been made in ensuring that Risk Management became embedded in the Constabulary. Accredited training had been delivered to staff who would lead on Risk Management in BCUs and Departments. A Risk Management Panel was due to sit for its inaugural meeting on 11 January 2006 and a Police Authority representative would attend these meetings.

Issues raised in discussing the above included:

- Risk mitigation – the Risk Management Panel would address risk mitigation in detail.
- **RESOLVED** to note the progress being made towards the introduction of Risk Management in the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary and Authority.

P/1112 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 Corporate Governance Committee was held on 23 November 2005.

There were no recommendations arising from the meeting.

Members noted the items discussed by the Committee.

The Chairman of the Committee asked for an item to be discussed in Part II.
2. A meeting of the Planning and Consultation Committee was held on the 15 November 2005.

There were no recommendations arising from the meetings.

Members noted the items discussed by the Committee.
3. The meeting of the Resources Committee had been postponed to 5 December and therefore a report was not presented.

P/1113 Police Authority Liaison Meetings

Members noted the meetings held since the last meeting of the Police Authority.

Issues raised in discussing the above included:

- On behalf of Mrs Talbot, Mr Hicks read a summary of the issues raised at the meeting held in Newquay.

P/1113 Police Authority Liaison Meetings (Cont'd...)

- Mr Doggett updated members on the success of the meeting held in Paignton. This meeting had piloted a 'drop in' format and had proved very successful.

P/1114 Closed Items - Exclusion Of The Press And Public

RESOLVED that the items detailed in the table below be considered as closed items:

Minute Number	Report Title	Relevant Act	Relevant section
P/1115	Appointment of Independent Members to the Standards Committee	Freedom of Information Act	Section 40 – Personal Information.
P/1116	Purchase of former police station at Holsworthy from Devon County Council Social Services	Freedom of Information Act	Section 43 - Commercial Interest (2) Prejudice the commercial interests of any person including the public authority holding it.
P/1117	Proposed provision of increase in budget for Brixham Police Station refurbishment.	Freedom of Information Act	Section 43 - Commercial Interest (2) Prejudice the commercial interests of any person including the public authority holding it.
P/1118	Internal Audit Report	Freedom of Information Act	Section 22 - Information intended for future publication

P/1115 Appointment of Independent Members to the Standards Committee

The Local Government Act 2000 and its subsidiary legislation required that at least 25% of the Members of the Standards Committee were completely independent of the Authority. The Authority had agreed that Independent Members be appointed for a four year term and the current appointments were due to expire on 31 December 2005. The positions were advertised in various local newspapers, published on the Authority's website and notified to a number of voluntary organisations. An analysis of the applications received was provided. An interview panel had interviewed 6 applicants, of which 3 were considered suitable for appointment.

Issues raised in discussing the above included:

- It was proposed and confirmed that the Chairman of the Standards Committee should be elected from the independent membership.
- Appointment of the Committee Chairman would be resolved at the next meeting of the committee.

RESOLVED

- That Mr Martin Harvey and Mrs Ann Mayes MBE be appointed as Independent Members to the Standards Committee for a 4 year period commencing on 1 January 2006.
- Mrs Jean Rossi be placed on a reserve list until 31 December 2006, and in the event of a further Independent Member to the Standards Committee needing to be appointed, Mrs Rossi be offered the position.

P/1116 Purchase of former police station at Holsworthy from Devon County Council Social Services

The Police Authority had already approved the purchase of a vacant building from Devon County Council's Social Services Department. Since this approval was given, negotiations for the purchase had been ongoing with Devon County Council following an independent valuation of the building commissioned by the Constabulary. Devon County Council's current asking price was £25,000 more than initially approved. The issue had been fully debated at the Police Authority Property Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED that the recommendation as detailed in the report be approved.

P/1117 Proposed Provision Of Increase In Budget For Refurbishment Of Brixham Police Station.

The budget for the refurbishment of Brixham Police Station had been estimated some 2 years ago as part of a PIF bid process. At the time, there was no work carried out by a Quantity Surveyor to ascertain how realistic the estimate of cost was. It was now estimated that the refurbishment would cost more than the estimated amount. The issue had been fully debated at the Police Authority Property Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED that the recommendation as detailed in the report be approved.

P/1118 Internal Audit Report

The Corporate Governance Committee had received a report on an internal audit review. Members at that meeting had raised some concerns about the Constabulary's progress towards implementation of the recommendations made within the audit report.

ACC(O) assured Members that work was in progress to address these concerns and a report would be brought to the next meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee to update them on progress.

RESOLVED that

- i. a report be prepared for the next meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee which would provide an update on implementation of the audit report recommendations and;
- ii. a report be prepared to provide the Internal Auditors with appropriate responses to the recommendations made in their internal audit report.

The meeting closed at 13.00hrs