

**Devon and Cornwall Police Authority Performance Management Committee  
16 July 2007**

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Report of Cornwall and Isles of Scilly BCU Commander

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**Magistrates' Court Act Offences Backlog**

**Recommendation**

- i. For members of the Committee to note the report.

**Background**

1. It has been requested that an update is to be provided as to the existing number of outstanding Magistrates' Court Act (MCA) summary offences are reported at the above meeting. As of 25/6/07 the backlog figure stood at 168 (one hundred and sixty eight). This is to be compared with the figure of approx. 1100 (eleven hundred) in November 2006.
2. The reduction has been achieved in a number of ways.
  1. A number of additional staff within the Enhanced Charging Prisoner Handling Unit have been trained to input these offences, thus increasing capacity to deal with the backlog.
  2. Staff on restricted duties have been used to clear offences within the backlog.
  3. Additional funding has been provided
  4. Working Practices have been examined and made slicker
  5. Effective Gatekeeping has been introduced to ensure all cases meet the required evidential test to prevent cases being summonsed and then withdrawn through insufficient evidence.
3. No cases have been written off.

**Future Issues**

4. In terms of addressing future issues. The additional training given to staff together with an effective weekly monitoring system to address spikes and troughs coupled with constant reviewing of working practices will ensure the BCU is better placed to cope with additional workloads should they occur.
5. When Chief Superintendent Cooper attended a previous committee meeting he advised that the target was to reduce the backlog to 300. This target has been exceeded by a significant margin and, as reported here, measures have been taken to ensure a good level of service is maintained with criminal justice partners.

**Contact: for further information**

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