

**DEVON AND CORNWALL POLICE AUTHORITY
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

17 March 2005
(Open for FOI)

Report by Chief Constable

ON STREET BAIL

ISSUE UNDER CONSIDERATION

1. The use of powers to grant bail elsewhere than at a Police station – ‘on street bail’ – Criminal Justice Act 2003.

BACKGROUND

2. Powers under the Criminal Justice Act 2003 allowing bail to be granted elsewhere than at Police stations came into force in January 2004.
3. The power was created as a result of the work carried out by the Reducing Bureaucracy Taskforce. It was envisaged that use of street bail powers would:
 - Retain officers on patrol and increase visibility
 - Reduce detention times for offenders
 - Allow for the conduct of a professional investigation whilst an offender was on bail, increasing justice outcomes as a result
 - Reduce demand at peak times upon Custody and other resources by balancing workloads
4. Whilst the benefits specified were envisaged, there was no definitive business case made out for the use of street bail.
5. In March 2004 the force embarked upon a project to pilot the use of street bail, and enable the production of a business case that would support a Forcewide introduction.
6. Two pilot sections in North and East Devon BCU were selected: Barnstaple and Exmouth. The pilot went live on 1st November 2004.

Current position

7. Whilst the ability to use the new powers continues to be available to officers in the two ‘pilot’ sections, the Pilot concluded on the 18th January 2005.

8. Overall number of uses of the power were low. However, the data collected during the pilot indicates that:
- Time spent in Custody is reduced from Force Average of 8.6 hours to 2.6 hours for those granted street bail.
 - The reduced time spent in Custody has a corresponding benefit to the visibility of patrol officers. On street bail takes an average of ten minutes to 'issue'. Patrol officers would, prior to the availability of this power, have to travel to Custody and book detainees into custody, which can take a considerable time.
 - Within the arrests granted on street bail, those resulting in no further action amounted to 24% of the arrests, as opposed to the current Force average of No further action (43%). Within the pilot group there has therefore been an increased level of justice outcomes against general arrests.
9. The on street bail Project Board will meet on the 14th March to formally review the pilot, and from that meeting will make recommendations regarding the Forcewide implementation of this power.

RECOMMENDATION

10. The Police Authority note the contents of this report.

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