

**Devon and Cornwall Police Authority Resources Committee**  
**28 September 2005**  
Open for the purposes of FOI  
Joint Report of Mike Walton and the Chief Constable

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## **MacFarland Review of PITO**

### **Recommendation(s):**

**For members to note the key points of the MacFarland briefing and consider the Authority's response to the recommendations that effect the Authority.**

### **Introduction**

1. This paper summarises the keypoints from Robert MacFarland's Review of Police Information Technology Organisation' issued by the Home Office in June 2005. It identifies the implications of the MacFarland report for Forces and Authorities and outlines the issues for this Force and Authority to consider.

### **Background Information**

2. In January 2004 Hazel Blears, the Minister for Crime reduction, Policing and Community Safety, initiated an End to End Review of PITO<sup>1</sup>.
3. Since 80% of Police ICT expenditure is controlled by individual Forces rather than PITO the review's scope was extended wider than just PITO and makes recommendations for the delivery of ICT nationally, regionally and at Force level.
4. Whilst the MacFarland report was initiated as an ICT/PITO review its findings relate to many police support services (HR, Finance, Procurement) not just ICT.

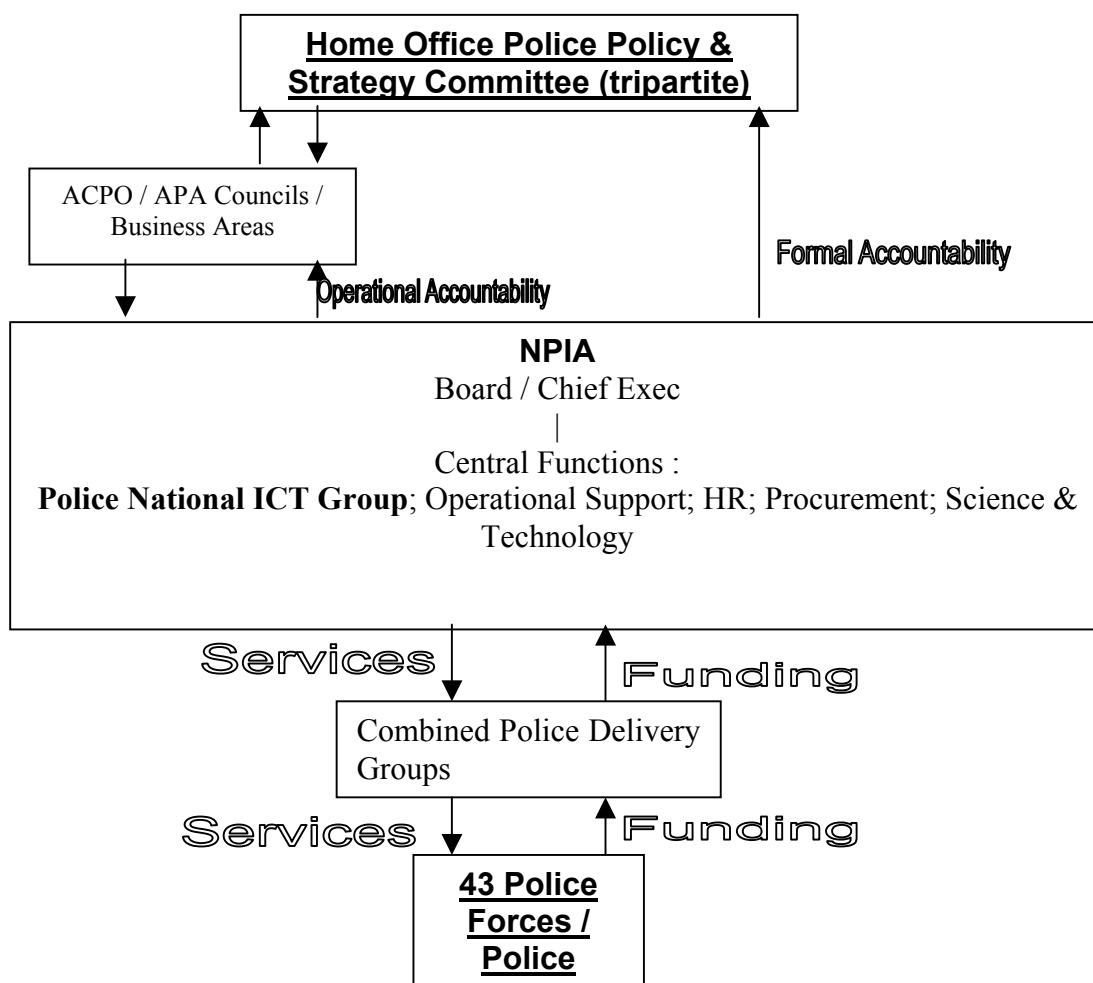
### **Key Points**

5. The Review is very critical of PITO. It describes its contribution to police ICT as "marginal" and states that "PITO has largely failed to meet the needs of the police, partly through its own shortcomings but principally because PITO as a concept is fatally flawed". It concludes that the relationship between PITO and the police "has probably gone beyond the point of no return".
6. The Review also states that "the tri-partite governance structure [involving the Home Office, ACPO and the APA] is in appropriate".
7. There is an underlying assumption in the Review that 43 separate police ICT departments (Forces) is not the most effective/efficient way of delivering ICT services and central national Police ICT leadership has been poor.
8. The MacFarland review is part of a wider dialogue within central government of how savings can be achieved and Police ICT made more effective (e.g. the Gershon Review touches on similar issues).

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<sup>1</sup> PITO : Police Information Technology Organisation: A Home Office QUANGO charged with providing a strategic steer to Police ICT nationally and the delivery of Police ICT systems.

9. There appears to be an expectation within the Home Office that the governance of Police ICT will change.
10. Key to understanding the issues that the Review looked at is to grasp the importance of attempting to look at police ICT as **one** overall system rather than 43 separate systems.
11. MacFarland proposes changes in the governance arrangements. These build upon parallel recommendations from elsewhere for the establishment of the National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA) under which will sit various directorates (ICT being one) and a number of 'regional collaboration structures'. Individual Forces will be members of these regional collaboration centres.
12. The NPIA will be formally accountable to a Home Office Policy and Strategy Committee which will be a tripartite body of ACPO, APA and Home Office



13. Regional Collaboration Structures or 'Combined Police Delivery Groups' (CPDG) would be established which would be :
  - Funded by individual Police Authorities.
  - Tasked with delivering shared services to their Police Forces against KPIs.
  - Given the authority to make decisions on behalf of Forces.
  - Closely 'networked' with the NPIA and thus aligned to national strategies and standards.
  - Mandated upon every Force to join.
  - Governed by a board which would include the IT directors of the constituent Forces and managed by regional ICT co-ordinators (and staff).

## Possible issues with these proposals

14. Experience from many existing regions is that regional collaboration is not easy unless mandated or strongly encouraged by Police Authorities and Chief Constables
15. Such an approach demands more discipline than most forces currently show in tying themselves to a regional / national programme and national priorities
16. If funding for CPDGs comes from the Police Authorities then it may well be unstable (subject as it will be to annual Police Authority budget setting)
17. Regional working is believed by some to be sub-optimal. National structures may serve us better.

## Implications for Forces

18. When briefing IT Directors earlier this year Robert MacFarland suggested that change to the governance of Police ICT **will** happen within the year. The Home Office fully expects to be making changes and believe the status quo will not remain.
19. Individual Forces' autonomy to set their own programme of projects or choose their own technology solutions will greatly diminish.
20. There appears to be a general acceptance amongst Police ICT directors that closer collaboration (either regionally or nationally) is the way forward to delivering a more cost effective ICT service to the Police (this contrasts with the prevailing view two years ago).
21. The refreshed national Information Systems Strategy for the Police Service (ISS4PS), which has been IT-director-led, calls for central standards, technologies and programmes of work to be more strongly centrally-mandated. MacFarland and the refreshed ISS4PS calls for Chief Constables/Forces to be inspected on their degree of compliance with or commitment to regional/national working.

## Issues for Devon & Cornwall Constabulary and Authority

22. The MacFarland Review presents this and every Force with a number of issues to consider:
  - Devon & Cornwall Constabulary has some experience of working in regional collaboration groups. This can become complex and time consuming but it is difficult to argue against the central premise of the MacFarland (and Gershon) Reviews that there are economies of scale to be gained from rationalising common services across different Forces.
  - There appears to be Home Office acceptance that change must happen in the governance and delivery of many Police services (ICT being one) and that **this will involve the ceding of some sovereignty and some of Police Authorities' budget to regional or national bodies.**
  - If a will exists to make regional working a reality would the Police Authority be prepared to provide managerial commitment and resources to making it happen? (The experience from the Three Counties collaboration between Cambridge, Norfolk and Suffolk is that it demands Chief Constable and Police Authority leadership and the establishment of a full-time staff).
  - How proactive should this Constabulary and Authority be in seeking to establish a Regional Collaboration group ?

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