

GWENT POLICE AUTHORITY

BEST VALUE COMMITTEE

8th December 2005

Present: Councillor M Dally - (Chair)
Police Authority: Councillor P R Clarke, R Derricott, W H Phillips; R Leadbeter
and D G Price-Thomas
Together With: M Tonge - Chief Constable
Supt J Knight – Corporate Services
J Metcalfe – Corporate Services
Chief Inspector C Dodd – Crime Investigation
Mr G R Fowler – Assistant Clerk

The meeting started at 10.00 a.m.

The Chair welcomed Superintendent Knight to his first meeting of the Committee.

Action

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G I Davies and Mr M Giannasi, Deputy Chief Constable.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES

3. The minutes of the meeting held on the 6th October 2005 were received.

Matters Arising

Best Value Review – Crime Investigation – the Chief Constable advised that a further report on any limitations on intelligence training and risks associated with the recommendations contained in the Bichard Report would be provided to a future meeting. **CC**

BEST VALUE REVIEWS

4. We received and noted an update on the progress of Best Value reviews.

The position with regard to the outstanding reviews was as follows:

Air Support – the Air Consortium had agreed to invite service providers to tender against options to lease or purchase aircraft and the tendering process should be concluded by June 2006. Dyfed Powys police had also decided not to become part of an enlarged Consortium at this stage, however decisions on future policing arrangements may cause this to be revisited. We have asked that updates continue to be presented to us at each meeting.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships – a final report on this issue would be available by 1st March 2006.

CC

Crime Investigation – subject to a separate agenda item. See minute 5 below.

Information Services – terms of reference completed and a scoping exercise undertaken – see minute 6 below.

BEST VALUE REVIEW – CRIME INVESTIGATION

5. We received a report by the Chief Constable regarding the Best Value Review of Crime Investigation together with a verbal update by Detective Chief Inspector C Dodd the Project Manager.

A report on the Baseline Assessment Stage was presented to our last meeting when it was considered that further consultation would need to take place with senior managers, based on the findings and options prepared for consideration. Consultation had now been completed and a final report issued, together with a matrix of specific issues for progress and implementation. The list of issues identified would be progressed by senior managers within the Division during the next twelve months and regular updates on progress would continue to be made to this Committee. Those updates would include scheduled dates for completion and details of any likely slippage.

Where additional resources were identified, the Division would endeavour to make the best use of its existing resources in providing the additional level of cover required and where this could not be achieved, business cases would be submitted in respect of any additional resources identified.

We noted the report.

INFORMATION SERVICES REVIEW – TERMS OF REFERENCE

6. The Chief Constable reported that the Terms of Reference in respect of the Service Improvement Review of Information Services had now been prepared. These had been prepared following the scoping exercise undertaken with stakeholders and consultation with the Head of Department.

As a result of possible changes to policing in Wales, the review would concentrate on service delivery related issues and would only identify potential improvements within existing structures, procedures, policies, processes and current procurement arrangements. The review would therefore centre on the IS Operations and Communications Sections of the Department.

The post implementation review process would identify any improvements to the service by a comparison with current performance data.

We approved the content of the Terms of Reference.

POLICE AUTHORITY ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK (PAAF) - PROGRESS

7. The Chief Executive and Clerk reported on progress on undertaking the Police Authority Assessment Framework against the project plan.

Progress against the project plan had been maintained and a list of actions had been identified as part of the assessment. It was proposed that the Committee should meet in a workshop setting to agree the priorities/weighting on the actions and in assessing the priority (or risk) the following needed to be taken into account:

- A risk assessment was about identifying the factors and events that might prevent the Authority from fully achieving the outcomes that it sets out to achieve.
- It was also about identifying the factors which might lead to the Authority missing opportunities to innovate and do things more efficiently or effectively.
- The level of risk should be assessed by determining how likely the thing that there are concerns about will actually occur and how serious would the consequences be if it did occur.

We have agreed to meet in a workshop setting to determine the list of priorities arising from the actions identified and that the Chair should determine the exact date for this to take place in January 2006.

CEX

INSPECTION REFORM

8. The Chief Executive and Clerk reported that the Government intended to bring together and refocus the work of the inspectorates for the Police, Crown Prosecution Service, Courts Administration, Prisons and the National Probation Service under a single inspectorate for Justice, Community Safety and Custody.

The intention was that the new organisation would examine the Justice and Community Safety System as a whole focusing on the end user and the quality of service they receive as they pass through the system. The change to one inspectorate would require primary legislation which the Government was keen to move forward as soon as possible. The estimated time for transition would be one year after the legislation.

We noted the report.

HMIC INSPECTION PROGRAMME 2006 – BEST VALUE REVIEWS

9. We received a report by the Chief Executive and Clerk regarding the approach HMIC was taking on inspecting Best Value Reviews during 2006/2007.

Given the significant issues facing the police service, it was intended that the annual HMIC inspection programme would be constructed to minimise disruption to individual forces and due to the significant amount of work being undertaken by forces and authorities on the restructuring agenda, HMIC would be suspending their activity around the inspection of Best Value Reviews.

The approach by HMIC did not relax the obligation on the Authority to achieve best value and we agreed that the Chair, Chief Executive and Clerk and Chief Constable be asked to consider and prepare for consideration at our next meeting a risk assessed Best Value Programme for 2006/2007 taking into account the approach being taken by HMIC and the impending restructuring proposals.

CEX/CC

We have also asked that this proposed approach to the Conduct of Best Value Reviews be discussed with the Authority's external auditors.

The meeting concluded at 11.45 a.m.