

GWENT POLICE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE GWENT POLICE AUTHORITY HELD AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS, CROESYCEILIOG, CWMBRAN ON FRIDAY, 26th SEPTEMBER 2008

Present: Mrs P E Davies (in the Chair)
Local Authorities
Councillors H A Andrews, M Dally, W A L Crump, E Townsend and W J Williams
Lay Justice
Mr R Derricott
Independent Members
Mr R Leadbeter and Ms G Reddington
Officers of the Authority
Mrs S A Bosson – Chief Executive
Mrs S Curley – Business and Member Services Manager
Mrs M Lambert – Committee and Member Services Officer
Miss C Hawkins – Equalities & Research Officer
Also in Attendance:
Mr M Giannasi – Chief Constable
Mrs C Napier – Deputy Chief Constable
Mr D Ansell – Director of Finance and Administration
Mr K Price - Acting Assistant Chief Constable
Chief Inspector M Warrender – Staff Officer
Mrs Linda Sweet – UNISON
Mr J Mapps – Police Federation

The meeting commenced at 10.30 a.m.

The Chair welcomed Mr Giannasi and the Deputy Chief Constable to their first Full Authority in their new posts. Mrs Caroline Hawkins, the newly appointed Equalities and Research Officer, was also welcomed to the Authority. Acting ACC Price was thanked for his contribution whilst in this temporary post.

Action

We were informed that the Chair, Force representatives, Unison and the Police Federation would be attending the Police Memorial Service in Liverpool this weekend.

The Chair reminded Members of the invitation to visit the Gold Command following the meeting.

Members agreed that item 4 would be moved to item 3 on the Agenda.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Clarke, C Mann (PA business), L Jones and M Evans, Mr D Bayliss (PA business), Mr O Ali, Mr H Phillips and the Treasurer (PA business).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Action

2. The Chair and the Vice Chair declared an interest with regards to item 4 on the subject of the Appointment of Independent Members.

Mrs Davies and Mr Derricott left the meeting at 10.34 a.m. whilst Members noted item 4 of the Agenda. As Chair of the Appointments Panel, Councillor Dally took over as Chair of the Committee.

MINUTES OF APPOINTMENTS PANEL

3. We noted that the following had been appointed as Independent Members of the Authority:

Mrs P Davies
Mr R Derricott
Mr J Hathaway
Ms F Thyer

It was highlighted that the appointments from were from 1st October 2008 for a period of 4½ years or such shorter period which may result from any changes to the structure and membership of the Authority following the Home Secretary's review of policing.

It was confirmed that the Chief Executive had sent a letter of thanks to Mr H Phillips for the enormous contribution he had made during his term of office with the Police Authority.

Mrs Davies and Mr Derricott returned to the meeting at 10.38 a.m.

MINUTES

4. We received and noted the minutes of the meeting held on the 25th July 2008.

Matters Arising

Appointment of Members to Committees and Outside Bodies and Organisations 2008/2009

We noted several changes to this list. An amended copy would be forwarded to Members in due course.

CEX

Ryder Cup 2010 – Planning Arrangements

We were informed that the two visits had been very useful in establishing relationships and to view the event and operational challenges which would have to be met in 2010. We noted that a permanent member of staff was being recruited to take forward plans and to set clear protocols and responsibilities around costs. More details would be available after the 15th October 2008 and would be presented at the next Development and Awareness Day on the 20th October 2008. We were informed that work was ongoing by Newport City Council to create the right environment for the event.

CC

MEMBER REPORT

5. We received a report from the Chief Executive regarding meetings attended by officers and Members of the Police Authority.

5th September 2008 – Police Collaboration Seminar attended by Mrs P Davies and Mr R Derricott

5th September 2008 – Gold Command relating to severe weather conditions attended by Mrs P Davies

12th September 2008 – APA Special Council Meeting attended by Mrs P Davies

We noted that the meeting had focused on the APA response to the Green Paper and the recommendations of the APA board in relation to that response. It was confirmed that issues raised by Members had been included in the response and a copy would be circulated to Members. We noted that consultation ends on the 10th October 2008 following which an action plan would be drawn up by the Home Office. We noted that local lobbying with MPs and AMs would take place on issues raised in the Green Paper. Members expressed concern that the APA had supported the retention of precepting powers for Police Authorities but, while they do not support directly elected representatives, don't seem to have raised the issue of taxation without representation. It was confirmed that this was covered in the PAW response.

CEX

COMMITTEE REPORTS

6. We received the following reports from meetings:

Police Authority for Wales – 18th July 2008

WLGA Appointments

We noted the appointment of Councillor Derek Vaughan to the new post of Deputy Leader responsible for the 'wider local government family', and that he and Councillor Whittle would be invited to attend PAW meetings to observe proceedings.

CEX

Urgency Committee

We were informed that an Auditor had now been appointed.

Proposal to Appoint a Chief Officer to Lead the All Wales Collaboration Agenda

Members noted that Dyfed-Powys had agreed this proposal. Terms and conditions were being considered and this would be taken to PAW on the 17th October 2008.

Removal of 14 Posts

We were informed that a response had been sent from Huw Irranca-Davies.

Item 36. Hand Held Computer

Action

We noted that an All Wales bid had been submitted and a response was awaited.

Community Safety and Engagement Committee – 3rd September 2008

Corporate Planning and Performance Committee – 4th September 2008

Equality and HR Committee – 8th September 2008

We noted that the alterations to Lead Members would be dealt with at the next Committee meeting.

Audit and Resources Committee – 11th September 2008

The following dates were noted and changes would be made to the minutes:

24th October 2008

18th December 2008

23rd January 2008 (budget setting)

4th February 2008 (budget setting)

26th February 2008

16th April 2009

It was reiterated that the reported underspend included monies saved by the change to the normal recruitment pattern which would contribute to the 2011 Review.

We noted that included in the £30m investment figure were costs for a new headquarters and a new custody facility.

South West, Wales and North West Forensic Analytical Services Joint Committee – 27th June 2008

We were informed that Councillor A Crump would be attending the next meeting as substitute for Councillor P Clarke.

OPERATIONAL UPDATE

7. We received and noted a report by the Chief Constable outlining items of operational interest, which occurred during the months June and July 2008. The report was divided into the three territorial divisions and one functional division of the Force and also included an overview of Operations currently being undertaken by Headquarters Specialist Departments.

The following was highlighted:

Operation Carousel

We noted the success of this operation which was indicative of how successful neighbourhood policing teams have been.

Torfaen – Safer Neighbourhood Group Award

We were informed that the Home Office Crime team would be coming

back to look at good practice which may be taken this over Wales.

Action

Lucky Luke

Members were extremely pleased with these preventative activities. We noted that CI Mark Warrender had the lead for the making of the road safety film, which would be marketed nationally.

U Division

Members' attention was drawn to the work being carried out in this Division which was again an indication of the success of neighbourhood policing.

Air Support

Members agreed that the purchase of the new aircraft had been a good investment. We noted that the camera on the aircraft detected heat source on the ground half a mile away.

Police Dogs

Members recognised the excellent work being carried out by the Dog Section month by month.

We noted that in these two months there had been an increase in demand for services compared to the previous three months with over 1012 more incidents recorded.

FORCE PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE LOCAL POLICING PLAN

8. We received a report by the Chief Constable on the current level of performance against the targets set in the Local Policing Plan up to the end of July 2008.

The following was highlighted:

The first four months of the current financial year had seen an encouraging performance. The force had experienced almost 500 less recorded crimes than our target for this point in the year and was only marginally below the Force's sanction detection rate target of 30%. The Force had also performed well in many areas of public satisfaction, for example, calls for service from the public.

We were informed that as of today there had been 828 less victims than the same period last year, which was a reduction of 4%.

This year, new performance targets in relation to CJD file preparation processes had been set within the local policing plan. Expedited and Evidential file submission received within 24 hours had a target of 90% and as at the end of July 2008 the Force performance was 31.1%.

Members agreed that this was an area of concern and we noted that the Deputy Chief Constable had taken on the responsibility to bring the Force closer to the target. It was felt that this was a process issue rather than a performance issue.

British Crime Survey - In relation to public confidence, 53% of people throughout England and Wales thought the police were doing a good/excellent job compared to 39% in Gwent. However Gwent's comparative performance was significantly improved when "Doing a Fair

Job” is included in the analysis leading to a public confidence performance of 80%. This compares to a national average of 87% [South Wales and North Wales = 82%]. Further research had revealed that Gwent Police had the second largest “Fair” category of all forces. This area of performance was now subject to fundamental review in order to understand why our significant investment in neighbourhood and citizen focused policing had yet to translate into improved satisfaction and confidence levels within Gwent’s communities.

Action

Members expressed their concern regarding the BCS results. We noted that the Deputy Chief Constable was taking on the responsibility for a programme of work to increase public satisfaction. Funding for this work had been allocated and the programme would include information packs and additional ways of making contact with the public. Full details would be presented to the next meeting.

CC

Discussion took place regarding the poor attendance at PACT meetings in some areas and whether this was due to lack of advertising. It was felt that there was a need to advertise by various methods in order to keep the public informed and to promote the work of the police. Generally it was agreed that those who do not have any particular concerns do not attend the meetings.

Members noted and thanked the Chief Constable for his report and looked forward to further progress reports. It was also felt that the raw data being used by the BCS should be researched. In the past the Home Office had used post codes but it was understood that they are now targeting younger people.

Reference was made to the Citizen Focus and Neighbourhood Policing HMIC Assessment which was a good report but it highlighted that the Force was lower than some other Forces, however there were no areas of improvement identified in the report. Members agreed that the Force was not being credited for the tremendous amount of work being done and it was suggested that the Force’s own satisfaction figures could be presented via the PACT meetings.

We were informed that the All Wales Seatbelt Campaign had taken place between 8-21 September. The four Forces took part and Gwent had made a valuable contribution to this national campaign. The campaigns were speeding, mobile telephone, seatbelts and drink driving and we noted that the next campaign would be mobile telephones.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

9. We resolved to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 12, 14 and 18 of Part 4 of Schedule 12(A) of the said Act.

REMUNERATION PANEL MINUTES

Action

10. We received and noted the minutes of the Remuneration Panel of the 25th July 2008.

APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

11. We received a report from the Chief Executive regarding an application for financial assistance. We agreed the addition of a third officer's application. We noted that the Assistant Chief Constable had been consulted and following examination of the facts of the case the Authority would be supported if the decision was made to approve this application.

Members considered the requests and agreed that the three officers mentioned should be awarded financial assistance.

OPERATIONAL UPDATE

12. We received and noted a report by the Chief Constable outlining items of operational interest, which occurred during the months June and July 2008. The report was divided into the three territorial divisions and one functional division of the Force and also included an overview of Operations currently being undertaken by Headquarters Specialist Departments.

STAYING AHEAD PROGRESS REPORT: BLUEPRINT DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

13. We received and noted a report by the Chief Constable which updated Members on the progress towards achieving the new Force structure. It set out:
 - The current status of the design of the Blueprint, and target date for its publication;
 - Progress towards the development of the implementation plan;
 - An overview of how implementation was being managed.
 - An overview of the timescales to which the programme was progressing;

Members discussed the content of Appendix D – Decision Record and the resultant effect if plan dates were not met. It was confirmed that changes would not be delayed due to any Estates issues. An interim financial report was to be presented to the Audit and Resources Committee on the 24th October 2008.

CC

Members commented on the excellent performance of Beyond the Call which had identified potential saving by increasing efficiency without cutting costs. The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed she would pass these comments on.

RISKS IDENTIFIED

Action

14. We noted that the risks identified during the course of the meeting had previously been added to the Risk Register.

The meeting concluded at 12.10 p.m.