

GWENT POLICE AUTHORITY
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

14th January 2009

Present: Councillor H Andrews (Chair)
Councillors, L Jones and W John Williams
J Hathaway and R Leadbeter

Together With: C Napier – Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)
Chief Supt S Prince
N Phillips - Treasurer
C Hawkins – Equalities and Research Officer
M Lambert – Committee and Member Services Officer

The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Action

1. Apologies were received from Mr O Ali, Mrs P Davies (PA Business), Ms G Reddington, Ms F Thyer, Chief Supt P Symes, the Chief Executive (PA Business) and the Community Engagement Manager.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. Mr Leadbeter, as a Member of the Blaenau Gwent Local Health Board, declared an interest at Item 4d, which made reference to the reorganisaiton of the Local Health Board.

MINUTES

3. The minutes of the meeting held on the 29th October 2008 were received and agreed.

Matters Arising

Page 5. Item 7 Dog Section Budget

Members were informed that the £50,000 referred to was a vision for the future and that for the moment existing premises were being made good. We noted that an Estates Strategy was being prepared, which would be presented to the Authority in due course.

Page 6. Item 8 Animal Welfare Meeting 18th August 2008

We noted that the fault to the kennel door had been rectified.

PROPOSED JOINT CONSULTATION PROGRAMME FOR 2009/10

4. We received a report from the Chief Executive that highlighted the emerging format of the proposed joint consultation by the Authority and the Force.

Although the Authority and the Force have separate requirements for consultation it was considered more efficient to act jointly as had been done for the past three years.

We noted a series of joint meetings with the 5 Local Authorities had developed a framework for the 2009/10 consultation programme. It was proposed to build on the positive links formed, and by way of the Local Policing Unit Superintendents, seek to carry out joint consultation exercises with partners using the standard question set produced as Annex A of the report.

We were informed that this question set had already been used in a Newport City consultation exercise and had been passed to Blaenau Gwent for consideration of inclusion in a pending exercise in their area. A similar question set had also been used in Torfaen. Links had been established with Caerphilly and Monmouthshire and work was ongoing regarding achieving similar activity.

Members were concerned that there was no reference to the Authority on the Standard Question Set 2009. Considering that it was a joint questionnaire Members felt that there should be a question regarding the Authority such as; 'Are you aware of the role and purpose of the Gwent Police Authority?' This would help to raise awareness and increase the Authority's profile. However it was recognised that this question set had already been used by some Local Authorities. Awareness of the Police Authority was assessed in other consultation exercises, but consideration would be given to including it in further surveys.

CEX

Members noted that to fulfill the requirements to produce the Local Policing Plan, all consultation findings would be reported to the Authority in November 2009. Compliance with this requirement and co-ordination of consultation activity would be monitored and progressed via the Force Neighbourhood Policing lead and the Community Engagement Manager.

CC/CEX

With regard to raising the profile of the Authority, it was proposed that attendance at events in support of local team activity would continue and this would be co-ordinated and reported to the Committee by the Community Engagement Manager on behalf of Members.

CEX

As Members were to be asked to attend consultation events, it was requested that a short paper on the planned programme be presented to

them.

Action

Members noted and agreed the format of the proposed joint approach to the consultation programme for 2009/2010 based on the comments raised.

MONMOUTHSHIRE LSB – COMMUNITY STRATEGY, PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS 2008-2012

5. We received and noted a report from the Chief Executive that apprised Members of the request from the Monmouthshire Local Service Board to sign up to the Community Strategy for 2008 to 2012.

As the Authority was a member of the Monmouthshire LSB we had been invited to agree to support the Board's vision, focus and method employed to deliver services in Monmouthshire as outlined in the Community Strategy priorities and actions document.

We noted that the key areas of focus identified in the strategy for activity up to 2019 (subject to review every 3 years) were:

- Social Justice
- Community Cohesion
- Localisation

The key priorities to be addressed in the next 3 years to support the above key areas were:

- Transport/access to services and facilities
- Affordable and sustainable housing
- Climate change
- Public service integration

Members noted that these priorities would not necessarily be the same as other Local Authorities. The priority 'climate change' was considered to be a difficult priority to address as there was no legislative responsibility and possibly no Environment Agency representative on the Board.

We noted that Mr Derricott was the Authority Member for the Monmouthshire LSB and that Caerphilly LSB was also running, having been the pilot nominated by the Welsh Assembly. The status of the Blaenau Gwent and Newport LSBs was unclear. We noted that Torfaen LSB would be up and running in March or April and this would be taking the place of Torfaen Partnership, which had been considered as non effective.

We were informed that the Force would have a major part in LSBs and

LHBs and we noted that the voluntary sector would also be included in the partnership. Members were also informed that the Chief Constable would sit on each of the five LSBs and Members welcomed this and asked that all minutes be forwarded to the Authority. The DCC confirmed that she would ask Chief Supt P Symes to provide a summary report on all of the five areas for the next meeting on the 25th February 2009. In addition the DCC would also ask him to circulate an interim report to Members by the end of next week.

Action

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CC

Members discussed how the effectiveness of these organisations would be measured and wondered if there would be an annual briefing report showing what issues had been looked at over the past 12 months to indicate what had been achieved and what difference had been made.

We noted the importance for the Authority and the Force to be closely linked with the progress of the Monmouthshire LSB Community Strategy and its action plans at all stages. Members agreed to sign up to the strategy and recognised that it supported and joined up methodology that was commensurate with the Police Authority's approach to service delivery.

GPA SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME CONSULTATION FINDINGS – NOVEMBER 2008

6. We received a report from the Chief Executive which provided an overview of the findings of the consultation around the Single Equality Scheme which was undertaken between June and October 2008.

The following was highlighted:

It was found that awareness of the Authority and its role and responsibilities was generally limited, with several perceived barriers to involvement highlighted, specifically:

- Lack of awareness;
- Physical barriers, such as transport and access to police stations and meeting places;
- Psychological barriers, such as believing themselves unable to fulfill the requirements of Members due to a disability or lack of skills or knowledge required;
- Unpredictability of condition and the potential for health to deteriorate;
- Specific requirements, such as needing a hearing loop, advocacy service, or documentation in a particular format; and
- Public perception that only older people are eligible for Membership of the Authority.

Members were informed that the issues raised during the consultation process had been fed into the development of the Single Equality Scheme and its associated Action Plan. Continued efforts would be made to raise the profile of the Authority and its work would contribute to lessening perceived and actual barriers to involvement, with identified areas targeted for improvement and monitoring within the Action Plan. We noted that the SES and Action Plan was due for stakeholder consultation at the end of January 2009.

Action

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Members noted the content of the report. It was suggested that new Members might require more detailed information on how they can help to engage as Council Members had the advantage of already being able to liaise with the public. We were informed that the report on the Consultation Programme would help in this regard.

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MEMBER REPORT

7. We received and noted details of visits/meetings attended by Members as follows:

Councillor C Mann 5th November 2008 Divisional Management Meeting Blackwood

Mr R Leadbeter 11th November 2008 Divisional Commendation Ceremony

Mrs P Davies 19th November 2008 Listen Harder – Listen Better Parkway Hotel Cwmbran

Mrs P Davies 20th November 2008 Community Leaders Meeting Newport

Councillor C Mann 24th November 2008 Revolution Club Newport

Mr R Derricott 24th November 2008 Monmouthshire LSB

Members commented on the reference made to the proposed changes to the Local Health Boards. Members noted that the LHBs were to be abolished by the end of September and questioned who the Force and the Unitary Authorities would be working with from the 1st October 2009. The consultation would finish on the 25th February 2009 and a response would need to be submitted by the 22nd February 2009. We were informed that this had been discussed at a PAW meeting and it had been suggested that a letter be sent to the Health Minister stating that the proposed NHS reform in Wales was unclear and to ask who the Police Authority and Unitary Authorities would be able to liaise with. Members formally moved this action and the Chief Executive would be asked to write to Edwina Hart on behalf of the Police Authority. The DCC stated that this was also a critical issue for Neighbourhood Policing.

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PUBLIC CONFIDENCE TARGET/CONSULTATION BY HOME OFFICE

8. We received a report from the Chief Executive which outlined the Home Secretary's decision to move away from centralised performance management to a single top down numerical target based on the Public Service Agreement (PSA) indicator to improve public confidence.

Members noted in the letter from Vic Hogg, that Gwent Police's indicative target was 56% by the end of the PSA period (March 2011) and the baseline was 34%. The baseline for the Force had been established on BCS results on a question covering confidence in police and other partners. Concerns were expressed regarding the samples used and how this can skew results and Members had reservations on the accuracy of these results. Hand held electronic equipment would be used in further Force surveys to enable quick and accurate recording.

CC

It was pointed out that the basic target was 12% but for Gwent Police it was 22% and no other Force had been set a higher target, although some Forces had been set the same. It was agreed that the target was totally unrealistic and from a monitoring and statistical perspective at this present time it was not known how this could be achieved in this two year period. It was felt that 56% should be a target that the Force aspired to and that it could be made an objective rather than a target.

The following was highlighted from the Technical Annex:

Some Forces would be set a more stretching target as their relative level of confidence was lower and the stretch was based on difference to their Most Similar Group average.

It was agreed that when this was scrutinised Most Similar Groups were not in fact that similar in practice.

Members were informed that there would be an opportunity to discuss moving towards a single target at the Task and Finish Group on the 19th January 2009 and the final target would be agreed in February 2009.

Comments had to be submitted back to the Home Office by 23rd January 2009. It was suggested that a joint response be written following the Task and Finish Group. The DCC agreed to link in with the Chief Executive and draft a joint letter, which would be sent out via e-mail to Members before the 23rd January 2009. The response letter when sent to the Home Office would also be copied to MPs and AMs.

CC

CC

It was agreed that the future main target against which the Force would be measured was that of public confidence and it was essential that both the Authority and the Force actively engage with the Home Office in setting a stretching but realistic target. The work on the 2011 Project should contribute to the public confidence target as the new structure would be more customer focused. Members were informed of a Communication Day on the 30th March 2009 when the public would be informed of the new policing structure.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

9. Members received and noted the following minutes:

a) Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership Strategy Group
23rd September 2008

We noted the reference to the re-organisation of the Force and the Local Health Board.

b) Safer Newport Steering Group 23rd September 2008

c) Monmouthshire Local Service Board Core Group 13th
October 2008

Members again noted the reference made to the future shape of the NHS and how this would impact on the work of the partnership. We noted that the attendance list only showed names and did not indicate which organisations were represented. It was agreed to raise this with Mr Derricott.

CEX

d) Association of Police Authorities – Citizen Focus Policy
Network 24th October 2008

Members noted in the membership list the reference to Wales Police Authority. The Treasurer agreed to inform the APA that this should be Police Authorities of Wales.

Treasurer

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

10. 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 Part 4 of Schedule 12(A), paragraphs 12, 13 and 14 of the said Act

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS OF THE BOBBY VAN TRUST

11. We received an interim report on the Financial Arrangements of the Bobby Van Trust from the Chief Constable.

We noted that the Bobby Van Trust was an independent charitable trust, run by trustees. The Authority's interest was based purely on the continued success of the services provided by the Trust to the community. Given the significant contribution played by the Bobby Van Scheme to crime prevention, it was in the force's interest to ensure that this service continued to be provided to the community.

Members agreed that this was a valuable service which should be maintained, however it was recognised that the Force had no control over its management. It was questioned as to whether those Local Authorities who discontinued funding would still have access to the service. It was suggested that the Trust be given the names of Housing Associations to see if they would be prepared to contribute to the scheme.

The following was highlighted:

Over the last 15 months various issues have been raised by the chairman of the Trust regarding the funding and other services provided by Gwent Police to the Trust, e.g. fuel, servicing of vehicles. In addition, there are indications that some of the organisations providing funding to the trust were considering withdrawing their support.

Consequently, it was essential that the recurring funding of the scheme was ensured and the Authority's contribution to the trust clarified.

It was agreed that the Treasurer and the Director of Finance and Administration should meet outside of this meeting to discuss the way forward on these issues.

**Treasurer
/DFA**

IDENTIFIED RISKS

12. We noted the risk in regard to the Home Office's proposed target on Public Confidence as discussed in Item 7 which was considered unrealistic and unachievable.

The meeting closed at 12.00 noon.