

OPERATIONAL POLICING PANEL

A meeting of the Operational Policing Panel was held on Friday 22 January 2010 commencing at 10.00 am in the Members Conference Room at Police Headquarters.

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| PRESENT | Councillor Barry Coppinger (Chair), Councillor Steve Wallace (Vice Chair), Mr Chris Coombs, Councillor Mary Lanigan, Councillor Victor Tumilty. |
| OFFICIALS | Mr Norman Wright and Mr John Bage (CE) Mr Sean White, Mr Mick Williams, Miss Kate Rowntree (CC). |
| ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES | Mr Ted Cox JP, Councillor Ron Lowes and Mr Peter Hadfield. |

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from, Councillor Dave McLuckie (ex officio), Mr Peter Race MBE (ex officio) Councillor Hazel Pearson OBE, Miss Pam Andrews-Mawer, Mr Aslam Hanif and Mr Dave Pickard.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Two Members declared an interest in Agenda Item 12 'Tall Ships Race 2010'. Councillors Tumilty and Wallace declared an interest as there may be a financial recovery cost to Hartlepool Borough Council. They were permitted to continue in that part of the meeting. Apart from this, there were no other declarations of interest.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 13 NOVEMBER 2009

The minutes of the previous meeting were held as a true record.

OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS

ORDERED that:-

1. the outstanding recommendations be noted.

FORCE PERFORMANCE REPORT (APRIL – NOVEMBER 2009)

The Assistant Chief Constable presented the report to Members on Force performance to November 2009.

Progress against the Policing Plan Priority was monitored using the Priority Indicator Set. The Priority Indicator Set provided a reduced suite of performance measures (i.e. 'a performance dashboard'), which aimed to reflect outcome performance in relation to the local policing priority and the Chief Constables vision of Putting People First.

For 2009-10, there are 18 performance measures within the

Priority Indicator Set. Of these 11 are green, 2 are amber and 5 are red.

However, Members were informed that recorded crime continued to fall significantly. The annual target for 2009-10 was a reduction of 5%. The current year to date figures showed a current decrease of 11.9% (4,437 less crimes) when compared to last year. Significant reductions have been achieved in all headline target crime categories (Overall Violent Crime, Serious Acquisitive Crime, Criminal Damage and Other Theft).

The Chair queried what the force executive did to publicise and highlight such good results. The Assistant Chief Constable informed Members that the Force regularly promotes such activity with a wide range of external media publications, notices and press releases. This is followed up by Neighbourhood Police Officers regularly attending community meetings and events. Internally, there are regular staff updates and notifications sent via the Police Intranet and other publications.

The Assistant Chief Constable informed Members that the Force is aware of the need to inform the public of their achievements and to help reduce the fear of crime. However, this has to be balanced against constantly feeding too much into the public domain.

ORDERED that:

1. the report be noted.

VULNERABLE ADULTS REPORT

The Assistant Chief Constable updated Members on the current work across the Force to tackle abuse caused to and committed by Vulnerable Adults (VA).

Members were informed that the investigation of abuse against vulnerable adults had been included in the remit of the Vulnerability Units (VU), established on 13th July 2009. Staffing levels with respect to this specialist area remained unchanged during the move to the VU. Detective Constables deal with investigations in this area and are supported by a specified supervisor within the unit. Additional assistance is provided by other staff within the unit at the discretion of the Detective Inspector in charge of the unit.

The Force is committed to safeguarding vulnerable adults and striving to improve the investigating of such offences. The introduction of the Vulnerability Units had changed the structure of the Force response to VA referrals and VA investigations. The success of the Vulnerability Units will be reviewed early in 2010.

ORDERED that:

1. the report be noted.

SPECIAL CONSTABULARY AND POLICE VOLUNTEER SCHEME

The Assistant Chief Constable informed Members that the purpose of the report was to update Members as to the present position with regards Cleveland Police Special Constabulary and Volunteers Programme.

Members were informed that the aim of the Special Constabulary is to provide assistance to the regular Force, by working alongside Neighbourhood Policing Teams, high visibility patrols, and response assistance where required. The aim of the Volunteers is to provide support to our organisation in back office functions, enabling officers and staff to concentrate on core policing tasks. Cleveland currently has 143 serving Special Constables and 68 volunteers in various posts at BCU's and Force HQ

The Assistant Chief Constable informed Members that the National Strategy for the Special Constabulary was launched in March 2008. The aim of the strategy was to enable the Special Constabulary through seven key work streams to strengthen its position as a valuable part of policing provision and to make best use of Specials to increase force performance.

Members were informed that the Special Constabulary, due to the national strategy are undergoing a period of tremendous change. The aim is to have a Constabulary that meets the needs of a modern police service, and for the Constabulary to consolidate its position as a reliable, trusted and respected member of the policing family, with a role to play in most, if not all aspects of police service delivery, especially community engagement. The Force is continuing to embed volunteers within the organisation. An evaluation will be carried out in 2010 to establish how well the program is running.

Members queried the deployment of Special Constables and enquired as to where they carry out their duties. The Assistant Chief Constable informed Members that Special Constables are deployed across all Districts and across almost all departments.

Members asked if the Special Constabulary was used to give feedback to those that contact the Police. The Assistant Chief Constable informed Members that both Special Constables and Volunteers are utilized to provide feedback to members of the public, they carry out ringbacks to those contacting the Police and also to get messages and information into communities and neighbourhoods.

ORDERED that:

1. the report be noted.

USE OF TASERS

The Assistant Chief Constable informed Members that the report is to update Members on the Force's use of Tasers as a less lethal option and in particular as to its roll out to specifically trained unarmed officers.

Taser provides Officers with an alternative to lethal force when faced with incidents of serious violence that fall below the threshold for the use of firearms and is very successful in assisting to safely resolve such incidents. The 'use' of Taser includes those incidents when a Taser is drawn, pointed, fired or used in 'drive stun' mode.

Members were informed that in December 2008 the Home Secretary authorised the roll-out of Taser to Specifically Trained Units (STUs) and provided funding to cover the cost of acquisition. STUs are otherwise unarmed officers specially selected and trained in the use of Taser.

The Assistant Chief Constable informed Members that after careful consideration the Force had taken the decision to issue Taser to a proportion of their response officers as they were the officers most likely to face spontaneous incidents of violence when Taser may become necessary.

Members enquired as to how Officers were chosen to be issued with a Taser. The Assistant Chief Constable informed Members that individuals were chosen once they had volunteered and were nominated by their respective Inspector based on the Inspectors professional judgement.

Members were informed that the Force will continue to use Taser as a less lethal option during the deployment of armed officers.

ORDERED that:

1. the report be noted.

POLICING PLEDGE UPDATE

The Assistant Chief Constable updated Members on progress in implementing the Policing Pledge. The Pledge is the police service's commitment to the public and sets out minimum standards of service they can expect to receive.

Members were informed that the overall impact of the pledge was expected to be an improvement in public confidence. A sub-group of the Citizen Focus Project Board was established to develop systems to meet the Policing Pledge. This sub-group reports to and is monitored by the Citizen Focus Project Board, Chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable (Territorial Operations). The Authority has both Officer and Member representation on the project board.

The Chair sought clarification on how the Operational Policing Panel could receive updates from the Citizen Focus Project Board and take receipt of actions taken to date. The Assistant Chief Constable informed Members that a briefing had been arranged for Members for February 2010 and feedback as and when available could be brought to the Panel as appropriate.

Members required clarification as to the availability of policing priorities to call handlers and those working in those areas. The Assistant Chief Constable informed Members that call handlers do have policing priorities available to them, especially those for neighbourhood areas. Upon receipt of requests for assistance and where the assistance requested matches the priority in a certain area, those calls are immediately expedited and dispatched within sixty minutes.

ORDERED that:

1. the report be noted.

SPEED AWARENESS COURSE UPDATE

The Assistant Chief Constable provided Members with a summation of the Speed Awareness Course Provision for the first six months of operation.

In June 2009 an interim scheme was introduced to provide a Speed Awareness Module of the National Driver Offender Re-Training Scheme (NDORS) within the Cleveland area.

Members were reminded that the NDORS is a Court diversion scheme, which allowed the Chief Constable to introduce educational courses as an alternative to prosecution for certain offences.

There are three courses available:

- The Driver Improvement Scheme (DIS)
- The Rider Intervention Development Experience (RiDE)
- The Speed Awareness Course (SAC)

The Assistant Chief Constable informed Members that all of the courses can be used by Cleveland Police as an alternative to sending drivers/riders to Court or issuing a fixed penalty ticket.

A formal deployment process had been developed by the Unit managing the schemes, to allow incremental deployments in line with the process levels. This will allow the Partnership to amend their operating procedure accordingly.

Members sought clarification as to why there had been growth in staffing since the commencement of the scheme. The Assistant Chief Constable advised Members that there had been a large increase in referrals to the scheme, and following an extensive review, it was determined that the Police and Administrative Support element of the scheme needed to be

more appropriately staffed. Members were informed that all costs had been self funded from the scheme.

Members requested a full report to be brought to the Police Authority post its first anniversary in June 2010.

ORDERED that:

1. the update, staffing changes, and ongoing work for the provision of the Speed Awareness Courses be noted.
2. a full report to be brought to a future Police Authority Executive, post June 2010 be agreed.

ACC (Territorial Ops)

LOCAL PUBLIC CONFIDENCE SURVEY (OCTOBER TO NOVEMBER 2009)

The Assistant Chief Constable presented an update on the findings to date resulting from the Local Public Confidence Survey.

Members were informed that the Local Public Confidence (LPC) Survey was introduced in October 2009. The survey is conducted in partnership by the Force and the Authority and replaces the previous Quality of Life and Neighbourhood Surveys. The survey is conducted via telephone interviews with a sample selection and other methodology issues designed in accordance with the Home Office minimum technical requirement.

The survey is conducted on a monthly basis by an independent market research company. The aim of the survey is to measure public confidence and to understand the factors associated with it. For comparative purposes, the survey included a number of British Crime Survey (BCS) questions, including the national confidence indicator.

Members were informed that the initial findings of the LPC survey are positive. To date, the responses given would suggest a higher level of public confidence and a more positive perception of police performance than those indicated via the BCS. In accordance with national requirements, headline results from the baseline dataset will be made available to the public by the end of February 2010. Data collection for 2010-2011 will re-commence in April 2010.

ORDERED that:

1. the report be noted.

TALL SHIPS RACE 2010

Two Members declared an interest in this item. Councillors Tumilty and Wallace declared an interest as there may be a financial recovery cost to Hartlepool Borough Council. They were permitted to continue in the meeting.

A/Supt Mick Williams provided an update to Members on the work that Cleveland Police is undertaking in preparation for the Tall Ships Race to be held at Hartlepool in 2010.

The Tall Ships Race 2010, organised by Sail Training International, will be hosted in Hartlepool between 7th and 10th August 2010. The ships will leave Kristiansand, Norway on 1st August and race across 376 Nautical Miles to finish at Hartlepool by 7th August.

Hartlepool Borough Council are the organisers and hold responsibility for all events in Hartlepool. Approximately one million people are expected to attend Hartlepool over the four day period with approx. 66,000 vehicles expected.

Event Control will be located overlooking the Marina and with in it will be sited Silver Commanders from emergency services and partners. Police will have a Silver Commander within Event Control 24 hours a day throughout the event. Cleveland Police will lead Silver Command for partner Police services – Durham Police, Northumbria Marine Unit, Harbour Police, British Transport Police and Civil Nuclear Police.

Members were informed that this is a highly prestigious event that will bring a lot of interest to the town and the region. Partnership and internal planning is underway utilising previous experience and expert knowledge. This is a very exciting event that attracts international media and gives host to many people from across the world.

ORDERED that:

1. the report be noted.

COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENTS (ONEPLACE)

The Strategy & Performance Manager informed Members that the purpose of the report is to inform Members of the 2009 area assessments for Middlesbrough, Stockton, Hartlepool and Redcar & Cleveland that were published on the Audit Commission Oneplace website in December 2009.

Members were informed that the Comprehensive Area Assessment, or Oneplace Assessment, is a new way of assessing local public services in England. It examines how well Councils are working together with other public bodies to meet the needs of the people they serve. It's a joint assessment made by a group of six independent watchdogs, led by the Audit Commission, and including HMIC. It covers 152 areas in England.

The assessments for the 4 local areas covered presented a mixture of problems being experienced in those areas and positive steps being taken by partners to improve the service outcomes and standards for people in those areas. Members were informed that there is generally a strong partnership

working and service improvements being experienced, particularly in the safer community area, with recent reductions in crime and ASB, and associated improvements in safety.

Members showed concerned and raised the issue of the 'Significant Concern' (poor performance - red flag) raised against the Hartlepool Partnership with regard to deficiencies in tackling the harm caused by alcohol. The Assistant Chief Constable informed Members that the District Commander for Hartlepool had highlighted this problem in discussions with partner agencies over the concerns with alcohol problems within the night time economy, with particular reference to the issue of alcohol-fuelled violent crime. Members were informed that the work to be undertaken to address these areas of concern will be open for scrutiny throughout the course of the year.

ORDERED that:

1. the report be noted.