

SETTING STRATEGIC DIRECTION

HUMAN RESOURCES

Background

In 2006 Sussex Police received a grading of 'Poor' and 'Deteriorating' for its Human Resources. The Force were criticised by HMIC for the management style and the vision of the department and how it provided a service to enable frontline policing delivery. The Authority at that time were closely involved in trying to turn around the fortunes of the department and saw this report as being a catalyst for change.

The Authority adding value

The Authority's Lead Member for Human Resources at that time, Mrs Ann Swain, had a series of meetings with the Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable to decide on a way forward to pull up the department. The Authority's strong view was that the Human Resources Department required a Director at Chief Officer level to ensure the most appropriate strategic direction at that level. It was agreed to move on a staged process which began with the appointment of a recently retired chief superintendent from Sussex Police to take over the running of the department. That officer worked very closely with Mrs Swain and then Dr Laurie Bush in the development of the department. Dr Bush played an active role in leading the Authority's oversight of Human Resources during this difficult time.

The Authority continued to promote its vision for Human Resources following the appointment of the current Chief Constable, Mr Martin Richards. The Authority agreed with the Chief Constable that a Director of Human Resources would be appointed and Dr Laurie Bush was part of the team who selected the current Director of Human Resources, Mrs Marion Fanthorpe.

Since becoming Chairman of the Authority, Dr Bush has passed on responsibility of Lead Member for HR to Mr Peter Bratton. The Authority's oversight, scrutiny and support to the Director of HR and her senior managers has continued at the high level that was previously obtained by Dr Bush. Since her appointment, the Director of HR has successfully introduced a new management structure within HR and is now delivering a far better service to frontline policing. This has recently been recognised by the Audit Commission's assessment through use of resources where the Authority and Force were graded a '3'. Considering where the Force were relating to HR only a short period of time ago, this achievement is even more remarkable.

As a direct result of the Authority's continued leadership in setting strategic direction for HR, particularly with the appointment of Mrs Fanthorpe, this has resulted in improved services which are continuing in that direction.

Reference:

[RSC Report, 30 September 2009, Sickness Management Update](#)

[RSC Report, 17 November 2009, HR Improvement Project](#)

[\(PPSG – Policy and Performance Steering Group\)](#)

[\(RSC – Resources Scrutiny Committee\)](#)

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