

VALUE FOR MONEY

THE CHALLENGE PROGRAMME

Background

The Authority, in common with other police forces in England and Wales, faces significant revenue budget pressures. In 2007, a reducing income along with controls over local fund raising, meant that in real terms the Authority faced a serious financial shortfall in the coming years. The medium term forecast at that time, following the budget settlement, indicated that the shortfall would be approximately £10m between 2007 and 2010. In response to the considerable risk to the delivery of policing in Sussex, the Challenge Programme was established.

The Authority adding value

The Authority and the Chief Constable approved four operating principles against which all decisions for the Challenge Programme were to be tested. Those principles were:

- To maintain public confidence
- To maintain the levels of Force performance and improved public satisfaction
- To continue the development of Neighbourhood Policing and Protective Services and
- To balance the books

The Authority was fully supportive of the Challenge Programme and was heavily involved in the process to deliver savings, ensuring that solutions were jointly developed and jointly owned. A joint statement was sent to key opinion formers and set a clear tone to the sheer determination to approach the difficulty without negatively impacting on services to the public.

Business cases were developed following extensive consultation, including with the teams and individuals affected, and also with outside partners and stakeholders whose views were taken into account in the decisions made. Members of the Authority worked closely with each of the work streams within Phases 1, 2 and 3. Members were supported by the senior officers of the Authority and the Treasurer.

The Challenge Programme Board oversaw the identification and implementation of the work. The Board, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable, included considerable representation from the Authority, including the Vice-Chairman, Lead Member for Resources, Chief Executive, Treasurer to the Authority and the Assistant Chief Executive.

Outcome

As a result of the robust way that the Authority and the Force approached the identification of savings in advance of when they were to be needed, the Authority is now in a far better position to meet the considerable demands expected to be placed upon the public purse in the coming years. Savings were identified amounting to £6.7m recurring.

The Challenge Programme was robust and effective, with strong governance from the Authority at every stage. The role of Lead Members was particularly beneficial as their in-depth understanding of the areas of the business proposed to be affected enabled them to scrutinise recommendations for savings in every area of the business.

This is an example of how Sussex Police Authority's strong professional relationship with Sussex Police helps secure the very best value for money, whilst delivering effective policing to the people of Sussex.

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