

SUSSEX POLICE AUTHORITY – 15 APRIL 2010

REPORT OF THE RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

REPORT BY CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE

Introduction

- 1.1 This report informs the Police Authority on matters considered by the Resources Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 2 March 2010. The meeting was attended by Mr S Waight (Chairman), Prof G Bull (Vice-Chairman), Dr L Bush, Mr B Duncan, Mr P Evans, Mr P Jones and Mr B Tidy.
- 1.2 The full agenda and reports for this Committee are available on the Authority's website, and the webcasting of the meeting can also be accessed via the website.

Budget Monitoring Report to 31 January 2010

- 2.1 The budget monitoring report considered by the Committee set out the Authority's financial position to the end of January 2010.
- 2.2 The report forecasted an underspend of £1.3m, after accounting for planned transfers to reserves of £0.8m. The key reasons for the variance to date are underspends on building maintenance costs, a windfall saving on utilities costs and an over-achievement of income.
- 2.3 At the end of January 2010, outstanding debts totalled £3.2m and outstanding debts over 60 days old totalled £148,519 which represented 5 per cent reduction against a target of 10 per cent. This was a decrease of £29,895 on the balance as at 31 December 2009. During the examination of the significant debtors, the Committee drew attention to the fact that some debts were from other public bodies. Members were reassured by the Director of Finance that existing procedures were currently being reviewed to work towards the reduction of the current problem.
- 2.4 The issue of police staff and officer overtime was raised as an issue to be monitored. The overtime variance for the West Downs Division seemed high when compared to other areas. It was reported that Divisional Commanders are regularly held to account for spending within their particular division.
- 2.5 Police staff budgets are underspent by £1.7m, which reflects a year to date vacancy of 4.5 per cent on permanent Authority-funded posts. This has been partly offset by an agency staff budget overspend of over £1.1m. In most cases now agency costs are fully offset by underspends in police staff pay and overtime budgets. Members welcomed that a full review of agency costs has been undertaken by the Human Resources Department and a new force-wide contract with Reed commenced in October 2009.

Private Finance Initiative Annual Report

- 3.1 The Committee considered a report setting out details of performance of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Custodial Services contract, as well as other ongoing associated developmental issues.
- 3.2 The Authority entered into a 30-year PFI contract on 23 August 2001 which provided for new custody facilities in Worthing, Chichester and Brighton and for custodial services in those sites and at existing facilities in Crawley, Hastings and Eastbourne. A further contract had been signed on 30 March 2004 for the provision of a facility in Eastbourne and a secure pedestrian access to the centre in Brighton. The Investigation and Detainee Handling Centres (IDHCs) in Worthing, Chichester, Brighton and Eastbourne were opened on 22 September 2002, 30 September 2002, 21 October 2002 and 1 August 2005 respectively.
- 3.3 Detainee numbers rose steadily over the first five years of the PFI arrangements, peaking at 51,347 in 2007-08. However, there was a drop in detainee throughput to 44,101 during 2008-09 which represented a reduction of 14 per cent (7,246). In 2009-10, detainee numbers have continued to fall and have averaged a decrease of nine per cent, month on month. The Authority is charged a fixed Unitary Charge for the provision of custody facilities by the PFI provider and there will be budgetary implications should the detainee numbers fall below 42,000 for the performance year as credit refunds will be issued.

Workforce Diversity

- 4.1 The diversity and equality programme of work has underpinned the Local Policing Plan and the 'Serving Sussex', Policing Pledge and 'Hallmarks' commitments. The Equality Standard for the Police Service (ESPS) has been recently introduced as a performance tool and a means of integrating equality and diversity into policing activities. The ESPS has been developed by the National Police Improvement Agency and Sussex Police was one of the pilot forces pioneering the use of the Standard.
- 4.2 The main aim of mainstreaming diversity and equality into day to day people management activities of the Force is the reinforcement of the culture and behaviours which promote customer service, provide services that meet different people's needs and build relationships with communities.
- 4.3 The Committee welcomed notification that the 2009 target (of 2 per cent) for the proportion of BME employees within the Force has been reached for the first time.
- 4.4 It was agreed that detailed update reports on workforce diversity would be presented to the Committee on a bi-annual basis.

Development of the Corporate Communications and Public Engagement Department

- 5.1 The Committee received a report which provided details of developments within the Corporate Communications department following recent substantial investment by the Authority.

- 5.2 The Committee welcomed the report and recognition was given to the Authority's Press and Public Relations Officer, Mrs Katie Coakes, who has already significantly increased the media coverage on the Authority and forged strong relationships with key members of the local press. The recent redevelopment of the website was also commended.
- 5.3 Evaluation of the publication 'High Viz', which has superseded the former Sussex Police publication 'PATROL', will be undertaken to measure effectiveness and ensure delivery to the specific outcomes set at the beginning of the project.
- 5.4 A range of key deliverables for 2010 for the Department were detailed in the report, and the Committee has welcomed the development of engagement strategies and campaigns for young people. It had been agreed at the recent Neighbourhood Policing Scrutiny Committee held on 25 February 2010, that a proposal to set up a Young Persons' Police Authority would be presented to a future meeting of that Committee.

Fleet Review – Interim Report

- 6.1 The Committee had previously requested an update report on the Fleet Review.
- 6.2 A final proposal for the operationally led review was presented to the Force Transport Committee (FTC) on 3 February 2010 which also agreed the terms of reference for the review. As agreed at the previous meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, Mr A Price, lead member for fleet issues, has been invited to join the review team. The Committee considered the terms of reference (Appendix A to the report) and suggested that the aims of the review should make reference to the target of reducing emissions as stated in the Local Policing Plan.
- 6.3 It was noted that the initial results of the review would be presented for consideration by the FTC in July 2010 with the final review undertaken by the Resources Scrutiny Committee in September 2010. The final draft of the Fleet Asset Management Plan will be presented to the Authority at its meeting in October 2010.

Estate Asset Management Plan Update

- 7.1 The Committee received details of progress with the implementation of the Estate Asset Management Plan (AMP).
- 7.2 The Estate AMP is updated every year with an Estate Review, led by the Director of Finance, being undertaken to identify any adjustments that may be required to ensure the estate continues to support operational requirements in an affordable and cost-effective way.
- 7.3 The latest report from the Force's building consultants state that funding for planned maintenance is insufficient, with a back-log of maintenance experienced year-on-year.
- 7.4 It was reported that a business case which recommends a staged redevelopment programme at Kingstanding had been approved by the Best Use of Resources Board in February 2010. A separate exercise would be undertaken to identify the most cost-effective way to meet the

Authority's obligations for the maintenance of the Grade II listed building at Kingstanding (known as the cinema).

HMIC Value for Money Profiles

- 8.1 The Committee received a report which set out information in response to the publication of HMIC Value for Money Profiles.
- 8.2 The Profiles published by HMIC are based on data supplied by the Force annually and have reflected the situation as at 31 March 2009. The data covers full time equivalent (FTE) numbers for staff broken down by rank and functional areas, as well as turnover and sickness levels. It was reported that overall staffing levels were in line with the Most Similar Forces Group (MSG), with the exception of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). The Committee welcomed that Sussex was above average for PCSOs per 1000 population (0.26 in Sussex against the average 0.23).
- 8.3 It was reported that there has been a recent decline in the turnover of officers with Sussex falling to 6.2 per cent, below the MSG average of 7 per cent.

Airwave Refresh Project – Interim Report

- 9.1 The Committee considered a report that detailed progress of the Airwave Refresh Project which had been requested by Professor Gordon Bull, Lead Member for Airwave.
- 9.2 It was reported that the Project has been scheduled for completion on 31 March 2010. The report detailed the planned installations and identified the contingency plans should the Project not complete on time. A further progress report will be presented to the Committee at its meeting on 15 June 2010.

Local Policing Plan Performance: October, November, December 2010

10. The Committee welcomed that the Force is performing well against targets in the Local Policing Plan relating to the Best Use of Resources, in particular the notification that the environmental targets had been met and exceeded. Other areas, such as maintaining the improvement in employee turnover, was acknowledged as requiring further attention.

Risk Management

- 11.1 The Committee received a report on Risk Management which is exempt under paragraph 14 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 11.2 The report detailed the top strategic risks currently managed by the Best Use of Resources Board (BURB) in January 2010 and outlined progress made by the Force with the embedding of risk within the organisation.

Special Priority Payments

12. The Committee received a report on Special Priority Payments which is exempt under paragraph 11 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Recommended – that the report be noted.

STEVE WAIGHT
Chairman

Contact: Debbie Hill, Policy Officer
Tel no: 01273 482634
e-mail: debbie.hill@sussexpa.gov.uk