

**MINUTES OF HERTFORDSHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 5
FEBRUARY 2010 AT COUNTY HALL, HERTFORD**

PRESENT

Bengie Walden (Chair), Sarah Coffey, Sally Newton, Brenda Griffiths,
Kevin McGetrick, Keith Emsall, Derek Scudder, Clare Berry

Hertfordshire Police Authority Officers present:

Emily Anderson	Communications Officer
Bernice Compton	Committee and Members' Services Officer
Sally Patient	Communications Manager
Brian Pereira	Performance and Operations Manager
Peter Hinton	Performance and Operations Officer

Hertfordshire Constabulary Officers present:

Chris Miller	Temporary Assistant Chief Constable
Dean Patient	Detective Superintendent
Simon Warwick	Detective Inspector

Also present:

Rachel Cerfontyne IPCC Commissioner

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Andrew White, Sue Warman and Ron Tindall.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

3. MINUTES

8. Review of Front Enquiry Offices – The Constabulary had asked for more time to finish the review in order to give a proper update at a future meeting. A report will be presented to the April 2010 meeting.

The Part 1 minutes of the meeting held on Friday 16 October 2009 were confirmed by the Committee as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. PRESENTATION BY RACHEL CERFONTYNE, INDEPENDENT POLICE COMPLAINTS COMMISSIONER

The Chair welcomed Rachel Cerfontyne, the IPCC Commissioner for the Eastern Region, to the meeting.

Rachel gave a brief introduction to the IPCC explaining that not only complaints are assessed, but also deaths and serious injuries.

There is always a 'blame' culture around complaints, the IPCC's philosophy is more about lessons learnt rather than blame.

In a response to a question Rachel advised that the investigators come from a mix of backgrounds. A significant number have a police background although, by law, a Commissioner cannot have worked for the Police.

The members asked what the budget is for the IPCC per annum. Rachel will come back with an answer.

There was discussion regarding Hertfordshire's position regionally and nationally. In particular, the fact that Hertfordshire Police Authority did not have a Professional Standards Committee was discussed.

The Chair advised that the PA was currently in discussions with Bedfordshire Police Authority to bring the two PS scrutiny structures into line. Hertfordshire is considering the possibility of setting up a sub-committee of Community Engagement specifically to look at PSD.

Rachel went on to present the new IPCC Statutory Guidance. Since IPCC came into being they had seen the number of complaints double, although they expect the figures to level out. This rise in complaints may reflect greater public confidence in the system.

In relation to the number of complaints substantiated and unsubstantiated, T/ACC Chris Miller asked what the ratio was compared to other public sector agencies, i.e. teachers, doctors,

nurses, social workers, etc. Rachel will come back to the Police Authority with this answer.

There was some discussion concerning complaints that are upheld by the IPCC where the Constabulary had decided there was no case. Members requested more guidance be given to the Police Authority about learning points and better understanding of monitoring. DS Patient advised that, out of 456 cases that had gone to appeal, only four had been upheld.

Rachel informed the committee that there were case work staff on hand that would spend time with file reading and performance figures.

The Chair thanked Rachel Cerfontyne for her presentation and for taking time out of her busy schedule to visit the Committee.

ACTIONS

Rachel Cerfontyne to report back to the Police Authority on the budget for IPCC and how we compare with other public sector agencies.

5. CITIZEN FOCUS

The Committee considered a report from T/ACC Chris Miller updating the Members on Citizen Focused Policing, Policing Pledge Report and Review Update, Police Foundation Research and New and Developing Citizen Focused initiatives.

T/ACC Chris Miller updated the Committee with regard to the public meetings that had been attended by HMIC. Two out of the four public meetings attended did not go ahead due to lack of staff availability. These specific instances had been investigated and a back up process was now in place to ensure officers attended the meetings.

There was some discussion about public meetings and it was suggested that there should be a way of recognising those neighbourhood teams that were doing well.

T/ACC Chris Miller mentioned that a good product is expected from the Police Foundation research. Members expressed concern that, although the Police Foundation was being paid in instalments, no results would be available until the end of the project. Chris Miller agreed to look into the situation and report back to Members.

The Committee noted the report

ACTION

Chris Miller to investigate instalment payments to London School of Economics for the research and to make an interim progress report to the next meeting.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER UPDATE

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Executive giving an update on partnership and crime and disorder issues.

With regard to funding for 2010/11 the Home Office has confirmed a 50% reduction in the Capital Element of the Area Based Grant. This will mean a reduction of just over £160,000 to Hertfordshire.

This could impact significantly on individual CDRPs and discussion will need to take place as to how this reduction will be managed.

This will be discussed at the newly formed Safer Stronger Executive Group (SSEG), due to meet on 28 April.

CDRPs need to bear in mind that the new governance structure means that not all CDRPs are represented on this group so will need to ensure their views are heard.

The Safer Herts II Campaign will be launched in February. This is planned to be a sustained effort over 6 – 9 months with bursts of advertising and activities, initially in February and March and then again in the summer.

18 months ago, a report was presented to the former Chief Officer Group proposing the county adopt a minimum standard for the removal of graffiti. Services have improved in some areas although progress had been slow. There have been some developments especially with removal of graffiti from Highways property, such as

subways and bridges. An updated report will go to the SSEG in April.

PALs were asked to help ensure that their CDRP has effective processes in place for removing graffiti.

There are changes to the CDRP responsibilities, coming into effect from 1 April 2010:

- Probation will become a responsible authority
- There are new duties in relation to re-offenders
- Responsibilities to collect, assess and inform people about hate crimes in their area and develop a strategy to deal with them.

The update on the joint Constabulary/Authority Engagement and Consultation Strategy has been deferred to the next meeting. There are concerns that progress is too slow in relation to Constabulary contributions.

Currently the Police Authority is working jointly with the Public Engagement Partnership on an on-line survey of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual (LGBT) communities in the county, covering a wide range of issues including feelings of safety and experience of hate crime and incidents.

Also the Police Authority has carried out an on-line and paper based youth survey and the results are now being analysed.

On Wednesday 10 February, Sarah Coffey and Clare Berry will be attending Oaklands College in Welwyn Garden City, working with the Constabulary on some workshops with students, giving them an opportunity to ask questions after their sessions.

Brian Pereira gave a brief update on PAL Reports received since the last meeting in October.

The Chair urged members to continue sending in their feedback forms.

The Committee noted the report.

ACTIONS

PALs were asked to encourage the process for reducing graffiti in their areas.

Members were urged to be diligent in sending in their feedback forms.

7. PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

a) COMPLAINTS FOR PERIOD 1 OCTOBER TO 31 DECEMBER 2009

The Committee considered a detailed report from Detective Superintendent Dean Patient giving an update on current professional standards issues within the Force.

The Committee's focus is on public complaints but there are other roles covered within PSD. Currently there were:

- 45 Conduct Complaints ongoing
- 23 proactive Anti-Corruption Investigation
- 2 Open Security Breaches
- 2 Officers arrested
- 2 Officers dismissed
- 15 Officers cleared.

The PSD now also deals with Vetting and Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks. Currently they have 100 vetting cases and 2,000 CRB checks. Of the 79 staff, 18 look after Public Complaints.

They are looking to produce a slicker report from April.

There has been a workflow increase of 20% compared to the same period last year due to a number of factors. The Pledge is driving up public expectation and interest. Also they have struggled in the first half of the year with the merging of the Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire units but are now seeing an improvement.

On a more positive note, between 1st April and 31st December a total of 219 external letters of appreciation were recorded and 14 internal letters of thanks were recorded.

Members expressed disappointment with the report and concern that performance across the board was down and that the recommendations from the Taylor report were not being met. DS Patient acknowledged there was a problem and felt that the increased bureaucracy was a contributing factor. However, he explained that controls had been instigated to improve performance and that the figures in January 2010 had improved.

Members asked that these issues be looked into at a higher level and an urgent review be brought back to the next meeting. Bengie Walden would discuss the issues with ACC Steve Devine. It was suggested that this might possibly be a subject of a future topic group. It was also suggested that the Beds and Herts Collaboration Working Group should look closely at the performance of this joint department.

Rachel Cerfontyne informed the Committee that figures for local resolution are down across the Country. Hertfordshire's Local Resolution is at 39%, the National Average is 41%, therefore Hertfordshire is not doing too badly.

The Committee noted the report.

ACTIONS

Bengie Walden to discuss with ACC Steve Devine the concerns raised by members in relation to the performance of the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire PSD and consider what action should be taken. Consideration will also be given to an Authority Topic Group or the Beds and Herts Joint Collaboration Working Group scrutinizing more fully the performance of PSD. A progress report will be presented to the next meeting.

b) COMPLAINTS FILE READING 30 OCTOBER 2009

The Committee considered a report on the outcome of the complaint file reading on 30 October and a proposal for a subject for the next complaint file reading.

During the last file reading 40 files were read, of which 19 were signed off by members. Of the remaining files, 13 contained procedural issues such as missing signatures and 4 files had incomplete or missing service improvement documentation (and will

be returned to the next File Reading Session. Members also raised queries on four files which PSD are to investigate and report to the next session.

DS Patient explained that the issue around missing signatures was a bureaucracy issue because all files currently have to go through PSD Senior Management. From 1 April there will be a slimmed down, more efficient process.

With regard to the missing service improvement documentation (SID) it was recommended that, in future, PSD will provide a status report for such SID's that are 'work in progress' and will also ensure copies of SID's are attached to complaint files. The Committee agreed the recommendation.

Currently 5-10 additional files are selected on the day of the File Reading but, as the sessions are now held at Leahoe House, this poses a logistical difficulty. Since APA guidance does not contain a recommendation to select additional files on the day, members were asked to consider ending this practice. The Committee agreed the recommendation.

There was some discussion regarding the theme of the next file reading. The Committee agreed subjects should be:

- Direction & Control
- Withdrawn Complaints and
- Custody Complaints

Peter Hinton asked for four members to volunteer for the next File Reading in early March, either 1 or 5 March, date to be confirmed. The session will take place in Biggleswade. Members to give Peter their availability.

The Committee noted the report and agreed the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Concerns were noted by members regarding the appropriate level of authority to signoff of complaint files and the lack of an approved signature list. PSD have noted these concerns and are to provide written procedures that define the level of authority required to sign off each type of complaint. However as

- Examples of missing signatures highlighted by Members have identified a gap and the Committee agreed to entrust PSD with the final sign off and any chase up required with those signatories that have clearly scrutinised the document but simply failed to insert a signature’.
- Missing Service Improvement Documents (SID) are the result of a process issue in that not all SID actions will be completed in time for File Reading. In future, PSD will provide a status report for such SID’s that are ‘work in progress’ and will also ensure copies of SID’s are attached to complaint files.
- Currently 5-10 additional files are selected on the day of the File Reading. This practise was introduced when the sessions were held at Hertfordshire Police Headquarters as files could be produced on demand but poses logistical difficulties now that sessions are held at Leahoe House. Since APA guidance does not contain a recommendation to select additional files on the day of the File Reading session, the Committee agreed to dispense with this practice.

ACTION

Members to contact Peter Hinton with their availability for early March in order to attend the next File Reading Session in Biggleswade.

c) PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE SCRUTINY OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS MATTERS

The Committee were asked to consider a paper that had been discussed with Bedfordshire Police Authority outlining how to make best use of PSD resources to support Police Authority oversight and scrutiny roles.

Bengie Walden gave a brief update on the discussion held with Bedfordshire Police Authority. Another meeting is set for March and it was suggested that a progress report be brought to the next CEC meeting. However, members expressed a desire for any structure changes to happen sooner rather than later, in order for them to be

implemented fully before the inspection in June. Sally Patient will discuss with Andrew White what next steps need to be taken in order for committee structure changes to be implemented.

Rachel Cerfontyne asked the Committee to consider what was required as a function. IPCC are involved in the inspections and suggested it would be helpful to show work in progress.

The Committee noted the report.

ACTION

Sally Patient to discuss with Andrew White the setting up of a sub-committee to oversee Professional Standards Committee.

8. PUBLIC REASSURANCE AND DIVERSITY

The Committee considered a report from T/ACC Chris Miller providing a brief update on 'Stop and Account' and 'Stop and Search' activity.

Key points of the paper discussed:

- Engagement with young people concerning 'Stop and Search'. A work shop with those aged between eleven and sixteen years of age was held in December 2009. A second event for those aged seventeen to twenty three is planned for February 2010. The results will be subject of a separate paper.
- Work to understand the differences in disproportionality between High and Low discretion led 'Stop and Searches' were conducted. Searches originating from planned police operations were found to have the lowest rates of disproportionality, whilst ANPR initiated searches were found to have the highest.

Members asked what the arrest rate was compared to the 'Stop and Search' figures. T/ACC Chris Miller agreed to bring a more detailed report showing arrest figures to the next meeting.

The Committee noted the report.

ACTION

T/ACC Chris Miller to bring a more detailed report to the next meeting.

9. PREVENT STRAND OF CONTEST

The Committee considered a report from Detective Inspector Simon Warwick setting out the progress of the PREVENT strand of CONTEST within Hertfordshire.

In April 2003 the UK government introduced CONTEST – an international Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The strategy has four key elements:

- Pursue – to stop terrorist attacks
- Prevent – to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism
- Protect – to strengthen our protection against terror attack
- Prepare – where an attack cannot be stopped, to mitigate its impact

DI Simon Warwick informed Members that Hertfordshire Constabulary is currently piloting work with PCT's, GP's and Mental Health Practitioners to help PREVENT be delivered in their organisations.

Members discussed the Counter Terrorism profiles (CTLP) and, in particular, those for Broxbourne, which were thought to be more of a perception issue. T/ACC Chris Miller agreed to check progress with race/hate crime in Broxbourne and report back to members.

Bengie Walden informed members that a specific ARGUS counter-terrorism exercise is being organised specifically for the police authority – details will be circulated to members when available.

The Committee noted the report.

ACTION

T/ACC Chris Miller to check progress with race/hate crime in Broxbourne and report back to Members.

A way to be found to ensure that Police Authority Lead (PAL) members are able to see the relevant CTLP.

10. EQUALITY STANDARD

The Committee considered a report providing information on Hertfordshire Constabulary's response to the recently published Equality Standard for the Police Service.

The Committee noted the report.

ACTION

T/ACC Chris Miller will bring an update to the next meeting.

11. AOB

Members discussed issues that have recently come to light with two Neighbourhood Watches. There were clearly some issues with the management of NW Liaison Officers. NHW are all volunteers which is both a strength and a weakness, particularly when relationships break down. T/ACC Chris Miller was asked to look into NWatch Co-ordinators, their role as part of the Police family and the relevance of the Pledge to their work.

ACTION

T/ACC Chris Miller to look into the role of NW Co-ordinators and their role within the Police Family and the Policing Pledge, and circulate a report to members.

12. FUTURE DATES

Friday 23 April, 10.00am
Friday 23 July, 10.00am
Friday 22 October, 10.am

All meetings to be held in Committee Room B

Chair _____