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CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY

ANNUAL REPORT

1999 - 2000

In Partnership with the Community

CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY

Councillor R Watson - Chairman

| Councillor Members | | Magistrate Members | | Independent Members |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| K R Hamilton Esq T Heslop Esq G Humes Esq Mrs A M Martin J Nicholson Esq W Smith Esq A R M Toft J Woolley Esq | | Mrs R Otway JP Mrs L Slavin JP M Redgers Esq OBE JP | | G K Burns Esq Ms S E Donnelly Mrs J Lashmar Mrs M Masson A W Taylor Esq |

Clerk to The Police Authority - J F Brown LLB, The Courts, Carlisle, CA3 8LZ

Treasurer to The Police Authority - R F Mather BSc IPFA, The Courts, Carlisle, CA3 8NA

POLICE AUTHORITY ANNUAL REPORT

FOREWORD

1999 / 2000 saw five new members, (two Magistrate and three Independent nominees) join the Authority for what has been a challenging year. In addition to again having to manage a difficult financial situation in striking a balance between the extent of the increase in the Authority's element of the council tax and reducing the budget available to the Chief Constable, the Authority has also been involved in addressing a number of issues, ranging from community and race relations and integrity to the Public Safety Radio Communication Service and the force's Call Handling and Dispatch facilities.

The major thrust of the Authority's work has, however, been focused on preparing for Best Value. This government initiative, which places specific responsibilities on the Police Authority, is aimed at seeking continuous improvement in service provision. It links closely with the Excellence Model adopted by the force and which will be key to the implementation of Best Value. The development of a Best Value local performance plan, as part of the Authority's Annual Policing Plan, has involved a considerable amount of work for both the Authority, its officers and the force but the outcome does, we believe, put us in a strong position to respond to this new initiative.

In addition, the Authority has also reviewed its planning process to ensure that the development, implementation and monitoring of the Annual Policing Plan is fully integrated from both the force's and Authority's perspectives.

Despite having to reduce the force's budgetary requirement by £1.6m, the Chief Constable and his staff have produced excellent results. The Authority is quite satisfied with the force's performance in respect of the whole range of performance indicators and targets included in the Policing Plan for 1999 / 2000, and the people of Cumbria can be particularly reassured in that all of the corporate crime reduction targets were met, with overall crime being reduced by more than double the 3% target set by the Authority. We are proud of the results the force has achieved in partnership with other agencies in the county and the general public, which reaffirms the 'quality of life' to which we have all become accustomed.

R WATSON
Chairman

POLICING PLAN 1999 / 2000

The Home Secretary initially identified three Ministerial Priorities for the police service for 1999 / 2000.

- To deal speedily and effectively with young offenders and to work with other agencies to reduce offending and re-offending.
- To target and reduce local problems of crime and disorder in partnership with other local agencies.
- To target and reduce drug related crime, in partnership with other local agencies via the local Drugs Action Teams, in line with the government strategy, "Tackling Drugs to Build a Better Britain".

These priorities broadly mirrored the issues identified in the Authority's consultation process and, hence, were adopted for inclusion in the plan. In addition to identifying performance indicators the Authority, for the first time, set targets seeking specific reductions in the level of overall crime, violent crime, burglary, theft, public order and vehicle crime.

During the year the Home Secretary announced a fourth priority – to increase trust and confidence in policing amongst ethnic minority communities.

Set out in the appendix to the report are details of all the indicators and targets used to measure the force's performance in the areas of activity identified by the Policing Priorities with comparative figures where available. The force has achieved commendable results across the whole range of activity, with the crime reduction figures being particularly noteworthy:-

| Offence | Target Reduction | Actual Reduction |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Theft | 5% | 7.8% |
| Burglary (dwelling) | 3% | 3.5% |
| Burglary (other) | 3% | 8.2% |
| Vehicle crime | 3% | 16.3% |
| Disorder | 5% | 15% |
| Violent crime | 3% | 7.5% |
| Overall crime | 3% | 6.3% |

FINANCE

The Authority again received a disappointing grant settlement from the Home Office. We continue to be disadvantaged by the lack of an adequate provision to reflect the costs of policing a sparsely populated area but were pleased to note that results of Home Office sponsored research had proved our point to the extent that if implemented the Authority would benefit by nearly £2m. The Authority, along with other similarly disadvantaged Authorities, will continue to press for the results of the research to be included in the national funding formula.

Following detailed deliberation, the Authority eventually set a budget at £64.523m (an increase of 2.69% on the 1998 / 1999 budget). This required the Authority to reduce its budget requirement by £1.577m by implementing a range of measures, including the closure of premises, the restructuring of the force, staff reductions, procurement savings and civilianisation. Because of the inadequate increase in the level of central government funding and the impact of new arrangements in respect of Council Tax Benefit Subsidy payments, the Police Authority's element of the council tax had to be increased by 8.2 %. Thanks to prudent budget management by the Chief Constable and his staff, expenditure at the year-end is expected to closely correlate to the budget.

In addition to making budgetary reductions the Authority was, for the first time, required to produce an Efficiency Plan. An efficiency gain is achieved when either output is increased at the existing level of resources or cash savings are realised without lowering the level of output. The required 2% gain (equating to £1.3m) was identified to the satisfaction of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and was supplemented during the year to the extent that the total value involved increased to £1.7m.

The development of the scheme to provide a new facility in Workington, under the government's Private Finance Initiative, has progressed although contract negotiations have been complex and lengthy. Difficulties with the provision of a site have also been experienced but it is hoped to conclude the deal early in 2000 / 2001.

In addition to the revenue budget a capital programme of £1.2m was approved supporting the routine replacement of vehicles, improvements to the force's IT systems and other minor schemes. This programme was extended during the year to include provision for the acquisition of HOLMES 2 (£0.2m) and the provision of a Call Handling and Dispatch facility in 2000 / 2001 (£0.6m).

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Maintaining a close liaison with the community has always been a key priority for the Authority. Its Community Liaison Forums provide a means of identifying priorities and concerns and providing information to the public at a local level. They are a major element of the consultation process used in developing the Policing Plan. During the year the widest ever consultation process has been undertaken, which, in addition to involving the Forums, Parish Councils, other elected representatives and service users, has been extended to incorporate a range of other groups, including the Citizens Panel (a representative sample of over 1800 members of the community who have volunteered to give their views on issues affecting the community) and sixth form pupils. The Authority is keen to develop additional methods for consultation and an interactive web site, an annual public meeting and further contact with 'hard to reach' groups are anticipated.

Towards the end of the year the Chief Constable also undertook wide ranging public consultation as part of the process of producing a long term development strategy focusing on Service Provision. This project will have a major impact on the way the force delivers its services in the coming years.

The Authority's Community Liaison Forums are also responsible for lay visiting, where representatives visit the custody areas of police stations to ensure that detained people are being treated fairly and lawfully. During the year 55 such visits were undertaken and no issues of substance were identified.

Anyone interested in attending their Local Community Liaison Forum, or becoming a lay visitor, should contact the Clerk to the Authority or call at any police station for details.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE POLICE

During the year a total of 278 complaints against police officers were received relating to 190 cases. These figures represent a 4.4% decrease in terms of complaints and a 13.2% decrease in cases when compared to 1998 / 99. To date only six of the complaints have been substantiated. Three cases have been referred to the Police Complaints Authority under the provisions for mandatory referral. Whilst the Authority receives statistical data about complaints against the police by members of the public, the Complaints Sub-Committee continues to meet with the Deputy Chief Constable to consider individual cases in detail and ensure that the Authority's responsibilities in this area are managed effectively.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Authority monitors the force's performance on an ongoing basis as part of its duty to ensure an efficient and effective police service is provided. The Policing Plan provides a focus for this activity, with detailed reports identifying the force's performance against the approved Policing Priorities, Key Performance Indicators and Targets being considered. Reports are received on a quarterly basis, as are details of the force's actual expenditure against the approved budget and progress with the Efficiency Plan.

The monitoring role also includes reviewing the results of external inspections. Whilst the force was not the subject of a formal inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary during the year, the report stemming from an inspection conducted in January 1999 was considered and actioned, and the Authority's Audit Sub-Committee met to receive annual management letters from both the internal and external auditors. This work included consideration of the force's response to the Audit Commission documents relating to police patrol and estate management.

In addition, the Authority has created a sub-committee to oversee the force's response to the HMIC Thematic Inspection Report on Police Community and Race Relations and the Macpherson Report into the death of Stephen Lawrence. A working group has also been created to oversee the implementation of the Public Safety Radio Communications Service and the Call Handling and Dispatch facility.

AWARDS

The Authority is well aware of the significant contribution made by the force's staff in achieving improved results across a wide range of activity. It is also pleased to note that during the year 137 awards or commendations were made, 20 of which were from external agencies and that 516 letters of appreciation were received from members of the public.

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