

**NORTHUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY**

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**26 JUNE 2002**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NORTHUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY  
HELD IN THE BRIDGES ROOM, GATESHEAD CIVIC CENTRE AT 10.00AM**

**PRESENT:** Councillor M Henry (Chair)  
Councillors Darke, Foster, Laing, Peckham, Purdue, Thompson and  
Waggott

Mr Atkinson, Mr Brown, Mr Gordon, Mrs Guy, Dr Mahmood and Mrs  
Pearson

**APOLOGIES:** Mr Avery, Mrs Brunton and Councillor Napier

**35. MRS ANGELA BRUNTON**

The Chair advised members of the Authority that Mrs Angela Brunton had given birth to a daughter, Julia Alison, on Saturday 22 June 2002.

**AGREED -** That the members' best wishes be passed onto Mrs Brunton.

**36. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

**RESOLVED - (i)** That the minutes of the following Committees relating to the business transacted while meetings were open to the public be confirmed:-

- (a) Standards Committee – 29 May 2002
- (b) Interim Business Committee – 31 May 2002
- (c) Complaints Committee – 5 June 2002
- (d) Audit Committee – 10 June 2002
- (e) Community Affairs Committee – 17 June 2002.

(ii) That, in respect of Minute 4 of the Standards Committee minutes, the proposed response to the consultation paper on Local Investigation and Determination of Misconduct Allegations be approved.

(iii) That, in respect of Minute 5 of the Standards Committee minutes, the Policy Statement on Fraud and Corruption and the Confidential Reporting Code be adopted by this Authority, following appropriate trade union consultation.

**37. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT FOR THE YEAR  
2001/02**

The statutory performance indicator results for the final period of 2001/02 and the actions from the implementation plans of completed Best Value reviews were submitted.

The indicators show that many key targets have been achieved or exceeded and performance of the Force overall can be viewed positively. The following are particularly positive:-

- An increase in burglaries detected from 15.45% to 16.41%.
- Thefts of and from motor vehicles have decreased from 15.76 to 14.43 per 1,000 population.
- An increase in robberies detected from 28.82% to 31.87%.
- All reported racist incidents have had further investigative action taken.
- The amount of complaints per 1,000 officers has decreased from 171.36 to 141.23.

The following are less positive aspects of performance:

- An increase in total recorded crime by 3.2% and an increase in violent crime by 18.5%.
- The number of racist incidents concluded with a positive result remains below target.
- A number of targets have not been achieved on a range of quality of service issues, in particular, answering 999 calls within 15 seconds, responding to calls within target time and the ability to answer non-urgent telephone calls within 30 seconds.

The impact of the National Crime Recorded Standard (NCRS) has contributed towards the rise in total recorded crime. A wider range of incidents, particularly minor assaults and criminal damage, are now being recorded as crimes.

There have been 98.39 crimes per 1,000 population, a slight increase compared to 2000/01. A proportion of this increase can be attributed to the effect of the NCRS pilot undertaken at Gateshead East Area Command where total recorded crime increased from 10,545 to 12,885 offences, an increase of 22.19%. The total recorded crimes detected have improved from 31.3% to 31.5%, although this figure is just below the target of 31.6%.

The number of violent crimes per 1,000 population has increased in comparison with last year's figures to 12.77 offences, while detection rates have decreased from 75% to 69.5%. There has been an increase of 57.2% in the number of common assaults, which has contributed to the increase in the level of violent crime.

Although the total number of robberies per 1,000 population target was not achieved, there were in fact only six more robberies in 2001/02 than in the previous year. Detection rates have risen by 2.9% compared to the previous year's performance. There was a reduction in the number of domestic burglaries per 1,000 households. In addition, the percentage of domestic burglaries detected has also increased from 15.45% to 16.41% in 2001/02, achieving the target set.

The twelve month period of 2001/02 shows good performance in terms of reducing thefts of and from vehicles and detecting those categories of crime when they have occurred. Vehicle crime continues to fall while detection rates have steadily risen. There has been a continuing year on year improvement in tackling vehicle related crime and the figures for the full year

show that the challenging annual targets regarding the number of offences and detection rates have been achieved.

The Force has continued to maintain its targeted performance of taking further investigative action on 100% of racist incidents. However, the performance indicator in measuring the percentage of racist incidents concluded with a positive result remains below target. The current performance is 49.63%, which is significantly lower than the previous year. The target for this performance indicator has been revised for 2002/03 to 51%, to reflect the changing environment in which the police service operates, while still providing a challenging target. Although the percentage of minority ethnic officers in the Force has not achieved its target, several initiatives have been introduced by the Force to actively seek recruits from the minority ethnic population within the region.

The target for answering 999 calls has not been achieved, with 87.46% of calls answered within 15 seconds. However, recent revisions and working practices have been implemented and as a result improvements in performance are expected.

The percentage of all full files and full youth files sent to the Crown Prosecution Service within time limits that were satisfactory or sufficient to proceed has improved significantly. While these have far outreached the targets set for 2001/02 there has been a reduction in the number of expedited/remand use files which are satisfactory or sufficient to proceed.

There has been a reduction in the number of road traffic collisions involving death or personal injury per 1,000 population from 0.43 in 2000/01 to 0.38 in 2001/02. Compared to the previous year there has also been a reduction in the number of road traffic collisions involving death or personal injury to pedestrians.

In respect of Best Value review implementation plans, the Administrative Support Units/Crown Court Liaison Implementation Plan has now been completed. Implementation has been robustly progressed and improvements have exceeded initial expectation. The feasibility of a digital imaging system for suspects has been examined as part of the Force ID Unit implementation plan. Digital imaging will be more bureaucratic and far more expensive than the existing arrangement.

Across all of the reviews a significant proportion of actions are almost complete. The Best Value Development Group continues to monitor implementation progress on a monthly basis to ensure compliance with the agreed implementation plans.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

### 38. **BEST VALUE PROGRESS REPORT**

All year two reviews are progressing well. Most reviews are currently developing options to address the issues raised through their investigations. Fleet Management and Catering and Cleaning reviews are appraising the options agreed by the Authority. Implementation of the recommendations from the reviews carried out in year one is continuing.

The Best Value review of training forms part of the year three review of Human Resources and ties in with a national project to review police training. All police authorities and forces in England and Wales are completing local Best Value reviews of training. These local reviews are subject to tight timescales as they need to be completed by 30 September 2002. Preparatory work has already been done to ensure that these deadlines can be met.

Guidance has been received from the Home Office which sets out the changes to the Best Value regime and the implications of those changes. The requirement for a five year review programme has been removed. However, all services must still be reviewed, just not within the original five year deadline.

As the publication date for the Best Value Performance Plan has been changed to 30 June 2002, the full year performance data can now be reported in the plan. This has led to some positive changes in the traffic lighting of performance indicators. The requirement to include in the plan "any assessment made of the level at which and the way in which the Authority exercises its functions" has also been removed as it caused confusion. This streamlines the guidance on financial content of the plan.

The 2002/03 Best Value Performance Plan has been updated and will be published on the website on 30 June 2002. Copies are being produced and distributed for public access points, such as police stations and libraries.

There are four Best Value reviews being undertaken in year three. These reviews will commence in September 2002. Commencing the reviews in September will allow the focus to remain on delivering better services to citizens rather than hurriedly completing reviews that will not lead to improvements.

The Metropolitan Family of Forces Benchmarking Forum has proved to be very positive and the liaison is beneficial to the reviews currently taking place.

RESOLVED - That the update on Best Value be noted.

### 39. **TOWARDS A CREDIBLE AND COHERENT MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

A letter has been received from the Home Office outlining the need to develop a clearer and more coherent police performance framework. The letter highlights the priority which the Government attaches to this issue in terms of the police reform programme. It sets out the immediate and longer term Home Office initiatives underway to identify differential performance and ultimately link funding to both needs and performance. KPMG have been contracted by the Home Office to undertake the first stage of a long term initiative to develop a Police Performance Assessment Framework.

Until agreement can be reached on the framework, Home Office Ministers have identified and agreed an interim set of top ten level forcewide performance indicators to reflect existing national priorities which will be linked to the National Policing Plan. Not all the indicators are Best Value performance indicators and it is stated that given the limitation of data quality,

the indicators are not primarily, at this stage, being used to make particular judgments about force performance.

As well as the development of the framework there are two other areas being progressed by the Home Office:

- The Police Standards Unit has established a project to quality assure police performance data. This includes a three year programme to provide quality assurance reviews in select forces and BCUs to ensure that the new National Crime Record Standard is being implemented effectively. The Unit is also collecting crime data at BCU and CDRP level on a quarterly basis to assess performance and identify areas where improvement and support is needed. An analysis and assessment framework is currently being developed for this purpose.
- Ministers have stated that they wish to develop a police funding formula which is not just needs based but which can also enable links to be made to performance. Substantial work is required linked to the effective use of activity based costing.

The Home Office intends to implement a more complete police performance framework adopting an approach similar to the balanced score card methodology. A project has been initiated based on a domain approach similar to that used in the NHS. Domains are areas of core policing activity/service delivery. These are to be distinct aspects of policing for which a family of performance measures can be identified. It is anticipated that there will be around six core domains which capture the full breadth of the police aims and objectives.

KPMG have been contracted by the Home Office to undertake the first stage of the work. As part of the creation of domains KPMG have been obtaining views of police authority chairs, chief constables and other stakeholders. This forms only part of a much wider consultation exercise planned by the Home Office before the framework comes into operation. Work is ongoing to prioritise and weight the domains and map existing BBPIs into the domains.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted and further reports be received once further information is received from the Home Office.

#### **40. NORTHUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY – RESIDENTS SURVEY 2002**

A biennial household survey of residents is now an established part of the continuing dialogue between the Police Authority and the local population, the last survey having taken place in 2000. It is proposed that the household survey be carried out in the autumn of 2002. It will involve face to face interviews of a randomly selected sample of householders located across a force area. The topics to be covered by the survey will include:

- Views on priorities of policing.
- Satisfaction with the various aspects of policing including visibility, reassurance and e-policing.
- Fear of crime.
- Experience of crime.
- Reporting of crime.
- Experience of and satisfaction with direct contact with the police

Due to the relatively small proportion of people from ethnic minorities in the region, special arrangements will be established to ensure that the views of this group are fully investigated.

A detailed brief and specification which sets out the aims and objectives of the survey and the requirements in terms of sampling, fieldwork and output/analysis, has been produced. Bids to carry out the survey will be invited from five established market research companies in accordance with this brief.

Local Crime and Disorder Partnerships have been offered the opportunity to access this survey by securing an increased sample of households in their area so that more reliable results can be obtained for their use and/or any additional questions that they wish to raise. A request has been placed with the Government Office North East to determine if there is any external funding available to assist the Partnerships and the Authority with these costs.

RESOLVED - That Clerk, following consultation with the Chair, be authorised to accept the most appropriate tender to carry out the survey.

#### **41. CRIME STATISTICS 2001/02**

In 2001/02 the Force experienced the first rise in total recorded crime in four years from 134,777 offences to 139,130, an increase of 3.2%. This overall figure masks continued reductions in burglary dwelling, burglary OTD (other than dwelling), theft from motor vehicles and theft/TWOC (taken without owner's consent) of motor vehicles. The Force introduced the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) from 1 April 2002. In anticipation of this change, a pilot was conducted in Gateshead East Area Command to assess the likely impact. This has inflated several crime categories in this Area Command together with the total recorded crime. Removing the performance of this Area Command from the Force total shows a much smaller increase overall in total recorded crime of 1.6%. However, it is anticipated that the introduction of NCRS across the Force will lead to large increases in levels of recorded crime in some categories and to an increase in total recorded crime for 2002/03. The increase in total recorded crime in Northumbria in 2001/02 is also reflected in the other metropolitan police forces.

A sixth successive improvement in detection rates has resulted in an increase from 31.30% to 31.46%. This equates to a further 1,581 detections in 2001/02. Despite this improvement the Force narrowly missed its target of a 31.6% detection rate. There has been a decrease in the crime trends for burglary dwelling, burglary OTD, theft from motor vehicles and theft of/TWOC of motor vehicles. A number of categories of crime have increased namely robbery, criminal damage, violence against the person and common assault.

NCRS has already been implemented in five forces prior to April 2002. Analysis of their performance indicated that large increases in recorded crime can be expected with regard to criminal damage and some other less serious forms of assault. Both of these increases were experienced at Gateshead East Area Command. The Area Command's crime figures showed a significant increase in burglary dwellings amounting to 21.29% which had not been anticipated. It is believed that a large part of this increase is due to attempted burglaries being recorded as burglaries under NCRS rules, where previously they were classed as criminal damage.

Drug offences showed an increase from 4,238 to 4,804 offences, an increase of 13.36%. The majority of drug offences are found by police officers rather than being reported by the public, therefore, these offences may be viewed as an indicator of pro-activity by the police.

Total violent crime (violence against person, sexual offences and robbery) has risen from 15,235 in 2000/01 to 18,502 offences in 2001/02, an increase of 18.5%. A large proportion of this increase, 1,534 offences, is attributable to an increase in the recording of common assault. Common assault is the least serious category of assault involving minimal injury.

With NCRS now fully implemented throughout the Force, the number of crime reports relating to common assault offences is likely to increase substantially. There has been nearly a 200% increase in crime reports relating to this offence. Whilst this increase is large, it does not reflect an increase in violence on the streets.

“Core crime” together with violent crime accounts for over 70% of the crime which occurs in the Northumbria Police area. A further 20% of recorded crime is attributable to a number of theft offences. The remaining 10% of crime is made up from a large number of separate offences which generally occur in relatively small numbers.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

**42. FORCE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE - OCTOBER 2001 TO MARCH 2002**

The Chief Constable gave an update on the actions and achievements made by Northumbria Police in support of the Force Strategy 2000-2005 under the three main priorities: operations, people and management and the five objectives linked to each priority.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

**43. PROMOTION TRENDS IN NORTHUMBRIA POLICE**

Details have been provided on the promotion trends in Northumbria Police relating to female and ethnic minority officers.

The total number of officers in 2001/02 reflects the recruitment of new police officers to meet the Crime Fighting Fund allocation. The total number of officers has risen from 3,884 in 2000/01 to 3,955 in 2001/02, an increase of 1.8%. On average, 31% of each current intake of new recruits is female. Overall, there is an increase in the number of female officers who have been promoted.

The percentage of ethnic minority officers has risen from 0.85% to 0.89% from 2000/01 to 2001/02. This falls short of the 2001/02 target of 1%. However, targeted media advertising, liaison with community groups, liaison with schools and colleges with high ethnic populations, attendance at festivals and cultural events have attracted applications from ethnic minority groups. Familiarisation events have supported applicants through the recruitment and selection process.

The recruitment and selection policy complies with all relevant legislation. Successful candidates are chosen on merit, and their ability to demonstrate the skills and abilities required to carry out the duties of a police constable.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

**44. SPONSORSHIP – ANNUAL REPORT 2001/02**

Details have been provided on the annual value of all sponsorship received during the 2001/02 financial year. During the financial year several offers of sponsorship, loans and gifts were accepted. Many of these arrangements related to the loan or sponsorship of cars. In addition to vehicle sponsorship, certain other arrangements have been agreed.

In total £78,730 worth of sponsorship was obtained during 2001/02 in comparison to a total of £109,684 for 2000/01. This decrease is due mainly to a decrease in the amount of miscellaneous sponsorship.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

**45. AIR SUPPORT – CAPITAL FUNDING 2002/03**

The Authority has previously endorsed a bid by the North East Air Support Unit (NEASU) for Home Office funding of £44,000 in 2002/03 (Minute 122 – 2001/02). The bid was for funding towards the purchase of microwave uplink/downlink equipment for the NEASU helicopter and fixed wing aircraft, and a jettison door modification for the helicopter.

The Home Office has now advised that the bid was unsuccessful. The NEASU Consortium Monitoring Group does not intend to pursue the acquisition of the microwave uplink/downlink equipment, but it will give further consideration to the jettison door modification.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF CONSTABLE**

The Chief Constable submitted a report concerning the following items:-

**46. PROMOTIONS – 1 APRIL TO 31 MAY 2002**

The Chief Constable reported on the promotions made during the above period.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

**47. ROAD TRAFFIC INCIDENTS OCCASIONING INJURY**

An analysis of reported road traffic incidents occasioning injuries has been provided.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

**48. SECONDMENTS**

The Chief Constable reported on proposed Home Office funded and grant funded secondments which are subject to the provisions of the Police Act 1996, Section 97, Part 3, Paragraphs A and B.

RESOLVED - That the secondments detailed in the report be approved.

**49. REGISTER OF COMPLAINTS**

The Chief Constable submitted statistical returns of complaints for April and May 2002.

RESOLVED - That the statistical returns be noted.

**50. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED - That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining business in accordance with the indicated paragraphs of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

**51. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES (Paragraphs 9 and 14)**

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the following committees relating to business transacted following the passing of a resolution to exclude the press and public be confirmed:-

- (a) Interim Business Committee – 31 May 2002
- (b) Audit Committee – 10 June 2002.

**52. MEDICAL RETIREMENTS (Paragraph 1)**

The Chief Constable reported on medical retirement numbers 9/02 – 13/02 considered no longer fit to carry out the full duties of a police officer who had retired on an injury/ill health pension on the dates indicated.

RESOLVED - That the actions of the Chief Constable be noted.

**53. MEDICAL RE-EXAMINATIONS (Paragraph 1)**

Medical re-examination numbers 24/02 – 30/02 retired from the Force on injury pensions. The officers have been re-examined by the Force Medical Officer who has certified that they are not fit to rejoin the Force as regular police officers. He recommends the officers be further re-examined.

RESOLVED - That the disability assessments and re-examination of the above officers after the periods indicated in the report be approved.

**54. BEST VALUE REVIEW OF NORTH EAST AIR SUPPORT UNIT (Paragraph 9)**

The review process of the North East Air Support Unit is at the option development stage. The Best Value Advisory Group and the Joint Advisory

Group of Northumbria, Durham and Cleveland Authorities have received a summary of the option development report.

The following issues were raised throughout the review:

- Internal and external perception of the unit (awareness and reassurance)
- Is self-deployment used appropriately
- Is there a need to change the current consortium arrangements including resourcing, tasking and administration and protocols
- Is the coverage currently provided by NEASU adequate in terms of location of aircraft bases, pilotage, operational hours and equipment
- Is there a need for a separate NEASU air support strategy
- Lack of performance information
- Civilianisation and numbers of air observers
- Possible income generation through providing additional commercial services
- The potential for partnership or collaborative working

The following service options are recommended for further investigation:

- Develop an air support strategy.
- Develop a set of local performance indicators.
- Method of service delivery:
  - examination and review of NEASU coverage
  - reduce or expand the service: alone or in partnership
  - examination of the resourcing of the service.
- Examination and review of NEASU consortium arrangements.
- Examination of the staffing of NEASU:
  - arrangements for pilots
  - arrangements for air observers

Reducing the fear of crime, reassurance and visibility are all essential elements in the new ministerial and local priorities. It is hoped that the outcome of this review will provide the citizen with the continued provision of a highly visible air support service and the reassurance that it provides through its reactive work.

RESOLVED – That the actions identified within the report be approved.

**55. LICENCE OF AERIAL INSTALLATIONS AT ALTRINCHAM TOWER, EGLINTON TOWER AND PLANET HOUSE, SUNDERLAND (Paragraph 9)**

The Authority has a licence agreement with Sunderland City Council for the installation of radio equipment at Altrincham Tower, Eglinton Tower and Planet House, Sunderland. The licence was granted with effect from 1 April 1997. Sunderland City Council has terminated this licence with effect from 30 June 2002.

Ownership of the residential tower blocks has now been transferred from Sunderland City Council to Sunderland Housing Group. Terms for a new licence with the Housing Group have been provisionally agreed.

RESOLVED - That the terms for a licence of the Authority's aerial installations at Altrincham Tower, Eglinton Tower and Planet House, Sunderland, be approved, on the terms set out in the report.

**56. TOWER VIEW SECTOR STATION, BENWELL – ARSON TASK FORCE (Paragraph 9)**

The Arson Task Force is a joint initiative between the Authority and Tyne and Wear Fire Brigade. The Task Force currently occupies a portakabin in the grounds of the West Road Fire Station, Fenham, which no longer meets the operational requirements of the service. The Arson Task Force is currently funded through the Single Regeneration Budget and is limited in the amount of resources it can allocate to accommodation costs. The Chief Constable has, therefore, taken the opportunity to explore the possibility of sharing accommodation. The ground floor of Tower View Sector Station has been identified as being a suitable location to relocate the Task Force.

Negotiations with Sunderland City Council, who act as lead authority for the Fire and Civil Defence Authority, have resulted in a provisional agreement.

RESOLVED - That the terms for a licence for the Arson Task Force to occupy the ground floor rooms at Tower View Sector Station, Benwell, be approved, on the terms set out in the report.

**57. SALE OF SURPLUS PROPERTY – 63 WILTON DRIVE, WEST MONKSEATON AND 36 THE MEADOWS, BERWICK (Paragraph 9)**

These properties are vacant and surplus to the requirements of the Chief Constable. In accordance with Minute 141(iii) – 1995/96, the Clerk (Estates) is authorised to pursue a policy of disposal of surplus police houses. These properties have been advertised for sale on the open market. Six offers were received for 63 Wilton Drive and two offers for 36 The Meadows.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the highest offer of £97,100 for 63 Wilton Drive, West Monkseaton; and £110,500 for 36 The Meadows, Berwick, be accepted.
  - (ii) That, in the event of any of the offers being withdrawn, the Clerk (Estates) be authorised to offer the properties in turn to the next highest offerer until satisfactory completion is achieved.

**58. SALE OF SURPLUS PROPERTY – 3 LAKE APPROACH, BLAYDON (Paragraph 9)**

This property is vacant and surplus to the requirements of the Chief Constable. In accordance with Minute 141(iii) – 1995/96, the Clerk (Estates) is authorised to pursue a policy of disposal of surplus police houses. This property has been advertised for sale on the open market.

The Interim Business Committee has previously approved the sale of this property for £125,000. However, following acceptance of the offer, a further offer was received for the same figure of £125,000. The relevant parties were advised of the position and given the opportunity to submit revised offers. Two revised offers have been received.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the highest revised offer of £128,855 for 3 Lake Approach, Blaydon, be accepted.

- (ii) That, in the event of the offer being withdrawn, the Clerk (Estates) be authorised to offer the property to the next highest offerer.

**59. SALE OF SURPLUS POLICE HOUSES 2001/02 (Paragraph 9)**

Details have been provided of the sales of surplus police houses during the financial year 2001/02.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.