

PILOT DEVOLVEMENT OF SUPPORT STAFF SALARY BUDGET**Joint Report of the the Chief Constable, Treasurer and Clerk**

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to propose the introduction of a pilot scheme for the devolvement of the support staff salary budget, to operate within the existing Force scheme of Devolved Financial Management.

2 BACKGROUND

Over a number of years Northumbria Police has incrementally devolved budget heads to Area Commands and Departments, with significant benefits in accountability and effective resource management. Outline consideration has been given to the budget head for Support Staff Salaries, with agreement reached that this head was considered suitable for potential devolvement.

Other budget heads concerning payment to support staff are already devolved, including overtime allowance, temporary duty allowance and the budget for temporary staff.

The devolvement of support staff salaries would provide managers with an enhanced flexibility to consider the most appropriate means of resolving staffing issues, whether short term in covering a vacancy to longer term, in addressing the ongoing resource requirements of the Area Command or Department.

3 PROPOSALS

It is proposed to introduce pilot schemes within one Area Command and one Department for an initial period of 12 months. Whilst the detailed protocols are still to be finalised, the pilot schemes will adopt the following broad principles:

- The pilot will comply with the existing financial controls for the scheme of devolved financial management.
- No virement out of the support staff heading to underpin other budget areas.
- There will be no ongoing commitment beyond the end of the pilot scheme.
- No change to existing Force procedures for the evaluation and grading of affected posts.

It is proposed that the pilot schemes commence on 1 April 2003 with an interim evaluation after 6 months. This evaluation will help inform future consideration of the feasibility of formally devolving the support staff salary budget to all Area Commands and Departments, with effect from 1 April 2004.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Treasurer confirms that there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

6 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

- (i) Note the contents of this report.
- (ii) Approve the introduction of a pilot scheme for the devolvement of the support staff salary budget, with effect from 1 April 2003.
- (iii) Agree to receive a further report after the six months interim evaluation of the pilot.