

**INTEGRATED CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

**Report of Chief Constable**

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**1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

The purpose of the report is to inform members of the integrated Criminal Justice Strategy and the potential impact on the IT solutions and business processes within Northumbria Police.

**2 BACKGROUND**

**Criminal Justice IT Strategy**

The Police Science & Technology Strategy identifies several key priorities which reflect and support national policing priorities within the National Policing Plan. The Criminal Justice IT Unit (CJITU) within the Home Office has developed a strategy to enable the separate organisations, making up the criminal justice service (CJS) within England and Wales, to exchange information and introduce new and improved business processes. This includes co-located police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) staff along with improved target times for case files, court results and access to information by a wider audience of approved users.

Whilst the details of the Criminal Justice strategy are still being developed, the principles involve the use of a “central” CJS Exchange which acts as a link and translator between the various information systems installed in police forces and other CJS agencies. This will require a method of sending and receiving information to the CJS Exchange about offenders and arrest and charge details, along with full case files where appropriate.

Whilst some forces still have little or no IT facilities to process arrests in custody suites, that functionality has existed in Northumbria since the mid 1990s. Furthermore, the ability to track the progress of case details and to receive and process the court results electronically is almost unique in the country.

The National Strategy for Police Information Systems (NSPIS) Custody and Case Preparation Systems are many years late in being delivered, but are now at the stage of being tested in pilot environments. These products are seen by those forces without such functionality as a means to improve efficiency and to enable information transfer to the CJS Exchange. CJITU sees the NSPIS products as a “standard” to be adopted within the police service but now acknowledge the need to accommodate existing legacy solutions (such as those in Northumbria) where they exist.

National funding has been provided through the Police IT Organisation (PITO) for the national rollout of NSPIS Case and Custody to all forces as outlined in the National Policing Plan. However, to implement the NSPIS Custody application within the Northumbria Police integrated environment would cause loss of significant operational capability and provide little more to the operational officer.

The NSPIS Case Preparation application does provide some additional functionality over current internal solutions but only with regard to the production of electronic case files. Electronic case file creation has not yet been included in the existing systems due to the lack of any capability within the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to receive and process them.

Although additional national funding has been identified for the initial capital costs of installing NSPIS products the internal business change costs and implementation support are not covered. In addition, the ongoing revenue charges for support & maintenance are only included up to the end of 2005. Assuming that the rollout takes at least 2 years then the full costs for support and maintenance would come from local force budgets. It has not been possible to estimate the total costs and implications but it is estimated to be of the order of £400,000 to £600,000 p.a. in total for both Case and Custody in addition to existing costs. It would also be necessary to increase staffing significantly in the Criminal Justice Administrative Support Units.

If forces wish to proceed with alternative solutions to NSPIS Custody and Case then there must be some guarantee that the alternative solution can provide the same information to the same standards as required by the CJS Exchange. Documents that identify those standards are currently being examined to evaluate compliance.

### **Options**

The options are to:

- Implement NSPIS Custody and Case Preparation
- Implement only NSPIS Case Preparation with appropriate enhancements to existing systems to provide information transfer
- Implement neither NSPIS products and enhance the existing system to comply with CJS Exchange

The first option is not considered to be viable as it is not practical to implement NSPIS Custody without a significant increase in costs due to duplication of function and data, or to significantly reduce operational capability.

The choice between implementing NSPIS Case Preparation or enhancing the existing service cannot be determined until the investigation into compliance with the CJS Exchange and the implications on business process change is complete.

## **3**

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

Nil.

**4**      **HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

Nil.

**5**      **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

According to information from PITO there should be no capital funding requirement, although no actual costs for all forces have yet been calculated.

If the NSPIS solutions are adopted then the ongoing revenue implications will need to be included in the budget for the year following implementation (assumed to be 2004/05).

**6**      **RECOMMENDATION**

Members are recommended to note the contents of the report.