

COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS

Joint Report of the Chief Constable, Clerk and Treasurer

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to advise members of a successful bid to the Home Office for 45 Community Support Officers (CSOs).

2 BACKGROUND

At the Police Authority meeting held on 26 March 2003 members were advised that Home Office funding was available for 50% of the salaries and direct on costs of CSOs in 2003/04, and that this funding would continue to be provided until March 2006.

Approval was given for the Chief Constable to submit a formal bid to the Home Office for 45 Community Support Officers. Members also agreed to receive a further report detailing the outcome of the bid, followed by a progress report once the CSOs have been operating for six months (minute 268 - 2002/03).

3 OUTCOME OF THE BID

The Home Office has now advised that the Northumbria Police bid was successful, and has agreed to provide funding of up to £330k in line with the bid, to enable recruitment of 45 CSOs based on an anticipated 'go live' date of 1 September 2003. In respect of future years, the Home Office will provide funding of 50% salary and direct on costs from 2003/04 to 2005/06.

Three pilot sites have been identified (Sunderland City, Gateshead East and Wallsend Area Commands) using performance data relating to incidents of disorder, antisocial behaviour and racist incidents, along with information from the Police Authority survey relating to concerns about visibility and reassurance. Each will receive fifteen CSOs.

A project team comprising of two sergeants has been established to identify issues that will need to be considered to enable the integration of CSOs within the force.

3 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

Nil

4 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

Although there are no direct human rights implications arising from the report itself, the provision of CSOs does have human rights implications in that the force has a duty to promote human rights. The work of the CSOs may be said to promote the 'right to life', the 'right to respect for private and family life' and the 'peaceful enjoyment of property'.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Home Office will provide funding of up to £330k in 2003/04, to fund 50% of salary and direct on costs to enable recruitment of 45 CSOs. It will continue to provide 50% funding on the same basis during 2004/05 and 2005/06.

The Treasurer confirms that the requirement to meet 50% of the funding can be met from within the growth agreed for the support staff budget in 2003/04.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Police Authority is asked to:

- i) note the contents of the report;
- ii) agree to receive a progress report when the CSOs have been operating for six months.