

DEVOLVEMENT OF POLICE STAFF SALARY BUDGET**Report of Chief Constable, Treasurer and Personnel Adviser**

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Police Authority members of the results of the pilot exercise to devolve police staff budgets and to seek approval in principle for extension of the scheme as a permanent feature.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members agreed on 26 February 2003 to the introduction of a 12-month pilot scheme from 1 April 2003. It was also agreed that an evaluation report should be submitted after 6 months (minute 240 – 2002/03 refers).
- 2.2 The Criminal Justice Department (CJD) and Newcastle East Area Command were chosen as pilot sites. A meeting was held to evaluate the success of the pilot to date, and the following issues were raised:-

i) Newcastle East Area Command

There has been limited scope to vary working arrangements within Newcastle East Area Command, primarily due to the relatively low numbers of staff resources employed in area commands of this size. The proposed move to 6 area commands arising from the Public Sector and Performance Review will address the issue of size and permit greater flexibility in the use of staff within area commands.

ii) Criminal Justice Department (CJD)

There has been greater scope within CJD to investigate alternative arrangements during the pilot scheme. Effective management of vacancies and absences has released financial resources which have been used to trial alternative supervisory arrangements in the Central Information Bureau and to accommodate research and development work.

CJD management engaged Establishment Review to provide advice and support in designing the alternative working arrangements and have expressed satisfaction with this method of progressing the issue. It is envisaged that the preparation of business cases will provide the most effective way to formalise trial arrangements, where the experience and knowledge gained from the pilot scheme will help in the production of such documents.

iii) Other Issues

The scheme for the devolvement of the police staff budget must be governed by protocols that recognise the corporate needs of the Force. The protocols will be constructed using experience gained during the course of the pilot and with reference to those adopted by other Forces.

- 2.3 Feedback from the evaluation of the pilot scheme has been positive and indicates that the potential benefits predicted at the outset of the pilot have been realised. Devolvement has provided managers with enhanced flexibility in considering the most appropriate means of resolving short-term staffing issues and the ability to experiment with alternative structures and reporting relationships.

3.0 PROPOSALS

- 3.1 Given the requirement to prepare local budget proposals for 2003/04 over the forthcoming months, it is proposed that the devolvement of the police staff budget become a permanent feature of the Force's scheme for devolved financial management, subject to the remainder of the pilot scheme continuing to yield positive results.
- 3.2 It is further proposed that authority be given to Chief Officers to extend the permanent scheme to all area commands and departments at an appropriate juncture, in light of the progress of the Public Sector and Performance Review and the development of effective protocols.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Treasurer confirms that there are no financial implications arising directly from the contents of this report.

5.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no equal opportunities implications arising from this report.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 It is recommended that members approve:-
- i) In principle, the devolvement of the police staff budget as a permanent feature of the Force's scheme for devolved financial management.
 - ii) The extension of devolvement of the police staff budget by Chief Officers to all area commands and departments at an appropriate juncture, in light of the progress of the Public Sector and Performance Review and the development of effective protocols.