

**IMPLEMENTATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE MANAGEMENT OF OFFENDER PROJECT****Joint Report of the Chief Constable and Treasurer**

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**1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

The purpose of the report is to update the Police Authority regarding the implementation of the Criminal Justice Management of Offender Project and funding achieved from the Home Office under the Workforce Modernisation Implementation Fund (WMIF).

**2 BACKGROUND**

In October 2003 the Home Office established the WMIF to assist forces in taking forward the new powers for designated police staff roles under the Police Reform Act 2002, to assist them to make major changes to skills mixes and officer deployment.

The Police Reform Act 2002 introduced provision for designated officer police staff to undertake some duties previously undertaken by police officers. Designated officer roles specific to custody suites are Detention Officer and Investigating Officer.

As part of the Public Service and Performance Review, the force entered into discussions and consultation concerning the provisions of custody services with the Home Office.

The Police Authority Chairman and Treasurer were party to this dialogue and the Home Office invited Northumbria Police to submit a business case for a Criminal Justice Management of Offenders Project

The force submitted an outline bid to run a pilot scheme at an estimated annual cost of £2.647m, comprising of 93 new police staff and associated running costs, which would release police officers back to operational duty, thereby generating significant efficiency savings.

A complementary but important outcome will be an improved service to victims and witnesses, particularly those who are vulnerable and who may need additional support through the criminal justice process. This will assist to improve performance and assist to meet the force's commitment to Narrowing the Justice Gap targets.

It is also envisaged that confidence will be increased in the delivery of local criminal justice services.

### 3 **OUTCOME OF THE BID**

The Home Office has given provisional approval for Year 1 funding of £2.2m together with an additional £100,000 to fund an external evaluation of the pilot. The balance of the cost of the bid, being £347,000 will be met from the 2003/04 revenue budget.

Final approval for the 2003/04 funding (Year 1) is expected from the Home Office in early December, with further information on funding for 2004/05 (Year 2) to follow as soon as it is known.

It is therefore proposed to pilot the project in three diverse policing style Area Commands; Newcastle North/West, South East Northumberland (Bedlington) and South Tyneside (South Shields), in order to highlight the benefits the whole force would achieve.

An integrated approach, to dealing with an offender from arrest to post-conviction will be created.

This is a 2 year pilot that is currently subject to the implementation of a project board and planning preparation working towards a 'go-live' date of 1 March 2004.

### 4 **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

This proposal is empowered by the Police Reform Act and therefore is not directly affected by Equal Opportunities policies. Full compliance of the Northumbria Police Equal Opportunities policies will be maintained in all recruitment, appointment and training matters in respect of additional police staff.

### 5 **HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

Nil.

### 6 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Treasurer confirms that the Authority's contribution to the project can be accommodated from within the 2003/04 revenue budget

## 7 **CONCLUSION**

The benefits of this project are:

- i) To significantly reduce bureaucracy and inefficient working practices in the custody file preparation and offender management processes in support of the Bureaucracy Taskforce.
- ii) Increase the number of offences brought to justice and improve public confidence in the Criminal Justice system.
- iii) To maintain a high quality and diverse workforce in sufficient numbers who are able to be deployed in a flexible and effective way.

## 8 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That members:

- i) Note the contents of the report.
- ii) Agree to receive a further report at the conclusion of the pilot.