

**FORCE 'ON-CALL' FRAMEWORK****Joint Report of the Chief Constable, Clerk and Treasurer**

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**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a Force 'on-call' framework and financial remuneration for 'on-call' officers under the Special Priority Payment (SPP) Scheme.

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Northumbria Police has a number of officers who undertake 'on-call' duties daily throughout the force area on a 'goodwill' basis. The Force cannot require officers to carry out such duties and the actual utilisation of 'on-call' officers has lacked a corporate overview resulting in an expansion of roles.
- 2.2 There is national recognition that, from a work/life balance perspective, it is good practice to seek to rationalise the requirement for on-call working. This requirement should be limited to where a need has been identified for the Force to have immediate access to key roles for advice/attendance which, if not provided, poses a real risk to the organisation in terms of adverse service delivery/performance. Aligned to this has been the need to examine ways to share the burden for certain roles which carry unreasonable 'on-call' demands. A Working Group to examine these issues was set up last year and their findings have informed this paper.
- 2.3 It is considered that as a responsible employer, Northumbria Police should remunerate officers required to be 'on-call'. This remuneration is to compensate for the restrictions that are necessarily placed on the off-duty time of 'on-call' officers by the organisation to ensure that adequate cover is provided at all times.
- 2.4 Police staff who are required to be 'on-call' within the Force currently receive compensatory payment for such duties and, accordingly, they are not included within this proposal.
- 2.5 The Force is prevented, by recent legislation, from introducing a new payment scheme to officers for 'on-call' duties unless with the prior agreement of the Home Secretary. Discussions with the Home Office for such permission did not result in a positive response. Legal advice has also indicated that the criteria for routine payment for 'on-call' duties through the Bonus Payment Scheme cannot be justified.
- 2.6 This has left the Special Priority Payment Scheme as being the best vehicle to utilise for progressing payments for 'on-call' duty. However, the criteria of this scheme sets a minimum annual 'one-off' payment of £500.

### **3.0 PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Force adopt an identifiable framework of roles that requires officers to be 'on-call', taking into account the new Force structure. This is shown in the 'on-call' role register at Appendix 'A' and any changes made to the roles identified will require to be sanctioned by the Assistant Chief Constable with specific portfolio responsibility for the role(s) affected, in consultation with the Chief Officer responsible for finance.
- 3.2 It is further proposed that police officers who are required to be 'on-call', be financially compensated, through the Special Priority Payment Scheme, by the sum of a minimum of £500 and a maximum of £800, depending on the number of 'on-call' periods worked.
- 3.3 Requirements for officers to work occasional periods of 'on-call' may be considered for remuneration under the Bonus Payment Scheme.
- 3.4 As of 1st April 2004, under the new pay deal for Superintending ranks, they are not eligible for SPPs, therefore they will not be considered for payment under this scheme.
- 3.5 Finally, it is proposed that Area Commanders and Departmental Heads are specifically tasked with ensuring that no officer is required to work more than 100 periods of 'on-call' in any calendar year. It is recognised that this may prove difficult for this current year but steps will be taken to ensure that this requirement is complied with for 2005.

### **4.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The scheme is designed to be fair and consistent in its application to ensure that there is no discrimination. Applications for payment are open to all officers who meet the criteria.

### **5.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Rationalisation of the number of officers required to be on-call at any one time and a proper remuneration procedure for this will support the Force's obligation under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights to a right to a private and family life.

### **6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Treasurer confirms that the cost of these proposals can be met from existing budget provision for the Special Priority Payment Scheme.

### **7.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 It is recommended that members approve the introduction of a Force 'on-call' framework as outlined.

'ON-CALL' ROLE REGISTER

EFFECTIVE FROM 1 APRIL 2004

MONDAY TO SUNDAY INCLUSIVE

AREA COMMANDS	Duty Superintendents	(3)
	Duty DCI )	
	Duty DI )	(3)
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS	Senior Manager	(1)
OPERATIONAL SUPPORT	Traffic Inspector	(1)
	Collision Investigation Unit	(2)
	POLSA	(1)
	CSU Operations	(10)
CRIME MANAGEMENT	Senior Investigating Officer	(1)
	Aide to SIO	(1)
	Crime Scene Co-ordinator	(1)
	Crime Scene Manager	(1)
	Scenes of Crime Officers	(2)
	Special Branch Officer	(1)
	FIB	(1)
	Witness Protection Officer	(1)
	Child Protection Officers	(2)
	Crime Team Officer	(1)
	Negotiators	(2)
	MIR Co-ordinator*	(1)
	TSU	(1)
	Coroner's Office	(1)

\* weekends only

