

SPECIAL PRIORITY PAYMENT (SPP) SCHEME**Joint Report of the Chief Constable, Clerk and Treasurer**

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for:

- i) Retrospective inclusion of additional groups of officers in the 2003 Special Priority Payments (SPPs) Scheme to ensure the minimum requirement to spend 1% of the Force pay bill has been achieved.
- ii) New roles and payments to be included in the 2004 SPP scheme.

2 BACKGROUND

The Police Negotiating Board (PNB) agreed in May 2002 that a scheme for SPPs would be introduced nationally. Under the agreement, the posts which are eligible for payment and the levels of payment which they attract are determined by the Chief Constable and the Police Authority. There is no right of appeal against this determination.

Payments are made annually on a one-off basis and must be no less than £500 and no more than £3,000 normally, although exceptionally, payments of up to £5,000 may be made. The PNB expects that no less than 20% of Force strength will benefit from the scheme and no more than 30%, save in exceptional circumstances.

At the Police Authority meeting held on 29 January 2003, members agreed to adopt the national SPP Scheme (minute 207 - 2003/2004). The payment was set at £1,000 per annum per eligible officer, although because the scheme was to run for only 9 months, the actual payments were a proportion of that allocation.

Based on an assessment of the criteria, the following posts attracted payment under the scheme in the first year:

- Uniform patrol constables working in area commands on a 24 hour/7 days a week shift pattern who have completed over 5 years service on 1 December 2003.
- Community Beat Managers with a minimum of 2 years service working within area commands.
- Central Support Unit constables working on a 24 hour/7 days a week shift pattern.
- Central Support Unit sergeants working on a 24 hour/7 days a week shift pattern.

The total number of posts that were eligible to receive the payment under this scheme was estimated to be 1085 (26.8% of force establishment).

The finance allocated to the scheme was based on the minimum requirement of 1% of the Force pay bill and it was estimated that payment of the numbers eligible would allow the Force to meet this minimum requirement.

However, the scheme significantly underspent in 2003 owing to fewer officers making application because of failure to meet sickness criteria, movement between roles and self de-selection because of the known criteria. This has resulted in an underspend for the 2003 SPP scheme amounting to £148,700. This must be spent to achieve the 1% minimum for which the Force receives Home Office funding.

In respect of the 2004 scheme, the threshold number of officers the Force is permitted to allocate payments to has risen from 30% to 40% and the budget has risen from 1% of the Force paybill to 1.5%.

3 **PROPOSALS**

In order to meet the shortfall for 2003, it is proposed that the roles eligible for the SPP scheme be retrospectively extended to the following groups with the payment levels set at the same amount as for the other 2003 groups:

- 24/7 Uniform Sergeants (Patrol and Custody) who have at least 2 years in the rank
- Community Beat Manager Sergeants who have at least 2 years in the rank
- Operational Detective Inspectors
- Operational Detective Chief Inspectors

The retrospective inclusion of these officers in the 2003 SPP scheme will ensure that the financial targets are reached and it is anticipated that the additional officers involved will bring the numbers allocated payments under the scheme to the 30% threshold.

For 2004, it is proposed that the eligible roles be extended and that payment differentials be introduced between the different groups. Details can be seen on Appendix 'A' but the new groups eligible for SPP payments are:

Uniform Tutor Constables

Uniform Tutor Sergeants

CID Tutors

Operational Detective Inspectors

Operational Detective Chief Inspectors

Level 1 Under Cover Operatives

Motor Patrol Constables working 24/7 shift pattern

Motor Patrol Sergeants working 24/7 shift pattern with at least 2 years in the rank

In addition, it is proposed that officers eligible for 'on-call' payments are included with effect from the introduction of that scheme on 1st April 2004, as outlined in the previous agenda item.

4 **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

The scheme has been agreed nationally and is designed to be fair and consistent in its application to ensure that there is no discrimination. Application for payment under the scheme is open to all officers who meet the criteria.

5 **HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

Nil.

6 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Treasurer confirms that the cost of these proposals can be met from existing budget provision.

7 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are asked to approve:

- i) Retrospective inclusion of additional groups of officers as outlined in the 2003 Special Priority Payments (SPPs) Scheme.
- ii) New roles and payments as outlined to be included in the 2004 SPP scheme.