



REPORT TO CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

24 September 2009

1. MEETING

On 26th June Councillors Fiona Chapman, Alison Graham Christina Turner and myself were appointed to the Bedfordshire Police Authority.

Set out below are some of the issues discussed at that meeting and at the Authority's meeting on 17th July.

Also included is an update on current performance which was considered by the Authorities Performance Committee on the 11th August

2. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

The Authority has re - elected Peter Conniff and Penny Fletcher to the above respective positions for 2009/10.

3. COLLABORATION PROGRAMME – PROGRESS TO DATE

Some new Members to the Central Bedfordshire Council may be unaware that the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Joint Collaboration Programme was established in 2008. The programme provides further scope for joint working between the two forces following the success of the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Major Crime Unit established in 2007, and now acknowledged as one of the most successful collaboration initiatives in England and Wales.

The work of the Joint collaboration programme is overseen by the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Working group. Each Authority must give the final approval to any collaboration.

Since the programme began four collaborative ventures have been approved in the following areas

Scientific Services
Firearms
Dogs
Professional Standards

On 17th July both Authorities approved the establishment of a joint Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Civil Contingencies and Operational Planning Unit (including search) which will go live on 1st September

Annual savings in the region of £2m are expected from the rollout of the programme to date.

The joint arrangements are working well. An example of a collaborative outcome which provides Bedfordshire with a new capability in the area of Anti Corruption is highlighted later in the report.

Scoping work is currently progressing on an assessment of the collaborative opportunities for ICT, Procurement and Serious and Organised Crime.

The Business case for a proposed merger between the Bedfordshire Police Force and Hertfordshire Constabulary is currently being prepared by the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Collaboration Programme Team. It will be brought to the Police Authorities in September if it is operationally and financially sound.

A decision on a potential merger will be made by Bedfordshire Police Authority based upon what will achieve the best policing for residents and communities across Bedfordshire and Luton.

Before a decision is made a programme of consultation with the public and partner organisations, as well as staff will be developed

Clearly to allow for a meaningful consultation process to be undertaken the decision on the business case is unlikely to be made in the current year. If both Police Authorities supported a merger business case it would also need to be approved by the Home Secretary.

4. PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The Authority's Performance Committee closely scrutinised police performance for the first quarter of 2009.

Members of the Committee looked at elements of the Policing Pledge to assess how the standard is being met. It was felt by all members that meeting the targets of the Pledge and informing the community of the progress being made are both vital to public confidence.

Further work will be undertaken to publicise the Pledge and the availability of crime information.

The Force's work to address burglary, robbery and vehicle crime has brought significant improvements, with all areas showing reductions well above the target levels set by the Authority. Overall crime levels are also below the

target, with 974 fewer crimes than the same period the previous year.

Crime	Target	Actual
Overall recorded crime	11035	11012
Burglary	795	743
Robbery	225	189
Vehicle Crime	1521	1440

However there is concern that detections were not increasing at the same rate.

Figures for all categories of violent crime were seen to be deteriorating during the first quarter.

Of particular note had been the increase in racially aggravated crime which had been as a result of incidents such as the Royal Anglian March in Luton. Additional funding has been secured to address serious youth violence, including knife crime. Members have been assured that the trend of increasing violent crime was not expected to continue, with performance expected to show improvements at the end of the next quarter (September 30th 2009).. Members will be discussing the strategies in place to address violent crime at its next meeting and will continue to monitor fluctuations in performance and asking for appropriate action to be taken.

Members remained concerned to see the continuing large gap in satisfaction figures between white and BME victims of crime and were informed that the Force's intention is reduce the gap to target levels by March 2010.

5. NEW ANTI CORRUPTION UNIT

The Authority's Complaints and Professional Standards Committee has welcomed the introduction of an Anti-Corruption Unit as a result of the joint Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Professional Standards Unit launched in April.

The unit's vision, agreed by the Chief Officers of both Forces, is *'To maintain and improve public confidence and quality of service and enhance the integrity of the Bedfordshire Police and Hertfordshire Constabulary'*.

Members felt that the Unit's existence promotes the high standards expected from all police officers and staff and emphasises that any detraction from these standards will not be tolerated. The new unit will give members of the public confidence in the integrity of officers and staff.

The Police Authority promotes the highest professional standards at all times, It has demonstrated its determination to ensure that the Force endeavours to identify any unethical behaviour within the officers and staff of Bedfordshire Police with its total support of the creation of this pro-active Anti-Corruption Unit.

There is no indication that there is a problem with corrupt practices and it is hoped that the very existence of this unit will deter people from even

considering abusing their position, a position we believe to be based on trust and transparency.

The joint unit, the result of a collaborative project between the two forces, means that it will be better equipped to proactively protect both the service and public from the very small minority who, through their actions, undermine confidence in the Police Service.

PETER HOLLICK

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY