



CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

25TH November 2010

1. MEETING

The Authority last met on 22 October 2010

Set out below are some of the main issues discussed.

2. NEW CHIEF CONSTABLE FOR BEDFORDSHIRE

The Authority has appointed Mr Alf Hitchcock as the next Chief Constable of Bedfordshire Police.

Mr Hitchcock, who is currently Deputy Chief Constable at the National College of Police Leadership at the Police Staff College, Bramshill, will take up his new position on 1st January 2011. The current Chief Constable, Gillian Parker, retires at the end of the year.

3. COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW

The Comprehensive Spending Review announced on 20th October is roughly in line with our assumptions that the likely consequential budget 'gap' by 2014/15 is £19.2M and how this is to be met has been considered extensively by the Authority and Force.

As a result we have already started preparing to meet the challenges posed by the cuts and preparation of the 2011 -15 Strategic Plan to cover the four period year of the Comprehensive Spending Review has now begun. Also in progression is the development of a new policing model through Programme 2011 which will deliver significant financial savings. The Authority is also looking for further collaboration opportunities with relevant partners wherever possible to realise efficiencies and best value in line with strategic priorities.

In addition, the Force has placed a freeze on police officer recruitment and is holding police officer staff vacancies to reduce expenditure in the current year and provide savings in future years.

We are also highlighting to the Government the impact of the funding formula currently being applied, which already sees Bedfordshire Police receiving £3.6M per annum less than the formula, based upon need, states that Bedfordshire Police should receive

The full details of how the CSR will impact on the budget for policing in Bedfordshire will be known in early December when the Police Grant Allocations are published.

4 BEDFORDSHIRE AND HERTFORDSHIRE COLLABORATION PROGRAMME

The Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Police Authorities have formally approved the establishment of a joint Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire collaboration in the areas of ICT and Police Pension Administration. The new Pensions Administration unit will be in place from 1st November 2010 and is expected to make combined efficiency savings of approximately £105K per year and the new ICT unit will be in place from 1st December 2010 and is expected to deliver combined efficiencies of £350K per year.

Both Authorities have also approved business cases for joint arrangements in the areas of Firearm Licensing and Counter Terrorism and Domestic extremism. A business case for procurement has also been agreed and the Cambridgeshire Constabulary is a partner in this collaboration. Combined efficiency savings from all these proposals amount to approximately £571K

After the decision on the 16th July not to consult regarding a merger between the two forces both Authorities remain keen to move forward the current collaborative work but realise that this is not enough to make the savings each requires and therefore each Authority will be looking to collaborate with other forces and partners as well.

5. HMIC (HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY) AND AUDIT COMMISSION INSPECTION OF POLICE AUTHORITIES

The findings of the first joint HMIC (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary) and Audit Commission Inspection of Bedfordshire Police Authority was issued in September and the overall assessment indicated that the Authority was performing adequately. Members are particularly pleased that the individual inspection score for value for money and productivity had indicated that the Authority was performing well in this area... No Authority has been awarded a higher score in this category and only 5 of the 20 assessed so far have achieved this.

Members are pleased that that the report states that the Authority knows what is important to Bedfordshire people. The report acknowledges that the Authority actively seeks the views of local people about policing priorities and that it communicates well with local residents and other stakeholders.

The report confirms that the despite being one of the smallest Police Authorities in England & Wales, Bedfordshire Police Authority has significantly developed its capacity and capability in the last three years. The report also recognizes the strong commitment to equality and diversity in all areas of its work and the fact that Authority members are reflective of the local community both by gender and ethnicity.

In the current financial climate, the Authority is also pleased to see that the inspectors acknowledged the fact that Bedfordshire is recognised nationally for its strong promotion of collaborative working to achieve value for money. The Authority is consistently delivering challenging efficiency targets and has also been acknowledged for its commitment to partnership working.

The Audit Commission's Nigel Smith, spokesperson for the joint inspection team, has said:

"Bedfordshire residents can be confident that their Police Authority provides good leadership, scrutiny of and challenge to the county's Police Force.

"The Authority is already strongly focused on ensuring value for money and is recognised nationally for its strong promotion of collaborative working. At the same time it ensures the Force provides the services local people need. With a tough financial climate ahead it needs to have a clear long-term plan to enable it to make hard choices about policing priorities, funding and spending. The inspection shows that the Authority is well-placed and motivated to meet future challenges."

PETER HOLLICK
REPORT OF THE BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY