

County Council Meeting – 24 March 2009

To: SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

Date: 24 March 2009

By: Sue Martin, Chief Executive of Surrey Police Authority

Title: REPORT FROM SURREY POLICE AUTHORITY

Purpose of Report/Issue:

To inform Members of the work of Surrey Police Authority since the last Council meeting in January 2009.

Substantive Chief Constable for Surrey Police

Interviews for the appointment of a Chief Constable are being held on 10 and 11 March and a verbal update will be available at the meeting.

Budget for 2009/10

At its meeting on 9 February, the Authority agreed a budget of £198.8m for Surrey Police in 2009/10, representing a 3.8% notional increase in budget requirement (a 4.8% notional increase following capping last year) and a 4.89% increase in the policing precept. The Authority continues to face a substantial budget gap as a result of years of under-funding arising from the police funding formula, which disadvantages Surrey. The Authority received the minimum increase in grant of 2.5%, compared with grant increases of nearly 4% given to some other authorities. Whilst other areas pay on average less than 25% of their police budget, Surrey taxpayers pay around 50%.

The Force has already made significant cuts to close its budget gap (expected to be £14.5m over the next three years) and £3.8m of savings are programmed for the year ahead. These will include streamlining business processes, reorganisation of departments and a reduction in headcount. Protecting policing services for Surrey residents, and particularly neighbourhood policing, is becoming increasingly difficult, in spite of the efficiencies made elsewhere in the Force.

In making the difficult decision to increase the budget requirement this year, the Authority faced the choice of whether or not to make cuts to the frontline. In the longer term, the Authority will continue to seek a funding settlement that takes into account the policing needs of Surrey people and the amount they should have to pay for them.

Performance Information

The latest performance information, which sets out the Force's progress against targets for the third quarter of 2008/09, shows some excellent results. In December, it was announced that Surrey has the second highest public confidence rate in England and Wales and is the top Force in a new measure which monitors joint activity with partners.

In the last three months, 43 people have been charged or cautioned with the supply of Class A drugs. To date the Force has disrupted or dismantled eight organised criminal groups in Surrey and, with further active investigations ongoing, it is anticipated that the target of 10 will be met. Surrey Police remains focused on tackling serious violent and acquisitive crime and data up to mid January showed 8,694 serious crimes recorded which is a year on year reduction of 13.13%. Where performance is not as strong is conversion of forensic hits into detections for serious acquisitive crimes. The Force continues to drive to improve in this area.

Information for prospective County Council appointees to Surrey Police Authority

As Members will be aware, the Police Authority comprises eight independent members and nine County Council appointees. This year, following the elections, we are expecting a significant turnover in the Authority's County Council membership.

We have drawn up a briefing pack which sets out information about the role of the Authority and a Police Authority Member. Whilst we appreciate that ultimately, the decision on which Members join the Authority will be made by the party leaders, we hope that the information pack will allow councillors to make a more informed decision on whether the role is suitable for them. For those who will not be joining the Authority, the pack should explain more about the Authority's business. The pack will be available at the Council meeting on 24 March. A briefing session for interested Members will also be held at the Authority's offices at Mount Browne, Guildford on the morning of 16 April.

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