

County Council Meeting – 21 July 2009

To: SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

Date: 21 July 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.

New Members to Surrey Police Authority

We were pleased to welcome seven new Members to their first meeting of Surrey Police Authority on 29 June. Joining us in 2009-10 are County Councillors Bill Barker, David Harmer, Ernest Mallett, Sally Marks, Nick Skellett, Hazel Watson and Fiona White. Margaret Hicks returns as a long-serving County Council appointee and Angela Fraser rejoins having been with the Authority on a previous occasion.

Appointment of Chairman and Vice Chairman of Surrey Police Authority

At its annual meeting on 29 June, the Authority elected Peter Williams JP as its Chairman for the year 2009-10. Peter has been an independent member (and formerly a magistrate member) of the Authority since 2003 and served as Vice Chairman prior to his appointment as Chairman in 2008. Lynn Hawkins has been elected Vice Chairman of the Authority. Lynn is also an independent member and a serving magistrate and joined the Authority in 2004.

Capping of Surrey Police Authority

As Members will be aware, we have been notified by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) that our budget requirement for 2009-10 is deemed excessive and that the Government intends to designate or 'cap' the Authority. Ultimately, this means that our budget will be reduced this year by £1.6m and a re-billing exercise will need to be undertaken at an additional cost of around £1.2m.

In order for the designation to be progressed, an Order requiring the Authority to re-bill needs to be laid before Parliament. This is expected to take place on 9th July. The Authority continues to believe that this course of action is irrational, unreasonable and defies financial logic. We have been pleased with the level of support shown to the Authority by Surrey MPs, County, Borough and District Council members and colleagues and the wider public. In the meantime, the

Authority is progressing with a Judicial Review as we believe that DCLG's use of a 'notional precept' level has no basis in law. At the time of writing, we await to hear of a date for the hearing.

Front line cuts will be inevitable if the Government's plan goes ahead. The Force faces difficult decisions in the near future to identify where these cuts will fall. Capping will add a further 50 front line posts to the total reduction in headcount of 144 so far this year. These cuts will be spread across a range of functions including cuts to the number of officers investigating major crime, working in Special Branch, the forensics department, policing the roads as well as safer neighbourhood officers working with young people in schools and officers providing crime prevention advice.

End of 2008/9 Year Performance

At its meeting in May 2009, the Authority received a report on the 2008/9 performance year. In spite of a turbulent year for the Force, it showed that excellent results have been obtained.

The past year has seen increasing rates of public satisfaction and confidence with 81.8% of those surveyed saying they have confidence in the police in their local neighbourhood. Serious acquisitive and violent crime rates have been reduced and are below target. During 2008/09, the Force recorded a reduction of 12.2% or 1,515 fewer crimes in this category. Organised crime groups have suffered significant disruption and the number of people charged or cautioned with the supply of Class A drugs is 26% above target.

Operation Shield, (the creation of a protective 'shield' around Surrey using intelligence along with crime and roads policing resources) has had a major impact on cross-border criminality. The proportion of out-of-force offenders charged has increased by 10% and the forensic conversion rate for serious acquisitive crimes linked to out of force offenders has increased from 60% to 78%.

The Authority commends the hard work and dedication of Surrey Police officers and staff to achieve such high levels of performance despite a very challenging year.

Local Policing Plan for 2009-12

In order to meet its statutory requirement to publish a Local Policing Plan by 30 June 2009, the Authority agreed a revised set of targets at its last meeting, based on the assumption that the Authority's budget will be capped in-year. There will be an opportunity for revising the year's targets should the Government's capping decision be rescinded. The targets remain challenging at a time when the Force is facing reductions in its headcount. The overall strategic direction of the plan – Putting the Surrey Public First – remains the same. The plan is available on the Authority's website and has been sent to key stakeholders.

Statement of Accounts

The Authority agreed its Statement of Accounts at the annual meeting on 29 June. The accounts show that gross budget approved by the Authority for 2008/09 was £209.6 million and that out-turn expenditure was £206.8 million, resulting in a planned under spend of £2.8 million. Capital expenditure for 2008/2009 was £11.6 million, against an approved budget of £18.2 million. The resulting under spend of £6.6 million is committed against ongoing schemes and has been carried forward to the current financial year.

The Statement of Accounts is still subject to audit by the external auditors and is prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2008.

Appointment of Deputy Chief Constable and Assistant Chief Constable

The Authority was pleased to appoint Craig Denholm to the role of Deputy Chief Constable in May. This is Craig's second spell at Surrey as he served in a number of roles including Chief Superintendent and Divisional Commander between 2001 and 2008. Also appointed in May was Assistant Chief Constable for Specialist Operations, Jerry Kirkby. Jerry has a long association with Surrey, having started his career in the county as a constable in 1983.

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