

*County Council Meeting – 15 December 2009*

**To: SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Date: 15 December 2009**

**By: Alison Bolton, Acting Chief Executive of Surrey Police Authority**

**Title: REPORT OF THE SURREY POLICE AUTHORITY**

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**Purpose of Report/Issue:**

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

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**Operational Police Review**

Members will by now be aware of plans under development by the Chief Constable to address the considerable and unprecedented challenges facing the Force, both from a policing and a financial perspective. The Authority has encouraged the Force to think radically and it is hoped that the plans, which would see changes to Force structures, building and resources, will be a significant step towards achieving this aim.

By making cuts to senior officer posts, simplifying the policing structure, further reducing bureaucracy and rationalising the existing estate, the Operational Police Review (OPR) could result in up to 200 extra police officers on the streets of Surrey. These officers would be used to bolster neighbourhood policing teams and the Force's work around Operation Shield to counter cross-border criminality.

The Force has already been exploring opportunities with partners, including Surrey County Council, to locate policing teams in a range of more accessible places including local authority offices, libraries and other busy focal points in communities. This would ultimately see some of the older, under-used police buildings being replaced with better and more convenient places for the public to engage with officers.

The Authority's own consultation results have showed that more visible policing is a key priority for the public. The proposals are clearly not without risk and the Authority has made clear there will need to be a sound business case in place before the more detailed plans can be considered at its meeting on 10 December. However, it is evident that a more wide-reaching approach is needed to secure the future sustainability of the Force and on the basis of these plans, it is anticipated that this can be achieved.

## **Performance Update**

At the halfway point in this performance year, six of the nine Local Policing Plan targets are being met. The Authority was pleased to learn that the British Crime Survey now puts Surrey second nationally with regards to its confidence results. It is particularly encouraging that the public continues to have confidence in the Force in spite of the substantial organisational changes that officers and staff have been through in recent months. In terms of the public satisfaction rate, at 80.4%, it is very good, although below target. To meet the target of 83.9% between now and March will take a great deal of hard work.

In terms of the targets for safety and harm reduction, the Force is making excellent progress in charging or cautioning people with Class A Drugs and dismantling organised criminal groups. The target to maintain the reductions in serious violent crime and serious acquisitive crime achieved in 2008/09 is not currently being met, particularly in respect of domestic burglary and theft, and steps are being taken to remedy this.

## **Policing Pledge Inspection**

The Policing Pledge was introduced across the country by the Home Secretary in December 2008. It set out a number of undertakings to local residents to provide them with information about their local policing teams; give them a stronger voice in reflecting their priorities and concerns to the police; and standards around dealing with emergencies and incidents within agreed times. In Surrey, the Pledge was introduced as a complement to the work already in progress to improve public confidence and customer service through the Surrey Public First Strategy. With the support of HMIC, Surrey created a bespoke Pledge, building on the Government's framework, but with extra elements to reflect a Surrey perspective.

In April, HMIC began inspecting all police forces to establish whether they had kept their Pledge promises. Inspectors acted as customers, or 'mystery shoppers', to get a realistic, first-hand view of the public's experiences in each force. In October we learnt that Surrey was one of just eight forces in England and Wales to be graded as 'good'. No force received an 'excellent' grading and two were deemed 'poor'. Among the areas of good practice identified in Surrey are the visibility and continuity of Neighbourhood Policing Teams, community involvement activities and the sympathetic and reassuring response given to vulnerable or upset callers. The Authority has recorded its appreciation of the Force's achievements.

## **Budget and Target Setting Process**

The Authority's budget and target setting process for 2010-13 is well under way. Members of the budget sub-group have been undertaking the detailed work on the budget gap and to look at areas for possible savings. Alongside this, work continues to draw up the priorities for this year's Local Policing Plan, due for approval in March 2010. Members remain committed to the principles of 'Surrey Public First' but are very aware that finding a sustainable solution to bridging the

budget gap whilst ensuring the Force can continue to operate efficiently and with better capability will be extremely challenging.

### **Police Authority Inspections**

For the first time, Police Authorities are being formally inspected by the Audit Commission and HMIC. The areas of assessment will include setting strategic direction and priorities; performance scrutiny; partnerships and community engagement; and value for money. The first tranche of inspections began this summer and Surrey Police Authority has recently been informed that it is to be included in the second tranche, with our inspection being scheduled between March and July 2010. The Authority has undertaken a self assessment exercise prior to the inspection and will be working to carry out its action plan in the interim.

### **Dr Sue Martin**

As many Members will by now be aware, former Chief Executive, Dr Sue Martin, has moved on from Surrey Police Authority to new challenges. Dr Martin has asked Chairman Peter Williams to thank her colleagues for their support during five years at Surrey Police Authority and the Authority wishes her well in her future endeavours.

In due course, the Authority will begin the process of recruiting a new Chief Executive. In the meantime, Dr Martin's deputy, Alison Bolton is covering the role in an acting capacity.

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