

County Council Meeting – 20 July 2010

**To: SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Date: 20 July 2010**

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

**Title: REPORT FROM 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 June 2010.

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**Surrey Police Finances**

The Authority is examining the likely impact of the recent emergency budget, council tax freeze and further cuts to police funding on the delivery of policing in Surrey. The current three-year funding settlement period has ended and the funding level for 2011/12 onwards is unknown. The Policing Minister, Nick Herbert, has indicated that the police service could be facing cuts of up to 25% in the autumn's Spending Review.

Mr Herbert has stated that the police service will need to reduce bureaucracy, undertake more collaboration and drive out efficiencies to reduce costs and protect the front-line and can no longer 'salami slice' savings but will need to embark on structural reform. The Minister has suggested that forces should look at back office functions, more central procurement and 'getting civilians to take over paperwork duties' to help drive down costs. Surrey already has a long history of innovation and modernisation to generate efficiencies with £60m of cashable savings made in the last decade. We are already at the forefront of workforce modernisation, using police staff to carry out a variety of roles which do not require the powers of a warranted officer. This year, the Force and Authority have embarked on the wholesale programme of change known as the Operational Policing Review to significantly reduce our financial deficit.

We do already know that Surrey Police is to lose £1.4m in core government funding and capital grant this year. The Authority is currently exploring where to make budget reductions that minimise any impact on front-line service delivery or the planned increase of up to 200 police officers proposed as part of the Operational Policing Review.

**Future of Police Accountability**

As Members will be aware, the Government has outlined its commitment to make changes to police accountability structures through the introduction of a 'Directly Elected Individual' at a local level. In her speech to the ACPO Conference on 29 June, Home Secretary Theresa May stated that a Directly Elected Individual would "set the budget, agree the local strategic plan, play a role in wider

questions of community safety and appoint the local chief constable” – all duties currently performed by police authorities.

The Government intends to bring forward detailed proposals and introduce necessary legislation to be implemented in this session of Parliament. As we understand, there will be an opportunity to comment on plans over the summer.

### **Operational Policing Review (OPR) Update**

The Force has recently completed the first stage of its consultation into public accessibility to local neighbourhood officers and exploring alternative locations to meet neighbourhood officers as part of the Operational Policing Review. The consultation took place between 17 May and 17 June in Surrey Heath, Spelthorne, Woking and Guildford and the full results were presented to the Police Authority on 30 June.

The Force was able to exploit a wide range of opportunities to engage with local communities on their preferences for future engagement with officers. The consultation concluded that while there are some individuals and small groups expressing concern over the loss of smaller police stations, the overwhelming majority of people are happy to meet their local officer in a variety of alternative places that better suit their lifestyle. Few people state that a police station is where they wish to meet with their local officer, with local shops, halls, leisure centres and libraries proving more popular options. As the Authority's own consultation had already suggested, there remains work to be done with communities to ensure they fully understand which services are currently provided in smaller, local police stations and which are already being delivered in other ways.

### **Meeting with Surrey MPs**

On 11 June a number of Surrey MPs visited Mount Browne to meet with the Chief Constable, Mark Rowley and his Deputy, Craig Denholm and also Peter Williams, Chairman of Surrey Police Authority and Alison Bolton, the Acting Chief Executive. MPs were able to hear about the impact of the Surrey Public First Strategy and its impact on confidence; the financial and operational challenges the Authority and Force have faced in recent years; and the improvements we plan to deliver through the Operational Policing Review. This was also an opportunity to hear about initial proposals around funding prior to the emergency budget and the Government's commitment to introducing directly elected individuals.

### **Police Authority Inspections**

At the time of writing, a team from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and the Audit Commission is on site at Mount Browne to complete its inspection of Surrey Police Authority. The team will be focusing on where the Authority 'adds value' in terms of setting the strategic direction for Surrey Police, ensuring effective community engagement and partnership work, scrutinising the performance of the Force, and ensuring value for money for local people. We

can expect to receive a draft report on the inspectors' findings in August with the final report to be made public at the end of September.

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