

County Council Meeting – 12 October 2010

To: SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

Date: 12 October 2010

By: Alison Bolton, 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 July 2010.

Surrey Police Authority Inspection

In May and June, Surrey Police Authority was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and the Audit Commission. The report has now been published and we are pleased to have received a score of '3' in each of the four themes - setting strategic direction, scrutiny of performance, engaging with communities and value for money. The overall score of '3' (out of maximum of four) means the Authority is performing well and ranks amongst the best in the country, our scores not having been exceeded by any other Authority inspected under the regime.

The Chairman and Members have welcomed this recognition of the Authority's work and the report is seen as a fair reflection of the hard work put in by the Authority's members, staff and volunteers, as well as their genuine desire to do a good job for the people of Surrey. The full report is available on our website (www.surreypa.gov.uk) and the Audit Commission's website (www.audit-commission.gov.uk/communitysafety).

Home Office Consultation: Policing in the 21st Century - the future of Police Authorities

On 26 July 2010, the Home Office issued a consultation document on police reform entitled Policing in the 21st Century. The Government's plans include:

- replacing Police Authorities with an elected Policing and Crime Commissioner
- scrapping the National Policing Improvement Agency
- creating a new National Crime Agency to deal with serious organised crime and border security

The Government intends to include many elements of the outlined reform, including Commissioners, in a Bill expected to be issued in November 2010.

The Authority recognises that few will disagree with the broad aims of the Policing in the 21st Century document - improving local accountability, reducing bureaucracy, delivering better value for money in policing and providing greater

clarity of roles at local and national levels. However, Members are yet to be persuaded that the Government's proposals outlined in the paper will achieve any of these aims and ultimately provide identifiable benefits for Surrey's communities whilst representing real value for money.

Authority Members have been clear in their view that any new system must bring about improvements upon the existing arrangements. Given that national police strength is likely to decline as a consequence of spending cuts over the period of implementation, the planned changes to police governance could be quickly regarded as a wasteful distraction from an increasingly difficult fight against crime. In its response to the consultation document, the Authority highlighted a number of particular concerns, including the likely costs of bringing in new arrangements; the lack of accountability in the proposed new system of governance; the difficulties for a Commissioner in balancing local demand with wider operational imperatives; and the timing of the changes, which will coincide with the Olympics and Euro 2012.

As the Government draws up the detail to its plans, the Authority has sought an opportunity to be directly involved in helping to shape the proposals to ensure that the aims for improved accountability, robust governance and greater public input are achieved. The Authority still remains absolutely committed to its work and the responsibilities it continues to hold. There are major upheavals ahead of us and we must be absolutely focused on protecting high quality policing in Surrey through these difficult times. Our full response to the consultation has been shared with Surrey's MPs and is available on our website.

Performance Update

The Authority has recently received an update on the Force's progress against the nine headline measures in this year's Local Policing Plan. During the first quarter of the year, the Force has made some good progress against its targets. With local public confidence at 86.7%, the Force has recorded the highest level of public confidence on record since the change in the Joint Neighbourhood Survey in 2008. It is also positive to note that the improvement has been recorded on nine out of the eleven boroughs. Customer satisfaction for victims of serious crime and road traffic collisions now stands at 87% and the Force is on course to meet its target in this area.

Two Organised Criminal Groups (OCGs) have been disrupted or dismantled so far this year with a further six completed investigations pending sign-off. Crime reduction has seen notable successes with an 8.6% year-on-year reduction in the level of serious acquisitive crime and violence with injury.

The two measures that the Force are currently not on course to meet are the number of persons charged or cautioned for Class A drugs, and the detection rate (sanction detections and informal resolutions) for violence with injury, serious acquisitive, and serious sexual crime. Control measures for each of these have been developed and performance continues to be closely monitored. We anticipate improvements by the end of year.

Budget and Target Setting for 2011-12

Surrey Police and Surrey Police Authority have historically worked very closely together in setting the budget and developing the Local Policing Plan. The Policing Plan is a key statutory document which sets out the policing priorities for Surrey Police in the three years ahead and how these will be delivered. Setting the overall annual revenue and capital budgets and related council tax precept is another key statutory responsibility of the Authority. By working together, we can ensure that the budget is sufficient to enable the Force to deliver the priorities set in the Plan. This piece of work for 2011-12 has recently been set in train.

Setting the budget and Policing Plan is always a complex process and this year will clearly be influenced by our progress against current, significant strategic change programmes to close the budget gap, as well as external factors influencing Government funding, and police pay. The Government has already announced that council tax will be frozen this year and we await the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review in October, although the detail may not emerge until some time later. Discussions are already under way to discuss how these cuts, as well as the in-year cut of £1.4m to the Force's revenue budget, will be met whilst safeguarding the front-line.

The Plan must be issued by the end of March 2011. The budgets and precept will be approved at the Authority's meeting in February 2011.

Operational Policing Review (OPR) – Co-location and Consultation

Since the last Council meeting, work has continued on the second phase of the Force's public consultation. Local people have been asked how face-to-face meetings with neighbourhood policing teams can be maintained and improved following proposed changes to the police estate as part of the Operational Policing Review. The Authority has previously agreed that no police station will close until a better alternative is in place and the results of the consultation will be used to help shape proposals in each area. Public consultation in the final three boroughs and districts - Elmbridge, Tandridge and Waverley - will take place in October and November, with proposals made to Surrey Police Authority in December. Plans to co-locate Neighbourhood Teams and front counter facilities in local council offices are also progressing well.

Assistant Chief Constable Ian Dyson

Ian Dyson has recently been successful in securing a new role as Commander in the City of London Police. ACC Dyson had been with Surrey Police since 2008 and led many projects to improve public confidence and crime reduction. The Force has taken this opportunity to review its approach to senior leadership numbers and structures and will, for the time being, be operating with just one Assistant Chief Constable.

Chief Executive of Surrey Police Authority

Following a recent recruitment process, I am pleased to have been appointed as Chief Executive of Surrey Police Authority on a substantive basis and look forward to the challenges that the role will bring in the coming year.

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