

County Council Meeting – 11 October 2011

To: SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL
Date: 11 October 2011
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 2011.

Completion of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act

Peers debated the Police Reform Bill for the last time on 14 September 2011. Royal Assent having been granted on 15 September, this piece of legislation will now see the abolition of the Police Authority in November 2012 to be replaced with a directly-elected Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey, together with a Police and Crime Panel to hold the Commissioner to account.

The Bill had been subject to significant debate and discussion as it made its way through Parliament and met with opposition from Peers in the House of Lords. This resulted in a number of amendments to the original Bill being agreed, including:

- A delay to the intended timescales for elections, with the first elections now being held on 15 November 2012 rather than May 2012. Future elections will be aligned to coincide with local elections
- A new Government clause requiring Commissioners to adhere to a financial code of practice set by the Secretary of State to secure the proper administration of financial affairs
- An increase to the number of members local authorities can appoint to the Police and Crime Panel to up to 20 (to include at least 2 co-opted Members)
- A provision allowing the Commissioner to appoint a Deputy Commissioner, which is not a politically restricted post
- Clarification of the transfer arrangements for all staff, rights and liabilities from the Authority to the Commissioner in the first instance (with the Chief Constable retaining direction and control of police staff).

The Government has acknowledged that previous timescales had given insufficient time to plan for elections in May 2012. The Policing Minister is of the view that 'stand-alone' elections in November will *"bring a real focus to this landmark reform and ensure a distinct public debate on these issues"*. Some local authorities have raised concerns over possible low turn-out and additional cost.

The Police Authority has committed to continue with 'business as usual' and will not abrogate its responsibilities until such time as it is abolished – currently set to

be 22 November 2012, one week after the elections to bring in the Commissioner for Surrey. There remains a significant amount of work for the Authority and partners to undertake in order to ensure a smooth transition to a new form of police governance. To date, given that the final shape of the Bill has been subject to significant and ongoing changes, we have had to take a pragmatic approach towards preparations for transition. Work is, however, well underway both nationally and locally. In Surrey, this includes good links established between the leads for the Police Authority, Surrey Police, Surrey County Council and the Districts and Boroughs; a report to Leaders to begin to explore the possible make-up and lead for the Police and Crime Panel, and consideration of the 'internal' implications for Surrey Police such as the transfer of police staff, assets and estate.

Local Policing Plan Performance

At its September meeting, the Police Authority heard that the Force has made excellent progress against its Local Policing Plan targets during the first quarter of 2011/12. Of the nine targets in the Plan, seven are on track so far.

Public confidence remains high with 88.7% of the public surveyed saying they are confident in their neighbourhood team. This mirrors national results in the British Crime Survey which put Surrey as the highest performing force in respect of confidence. Satisfaction levels are also on course, currently standing at almost 88% for victims of burglary, vehicle crime, racial crime and road traffic incidents and at 78% for victims of anti-social behaviour. .

At the end of June, the Force had recorded 116 charges and cautions for class A drugs and 77 for class B drugs. Serious acquisitive crime and violence with injury crimes have seen a reduction of 5.5% compared to the same quarter last year.

Since the start of this year, the Force has recruited an additional 40 police constables, bringing the total number to 1,475. This puts the Force on track to achieve its planned increase of 200 constables against the 2009/10 baseline of 1,345.

The two target areas currently not on track are the volume of disrupted organised criminal groups and the serious crime detection rate. Following a number of recent raids which saw the targeting of properties in Redhill, Horley, Woodhatch and South Nutfield, a number of organised groups have been identified and are awaiting 'sign off' before they will be reflected in the Force's performance results. In respect of detections, currently levels of 18.1% are marginally below the end of year target, although the Force is showing continual improvement compared to last year. A Superintendent has been assigned to this area to ensure continued leadership and drive of performance.

Salfords

Following a previous refusal of the Force's planning application, the go ahead was given on Monday 18 July to convert a warehouse in Salfords into a custody facility for the east of the county. On 16 June last year, Reigate and Banstead Planning Committee refused the Force's planning application to convert a

warehouse on Salbrook Road Industrial Estate in Salfords, which is south of Reigate on the A23. The main reasons given were heightened fear of crime, parking and traffic issues. The Force was given six months to appeal and after careful consideration and legal advice on the likelihood of success, the appeal went ahead.

London Riots

At the last Police Authority meeting, the Chief Constable paid tribute to the dedication and resilience shown by Surrey officers and staff during the London riots. Surrey's contribution amounted to a total of 567 officer days. As well as supporting policing in London, the Chief Constable praised the Force for its policing within Surrey, which reassured the public and deterred outbreaks of copycat disorder. The Chairman of the Police Authority has received a letter from the Chairman of the Metropolitan Police Authority expressing his gratitude for the support provided by Surrey during the disturbances.

Police station disposals

At its meeting on 8 September 2011, the Police Authority agreed to commence marketing for a number of police buildings in Chertsey, Cranleigh, Dorking, East Molesey and Walton. The Authority also received confirmation of the new arrangements for neighbourhood teams that will replace the buildings in each of these areas.

The Operational Policing Review Estate Strategy seeks to enhance joint working with community safety partners through co-locating neighbourhood policing teams within Borough and District council offices. In addition it aims to provide appropriate and cost effective bases for local neighbourhood teams in the heart of communities from which they can patrol and engage with the public in a host of accessible locations that are flexible to meet changing local needs.

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