

SCRUTINY & AUDIT COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE NPA MEETING ROOM, BUILDING 8,
JUBILEE HOUSE, WYMONDHAM, NORFOLK ON
THURSDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2010 AT 10.00 A.M.**

Present

Mr R Chapman
Mr P Hardy
Mr B Hannah
Mr H Humphrey - Chairman
Mr B Iles
Mrs V Jenkins
Mr P Wells

In Attendance

Mrs K Abrahams	Principal Analyst, Business Performance Unit, Norfolk Constabulary
Mr R Birtles	Assistant Chief Officer (Resources), Norfolk Constabulary
Mr K Constantinou	Analyst, Business Performance Unit, Norfolk Constabulary
Mr R Davies	The Audit Commission
Mr A Gilbert	Head of Forensic Investigation, Norfolk Constabulary
Mr G Headland	Director of Performance and Modernisation, Norfolk Constabulary
Mrs K Stringfellow	Principal Management Accountant, Norfolk Constabulary
Mr R Summers	Treasurer, Norfolk Police Authority
Insp S White	Specialist Operations, Norfolk Constabulary
Miss N Wotton	Committee Administrator, Norfolk Police Authority

1. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Ms J McKibben.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

3. **Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2009**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2009 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. **Matters of Urgent Business**

There were none on this occasion.

5. **Review of Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations**

5.1 Members agreed to defer this item to the next meeting, in order to further review the regulations.

Approved by the Scrutiny and Audit Committee on 18 March 2010

RESOLVED:

To defer the Review of Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to the March 2010 meeting.

6. Annual Investment and Treasury Management Strategy

- 6.1 The Treasurer introduced the updated Annual Investment and Treasury Management Strategy and apprised Members on the changes within the proposed new guidance. It was noted that if there were any changes to the national guidance when it was finally published, the strategy would be formally amended also.
- 6.2 The Committee was informed that surplus cash was only invested on the overnight market at banks with the highest credit rating, however the interest rates received were very low as a result. It was noted that as the interest rates for borrowing funds were quite high in comparison, surplus cash would be used instead of borrowing, subject to ensuring that sufficient cash was available. Members were reminded that a Budget Monitoring report was presented at every full Authority meeting and provided an update on current investments and borrowing levels.
- 6.3 The Treasurer updated the Committee on the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators and highlighted a minor typographical error in the first bullet point in section 6.1, which should state 30% rather than 20%.
- 6.4 Following a query from a Member, the Treasurer provided clarity on the investments made on the overnight market, which were managed on our behalf by Norfolk County Council, who were in regular contact with the Treasurer. It was noted that the Treasurer would consult with the Committee Chairman, Vice Chairman and Lead Member for Finance via telephone, if it were necessary to operate outside of the established guidelines.
- 6.5 The Treasurer reassured Members that the reduced interest rates had been taken into account when planning the budget for 2010. Members unanimously endorsed the Strategy and agreed that it should be commended for further consideration to a future full Authority meeting.

RESOLVED:

- i) To note the contents of the report;
- ii) To adopt the clauses contained within CIPFA's Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Sector, together with the proposed Treasury Management Policy Statement;
- iii) To commend the Annual Investment and Treasury Management Strategy for 2010/11, including the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators, for consideration to a future full Authority meeting.

7. Annual Audit Letter 2008/09

- 7.1 Robert Davies from the Audit Commission, presented the Annual Audit Letter 2008/09 and reported that an 'unqualified' opinion had been given, which meant that the financial statements fairly presented the financial position of the Authority.
- 7.2 Members were advised that the Authority would need to prepare its 2010/11 financial statements under the International Financial Report Standards (IFRS), which would be a significant change and Members would need to monitor progress to ensure that the financial statements are produced in line with the new requirements. The Treasurer informed the Committee that a report on the International Financial Reporting Standards would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee in March, for information.
- 7.3 With regard to Value For Money and Use of Resources, an 'unqualified' opinion had also been awarded and overall Norfolk Police Authority and the Constabulary had scored at level 3 for its use of resources, which equated to performing well. In response to a query from a Member, it was noted that approximately 50% of Police Authorities achieved a level 3 and 50% achieved a level 2. A Member queried whether any Authority had achieved a level 4 and it was reported that although no Police Authorities had achieved a level 4, other organisations had successfully achieved it.
- 7.4 A Member raised concerns regarding the number of organisations requesting information from the Constabulary and Authority and the possible duplication of time and effort in providing the data. Robert Davies reassured those present that the Audit Commission operated from a common evidence base in order to minimise workloads and effort.
- 7.5 Members were reassured that the Audit Commission undertook a 'light touch' inspection with regard to finance and a Member queried whether the 'light touch' inspection had been reflected in the fees requested by the Audit Commission. There followed some discussion and it was noted that the fees were dependent upon the size of the Authority and discussions were ongoing with the Audit Commission on the possibility of an audit fee below the published scale.
- 7.6 The Committee noted the positive outcome of the audit and the resulting action plan. The Treasurer then took the opportunity to thank the Audit Commission for their constructive and supportive relationship with the Authority and Constabulary.

RESOLVED:

To note the contents of the report.

8. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) reports on Civil Contingency Planning and Critical Incident Management

- 8.1 Inspector Sarah White presented the report, which resulted from 2 surveys undertaken by HMIC regarding Civil Contingency Planning and Critical Incident Management, which were completed by 22 Forces. The surveys covered a broad analysis of risk and threat, whilst recognising the current challenges of not only supplying numbers of officers and staff but to contributing specialist skills.

- 8.2 After discussion, Members requested further information on the resulting action plans to be circulated outside of the meeting and that a report on any outstanding actions from the plans be reported to a future meeting. Members were reassured that the Taking and Finishing Group would be closely monitoring this area of work.

RESOLVED:

- i) To note the contents of the report;
- ii) That further information on the action plans resulting from the HMIC surveys be circulated to Members outside of the meeting, by the Chief Executive's Office;
- iii) That information on any outstanding actions be reported to a future meeting for consideration and discussion.

9. **Data Quality Management**

- 9.1 The Committee was apprised that the Constabulary was a member of the Eastern Region Data Quality Tool Procurement Group, which was working to procure a data quality tool to link in to the Police National Database (PND) in order to produce a greater level of detailed information. It was noted that the planned implementation of the data quality tool would be complete by July 2010. It was reported that the full scope of the PND would be subject to a high level of scrutiny, which would result in good quality information not only about crime but also concerning intelligence, incidents, custody and information about vulnerable people.
- 9.2 In response to a query from a Member, it was noted that a National Data Quality Tool would not be possible due to the many different systems in use within Forces nationally, however the regional work was progressing well and the pilot phase would be commencing in March 2010.
- 9.3 The Committee queried how Data Quality Management would be monitored and following discussions, it was agreed that a report would be presented to the Committee in September 2010 to provide an update on developments so far.
- 9.4 The Director of Performance and Modernisation informed those present that the Balanced Scorecard would also be linked to the data quality tool and that an update on the development of the Balanced Scorecard would be circulated outside of the meeting for information in due course, for information.

RESOLVED:

- i) To note the contents of the report;
- ii) That a report on Data Quality Management be brought to the September 2010 meeting, to provide an update on regional and national developments.

10. Contracting for Forensic Services Final Audit Report

- 10.1 Mr Gilbert, Head of Forensic Investigation, informed Members that during October 2009, Norfolk Audit Services had carried out an audit on the systems surrounding Norfolk Constabulary's contracting for forensic services. It was noted that the final report identified no areas for action, however it did indicate that Members should be made aware of the current and future position regarding the forensic market place.
- 10.2 Members were updated that Norfolk Constabulary was one of the first forces to exploit the fiscal and operational advantages of the emerging forensic market place and over the years, the proactive approach had saved the Constabulary hundreds of thousands of pounds, whilst also ensuring that the providers deliver the best performance. It was noted that many other forces had been passive and had remained with the Forensic Science Service, which is a Government owned company but was previously the Home Office laboratory.
- 10.3 The Committee was apprised that all forces in ACPO Eastern were part of an agreement with the Forensic Science Service, which offered a reduced pricing structure for most items. Members were pleased to note that Norfolk Constabulary had been instrumental nationally in forcing providers to improve performance, as a result of Constabulary knowledge of both the market and the performance of other providers. Members were also reassured to note that Norfolk Procurement were sighted on all current forensic contracts and had provided assistance where necessary.
- 10.4 Members were updated regarding the changes to EU procurement legislation and in order to address this, the NPIA had developed a National Framework for the provision of forensic services and produced a timetable to manage the process. It was reported that ACPO Eastern, in conjunction with Kent and City of London, were due to begin their mini-competition under the framework at the start of 2011, with a total contact value of £16 million. Members noted that it was anticipated that the mini competition would create a considerable workload, however it was hoped that some of this may be mitigated from lessons learnt as the process rolled out.
- 10.5 Members noted that following discussions across the region, Cambridgeshire's procurement department would be leading on the contact process and Norfolk Constabulary would be jointly leading from an operational perspective, to ensure that Norfolk's experience of the market and supplier performance was utilised fully to obtain maximum fiscal and operational value. Members were reassured that the Committee would be kept informed of any developments resulting from the area of work.

RESOLVED:

To note the contents of the report.

11. Performance Monitoring Third Quarter 2009/10

- 11.1 Members were pleased to note that there had been a reduction in the number of recorded crimes by 7.4% in comparison with the same period last year, which was 5.3% better than the year to date target. The Committee was apprised of the

increase in crimes experienced by South Norfolk and the reasons for this were explained. Members were apprised that the detection rate this year for serious violent offences was at 57.4%, which equated to 4.4% points better than last year's detection rate.

- 11.2 With regard to public confidence, it was reported that there had been an increase of 0.2% on the previous quarter and Members queried the measures which were being put in place to increase public confidence. The Director of Performance and Modernisation advised that further work in this respect would be taking place, based on the recent Sanford and Gleeson report and Members would be kept informed of any developments. The Committee was also reminded that confidence and satisfaction were measured using the British Crime Survey, where 1000 people were surveyed over the telephone each year and the information was published on a half yearly basis on the iQuanta system. It was reported that the Constabulary regularly undertook its own customer surveys and the results tended to be higher than those received by the British Crime Survey.
- 11.3 A Member queried whether there had been any changes to the targets for arrival times at Grade A, B and C incidents, following comments she had received from the public. The Director of Performance and Modernisation stated that he would look into this and report back to Members outside of the meeting.
- 11.4 Members took the opportunity to discuss Safer Neighbourhood Action Panel (SNAP) meetings and raised concerns about low attendance rates from the public. It was noted that although some advertising did take place, it was not consistent across the County and it was reported that the imminent appointment of Neighbourhood Communication Officers would standardise processes across the County.
- 11.5 The Committee noted that the number of people killed or seriously injured in road incidents was equal to target, despite the recent bad weather in December, January and February and commended the Constabulary for their work during these difficult conditions.
- 11.6 Members commended the Constabulary on the current sickness levels which were 8.83 hours better than target for Police Officers and 0.51 hours better than target for Police Staff. The Committee raised concerns regarding the relatively high levels of sickness within the Contact and Control Room and recommended that their concerns be passed on to the Professional Standards and HR Committee.

RESOLVED:

- i) To note the contents of the report;
- ii) That following a query from a Member regarding whether there had been any changes to the targets for arrival times at Grade A, B and C incidents, it was agreed that the Director of Performance and Modernisation would investigate and report back to Members outside of the meeting;
- iii) That the concerns raised by the Committee regarding the perceived high levels of sickness within the Contact and Control Room be forwarded to the Professional Standards and HR Committee for further consideration.

12. **NPA Efficiency and Productivity Plan Quarter 3 position for 2009/10**

- 12.1 Members were reminded that the Constabulary had been set the efficiency gains target of 10.3% of gross revenue expenditure to be achieved by the end of the third financial year (2011). The Committee was pleased to note that the Constabulary was expected to be close to the 10.3% 3 year target by the end of year 2.
- 12.2 Members noted the newly introduced traffic light system used to indicate in-year monitoring and were advised that detailed scrutiny would take place on Amber items only, rather than red items which were unlikely to be achieved, in the next report.

RESOLVED:

To note the contents of the report.

13. **Notes from the Value for Money Working Group meetings on the 20 October and 7 December 2009**

- 13.1 Members noted the notes from the Value for Money Working Group meetings on the 20 October and 7 December 2009. The Committee was reminded that the meetings had discussed Benchmarking, the Annual Data Return (ADR) and iQuanta data. Members discussed the Annual Data Return in detail and the difficulties experienced in completing the return were noted, due to its complex nature. It was noted that the work to date had provided some interesting information and had provided the opportunity to refine internal processes and procedures.

RESOLVED:

To note the contents of the report.

14. **Any Other Items of Business**

There were none on this occasion.

15. **Date of next meeting**

Thursday, 18 March 2010.

(The meeting closed at 11.15 am)

CHAIRMAN