

SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY

PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

6 FEBRUARY 2009

PRESENT: Councillor J Parkinson (Chair), Mrs J Bartrop, Councillor G Boyes, Mr C Bywell, Mr M Ismaiel, Councillor J McHale, Mr C W Perryman, Councillor D Wainwright, Kash Walayat.

Apologies for absence: Councillor S Anginotti, Councillor I Hussain, Councillor R Littleboy.

Officers: Mr A Holt (Assistant Chief Constable), Erika Redfearn (Head of Policy, and Performance), Stuart Lunn (Member Services Manager), Chief Inspector Murphy (South Yorkshire Police), Ms T Percy (Performance Review Manager), Mrs K Williams (Office Manager).

51/09 URGENT ITEMS

None.

52/09 ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

None

53/09 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

54/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

55/09 MINUTES – 21 NOVEMBER 2008

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 November 2008 be signed by the Chair as a correct record subject to the recording of an apology from Mrs J Bartrop.

56/09 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its work programme for 2008/09. This would shortly be rolled forward to the future meetings of the Committee.

Reference was made to a recent television broadcast about the spending cuts in the Probation Service and there was some concern about how this would impact on other agencies such as the police. Referrals to the Probation Services were increasing but there could be fewer probation officers to deal with them. Safeguarding was an issue for all the public protection agencies.

The Chair of the Authority was a member of the Force Public Protection Board and would raise this at the next meeting. In addition the Committee wanted to find out more about the impact of probation spending cuts on public protection generally.

RESOLVED – That this issue be referred to the Protective Services Committee.

57/09 LOCAL AREA STATISTICS ONLINE SERVICE AND LOCAL CRIME INFORMATION PROJECT

Tania Percy made a presentation to the Committee on

- the Neighbourhood Information System (NIS) web site and
- the Local Area Statistics Online Services (LASOS).

A South Yorkshire Police internal system, the NIS was already available via the Safer Neighbourhood Team web site and the Local Area Statistics Online Services.

She demonstrated the capacity of the NIS which was designed to improve public access to crime data.

LASOS had three sections to it:

- Front public section which had a broad overview of data, and gave quarterly data periods with comparisons against other South Yorkshire areas and trends.
- A background section. This contained the data sets behind all the data – crime data to sub ward level. From the data sets reports, charts, and maps could be created.
- A third section available only to those who had registered – it contained data sets for South Yorkshire Police partners at a more local level. Access was at the discretion of LASOS administrators.

The system was regionally based; in this case it covered Yorkshire and the Humber. The information was taken from the Sheffield Household Survey.

Development had been led by the local councils and South Yorkshire Police had been involved for the last two years. The crime data was updated quarterly.

Work led by Sheffield City Council was designed to ensure that data was consistent and the LASOS site quoted sources for its published data. In the case of South Yorkshire Police all crime data used was on the site was from Headquarters to achieve consistency. He had reservations about some of the data.

A member raised the danger of information overload. Another issue was not excluding those people who did not have internet access.

58/09 DELIVERY OF PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS

A 2007/08 FORCE PERFORMANCE

The Committee considered the 2007/08 Police Performance Assessment Framework Assessment results.

The Home Office had decided not to publish graded assessments of performance but instead to report data against each of the Statutory Performance Indicators for Policing. These covered information on priorities set locally by each force and authority, inspections carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) in 2007/08 and the results of the Audit Commission's Police Use of Resources Evaluation.

Also considered was a comparison of the performance of South Yorkshire Police against other forces. Assistant Chief Constable Holt commented that this showed South Yorkshire Police outperforming nationally but the picture was not so good against the other forces in the *Most Similar Group*. Recent press reports had commented on 18 forces having their performance figures questioned. South Yorkshire was not one of those forces. Four forces in the *Most Similar Group* were having their performance inspected by HMIC so it was possible that South Yorkshire's position could improve.

In relation to the Single Confidence Target the Authority and Force had jointly written to the Home Office as had a number of other authorities. In response to this pressure there were some indications that the Home Office were considering making changes. Assistant Chief Constable Holt added that there was considerable activity amongst partners in the criminal justice area but there was still some scope for improving performance.

In relation to burglary it was notable that although the number of offences was still going down there was no longer the dramatic falls that had been seen previously. There had also been a slight increase in robberies. In some other areas these offences were showing large increases. Although South Yorkshire was not seeing the same position as elsewhere it was still an area of concern as it impacted on confidence and satisfaction.

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A member questioned the performance in relation to sickness absence and in relation to the target of increasing the percentage of female officers to 27% had not been achieved. Assistant Chief Constable Holt said that there had been a recruitment freeze over the last year so there had been a problem maintaining the balance between male and female officers. In the latest recruitment intake female recruits exceeded male recruits. This then led to looking at retention policies and whether these were sufficiently family friendly. However this went further as the police was still a largely male dominated organisation. Looking at the existing Force there was a good mix between male and female officers amongst the patrol groups but not so good in roads policing. Tania Percy commented on the sickness. There was a problem in presenting South Yorkshire's sickness data in the form the Home Office wanted so there may be a problem in the comparative information. The sickness rate could therefore be lower than the figures suggested and a pilot study had been started some three months ago to validate the data. Assistant Chief Constable Holt added that some work was being undertaken within the Force to see if the Attendance Management Policy needed to be revised.

A member requested that the numbers as well as the percentages be shown for the number of black and minority ethnic staff in the Force. Assistant Chief Constable Holt said that the Force wished to have a wholly representative workforce and the reason for that was sound ethically and operationally. The recruitment freeze had not helped this goal. The member said that he had attended several of the Force's recruitment events and a tremendous job was being done.

A Doncaster Council member commented that 20% of South Yorkshire people believed there was a problem with Anti-Social Behaviour in the area in which they lived, the Force was ranked 36th of 42 forces nationally of people who thought the police were doing a good or excellent job, 37th for fear of vehicle crime, and 36th for burglary. The member asked what was in place to reduce the fear of these crimes. Assistant Chief Constable Holt that tackling these was one of the key challenges, whilst the Force had a good record in tackling the crimes the record on perception was poor. Action on Anti-Social Behaviour featured prominently in what local people wanted as a priority. Most of the seven strands of what made up Anti-Social Behaviour required action from local authorities rather than the police. He believed South Yorkshire Police was doing a good job and had a good relationship with Doncaster Council. Neighbourhood Co-ordinators would help here. The Force was working with local authorities to get the message across to the public. For example South Yorkshire now had the lowest vehicle crime figures for some years but higher level of worry was being reported. When a member of the public reported a crime they wanted to see a Scenes of Crime Officer or a police officer but was that a good use of resources if there was little chance of a detection.

Another member said that some performance being affected by partners would be common to all forces so should not effect the relative position of South

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Yorkshire Police. The figures suggested that there was no link between burglary detections and detections. In the example above of when it was worthwhile to deploy police resources if the focus of police actions was to be on what the public expected then the conclusion might be different. Police officers needed to understand public expectations and needed to broadcast good news since the public did not believe. Assistant Chief Constable Holt commented that to clarify the relationship with partners; if South Yorkshire Police wanted improve its performance by a given percentage they could do that along with partners, but those partners did not have a customer satisfaction target to achieve. That was not the same as blaming partners for the current performance. There would be a struggle in changing the culture of the Force as police officers aimed at detections rather than customer satisfaction. The Force needed to feel at ease with targeting low level crimes that improved customer satisfaction. Whilst he agreed with the point achieving it would not be straightforward.

A member referred to the generally poor performance of the Force against others in its *Most Similar Group* and asked if the Force looked at best practice in others. He felt that too much was being expected of the soon to be appointed Corporate Communications Officer. Assistant Chief Constable Holt said there was a team of people that was working very hard to improve communications. Also Chief Inspector Murphy would in future have a changed role concentrating more on improving customer satisfaction. Some performance was heading in the right direction.

Another member referred to the several indicators based around Satisfaction and Fairness where none of the targets had been achieved. In particular, the indicator for making contact with the police, where South Yorkshire's performance was sixth of the eight forces in its *Most Similar Group*. Chief Inspector Murphy said that this was about perception and was based on surveys done by the Swift Company. Swift conducted surveys in 17 other forces using a set of standard questions to which forces could add more local questions. Previously the Force had not understood how the company assessed a *pass* or a *fail* for any particular encounter between the public and the police. The differences could be quite minor. In the third quarter of this year there had been a large improvement. Assistant Chief Constable Holt added that these minor differences may not be liked but those were the standards that were being applied. Arising from a supplemental question from another member Assistant Chief Constable Holt said that the same surveys produced data at neighbourhood level and the Force was trying to understand why the performance in one neighbourhood was different to that in another. In response to another member Assistant Chief Constable Holt referred to the Policing Pledge and the establishment of targets against which to measure performance. This was an important piece of work. If local targets were to be established that were different to the national ones then they had to be more demanding.

RESOLVED – That the position be noted.

B PERFORMANCE AGAINST PRIORITIES

The Committee considered the performance of the Force against the Assessment of Police and Community Safety (APACS) Statutory Performance Indicators (SPI's) during the current year.

In relation to some of the indicators there had been changes to the crime types included within the headings, so an increase may be shown in the number of offences committed. The two areas which this was very important were that of Serious Violent crime and Knife Crime. Due to the change in offences within these two categories increases would be shown against the same period last year. This may have an adverse effect if people believed that these more serious and very topical offences had increased, when in fact it was just down to changes in counting procedures.

A member noted that looking at the position of the Force within its *Most Similar Group* for confidence and satisfaction in only two of the SPI's was the Force in the top two; what was the Force doing now that was different in order to improve its position? Assistant Chief Constable Holt responded that a lot of new things were in hand and these were being co-ordinated through the Force Citizen Focus Board, on which the Authority was represented. Chief Inspector Murphy added that the confidence and satisfaction data was provided by the Swift Company – a member asked whether those forces higher placed within the *Most Similar Group* were also using Swift. In response to another member Chief Inspector Murphy added that some forces used Swift whilst others used other systems. What was most important was to understand the template against which police actions were assessed. For example the satisfaction assessment in relation to road traffic collisions included whether or not someone involved in a collision was issued with a collision pack. Previously the Force had not understood how this was being measured, however he was confident now that this was understood. This same reasoning applied to other assessments where the process had not been properly understood; so neither had the Force understood how to change people's perception from not satisfied to satisfied.

Chief Inspector Murphy and Assistant Chief Constable both commented on the performance information that was put before the Committee. They would be entering into discussions with officers of the Authority to see what improvement could be made in the way performance was reported to the Committee.

A member referred to the way in which working with partners could be used as a means of adding capacity. Assistant Chief Constable Holt referred to the National Criminal Justice Co-ordinators who would co-ordinate partnership work. His reservation was about the current economic climate – would the local

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authorities see crime and disorder as a lower priority. A local authority member commented that local politicians saw crime and disorder as a high priority. Another member said that the Authority and Force needed to ensure that the staff of South Yorkshire Police was fully equipped to do their jobs especially in relation to communicating. Quality of life was a permanent issue and the police could not be seen in isolation. In response Chief Inspector Murphy said that Doncaster was re-working a communications strategy and this might then be adopted across the County. It was an aspiration to have one strategy right across the Force.

A member referred to an actual situation, a meeting of a crime and safety group with police officers present. A presentation on the Policing Pledge included a section on the speed of response to incidents and to keeping people informed. On the day before this meeting a group of people in his area had informed the police of an incident where a group of vehicles were being driven dangerously. The police had not responded. This would not have improved their confidence and satisfaction and those involved would tell others. Assistant Chief Constable Holt said that he did not want to blame the current heavy snow falls for this but the Force had recently received 350 999 calls about people snowboarding. Nevertheless the absence of a police response to this incident was not helpful and he was disappointed and would seek more information from the member. Assistant Chief Constable Holt added that the Force would never have enough resources to achieve the Policing Pledge 100%.

A member referred to the make up of the *Most Similar Group* of forces that both the Authority and Force may feel was an inappropriate comparison but the Force was still 7th in that group for tackling crime. Assistant Chief Constable Holt said that the Force could improve its confidence and satisfaction position provided there was good news to tell. The dilemma was that if a particular thing was what victims wanted then the Force could concentrate on those things. He was disappointed with the Force's position in its *Most Similar Group* but nationally the comparison was better. But not agreeing with the make up of the *Most Similar Group* would not help with responding the articles in the press. The member referred to the performance on gun crime. There the Force had achieved a substantial reduction but it was still 7th in its *Most Similar Group*. The Authority could ask where the Force should put its priorities. Assistant Chief Constable Holt felt that the Force had managed a good and proportionate response to gun crime. The member noted that the number of offences was quite small.

Another member referred to the good story involved in the performance on asset recovery. Assistant Chief Constable Holt said there would be proposal made as part of the budget to use some of reserves in this connection. The problem was that when the Force arrested a "drug baron" it could be two years before a conviction and hence some asset recovery. In terms of confidence and satisfaction people liked to hear of these events.

A member asked if the economic downturn had produced an increase in crime. Assistant Chief Constable Holt said that increases were being seen in two areas, shoplifting and burglary. The latter was linked to the decline in scrap metal thefts. The price of scrap metal had fallen so burglary had become the "crime of choice".

RESOLVED –

- 1 That the position be noted.
- 2 That a report be submitted to a future meeting suggesting a coherent strategy on how the Force proposes to improve its confidence and satisfaction performance and a separate report balancing this with an improvement in crime reduction.

59/09 SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING

The Committee received a presentation by Chief Inspector Murphy on South Yorkshire Police Customer Service Training.

He began with the Forces internal structure for customer service or citizen focus. This included how the force was planning to deliver the policing pledge.

He included a list of the training programmes in this field and provided some background of what the training programmes included and how that content was being improved.

A member asked about milestones and whether had set any and by what dates particular things would be achieved? Assistant Chief Constable Holt said this was being handled within the Force by the Citizen Focus Board which had selected the priorities and when they would be achieved. When sufficient progress had made in those areas some more would be selected.

60/09 HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY POLICE NATIONAL COMPUTER COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

The Committee considered an update on the outcome of the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) Police National Computer (PNC) inspection undertaken in 2005, subsequently reviewed in October 2007, and the actions taken in response to the recommendations. A substantial number of the recommendations had been achieved and hence discharged. Action on some of the recommendations was on going and would always be so.

One of the original recommendations was that the Force should ensure that sufficient data protection auditing was undertaken of the PNC and should

satisfy itself that suitable accountability mechanisms were in place to ensure that data protection recommendations were implemented. HMIC auditors were concerned at the lack of auditing that had taken place and had recommended that the Force should urgently review the current arrangements for data protection auditing. Assistant Chief Constable Holt added that the audit part of the Professional Standards Department had not been staffed to the appropriate level. Nevertheless if higher priorities had been selected then that should be documented. A further discussion would take place at the next meeting on this issue.

A member referred to those recommendations that had not been achieved of which the one referred to in the previous paragraph was the most concerning. Another member added that almost four years had passed since the original recommendation. An action plan was needed to deal with it. Assistant Chief Constable accepted the comments made.

Another member referred to another recommendation that had not yet been achieved; this referred to the Force implementing processes to ensure that officers were held accountable for the submission of complete data for PNC. Assistant Chief Constable Holt commented that the Force had wanted to be able to complete all the data forms electronically at the time of arrest but had encountered problems getting the Information Technology in place. The same member asked whether this would be influenced when the new PNC system came on track. Assistant Chief Constable said it would be necessary to ensure that the correct data was transferred to the new system.

Another member referred to the recommendation that the Force investigate electronic solutions for the provision of magistrates' court results to the Police National Computer. Here Force had been in dialogue with the courts and the latest position was that the courts system, LIBRA, was now live at all South Yorkshire Courts. However Assistant Chief Constable Holt added that there were still problems with the interface with the courts systems.

RESOLVED –

- 1 That the position be noted.
- 2 That further discussions take place at the next meeting in relation to data protection auditing of the PNC.

61/09 NEW FORCE STRATEGY STRUCTURE

Assistant Chief Constable Holt reported that the various strategies adopted by the Force all came in different formats that made corporate understanding of them more difficult. Thus a Force standard corporate template had been developed.

A member suggested that there should be a mechanism to indicate what and when they should be removed.

CHAIR