

LEICESTERSHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY

Minutes of the Professional Standards Committee Meeting held at Police Headquarters, Enderby on Thursday 28 January 2010

Present

Mr P Brown, Dr S Chowdhury, Mr W Naylor, Mr J Orson, Mr D Prince and Mr B Roper.

Officers

Mr R Swinfield (Chief Executive) and Mrs L Salmon (Members' Services Officer).

Representatives from the Constabulary

D/Supt J Ball (Head of Professional Standards).

Mr P Brown – in the Chair

01/10. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr D Snartt and Mr C Garnham (Temporary Assistant Chief Constable).

02/10. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

03/10. Declarations of Code of Conduct Interests

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to make declarations of any Code of Conduct interests in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

No such declarations were made.

04/10. Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 September 2009

The minutes of the Professional Standards Committee meeting held on 3 September 2009, having been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed.

05/10. Police Complaint Statistics – 1 April 2009 to 31 December 2009

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Constable presenting figures on complaints received for the period 1 April 2009 to 31 December 2009. A copy of the report marked 'A' is filed with the minutes.

D/Supt Ball informed members of the cases with IPCC involvement and made the following comments:

- There had been a slight increase in complaints recorded however the number of allegations had reduced.
- Collaboration with Northamptonshire Police around Professional Standards was currently being scoped.

- Operation Teak had prompted processes and policies to be reviewed.
- Compared to previous years there had been a slight increase in the number of cases referred to the IPCC and it was anticipated that this would rise in the future to protect the reputation of the Constabulary.
- Trends in LPUs would be examined with a view to seeing a decrease in the future.
- There had been an 83% rise in allegations at Melton LPU however most were low level.
- Leicestershire was one of the few forces in the country that had seen a fall in allegations of incivility.
- Two thirds of the allegations made by under 19 year olds were now closed.

The Chairman of the Committee informed members that he and the Chairman of the Authority had recently met with the IPCC to discuss professional standards issues and Operation Teak. The Chief Executive stated that Ms Somal had been asked whether the rise in the number of complaints referred to the IPCC was cause for concern and she said not.

Members requested that future reports detail year on year trends for complaints reported by the BME community.

Members requested further information regarding the rise in allegations at Melton LPU, what underlies the trends at other LPUs and the action being taken to address any issues.

Regarding satisfaction of locally resolved complaints, members suggested that this should be an area of thematic review for a future dip sampling session.

Members suggested that the next dip sampling session include discussions on changes to the format of the performance report to ensure that the Authority's statutory obligation was being met and that the report contributed to public satisfaction and confidence. D/Supt Ball stated information from the Tactical Assessment document could be included.

The Committee RESOLVED to note the contents of the report.

06/10. Police Authority Inspection Report

The Committee received a report of the Chief Executive providing information on the Inspection of Leicestershire Police Authority by the Audit Commission and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and indicating matters arising from the Inspection pertinent to this Committee's terms of reference. A copy of the report marked 'B' is filed with the minutes.

The Committee RESOLVED to note the contents of the report.

07/10. Independent Custody Visiting Scheme - Update

The Committee received a report of the Chief Executive updating members on the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme in Leicestershire. A copy of the report marked 'C' is filed with the minutes.

The Chairman of the Committee commended custody visitors for their commitment to the Scheme. He stated that the variation in days and times of visits and the take up rate

between 94% and 100% for the number of detainees agreeing to a visit from custody visits was impressive. He added that he would be attending each quarterly team meeting to express his thanks in person.

The Chairman of the Committee informed members that he fully supported the decision to discontinue with holding an Annual General Meeting.

Members expressed concern about the staffing levels outlined in the report. The Members' Services Officer stated staffing issues were being addressed by Criminal Justice. She added that the issues highlighted in the report occurred when Euston Street was closed for building work and the loss of a 36 cell facility had put extra pressure on the remaining custody suites.

In response to a question whether custody visitors' comments were taken into account when upgrades to the custody estate were being considered, the Members' Services Officer stated that all comments received on visit forms were forwarded to the Chief Inspector (Criminal Justice) which included concerns around health and safety and the fabric of the custody suite. She added that the Safer Detention Action Plan was discussed at the quarterly Area Co-ordinators' meetings.

The Chairman of the Committee stated that the management of the Scheme and the dedication of the volunteers had been commended in the Authority's recent HMIC Inspection.

D/Supt Ball requested that the forthcoming Advanced Training session include a session on making complaints for detained persons.

The Committee RESOLVED to:

- (i) ratify the decision to cease holding an Annual General Meeting; and
- (ii) note the current position regarding the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme in Leicestershire.

08/10. Exclusion of the Public and Press

It was RESOLVED that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items on the grounds specified on the agenda.

09/10. Examination of Complaint Files

(Exempt by virtue of paras 1 & 7 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 – information relating to an individual and action taken in connection with the investigation of crime).

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive providing information on the dip-sampling of complaint files undertaken by members since 3 September 2009. A copy of the report marked 'D' is filed with the minutes.

Members discussed the implications of the issues they had identified when dip sampling.

Members suggested that future reports recite themes previously addressed in dip sampling to ensure that all categories of complaint were examined during the course of a given period.

It was RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Chairman discuss with the Deputy Chief Executive the focus for the next dip sampling of complaint files;
- (ii) the next dip sampling session take place at 2.00 p.m. on Thursday 29 April 2010 in the Professional Standards Department; and
- (iii) a policy on dip sampling be brought to a future meeting.

CHAIRMAN

2.00 p.m. – 3.25 p.m.

28 January 2010