

NORTHERN JOINT POLICE BOARD

29 August 2008

Agenda Item	
Report No	

Force Review Programme Update

Report by the Chief Constable

SUMMARY

To provide Members of the Board with a progress report on the implementation of the ongoing Force Review Programme.

BACKGROUND

Members will be aware of the Force Review which represents a 3 year scheduled programme of organisational review and change during the financial years 2006/9.

The Chief Constable has outlined his commitment to apprise the Board on the progress of the review throughout, and this paper seeks to update members in terms of progress made, outcomes achieved, and key work being pursued as the review approaches completion.

Prior to providing this update, a brief overview of the change programme has been included to assist contextual understanding in terms of the staged approach taken and timescales applied.

Overview of Force Review Programme

Phase One of the programme conducted during 2006/7 saw comprehensive review of the Force's organisational structures, functions, corporate processes, resource arrangements and policing capabilities. This provided 20 strategic recommendations for change, all of which were approved and progressed as a corporate priority to be implemented as Phase Two of the programme during 2007/09.

Phase Two commenced in April 2007 utilising an inclusive approach which retained both a local policing and corporate perspective. The change process has involved every area of the Force from territorial policing commands to headquarters and business support units. The primary steps to effect organisational change were for the most part delivered by April 2008, placing emphasis this year (2008/9) on supporting, embedding and monitoring completion of associated tasks to enable both operational and financial benefit to be realised.

Each and every work-stream, revision, adjustment or modification across the Force has been approached with a common purpose in securing tangible operational and business benefits, demonstrating prudent use of valuable resources to maintain, and wherever possible enhance, the Force's delivery of community based policing services throughout the Highlands and Islands to meet future challenges and increasing demands placed upon it.

Despite the breadth of change involved, normal service has not been disrupted through the application of a well-defined change management framework and

governance structure, which encouraged the involvement and co-operation of managers and task ownership at every stage.

The implementation process has included many challenges, not least in terms of the necessary rationalisation of the police staff establishment, but has been completed with compassion, understanding and flexibility, resulting in only two cases of compulsory redundancy, which, whilst always regrettable, were unavoidable due to geographical factors. Increased police officer recruitment has, and will, continue to be enabled through savings achieved through this work-stream. (Given its importance, this area has been reported to Board members in greater detail by way of a separate paper for the meeting).

At its commencement, the programme overall necessitated completion of over 98 identified work-streams throughout the Force. A total of 17 such tasks remain live, primarily awaiting the scheduled transfer of functions and/or responsibilities between units or simply completion of associated staffing requirements.

Revision of Territorial Policing - Outcomes

The revised territorial command and policing structure is now in place and working to good effect, retaining emphasis on local community based policing but providing the benefits of more flexible use of resources from a wider geographical area to support local initiatives, wherever they take place. The structure is comprised of **3** Divisions (North, Central and East) which collectively group **8** geographical Area Commands, **13** Local Policing teams and **17** Section stations, providing localised coverage throughout the Force area.

With the exception of Island Authorities where boundaries remain unaffected, the structure largely reflects earlier revision of Highland Council boundaries, into operational areas and multi-member wards, which have already been embedded into partnership working and consultation arrangements, which will become more effective as the new relationships mature.

Previously duplicated localised arrangements for intelligence management have been replaced and enhanced with dedicated and focused resources tasked with co-ordination of intelligence gathering and responses complete with dedicated analytical support, whilst thresholds of policing capability in a number of key areas such as community safety, child protection, offender management and proactive policing are being enabled to provide geographical accessibility, standardisation, and equity of response across the Force.

The first of many steps to reduce the bureaucratic burden on front line officers to maximise patrol time and increase visibility in communities has successfully been taken by the introduction of a digital dictation system which effectively allows officers to log key information without the previously associated hours of administrative abstraction and form filling. This has effectively removed over 250,000 pages of such bureaucracy from officers per annum. The process is in use by all operational officers across the Force and is seen as the first of many applications for the system which will serve the Force well for the future. This represents the first of many benefits available through corporate process re-engineering which is ongoing in tandem with 'business as usual'.

Business support to territorial policing has also been streamlined to provide economy of scale with the commencement of three territorial business management units to

support divisional commanders. The units effectively remove administrative responsibilities from local police managers, allowing them to focus their efforts exclusively on policing communities throughout the Force.

Changes to posts/roles and staff responsibilities are almost complete to fully populate the new structures which have been operational since April 2008. It is encouraging to note that police officer numbers have increased from **699** in 2006 at commencement of the review to **737** in August 2008, and are set to increase further as released funding sustains recruitment.

Territorial divisions are presently engaged in pursuing work-streams initiated by the review to produce structured Service Point Strategies, utilising partnership with local authorities wherever practical, with a view to publishing guidance and service arrangements for the public in some of the more remote parts of the Force area.

These strategies do not influence the current footprint of the Force and the associated question of potential station closures raised previously at the April 2008 meeting of the Board, which will be addressed at a future meeting.

Revision of Headquarters & Corporate Support - Outcomes

The detailed restructuring of headquarters Service Units, shaped in conjunction with senior managers, was approached with a clear purpose to focus the primary purpose of these units in their provision of relevant and cost effective support to operational policing and the organisation on a corporate basis.

A key element of this work lay in ensuring most productive use of resources taking an aggregated approach, and wherever possible, releasing resource for front line allocation, whether this was in the form of re-assigning police officer posts or funding toward increased officer numbers. The opportunity was also taken to streamline approaches, reduce departmental duplication of effort and consolidate capabilities such as information management or policy co-ordination, allowing units to be clearly defined and functionally identifiable within the framework of the organisation. A total of **14** police officers have been re-assigned through this process without loss of capability to the organisation.

Implementation of review findings has seen the creation of the Force Information Management Unit in April 2008 as part of Corporate Services, amalgamating a wide range of previously disparate functions under the control of various departments into a single focused team led environment comprised of primary teams in crime administration, intelligence and disclosure. This has effectively removed the burden of business functions relating to crime administration from territorial policing, allowing police commanders to focus on driving intelligence led policing as opposed to managing process and record keeping.

Whilst the Information Management Unit is still in development, it will enable the reduction of front line administrative abstraction through greater management and extraction of information at source, without recourse to excessive duplication and form filling by officers, development of such initiatives having been identified as a key priority.

The unit also provides corporate ownership of intelligence system management and inputting, and will develop to provide strategic analysis and oversight of crime trends, patterns or investigative opportunities. Performance reporting and production of

statistical information have been successfully adopted by the unit. The full potential of this capability will be realised as re-engineered processes and services are developed.

Headquarters Service Units, such as Operational Support Services and Crime Services, which provide direct policing support to the Force area have been successfully restructured with renewed emphasis being placed on the functional grouping of specialist responses with clear ownership for delivery and development of these capabilities, again taking an aggregated approach to the use of valuable resources and broadening of functionality to best serve the needs of the Force.

Operational Support Services have been relieved of their policy and co-ordination portfolios and re-shaped with **3** identifiable Inspector led units, 'Road Policing', 'Operational Planning' and 'Tactical Support & Co-ordination'. These focused units will serve the Force well in its delivery of strategic objectives and provision of specialist responses in road policing, road collision investigation, armed response, road safety, firearms operations, search, public order policing, dog branch, emergency planning, major event planning, and co-ordination of mutual aid policing.

Crime Services have been similarly re-structured from a collection of individual departments into **4** functional units, 'Crime Operations', 'Investigative Support', 'Public Protection' and 'Special Operations'. These focused units will serve the Force area in delivery and development of specialist policing in drug/serious crime investigation, surveillance capability, financial investigation, computer forensics, HOLMES computer system management, major crime enquiry, access to forensic services, family protection, offender management, Special Branch and ports policing activity, surveillance authority management and proactive intelligence management. Many of these functions will be linked with divisional capabilities to ensure corporacy, and synergy in common approaches for ease of investigative management and provision of support.

The addition of a further Detective Chief Inspector rank has provided the increased level of senior investigating officer resilience required, whilst the scheduled allocation of detective officers to fulfil the 'major crime enquiry team' to support territorial policing in the investigation of serious crime throughout the Force area, will complete revision of the capability overall..

Headquarters Service Units providing corporate business support to the Force have been reviewed and structured into identifiable sections again taking an aggregated approach to use of resources which have been rationalised as appropriate. Scrutiny of management ratios and multi-tasking methodology has been applied where pertinent without loss of associated capability.

The collective capability of Corporate Services is now contained within **3** distinct units, Policy & Co-ordination, Force Operations Centre and Force Information Management Unit. The established functionality of Corporate Services has successfully been combined into the new Policy & Co-ordination Unit, which caters for the strategic planning, policy and non-operational portfolio development and co-ordination requirements necessary to sustain the Force in this area of significant demand.

These revisions will both focus and strengthen provision of centralised support to the Force as a whole.

Ongoing Developments – Resource Management Project

The review remit in relation to providing options for change to the work patterns of core policing to deliver staff, operational and financial benefits, was delivered on schedule in March 2008.

This work was also associated to expected developments in information technology aimed at providing a new Corporate HR IT system ('SCOPE') which importantly included a 'duty management' module which would significantly enhance the Force's ability to manage operational resources more effectively.

Executive consideration provided direction to pursue the introduction of a 'variable shift arrangement' throughout the Force, (proposed to commence January 2009) supported by a corporate rest day cycle, which grouped officers onto common rest day patterns, enhancing operational planning capabilities and appropriate use of trained skills across the entire Force.

The introduction of a 'variable shift arrangement' will provide the opportunity to secure significant benefits for the Force by way of:

- Significantly improving the work-life balance of officers
- Resourcing in accordance with identified policing demand
- Increasing officer numbers and visibility at peak times
- Maximising operational planning opportunities for policing initiatives or major events
- Enabling potential efficiency savings arising from reduction in overtime costs

In light of the significant work to be undertaken in delivering the new HR IT system, duty management package and corporate revision of shift patterns across the Force, these inter-dependent work-streams were combined as a new area of business under the title of '**Force Resource Management Project**'. Although led by an HR manager supported by an experienced Sergeant as co-ordinator, the review programme has adopted monitoring responsibility for the project overall.

Initial work has included productive discussion and interaction between the Force Executive and Police Federation as necessary to secure appropriate agreement. A series of **12** information sharing presentations were recently made to front line staff at locations throughout the Force area. Work to populate the new IT system and structuring of team composition to enable shift revision is being actively pursued in conjunction with divisional representatives.

Amongst all of the many significant issues addressed by the review, this area is recognised as being of the highest personal importance to staff who have shown significant interest and enthusiasm for change to a more effective, healthier way of working.

Summary of Achievements

Whilst staff and management interaction with the review must regularly focus on project management matters, facilitating implementation, and checkpoint monitoring, these factors can often dominate communication associated with the change programme.

Given this position, it is relevant at this stage to provide a general summary which focuses on the achievements of participation in the review and the position this has enabled for the Force.

To date, the change programme has delivered all primary areas of change including:

- The reduction of operational bureaucracy through use of technology, and restructuring of information management resources to handle, extract and manage data more effectively through streamlined processes, aimed at reducing the time spent by front line staff on administrative duties.
- The revision of territorial policing boundaries and command arrangements to allow more flexible use of resources, coterminous partnership working, greater opportunities for inter-area collaboration and support, and more focused use/availability of resources to enable local policing initiatives across the Force.
- The provision of agreed thresholds of policing capability and equity of service level across the Force in terms of child protection investigation, community safety, offender management, proactive policing and intelligence co-ordination.
- The restructuring of centrally based services to enable greater emphasis to be focused on their key role in supporting operational policing, whilst taking a more aggregated approach to the use of resources.
- Achieving economy of scale in relation to business support and enabling revenue saving in terms of the scaled reduction in police staff numbers, to be redirected to recruitment of front line operational police officers.
- The release of headquarters based officers to return to front line policing without loss of function or capability.
- Enabling greater police officer recruitment through efficiency savings, to achieve an incremental rise in officer numbers across the Force.
- The enabling of resource allocation to increase the Force's resilience and capacity to investigate serious crime.
- The structured change of approach to work patterns which will provide significant health and work-life benefits for staff, assist the Force to better respond to its identified policing demands, increase operational planning capabilities and responses, and allow opportunities for revenue saving to be directed toward more productive initiatives.

Conclusion

The change programme continues, with a view to its finalisation by April 2009. It is considered that the programme will enhance the already successful performance and professionalism of Northern Constabulary and assist its aim of meeting the challenges of future years.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board is invited to note the content of this briefing document.

I Latimer
Chief Constable
18 August 2008

