

**Northern Joint Police Board  
Finance and Policy Working Group**

Minutes of Meeting of the Finance and Policy Working Group held in the Chamber Inverness Town House, Inverness on Friday, 15 January 2010 at 2.00 p.m.

**Present:**

**Representing the Highland Council**

Mr I Ross  
Mr A Millar  
Mr H Wood  
Mr B Murphy

**Representing Comhairle nan Eilean Siar**

Mr N M Macleod  
Mr I Mackenzie

**Representing Orkney Islands Council**

Mr R Leslie

**Representing Shetland Islands Council**

Mr A Duncan (Substituting)

**Officials in attendance:**

Mr I Latimer, Chief Constable  
Mrs E Ward, Force Director of Finance  
Mrs M Grigor, Treasurer's Office  
Mrs R Moir, Assistant Clerk  
Mr S Taylor, Clerk's Office

**Mr N M Macleod in the Chair**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr G Smith and Mr N Donald of the Highland Council and Mr A Cooper of Shetlands Islands Council.

**2. Revenue Budget 2010/11**

There had been circulated Report No. F&P1/10 dated 22 December 2009 by the Chief Constable presenting the proposed revenue budget for 2010/11 and asking the Working Group to recommend its approval by the Northern Joint Police Board at its meeting on 29 January 2010. Appendix A to the report set out a summary budget outlining the headline budget movements from 2009/10 to 2010/11. Appendix B detailed a reconciliation of the movements between the budget proposals considered by the Working Group and by the Board in November 2009 and those in the current report. Appendix C outlined the proposed requisition allocations.

The Chief Constable drew the Working Group's attention to the main points contained in the report, including that:

- the proposed budget reflected a change in circumstances with regard to pensions and ring-fenced revenue funding and would provide an additional £762,000 for the Police Budget, excluding pensions; however, since the

previous meeting of the Board, a number of cost factors had been revisited and funding would be required for the decrease in Interest on Revenue Balances, a Development Officer post within the Clerk's office, and arrangements for additional officers during the first 6 months of the year

- the unallocated balance of £324,000 would be used to limit the reductions previously discussed at the November 2009 meetings of the Finance and Policy Working Group and the Board
- it was proposed that capital funding to be drawn from Constituent Authority capital allocations be set at £1m for 2010/11, allowing the continuation of projects currently underway and a vehicle replacement programme
- the reduction in the requisition level for 2010/11 was due to the amended mechanism for funding Police Officer pensions.

During discussion, in response to questions, the Chief Constable advised Members that:

- the voluntary redundancy programme would be concluded by the end of March 2010 and a report on progress to date would be presented to the Board at its January meeting
- the programme was based on Highland Council's policy and would be reviewed following the conclusion of the current exercise
- the establishment of a centralised administration unit at Northern Constabulary Headquarters would provide opportunities for staff whose jobs were under threat to apply for matched vacancies
- as police officers could not be made redundant, and fewer were retiring on attainment of 30 years service, the only way to reduce officer numbers was to stop recruitment
- the draft budget would allow the Force's strength to remain at 800 officers
- a review of the vehicle fleet had been carried out and steps were being taken to maximise the use of vehicles, while also seeking opportunities to improve the fleet's environmental credentials
- there were no plans to close any police stations during the coming year.

Members expressed their disappointment that the final tranche of 11 officers allocated to Northern Constabulary under the Scottish Government's Capacity Project would possibly attract only 6 months' funding. They supported the Chief Constable's proposal to recruit these officers for the full year, in order to maintain Force levels, with the remainder of the associated 2010/11 costs falling on the Force budget. They reiterated the view that jobs must be retained in the local area and that moves towards further centralisation or a review of Force structures should be resisted; however, should the situation arise, the Board should be prepared to consider any expansion of its remit that might permit other rural areas with similar characteristics and priorities to benefit from Northern Constabulary's successful policing style.

After discussion, the Working Group **NOTED** the report and the information given and **AGREED** to recommend to the Board that the draft budget for 2010/11 be approved.

The meeting ended at 3.00 p.m.