

INDEPENDENT ADVISORY GROUPS

INTRODUCTION

1. This report seeks to inform Members in relation to the proposal that the Police Authority assume responsibility for administering the Force Independent Advisory Group.

BACKGROUND

2. At the Consultation and Partnership Committee on 6 September 2005, Members considered a report of the Chief Executive to the Police Authority on Independent Advisory Groups, this included information on:
 - the guiding principles
 - the membership of the Force Independent Advisory Group
 - terms of reference of the Force Independent Advisory Group
 - the identifiable advantages and disadvantages of the scheme as administered by both Humberside Police and Humberside Police Authority
3. Members resolved to receive a final joint report from both the Chief Executive and the Chief Constable at the Consultation and Partnership meeting on 6 December 2005.

PURPOSE AND REQUIREMENTS TO MAINTAIN INDEPENDENT ADVISORY GROUPS

4. The principle objectives of Independent Advisory Groups are to:
 - provide to both communities and to the Force, the strategic element of consultation in respect of minority issues
 - provide communities with a conduit for accountability of the police on minority issues and for the Force to benefit from the independent advice of members of the group
 - enable the Force to sustain and manage critical risks to the organisation, an example of this locally is the death of Christopher Alder and nationally, issues around Stop and Search.

5. The requirements for Forces or authorities to establish Force Independent Advisory Groups are as follows:
 - it is a recommendation made in the McPherson report into the death of Stephen Lawrence
 - there is a requirement under the Race Relations Amendment Act to consult in respect of policy and practice by the involvement of local community representatives.
 - it forms part of the HMIC Baseline Assessment in relation to how Forces are engaging with minority groups

THE CASE FOR POLICE AUTHORITY ADMINISTRATION OF THE FORCE INDEPENDENT ADVISORY GROUP

- (1) It is consistent with the statutory requirements under Section 96 of the Police Act for Police Authorities to consult with communities.
- (2) It would introduce an element of independence but would not be truly independent as it would not be a stand alone forum. However pragmatism dictates that there is a need for a support structure
- (3) It is consistent with the Police Authority role in respect of scrutinising the activity of the Force
- (4) It goes some way to achieving the aim of Humberside Police Authority to consult with all sections of the community especially minority groups

THE FUTURE ROLE OF HUMBERSIDE POLICE IN RESPECT OF FORCE IAGs

6. Should members resolve that Humberside Police Authority undertake the role of administration of the Independent Advisory Groups, whilst this would introduce the element of impartiality, it is vital that the group continue to be supported by Humberside Police both in the consultation and operational context. There would be an expectation that the group would receive the benefit of representation at Chief Officer level, the reason being that Humberside Police have a more in depth knowledge of current operational matters than the Authority.
7. In the previous report to the Consultation and Partnership Committee, reservations were expressed that currently the Force Independent Advisory Group is not strategically focused or proactive in its approach, concentrating on the micro, not the macro. However this is an issue that would be addressed by the Authority once the administration had been transferred. It is understood that Humberside Police have put themselves forward to be a pilot force in respect of training for IAG members. No training currently exists but the proposed pilot programme will put a national focus on this new critical incident training course.
8. At the Force Independent Advisory Group on 21 November 2005, attended by the Consultation and Partnership officer, Members of the group expressed concern that they had not been consulted by the force on this proposal and wished to be given the opportunity to do so and will be contacting the force on this point.

THE ROLE OF DIVISIONAL IAGS

9. It is suggested that the Divisional IAGs remain under the administration of the Force however it would be appropriate for representatives from the four Divisional IAGs to be represented at the Force IAG.

ADMINISTRATION

10. The Independent Advisory Groups sit once every four months usually at Pacific Exchange. The administration of the meetings consists of:
 - the preparation and circulation of minutes
 - the arrangements for convening the meetings
 - the provision of any information made by members of the IAG

The process could be accommodated within the administrative structure of the Police Authority.

11. The Force currently hold a budget for the administration of the IAG and this is expected to cover costs in respect of:
 - training
 - arranging conferences
 - general expenses

It is suggested that should the arrangements for the administration of the IAG be transferred to the Authority, then a way be found for the budget to be transferred to the Authority.

RECOMMENDATIONS

12. It is recommended that:
 - i. Members discuss the content of this report and the previous report submitted to the Consultation and Partnership Committee
 - ii. Agree to the transfer of the administration of the Force Independent Advisory Group subject to the views of Members of the group.
 - iii. That the Chief Constable agree to support the Independent Advisory Group by representation at Chief Officer level
 - iv. That the Chief Constable agree to the transfer of funding for the Force Independent Advisory group in respect of administration to the Police Authority

- v. Review the situation in twelve months in the interests of making it truly independent.

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Chief Executive

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Chief Constable

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Background Documents: Report to Consultation and Partnership Committee meeting
6 September 2005 - "Independent Advisory Groups"