

WORKFORCE MODERNISATION

INTRODUCTION

1. This Report outlines the context for Workforce Modernisation Agenda, the pressures for change, the opportunities this presents and our current position.

CONTEXT

2. The drive for performance in the force through the engagement process has highlighted a fundamental issue of capacity in the existing workforce mix to deliver particularly in the areas of volume crime investigation and neighbourhood policing. The neighbourhood policing agenda is being driven through the PCSO recruitment programme. The Home Secretary's recent announcements on PCSO funding significantly impact upon current plans to recruit and retain 335 PCSOs by 2008. The force is currently examining ways of meeting the budget shortfall created by the recent reduction in Home Office funding and this will be subject of further discussion and debate at the members workshop on 16 January.
3. The position in relation to investigative capacity is that short term funding is being used to take on agency investigators to support volume crime teams. This has proved particularly successful in releasing police officer time to concentrate on the more complex elements of investigations with a consequent significant improvement in volume crime performance.
4. The challenge for the force is to now build a permanent model to provide continuing extra capacity in volume crime investigations to sustain our improved performance. Workforce modernisation unlocks the potential to provide this additional capacity in a scenario of standstill or declining budgets in real terms.
5. All public service organisations have to evolve and alter to meet the needs of changing environments and emerging needs. The Police Service is no different. There is a wealth of evidence from numerous reports that despite the quality and commitments of the majority of individual officers and staff, the police workforce model is in some respects obsolete with inefficiencies causing waste and suppressing potential performance.
6. Guiding Principles developed by ACPO acting as a touchstone for the modernisation process include; retaining the office of constable at the heart of policing and retaining core operational competencies and ethical standards.

PRESSURE TO REFORM

7. Nationally a number of factors are creating the need for change:
 - the increase in the volume of low-level crime and associated rise in public fear of crime.
 - the increase in complexity of policing due to global organised crime, terrorism and more complex laws and regulations.
 - the funding gap in which the costs of policing are not being met by existing funding structures whilst the public demand for value for money from policing is increasing.
 - the willingness of the service to 'run harder' and overstretch resources resulting in the risk of damaging the reputation of the police and losing public confidence.
8. It is recognised locally that the sources available to fund policing cannot keep up with the demand in any sustainable way and to look for funding elsewhere is not a viable option. However, by addressing fundamental questions about the characteristics of the workforce and how tasks are matched to skills, powers and rewards, efficiencies can be achieved.
9. The simple premise is that when core elements of policing practices are disaggregated, many functions currently undertaken by police officers can, in fact, be done by non sworn staff dedicated to that role more effectively and at less cost. Constables remain in place but form part of a 'mixed economy' of people with different skills, competencies and roles. By applying this 'mixed economy' approach, capacity can be increased so higher volumes of work can be completed and capability can be enhanced because people are available to apply their specialist skills to best effect. The potential exists therefore to do more for the same or the same for less.

WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED?

10. Pilot schemes across the service are already demonstrating the quantifiable benefits of an approach whereby mixed teams, comprising a range of complimentary skills and experience, are organised to achieve the optimal 'mix' required for the desired operational outcomes. They perform better than traditional investigation teams made up of just police officers and have integrated well with their police officer colleagues.
11. The approach to modernisation needs to revolve around a review of the operational outcomes required and a reconfiguration of the roles and teams best suited to achieve them. Creating resilience and flexibility isn't a 'numbers game' achieved through bidding for more warranted officers but is achieved by ensuring you have highly skilled teams of people who compliment each other in their specialist roles. Feedback suggests that, substantial efficiencies and savings can be achieved through realignment of resources and re-engineering processes.

CURRENT POSITION

12. Within this Force a modest approach has so far been taken to civilianising a number of police officer roles which do not require Police powers; although many more have been identified as having potential.
13. Under the current Home Office rules a reduction in police officer numbers below 2203 would be assumed to be a reduction in Crime Fighting Fund (CFF) Constables and result in a reduction in continuation funding being made available. This has been a restraining factor.
14. The Home Office has agreed scope to negotiate flexibility from the constraints of CFF for Forces participating in planned national modernisation demonstration sites and has also more recently signalled this may well go further thereby freeing Chief Constable to develop an optimum staff mix.
15. In anticipation of this the Force is currently considering its strategic approach to the optimum staff mix in potentially all three policing pillars. This represents an exciting opportunity to put in place a long term investment in people to increase the capacity of the force within existing budget constraints and is the best way to sustain improvements in performance and continue the process of restoring the reputation of the force both locally and nationally.
16. Members will be provided with further information in the near future as the outline strategy evolves.

RECOMMENDATION

17. It is recommended that Members consider the information provided in the Report.

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Background Papers: Various Home Office, ACPO, Conference documents on Workforce Modernisation

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