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POLICE & CRIME PANEL – 7 NOVEMBER 2013

ENQUIRY OFFICE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING PAPER

REPORT BY THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper is intended to inform and engage the Police and Crime Panel on the initial proposals for changes to the Enquiry Office provision and their support on the Stakeholder Engagement currently being undertaken.

This is an operational decision of the Chief Constable; however no decisions have been taken regarding the final provision. The Enquiry Office Stakeholder Engagement process is essential in obtaining views from all relevant parties and the final decision is dependent on feedback received through the engagement process.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In 2011, the force consulted with key stakeholders regarding a demand led proposal to rationalise the Enquiry Office service. Due to the resulting public concern to keep front counters open, the force agreed to compromise on a way forward, on the understanding that this area of business would be subject to a further review in respect of demand.
- 1.2 It was therefore agreed to close three Enquiry Offices based on the following alternative provision:
 - Boscombe – covered by Bournemouth, Winton and Christchurch
 - Gravel Hill – covered by Poole
 - Lyme Regis – covered by Bridport
- 1.3 Further Enquiry Offices operating hours were reduced by the following amount:
 - Poole – 47 hours
 - Bournemouth – 35 hours
 - Weymouth – 25 hours
 - Winton – 8 hours
 - Bridport – 16 hours
- 1.4. District/Town and Parish Councils were influential in the resulting stations remaining open:
 - Gillingham
 - Shaftesbury
 - Verwood
 - Wimborne

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- 1.5 Collaboration with Swanage Town Council led to the joint service provision of Swanage Pathway, an Information Referral Point based in the annex to Swanage Town Hall. However, Dorset Police continue to fund this provision despite data which reflects that it is under-utilised (as per Section 3.2).
- 1.6 A total of £903,450 savings were achieved through closures and reduction in opening hours. The Phase One Stakeholder Engagement led to the force maintaining 15 stations. However, it was still necessary for the force to make the proposed savings and so these were made elsewhere within the force.

2. CURRENT SITUATION

- 2.1 As the force prepared itself to find a further £9.5m, mindful of the looming June 2013 CSR, it was geared to the inevitability that additional, substantial cuts were on the horizon.
- 2.2 Continuous review is at the heart of the One Team Programme and previous research regarding the usage of our Counter Service could not be ignored. It was therefore essential to re-run the demand led analysis to re-evaluate the counter service provision. The outcome of the 2012/13 data mirrored that of 2010/11 and therefore a change in the way the force operates this service was evident to increase efficiency and value for money.
- 2.3 Habits have changed. The 2012/13 community survey showed that 77% of the public prefer to contact the Force by phone, with 75% contacting the force through the non-emergency number. Demand combined with the running costs (as depicted in the next section) means a necessary change in how we will continue to deliver a future service.
- 2.4 Dorset Police is not alone in reassessing its counter service provision. Other forces have paved the way including Hampshire, Surrey and the Metropolitan Police, closing dozens of public counters. Some forces, such as Kent, Surrey, Essex, Cumbria and Gwent, are already using mobile police stations in supermarket car parks. This will be considered as part of the detailed business case.
- 2.5 At this time there is still a drive and determination to promote a "Footprint" in every town in Dorset. The potential reduction in Enquiry Office provision does not mean the closure of the Police Station. Territorial Policing will continue to provide a thoroughly professional service through its 77 Safer Neighbourhood areas across the Force:
- 2.5.1 The force already has a programme of initiatives to provide locations for SNT facilities and is currently moving forward and in each individual scheme at varying stages of delivery:
- Canford Heath / Broadstone to Broadstone Youth Centre
 - Rossmore to Rossmore Leisure Centre
 - Boscombe to Central Boscombe location
 - Portland to Portland Community Fire Station
 - Wimborne to East Dorset District Council, Wimborne Hub
 - Verwood to Verwood Hub Community Centre
- Others to be reviewed and progressed:
- Beaminster
 - Shaftesbury
 - Sturminster Newton

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- 2.6 As part of the consultation opportunities are being explored to work in greater partnership with other statutory partners. This engagement is seeking ways to work collaboratively potentially from the same location. These conversations are in their infancy but are hoped to achieve a commitment that will continue to support all communities across Dorset.
- 2.7 Further developments in the Force's mobile capacity will support the aim of allowing officers to remain out on patrol more. As this is refined, it will further reduce the reliance on specific site based facilities. This is already being promoted in new Safer Neighbourhood Team bases. The emphasis being, 'Think technology, not space. Work is an activity, not a place'.

3. DEMAND DATA & COST PER ACTIVITY

- 3.1 The following table is designed to reflect the cost of each visit for a policing purpose based on the 2012 activity. It does not represent the complexity of the task or the duration spent. It is intended to provide an indication only of resource costs.
- 3.2 It is offered as a tool to assist with the Stakeholder Engagement in educating key groups/individuals of the cost per task, in relation to the daily staff expense:

Station	Total Visits	% Police Generated Visits	Cost per task based on daily staffing expense divided by task
Blandford	1358	35%	£106.71
Bournemouth	17,355	34%	£26.88
Bridport	3663	16%	£26.37
Christchurch	2447	27%	£34.46
Dorchester	2136	22%	£54.31
Gillingham/ Shaftesbury	661 1081	31% 35%	£36.17
Ferndown HQ	1319	39%	£44.82
Poole	9297	35%	£19.24
Sherborne	2355	20%	£41.72
Swanage	828	28%	£89.25/£44.62
Verwood	717	18%	£66.42
Wareham	2151	31%	£50.63
Weymouth	6561	43%	£25.04
Wimborne	638	41%	£43.93
Winton	3276	28%	£17.75

4. PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The initial proposal to change the service across the county is as follows:
- Maintain an Enquiry Office provision at the two main custody sites in Dorset:
- Bournemouth Enquiry Office (Not 24 hours)
 - Weymouth Enquiry Office (Not 24 hours)
- 4.2 Replace the Counter Service provision at specific sites with surgeries staffed by peripatetic Enquiry Officers for a 6 month trial period.

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- 4.3 The reshaping of this service will ensure that staff are best placed to deal with the greatest demands and that we make the best use of our reducing resources to deliver a service that reflects the needs of our communities.
- 4.4 We are currently entering into the consultation stage prior to any firm proposals in relation to the service, before an operational decision is made.
- 4.5 This proposed change in service provision will enable the force to save £498,300.

5. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Purpose

- 5.1 The importance of effective consultation and engagement with stakeholders to the success of managing change cannot be underestimated and must be considered carefully to ensure that those who will most influence the change and those that will feel the most impact are proportionately engaged in the change process.
- 5.2 By engaging and educating the stakeholders on the negative cost impact of providing the current service, it is hoped a level of understanding and acceptance can be found in reducing the provision.
- 5.3 Therefore the purpose of the stakeholder engagement is to:
- Consult and influence partners, staff and the public of the proposed changes.
 - Understand needs and wants.
 - Encourage buy-in and understanding of the proposal.
 - Achieve substantial cost savings, based on demand profiling.
 - Achieve a more sustainable provision by reducing the Enquiry Office provision to reflect police generated activity.
 - Encourage and develop joint-service provisions across the county.
- 5.4 The phased approach both internally and externally allows the force to communicate the message in a structured manner, ensuring those most affected has sufficient opportunity to respond with any concerns, issues or alternative options. For example, the following stakeholders are included in the process:
- Strategic Partners
 - Voluntary Partners
 - Emergency Services
 - Public Service and Local Resilience Forums.
 - Chief Executives of District, Borough and County Councils.
 - Internal Heads of Departments
 - Unison
 - Federation
 - Territorial Policing Command
 - Station Desk Officers
 - District, Town, Local & Parish Council representatives.
 - Head of Services from District, Borough and County Councils.
 - Strategic Consultative Groups.
 - Community Safety Partnerships
 - Court Service

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Process

- 5.5 The Stakeholder Engagement process forms the initial phase of the change process.
- 5.6 The overall Implementation Process, including timescales, is as follows:
- Stakeholder Engagement 3rd October to 29th November 2013.
 - Stakeholder Engagement Review of Feedback
 - Draft Business Case to the Force Executive Board on 16th December 2013
 - Formal Consultation with staff to commence in January 2014
 - Implementation - April 2014
- 5.7 Dependent on the outcome of the consultation, there may be initiatives proposed from our strategic partners that may allow us to expand upon the initial proposals outlined in this paper. Further work regarding these joint service initiatives will inevitably take us beyond the implementation date, as work in progress.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 No final decisions have been made regarding the nature of Station Desk Enquiry Office provision in Dorset. However, this is an operational decision of the Chief Constable and the force has to meet a very challenging budgetary situation.
- 6.2 Please be assured this will be done in line with providing the best possible service to the public in Dorset, whilst reflecting true demand and value for money.
- 6.3 The potential closure of Station Desks does not mean the closure of the respective Police Station itself, and the force continues to ensure that there is a policing footprint in every town in Dorset.
- 6.4 Alternative provisions will be made available, this includes the telephone facility which will continue to be available at all stations as a means for the public to make direct contact with the Force Command Centre; Further promotion of the non-emergency contact number (101); and enhanced contact will be established via the Dorset Police Website.
- 6.5 This paper therefore requests the support of the Police and Crime Panel to engage with our strategic and voluntary partners, to ensure feedback is sought to inform the final proposal.

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