

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL – 11 SEPTEMBER 2014

COLLABORATION WITHIN DORSET

REPORT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To present to the Police and Crime Panel an overview of the extent of collaboration within Dorset and the potential implications for the current review with Devon & Cornwall Police.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In order to address the financial challenge presented by the current spending review, the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner are developing a business case for a Strategic Alliance with Devon & Cornwall Police.
- 1.2 The detailed business case will encompass Support Services and identify any areas in which the joint provision of Support Services will result in improve value.
- 1.3 The two Police Forces have a combined budget of over £400 million and a workforce of 7,500 officers and staff. The delivery of effective and efficiency Support Services is essential to operational delivery.
- 1.4 Within Dorset Police, Support Services account for £20 million, 17% of the budget. However, when account is taken of external costs and payment for national and / or police specific systems, this results in an addressable spend on Support Service staff of £5 million, 4% of the budget and 8% of the workforce.

2. CURRENT POSITION

- 2.1 The Force currently operates a mixed economy balancing internal and external provision of services. In financial terms, approximately 50% of the cost of Support Services are provided externally (premises cost, Police National Computer, Airwave communications system, fuel etc).
- 2.2 The external provision is undertaken by a variety of Public and Private Sector partners; the latter being engaged through a fully compliant procurement process.
- 2.3 Operationally the Force has many arrangements in place with the majority of Public Sector organisations in the County. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- (i) Safeguarding Boards
- (ii) Local Crime Justice Board
- (iii) Sexual Assault Referral Centre
- (iv) Civil Contingencies Unit
- (v) Dorset Road Safe
- (vi) Dorset Search and Rescue
- (vii) Local Resilience Forum

2.4 In addition to the operational interdependencies, the police works closely with the Local Authority, Public Sector and Charitable Sector for the provision of a range of services where it is beneficial to both parties to do so. Examples of which are summarised below:

- Joint PFI for the provision of police and fire estate.
- Joint use of buildings with Dorset Fire & Rescue Service.
- Medical services in Custody provided by NHS.
- Emergency catering from the Salvation Army.
- Range of financial services provided by Dorset County Council.
- Shared estate with Bournemouth Borough Council.
- Shared estate with Borough of Poole.
- Shared estate with District and Town Councils.

3. POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER COLLABORATION WITH DORSET LOCAL AUTHORITIES

3.1 The current area of focus with other local authorities concentrates on the estate. The rationale for which is twofold:

- (i) Significant element of cost.
- (ii) Natural impact of operating within same geographic boundary.

3.2 Work includes identifying further opportunities for sharing of accommodation, together with direct support on contact management and conveyancing provided by Dorset County Council.

3.3 The Assistant Chief Officer for Dorset Police has met with his counterparts at Poole Borough Council and Dorset County Council. A meeting has been requested, but not yet held, with Bournemouth Borough Council.

3.4 The objective of the meetings was to identify further opportunities, beyond those already mentioned, for collaborative working.

3.5 The most significant benefit so far was identified in the provision of accommodation and support to the Driver Awareness Training. New arrangements are being trialled across the County in a collaborative approach between the police and the Adult Education Service. Early indications are that this is both financially and operationally successful.

4. CORPORATE SERVICES

4.1 Discussions have also been held regarding the provision of Corporate Services (Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, Transport, Legal, Procurement).

4.2 Whilst these functions have a common basis in all parts of the Public Sector and nationally a number of forces have formal partnerships in place or being developed, the Force is concentrating its current work on the potential alliance with Devon & Cornwall Police. The rationale behind this approach is set out overleaf:

- (i) Separate regulatory approach through the Home Office.
- (ii) Different HR and Finance requirements and conditions of service.
- (iii) Significant requirement for vetting in a number of areas (covert authorities, crime and intelligence systems, operational equipment within IS and vehicle fleet.
- (iv) Risk of complicated governance and accountability model through increasingly complex service provision arrangements.

5. POTENTIAL IMPACT OF STRATEGIC ALLIANCE

- 5.1 Should the business case for the Strategic Alliance be made, the combined size of the two Forces should enable significant economies to be delivered, the expectation being that the governance would be simplified by restricting the number of collaborations needing to be managed. Within the Support Services the delivery model would also need adapting to ensure it provided effective support to any areas of combined operational delivery.
- 5.2 Both Forces have recently invested in a new Finance and HR system (Agresso Financials) which facilitates closer working, shared support and alignment of business processes.

Strategic Alliance Business Case Development

- 5.3 The process for developing the individual business cases has been agreed between the two Forces (Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners). This will include an evaluation of outsourced service provision; this element being delivered by external consultants.
- 5.4 The business case will also identify current and projected value for money using the HMIC VfM profile data.
- 5.5 Both Forces are currently within the lower quartile for cost on the majority of Support Services (Devon & Cornwall is in the highest quartile for IS costs; however this in part reflects the more complex service delivery and communication requirements across a wide geographic area).

6. THE WAY FORWARD

- 6.1 The work on the Strategic Alliance will be the primary focus of the Force's business change; however this does not preclude further local developments or exploring of opportunities with local partners.
- 6.2 The Force will continue working to deliver its strategic objectives on the estate with partners. This area of activity represents almost 50% of the Support Service costs. Joint accommodation will also enhance operational effectiveness in the direct delivery of service.
- 6.3 The initial discussions with Poole Borough Council and Dorset County Council did not identify any material areas beyond those already mentioned. A meeting will be held with Bournemouth to explore any additional areas for collaboration. Should further opportunities be identified then these will be evaluated and considered within the development of Strategic Alliance business cases.

7. SUMMARY

- 7.1 Dorset Police has both operational and Support Services collaborations in place with the majority of Public Sector organisations that operate within the same geographic boundary.
- 7.2 The current delivery of Support Services in Dorset is amongst the lowest cost in the Police Service.

7.3 The development of a Strategic Alliance offers significant potential to reduce costs, improve resilience and enhance operational capability across frontline and Corporate Services.

8. RECOMMENDATION

8.1 Members are asked to NOTE the report.

MARTYN UNDERHILL MSc PGCE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Members' Enquiries to: Dan Steadman, Chief Executive (01305) 223966

Press Enquiries to: Fiona Napier, Media and Communications Manager (01305 223619)