

CAMBRIDGESHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE:

Date: Monday 30th November 2009

Time: 4.00 pm until 5.10 pm

Location: Conference Room 1, Police Headquarters, Huntingdon

Present:

Members: Mr Benjamyn Damazer – Chairman
Mrs Jayne Wright – Deputy Chairman
Mr Ian Bates
Mr Mahmood Fazal
Ms Shona Johnstone
Mr Kevin Wilkins

Executive Team: Dr Dorothy Gregson, Chief Executive
Mr Ronnie Yellon, Policy and Performance Manager
Miss Jackie Chapman, Committee and Support Services Officer

Constabulary: Assistant Chief Constable Mark Hopkins
Detective Superintendent Dan Vajzovic

Other Attendees: None

1. To note any apologies

Two apologies were received from Mr Ansar Ali and Mr John Clark.

2. To note any Declarations of Interest

None were noted.

3. Questions and Statements from Members of the Public

None were received.

4. Any Other Items of Business that the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100(B) (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972

None were received.

5. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 27th August 2009

The Chief Executive advised the Committee that ongoing issues surrounding a persistent complainant had now been resolved.

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th August 2009 were then accepted as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. Report of the Custody Visitors Panel meeting held on 30th November 2009

The Chairman reported that the Panel had considered reports covering the following topics:-

- Independent Custody Visitors reports received during the period July 2009 to October 2009.
- An update on the local Independent Custody Visitors Scheme Panel meetings and events, recruitment and training.

The Chief Executive further added that a number of themes had been identified from the HMIC/P inspection, which are being actively monitored by the Constabulary and reported back to the Authority.

RESOLVED:

- (i) *To note the oral update. No further actions/decisions agreed.*

7. Links between Professional Standards and the Policing Plan

The Head of Professional Standards sought the Committee's approval to link the work of the Professional Standards Committee and the Constabulary's Professional Standards Department, to the Cambridgeshire Policing Plan.

The report contained a suggested inclusion for the Policing Plan outlining the strategic direction of the Professional Standards Department with the aim

"To maintain and build levels of public confidence in the Constabulary by ensuring that lessons are learnt from operational experiences".

The Head of Professional Standards outlined various key objectives in order to achieve this; these primarily focused on:-

- Educating Officers and staff on professional conduct and behaviour.
- Effective mechanisms for the investigation of complaints and a prompt and effective complaints resolution process.
- Organisational learning arising from complaints regarding misconduct, corruption and unprofessional or unethically conduct.
- Reducing organisational risks through staff vetting.

The Committee discussed the report and re-iterated the importance of demonstrating to the general public, that the Authority and Constabulary had robust and effective disciplinary and complaints procedures in place. The Committee asked for the Policing Plan to include an opportunity for the public to provide the Constabulary/Authority with feedback – positive, negative or neutral.

The Committee approved the recommendation outlining the Professional Standards Departments' commitment to maintain and build levels of public confidence in the Constabulary. The Professional Standards Department and Chief Executive agreed to link this work into the next Policing Plan.

RESOLVED:

- (i) *To note the report.*
- (ii) *To approve a recommendation outlining the Professional Standards Departments' commitment to maintain and build levels of public confidence, with this work to link into the next Policing Plan.*

8. Overview of Complaints for the period 1st July 2009 to 30th September 2009

The Committee received an overview of Complaints, Misconduct and Direction and Control issues dealt with by the Professional Standards Department, for the reporting period 1st July 2009 to 30th September 2009.

The report also included details of referrals made to the IPCC; comparative performance between reporting periods and improvements identified by the Constabulary to address specific aspects of performance.

The Constabulary reported that the number of recorded new complaint cases had increased by 4.1% from the previous quarter (from 98 to 102) – or nine cases compared with the previous year to date (ytd) figures.

Although the number of individual complaints in these cases had risen by 23.4% on the previous quarter (from 154 to 190), ytd comparisons showed an increase of just 1.8% (from 336 to 342). The Head of Professional Standards explained that the rise was due to an increase in reported assault and incivility complaints, and work was ongoing to closely monitor and address these two areas.

The Committee considered further detail relating to Complaint, Conduct and Direction and Control data, dealt with by the Professional Standards Department, for the reporting period.

The Committee queried the coding system used by the Constabulary to record complaints and highlighted some anomalies. The Constabulary agreed to provide an explanation on the Codes used in Appendix A, and also include some analytical data in the next report to the Committee explaining the increase in the number of unlawful arrests.

The Committee noted that the Local Resolution rate for the quarter had decreased slightly to 36%. Notably, 62% of complaints resolved by these means had been closed within 28 days, a 7% drop from the previous quarter. Substantiated complaints had decreased from 8% in the first quarter of 2009/10 to 6% in the second quarter, whilst the number of unsubstantiated complaints had increased by 10% to 41% for the same period.

The Constabulary explained that these fluctuations were an expected consequence of the new Police Conduct and Performance reforms introduced in 2009. The Committee discussed a separate issue and agreed that all files should contain a formal record showing that any actions agreed as part of the Local Resolution process, have happened e.g. signed by the Officer concerned. The Head of Professional Standards agreed to oversee this process.

Overall the Committee was satisfied that the Constabulary continued to demonstrate an ethical recording complaints process and good relationship with the IPCC and there were no undue causes for concern.

RESOLVED:

- (i) *To note the report.*
- (ii) *For the Professional Standards Department to ensure that all files contain a formal record to show that actions agreed as part of the Local Resolution process have happened.*
- (iii) *For the next report to the Committee to include an explanation on the Codes used in Appendix A and some analytical data explaining the increase in the number of unlawful arrests.*

9. Response to Members' Review of PSD Files

The Constabulary updated the Committee on the results of a review conducted on the Professional Standards Department's complaints files.

The Committee was informed that 10 complaints files had been dip sampled and reviewed by two Members on the 10th November 2009. Overall, the Committee was satisfied that appropriate action had been taken to rectify the issues raised (as detailed at Appendix A), noting that work would continue to refine this process.

The Committee generally discussed one specific element of the report regarding the treatment of individuals with mental health issues. The Assistant Chief Constable reported that work was underway with external partners to facilitate a joint approach and ensure that mental health based places of safety are available across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The Committee acknowledged the complexities surrounding this issue but supported the Constabulary's course of action. The Constabulary agreed to closely monitor this area and report back any significant issues to the Committee.

The Chairman briefly reported that the Association of Police Authorities (APA) was currently reviewing the guidance on the dip sampling of complaints files. The Committee could expect to see the updated guidance once published.

The Committee nominated Mr Benjamyn Damazer and Mr John Clark to conduct the next review of PSD Complaints Files, and raise any issues with the Constabulary, for report back and discussion at the next Committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (i) *To note the report.*
- (ii) *For Mr Benjamyn Damazer and Mr John Clark to conduct the next review of PSD Complaints files, and report their findings to the Constabulary, for discussion at the next meeting.*

10. Learning the Lessons Bulletin 7

The Committee received a report which summarised investigations carried out by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) or Constabularies into a range of Police matters and their outcomes.

The Assistant Chief Constable reported that the Learning the Lessons Bulletins provided the Constabulary with a valuable tool to identify any gaps in its current policies and procedures which may require further action.

The Committee was content that Cambridgeshire had responded appropriately to the "learning points" which had arisen from each investigation.

RESOLVED:

- (i) *To note the report. No further actions/decisions agreed.*

11. Exclusion of the public

The Chairman directed that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Clauses 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of revised Schedule 12A to the Act".

Summary of minutes excluded from public deposit

12. Claims Report

The Committee considered details of 29 new claims had been received during the reporting period.

The Committee agreed that in the future an annual report on insurance and claims should be presented to the Finance and Resource Committee, with any significant professional standards issues being incorporated into other Professional Standards reports.

RESOLVED:

- (i) *To note the report and agreed course of action.*

13. Consideration of Individual Complaints and Discipline Matters

The Committee considered details of specific complaints that had been investigated for more than 120 days, complaints that had been referred to the IPCC and details of Officers who were currently subject to Suspension, Restriction or Service Confidence.

RESOLVED:

- (i) *To note the report. No further actions/decisions agreed.*

14. Issues, Concerns and Complaints against the Police Authority

The Committee considered a report which detailed some issues, concerns and complaints made against the Police Authority.

RESOLVED:

- (i) *To note the report. No further actions/decisions agreed.*

15. Date of the next meeting

It was noted that the next Professional Standards Committee meeting would be held on **Monday 8th March 2010 at 4.00 pm** at Police Headquarters, Huntingdon.

CHAIRMAN