

**POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS – GOVERNANCE PROTOCOL
(Report by the Head of Administration)****1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) considered the report to be submitted to the Cabinet at their meeting held on 9th March 2004. The Panel had discussed the Council's support for the funding of PCSOs at an earlier meeting on 14th October 2003 when 3 members had called in the Cabinet's decision to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Police. At that time, the Panel decided not to refer the matter back to the Cabinet but to ask for a projected review after the operation of the scheme for six months to be reported back to the Panel.

2. DISCUSSION

- 2.1 The Panel were invited to comment on the proposed Governance Protocol between the Council and the Police on the supervision and deployment of the PCSOs in Huntingdonshire. They also received a draft service agreement on the potential involvement of the PCSOs in the enforcement of the Council's powers in relation to the control of dogs and a report on the first six months operation of the scheme. In addition the Panel requested sight of the agreed Memorandum of Understanding on the funding of the PCSOs, a draft of which had been submitted to their October meeting.
- 2.2 The Panel expressed their full support for the concept of funding PCSOs in Huntingdonshire but raised a number of issues which they suggested should be reflected in the Governance Protocol. The following paragraph numbers refer to those contained in the draft Protocol.
- 2.3 Paragraph 2.2 – The Panel acknowledged that direction and control of the PCSOs should remain the responsibility of the Police and they have been informed that the officers will be allocated to those parts of the District which statistically experience higher levels of anti-social behaviour. Nevertheless the Panel feel that the Council should recognise a desire for PCSOs to be visible throughout the District. Although smaller communities may suffer from a fewer number of incidents of anti-social behaviour, the Panel suggest that those incidents may have a disproportionately higher impact on those communities than in larger towns where a greater volume of incidents are experienced. The Panel suggest that this should be acknowledged by the Police and reflected in the Protocol.

- 2.4 Paragraph 3.1 – It is the Panel’s understanding that the Council’s primary purpose in funding PCSOs is to deal with issues relating to anti-social behaviour. They therefore have questioned the inclusion of traffic management enforcement and road safety education as one of the five objectives of the PCSOs in the Governance Protocol. While accepting that there may be occasions where it would be appropriate for PCSOs to become involved in such issues, the Panel are of the opinion that this should be afforded a lower priority than the other objectives in the Protocol.
- 2.5 With regard to the performance of the scheme to date, Members of the Panel have raised questions with regard to communication links with the PCSOs and whether sufficient contact can be made with them when they are active in the community.
- 2.6 There was also some concern as to whether the Council’s support for the PCSOs could be varied annually as part of the MTP process when this is not reflected in the Memorandum of Understanding. The Panel also questioned how the Council’s level of financial support was reflected in the total number of PCSOs deployed in Huntingdonshire in comparison with the contributions by other authorities elsewhere in the County.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The Panel have asked that information be presented to them on a regular basis on the performance and achievements of the scheme and for an involvement in the ongoing evolution of the Governance Protocol. They, therefore

RECOMMEND

that the Cabinet take the Panel’s views into account in determining the final content of the Governance Protocol and associated documents.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Police Community Support Officers – Governance Protocol
Memorandum of Understanding between Cambridgeshire Constabulary and
Huntingdonshire District Council
Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny (Planning and Finance) held on
14th October 2003

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