

## **Briefing – The Surrey Police Operational Policing Review**

### **December 2009**

Surrey Police Authority, the body responsible for overseeing Surrey Police, met in Guildford on 10<sup>th</sup> December to discuss a detailed business case for the radical proposals for changes to policing in the county put forward by Chief Constable Mark Rowley.

These changes include:

- Recruiting up to 200 more police constables for Surrey
- Introducing a simpler policing structure for Surrey Police
- Reducing the number of senior officers
- Replacing some police stations by permanently basing officers in other, more accessible public places
- Putting Surrey Police on a better financial footing

The Chief Constable has set out a seven point plan for change. The 17 Members of the Authority, who have taken a keen interest in the development of the proposals following their first discussion about them on November 5<sup>th</sup>, questioned the Chief Constable about this more detailed set of plans. In light of these discussions, the Authority has given its support for the principle of the changes proposed. This means that more detailed planning and implementation will now begin, including public consultation around how people would like to access police services in the future.

The plans are at an extremely early stage in their development and it is anticipated that the majority of changes will be made within three years.

The seven points set out by the Chief Constable, and the decisions taken around them, are as follows:

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#### **1. Recruit up to 200 extra constables by April 2012.**

Members welcomed the Chief Constable's proposal to recruit up to 200 extra police constables. This will allow for a significant increase in the number of neighbourhood officers involved in tackling anti-social behaviour and other local issues. In addition, Operation Shield - which tackles cross-border crime – will benefit from an increase in officer numbers, as will Surrey Police's serious crime teams.

#### **2. Locate neighbourhood policing teams in the buildings of Borough and District Councils to ensure a more joined-up and effective approach to issues such as anti-social behaviour.**

The Authority agrees that the work successfully trialled in Addlestone and Woking to locate police teams with other partner agencies to tackle complex issues like anti-social behaviour would bring significant benefits in other areas.

**3. Provide a range of better ways to access your neighbourhood policing team in your area, to replace outdated, expensive and under-used police buildings.**

The Authority supports the principle of offering a permanent police front counter in more accessible public buildings. This would not only make it easier and more convenient for the public to visit the police, it would allow us to take the money currently used to maintain a number of costly stations used by a small number of people and invest it in more constables to tackle the crimes that concern local people most.

The Authority will now begin detailed planning for consultation with the public around this aspect of the plans.

This process of change to the police estate is likely to span a number of years. Members agreed that no police station should be closed unless better alternatives can be provided. Moreover, Surrey Police and Surrey Police Authority have committed to undertake a comprehensive process of briefing and consultation with the public and partners in Boroughs & Districts before any police station can be replaced.

**4. Introduce a new and slimmed down command structure, facilitating the removal of approximately 50 senior police posts over three years (one third in total).**

Ultimately, how the Surrey Police workforce is constituted and organised is for the Chief Constable to decide. However, the Members of the Police Authority were asked to give their views on this aspect of the plans. They agree that, in light of the change to the policing model, reducing the number of senior officers is sustainable.

**5. Change the way that key functions such as investigation and emergency response are organised through introduction of a simpler structure to improve the service for the public.**

This will mean that Surrey's current model of three geographical divisions (or basic command units) will be replaced with a simpler policing model based on the four main functions of the police: response, investigation, neighbourhood policing and tasking command.

It is important to make clear that these changes relate purely to the internal organisation of the force. Response and investigation teams will operate across the county as before, working out of Staines, Reigate and Guildford.

Surrey Police and Surrey Police Authority believe that by reorganising in this way, a better service can be provided in our neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood policing teams remain at the heart of what we do, and they will be strengthened with a substantial increase in officer numbers funded by the changes.

The Authority also agrees with the Chief Constable that the triplication of some functions arising from the previous divisional structure was unnecessary and that service improvements and financial savings can be achieved by adopting a simpler model.

**6. Further reduction of non-operational costs as a consequence of a simpler management structure and a less costly estate.**

The Authority welcomed the Chief Constable's commitment to further reductions in non-operational costs but re-iterated that no police station should be closed unless better alternatives are in place.

Members believe that the savings generated will allow for a significant and lasting reduction in the gap in the policing budget that will put the force on a more solid and sustainable financial footing as we approach increasingly difficult financial times.

**7. Agree new and ambitious performance measures to make sure that the resources released by these changes translate into reductions in crime and increases in confidence.**

The Authority believes that this is at the heart of the entire plan and will be looking to set testing targets to make the most of the extra resources on the front line. The Authority will be working closely with the force to set up scrutiny arrangements to oversee these measures on an ongoing basis.