

**Report to:** Police Authority  
**Agenda item:** 4  
**Date:** 11 March 2010  
**Subject:** Annual Authority Plan  
**Sponsor:** Chief Executive  
**Author:** Chief Executive  
**For:** Approval

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## 1. Purpose of paper

- 1.1 This paper presents the Annual Authority Plan, which has been developed through the Strategic Review process, for approval.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 In the Autumn of last year the Authority undertook a strategic review of its activities, established a Business Review Group and also commissioned a review of its Governance which was undertaken by Tribal Consulting.
- 2.2 The Authority has also reviewed its approach to communications building on the work undertaken by the Stakeholder Relations and Communications Strategy Committee, with assistance from external specialists.
- 2.3 The purpose of this and related work was to enable the Authority to take decisions about the future conduct of its business and to ensure its practices and governance operate to the highest standards.
- 2.4 The Authority has had three workshop sessions as part of this wider programme of work and the early stages of the Strategic Review were conducted with full participation by all Members of the Authority. There has also been close consultation with senior colleagues from BTP and the second workshop was attended by the Chief Constable and senior colleagues from BTP.
- 2.5 In those informal sessions draft proposals were tabled and discussed. Members' suggestions have been incorporated in subsequent drafts and discussions.
- 2.6 Throughout those discussions there has been a strong measure of agreement on the principles, and concerns expressed about the detailed implications of some of the emerging proposals. More detailed work has been done and incorporated in the attached report to show how the new working arrangements

would operate in practice and to give assurance that business continuity would be maintained into the new arrangements.

- 2.7 All this work has been drawn together in the proposals set out in the attached report and in the reports on this Agenda on Financial Reporting and the Accounting Officer.
- 2.8 The proposals in the attached report are recommended for adoption from the start of the new financial year. Although many of the proposals are final other elements are still work in progress. In relation to all of them the intention is that they should be viewed as a dynamic set of arrangements to be kept under regular review to ensure they are achieving their intended objectives and enabling the Authority's strategic objectives.

### **3. The Authority's Annual Plan**

- 3.1 This is attached. It sets out in the opening narrative a statement of what the Authority does and how it will work. This reflects the work done during the Strategic Review in which there was support for the Authority and BTP sharing a mission, "*To Protect and Serve*". At the same time the narrative describes the Authority's role as an independent body charged with securing an efficient and effective police force within a context created by the perspectives and needs of the police, the PSA holders and the travelling public and staff.
- 3.2 The Plan then describes an annual business cycle which will give shape and discipline to the Authority's work and ensure that its strategy and plan drives its budget and review work.

### **4. Authority Structures**

- 4.1 Emerging from the Strategic Review was a strong sense that the Authority as a whole needed to take more responsibility for its work. One consequence of the use of committees over the years had become that whilst there were small groups of Members expert in particular areas the Authority as a whole was less sighted on the handling of key strategic issues.
- 4.2 To address this concern the document envisages that the Authority will take responsibility for decisions on strategic or important issues. To facilitate this, new Groups without delegated powers will be established in place of most existing Committees.
- 4.3 The role of these Groups is described in detail in the Report attached at Appendix A, but in essence they are intended to keep an overview on behalf of the Authority and to facilitate the Authority's discussion and decisions on issues in their area of responsibility.

- 4.4 The Audit Committee and the Professional Standards Committee will be retained.
- 4.5 The Terms of Reference are proposed to be amended to enable the Audit Committee to focus on audit related issues. Corporate Governance issues under the proposals would revert to the Authority and be handled as part of the annual review at the May meeting.
- 4.6 Professional Standards would also have its ToR changed to enable it to handle.
- 4.7 Appointments to Groups and Committees would continue to be the Chair's responsibility after consultation with Members. The report does propose that there should be some overlap in Membership between relevant Groups to help ensure there is appropriate connectivity and co-ordination between the Groups.
- 4.8 To further assist with this objective the Chief Executive will also have a responsibility to ensure that individual Groups and Committees and the Authority as a whole are kept informed of each others' work. The Chief Executive will also report to the Chair if there is evidence of Groups moving in different directions or of important issues being overlooked.
- 4.9 It has also been proposed that a Chairs' Meeting (i.e. the Chair and all the Chairs of the Committees and Groups) to ensure coordination of the Authority's business might be helpful. It could be argued that this is the job of the whole Authority. Members may wish to take a view on whether such a meeting should be established as part of the new arrangements.
- 4.10 To assist with the transition to the new arrangements all Committees have identified a series of continuing actions/issues which will be handed on to the Authority, or an appropriate Committee or Group.

## **5. Engagement and Consultation**

- 5.1 The Annual Business Cycle envisages a constant strand of work throughout the year engaging with stakeholder groups. The financial challenges facing the Authority place a particular premium on substantially improving the extent and quality of the engagement with PSA holders as the funders of BTPA and BTP.
- 5.2 New proposals are in development to enable the Authority as a whole and individual Members working with BTP to make a contribution to this work. These will be reported to Members for their consideration shortly.

## 6. Area and thematic roles for Members

- 6.1 In the workshop sessions that have informed the development of these proposals the Area and Thematic roles of Members have not been fully discussed. The general consensus seems to be that the Area roles are valuable, as long as they are effectively supported by reports and information exchange, but the thematic roles have been less so. If this is the view then it can be built into the detailed arrangements proposed in the report.

## 7. Cultural and Practice Issues

- 7.1 Structural change, as has been demonstrated time and again in many different settings, in itself achieves little or nothing. At best structures are enablers of other objectives.
- 7.2 In this case the objective is to build on the Authority's progress over the first six years of its work and ensure that it continues to improve in the discharge of its statutory functions, the value it brings to policing the network and ultimately the contribution it makes to rail user personal security.
- 7.3 These objectives would be important at any time but nevermore so in the face of the economic and operational challenges the police service faces into the medium term.
- 7.4 To make the changes work the Strategic Review pointed to the need for the Authority to be to be more effective strategically in setting a direction and budget for BTP. To achieve this Authority Members were clear in wanting to own the strategy and plans for the Police –that are their responsibility to set – and at the same time not in any way transgress into issues that were properly the Chief Constable's responsibility, but instead the Authority wished to improve its effectiveness in holding the Chief Constable to Account. (Another item on this Agenda reports on progress in this area).
- 7.5 Success in all these areas depends not on structures but on how Authority Members work together, and with other stakeholders, and with BTP.
- 7.6 Success also depends on the quality of the support the Authority gets from its own and BTP staff. Staff groups from BTP and the Authority have met together and worked together in developing these proposals. It is the job of both groups to support whatever arrangements the Authority chooses. However, whilst there are still matters of detail to work out both BTP and Authority staff strongly support the proposals set out in the Report.

## **8. Authority Staff**

8.1 The Authority's staff have been referred to as a Secretariat. At the informal discussion on the 10 February Members proposed changing this name to Executive. This would be a welcome change in both recognising the quality of the staff and the contribution they currently make but also in signalling expectations that the Authority wants professional and expert support from its staff to assist it in its work. The appointment of a permanent chief executive will also enable the Authority to ensure that its Executive is organised and staffed to support it in these objectives.

## **9. Tribal Report on Governance**

9.1 The draft report from Tribal was discussed at the informal meeting on the 10 February. In general Members were concerned that there were a number of factual inaccuracies in the draft but were nevertheless broadly supportive of Tribal's recommendations. Members comments on the Report have now been fed back to Tribal and their final report received.

9.2 The report is an independent report; its analysis and recommendations have been taken account of in the development of these proposals. Tribal also have recommendations on cultural and practice issues which will need to be built on as these new arrangements are put into practice. When the Authority reviews the effectiveness of these proposals the Tribal Report will be a good reference point against which to examine the progress the Authority has made. The Report is available to all Members in hard or soft copy by request.

## **10. Recommendation**

10.1 That the Authority considers this Report and the Authority Annual Plan and adopts it for implementation from the 1 April 2010 and reviews its effectiveness within a year.