

Report to: Police Authority

Agenda #: 6

Date: 21 January 2015

Subject: People and Standards Committee

Sponsor: Committee Chairman

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For: Information

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1. Purpose of paper

- 1.1 To report on the key matters arising out of the People and Standards Committee meeting that took place on 20 January 2015.

2. Standards

Standards Quarterly Report

- 2.1 There was good performance to report in relation to the activities of the Professional Standards Department, with a downward trend in the volume of complaints received, an improvement in handling times, and a low number of appeals allowed by the IPCC compared with the national average.
- 2.2 It was noted that the DCC had instigated a new internal process for reviewing how the Force manages disciplinary proceedings, across all departments, looking specifically at:-
 - Whether relevant departments acted proportionately, fairly and in line with organisational values in dealings with the employee
 - Whether BTP staff adhered to internal policy and/or guidelines in dealing with the case
 - Whether any department missed 'intervention' opportunities with the employee, that could have provided a different outcome
 - Whether any lessons learned can be deduced to avoid a recurrence.

The first of these quarterly review meetings was scheduled to take place in April 2015.

- 2.3 The Committee received an update on the most serious and sensitive cases being handled by the Department, including those which were being supervised by the IPCC.
- 2.4 The Committee discussed the merits of reporting data on the use of Unsatisfactory Performance Procedures (UPP), to allow the monitoring of their effectiveness against the use of conduct procedures to deal with poor performing officers.
- 2.5 The Head of PSD reported on an analysis of 'incivility' allegations, and there were no concerns arising from the results. One of the key themes emerging was that many such complaints involved the use of over-familiar terms, rather than offensive or hostile language.
- 2.6 One of the Members, who was currently providing support for the work on Stop and Search, provided feedback on the recent HMIC inspection.

Complaint and Disciplinary System Reform

- 2.7 The Home Office is consulting on proposals for a major overhaul of the complaints and disciplinary systems in England and Wales, for strengthening the protection of whistleblowers, and about the role of the IPCC.
- 2.8 In respect of the complaints system, the proposals intend to give PCCs a greater role in the complaint system and to simplify the system by making low level complaints easier to manage. Concretely, PCCs will have the option of taking over the initial handling of complaints. There is also an intention to broaden the criteria for complaints, so that these encompass quality of service as well as conduct allegations.
- 2.9 In terms of the conduct system, the proposals aim at ensuring consistency of use of sanction and management action. It looks at the possible introduction of a 'tariffs' system for disciplinary sanctions, at simplifying the unsatisfactory performance procedures and at centralising the administration of misconduct hearings.
- 2.10 Finally, there are proposals to strengthen the way whistleblowers are dealt with by giving greater powers to the IPCC so that it is able to engage directly with them and investigate issues effectively. Some proposals to reform the IPCC are also being consulted on, particularly about equipping the IPCC with the necessary powers to examine the most serious and sensitive cases of police conduct, whilst reducing some of its work on lower-level cases (e.g. appeals).

- 2.11 The proposals, if implemented, would have a significant impact on the functions and resources of the Force's Professional Standards Department and the Authority, both of which administer aspects of the complaints and disciplinary systems. The BTP/BTPA have traditionally adopted Government reforms in this area, and it would be important for our effective working relationship with the wider police service to continue to take a similar approach.
- 2.12 The BTP/BTPA recognises that there is room for improvement in the complaints and disciplinary systems, and welcomes the effort to simplify procedures for users, as well as to create new mechanisms to deal with complex integrity issues. Consequently, Members agreed that our response should predominantly look at matters arising from the practical implementation of the proposals.

Custody

- 2.13 The Committee received a report providing an update on the BTP's work around custody.
- 2.14 Members queried what steps had been taken to look at the strategic direction of custody activity, taking into account the future of the estate, our collaboration with other police forces and joint arrangements for custody provision. The DCC informed the committee of various workstreams which would support better decision-making about the level of custody provision. One of these, for example, related to data collection, which he expected would undergo a significant improvement under the ISP programme.

3. People

Quarterly Update

- 3.1 An intake of approximately 120 BTP officers is planned over the next 5 months, to meet the current deficit of 119 FTE, predominantly in B division.
- 3.2 The Fast Track Inspector Programme has received 26 eligible applications. The BTP will be assessing candidates in February 2015, following by the College of Policing assessment centre process in April 2015.
- 3.3 The first intake of additional Firearms Officers began 12 January 2015. The assessment centre will take place in February 2015 and a second intake is scheduled for March 2015.

- 3.4 Senior Appointment recruitment is in progress, with interviews scheduled for Head of People & Development, Head of Organisational Development, Head of Policy, Reward & Engagement and Head of Finance.
- 3.5 The Committee noted the increased demand on Learning & Development in 2015. A block syllabus has been developed for January to April 2015 and from April 2015 the new syllabus as part of the People Strategy will launch. A review for suitable training accommodation is underway.
- 3.6 The Equality & Diversity Report was reviewed and the Committee gave their support to the positive work on the strategy.
- 3.7 It was noted that the BTP Employee Survey will be launched on 26 January 2015.
- 3.8 The trends for Employment Tribunals and grievances remained reasonably static. There has been a marginal increase in total grievances from 49 in 2013 to 54 in 2014.
- 3.9 A cultural shift of proactive attendance management is underway, supported by refining the sickness policy, training line managers in process and ensuring HR and Occupational Health provide the appropriate level of support to give Line Managers confidence and skill to manage effectively on the front line.

Health and Safety

- 3.10 A new Head of Health & Safety joined BTP on 5th January 2015. They have been tasked with completing an audit of H&S within 8 weeks and convert the H&S Strategy into an action plan. This appointment will also be leading on actions from the second Central H&S Committee meeting which took place 4th December 2014.
- 3.11 Divisional H&S Committees are now business as usual. Officers in Charge now keep Monthly Management Logs to identify and escalate H&S issues through the appropriate channels.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 Members note the contents of this report.