

REPORT OF THE
Hampshire Police Authority

PART II

235. POLICE REFORM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT – TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS

1. The Authority received a report on the Police and Social Responsibility Act 2011, particularly in respect of Part 1 of the Act, “Police Reform” and its associated schedule. Part 1 abolishes police authorities across the geographical areas of England and Wales (excluding the City of London) and replaces them with a directly elected Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) who will hold office for four years. Elections will be held on 15 November 2012.

2. The functions of the PCC include: holding the chief constable to account for the full range of his/her responsibilities; publishing a police and crime plan; setting the local police and crime objectives; setting the local precept and annual force budget in discussion with the chief constable. The PCC also has responsibility to appoint, and if necessary suspend, and dismiss, the chief constable.

3. Part 1 of the Act contains provisions for establishing a Police and Crime Panel for each police area which will consist of one elected member from each of the local authorities within the policing area (15 across Hampshire) and 2 co-optees who are not councillors. With the approval of the Home Secretary, the Panel may also appoint an additional 3 co-optees who may be councillors. The role of the Panel will be to provide advice, support and scrutinise the work of the PCC.

4. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act is supported by a Protocol which will be issued by the Secretary of State setting out how the functions of the PCC, the Chief Constable and the Panel will be exercised in relation to each other.

5. To oversee transition at a national level, the Home Office has established a Police and Crime Commissioner Transition Board, chaired by the Policing Minister, which has divided the work into twelve projects.

6. At a local level, the Act requires each Authority to establish an effective and compliant transfer scheme. Hampshire Police Authority has stated that it is committed to leaving a positive and lasting legacy by handing over effective policing governance to the new governance body. To ensure it is able to meet its statutory duties, the Authority agreed to establish a Governance Transition Board which will agree a transition programme plan, release the necessary resources and monitor progress. The most significant area of work is to develop a transfer scheme which will focus on the transfer of property, assets, rights and liabilities; police authority staff; police civilian staff; senior officers of Hampshire Constabulary and contracts, licences and collaborative agreements.

7. Some elements of transition are reliant on the work and progress of partners, for example, the establishment of the Police and Crime Panel and the development of the necessary election process. To ensure effective and seamless transition, the Authority proposed the establishment of a Transition Co-ordination Partnership Group whose members will represent all interested parties.

8. The work programme for transition will occur over three distinct periods: up to the election on 15 November 2012; the overlap period from the election to the abolition of the Authority, likely to be on 22 November 2012 and the period from 15 November to 31 March 2013. A reserve of £50,000 to provide funds for additional expenditure arising during the transition period has been set aside by the Authority.

236. MOBILE INFORMATION PROJECT EVALUATION

9. The Authority received a report from the Chief Constable on the introduction of phase 1 and 2 mobile technology to frontline Hampshire Constabulary officers and the benefits achieved from this introduction.

10. Under Phase 1, in August 2008, Hampshire Constabulary received £665,000 capital funding to deploy mobile technology in two pilot areas. A further award of £112,000 was received in March 2010.

11. Phase 1 included the issue of 255 Blackberry devices to Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT), the issue of 7 mobile data terminals to officers on operations in the Gosport district and a further 17 to other officers. Other funding from the National Police Improvement Agency allowed an upgrade of the automatic numberplate recognition (ANPR) equipment in 11 roads policing vehicles and the training of 112 traffic officers in its use.

12. By February 2009 the main business benefits identified as a result of Phase 1 of this project were a 7% increase in time out of the police station by SNT officers on the Isle of Wight using Blackberry smart phones and a 5% increase in time out of the police station by the Gosport Tactical Patrol Team officers equipped with mobile data terminals in their vehicles.

13. Under phase 2, the Authority authorised £1.5 million expenditure to equip a further 160 vehicles and train 1100 officers and to issue 170 Blackberries to officers in rural areas and those outside 30 minutes walking distance from their police stations.

14. The aim of the project was to increase the amount of time officers can remain on patrol and anecdotally the public have reported seeing more officers in the communities. Officers have become less reliant on back office support to complete routine tasks and the information technology based in police stations as this is now available on their mobile devices. Officers are able to update live data from their mobile devices which reduces the demands on control room staff. Officers on the street are able to use images from the records management system to identify suspects and persons of interest whilst carrying out street encounters and vehicle searches. Officers on the street are also able to capture images from the scenes of incidents and upload them via their Blackberries to the Criminal Records Bureau enabling the best evidence to be gathered.

15. Roads Policing officers are benefiting from the integrated ANPR and mobile data technology to enable them to gather and upload evidence about travelling criminals which is shared across the country via the Police National Computer.

16. Hampshire Constabulary has become the lead force nationally in the use of mobile fingerprint readers which assists in the immediate identification of suspects.

17. The Authority was pleased to learn of the benefits from its investment and the effects on the working patterns of Hampshire Constabulary officers who have reacted very positively to the introduction of mobile data and who have provided clear and relevant feedback.

COUNCILLOR MRS JACQUI RAYMENT
Chair