

## **Collaborative Working Between Forces**

### **Driver – Economic**

Related Drivers – Counter Terrorism, Collection and Storage of Personal Information, E-crime / Cybercrime, Fraud, Organised Crime, Recession, Violent Crime – gun and gang violence, Asset Recovery, Efficiency, Entrepreneurial, Procurement, Public Sector Productivity, Police Funding, Airwave, Mobile Technology, Compatibility, Advances in Technology, Drugs – Cocaine, Drugs – Cannabis, Human Trafficking, Police Mergers, Prostitution, Public Confidence in the Police, 2012 Olympics

### **Background**

A key priority for the police service is to ensure that it deals effectively with terrorism, serious crime and other major challenges to public safety. These services are often described as 'protective services'. Protective Services were highlighted in the report '*Closing the Gap*'<sup>1</sup> (2005) and the Bichard Inquiry (2004)<sup>2</sup> as needing to be strengthened in capability and capacity by the majority of police forces.

Collaborative working is essential to achieve greater efficiency in the delivery of protective services. Forces and police authorities are expected to have made significant improvement in protective services in high need areas by 2009 and in all areas by 2011.<sup>3</sup> The Protective Services Improvement programme<sup>4</sup> has been implemented to assist forces and authorities in taking forward successful collaborative initiatives. Protective services will also be embedded in the new Assessments of Policing and Community Safety (APACS)<sup>5</sup> performance framework as well as policing plans.

The Home Affairs Select Committee recommended in 2007 that the Home Office should keep under review its policy of not mandating police forces in regard to making shared services a key element in the police efficiency agenda to help forces deal with the tighter funding settlement.<sup>6</sup>

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) report, '*Getting Together: A better deal for the public through joint working*' has found that collaboration between forces can potentially cut the costs of support services, enabling redirection of savings to frontline policing. Specific areas where collaboration has made major efficiency savings are that of procurement and shared services.<sup>7</sup>

Collaborating on the procurement of shared police services such as marked vehicles, forensic science service and uniforms can give better value for money. Although some shared services do exist, there is scope to extend the range of collaboration. This is a particular area of development for Chief Constables and police authorities.<sup>8</sup>

HMIC inspectors found there are considerable variations in the costs of delivering the HR and finance functions across the police forces of England and Wales. Some forces spend at least twice as much on HR for each full-time employee as others. A member of HR staff in the lowest spending force caters for more than twice the number of general staff as in the

highest. Additionally, the average police spending on HR is significantly above the public sector benchmark.<sup>7</sup> There is similar variation between forces in spending on finance services.

Though finance and HR represent only 1.6 per cent of the annual policing budget, public sector research suggests that savings of between 15 per cent and 30 per cent can be made through shared services. For example, the Metropolitan Police Service introduced the Transforming HR programme which aims to save £15m per year by centralising a number of HR functions.

HMIC believes there is potential for benefits to be realised through greater collaborative working if there is a will on the part of force leaders and managers to share these functions. It has recommended that the NPIA examine the opportunities for HR and finance share services across the service, identifying the potential scale of both investment and savings achievable.

In line with this recommendation, HMIC has proposed the Informed Choice Model (ICM) to capture collaborative working arrangements across the service, examining the benefits and improvements in service, cost and risks. These findings would then support and inform future decisions on the coordination of resources. Levels of support though ICM will be provided by a Resource-Co-ordination board (RCB) and will range from:

- Level 1 – Monitor, where they provide best information available on risk and cost on particular issues to inform decision makers, to
- Level 5 – Mandation of resources – exercise of legislative powers to direct forces to deliver services collaboratively when in the national interest.

Research carried out by HMIC and Avail identified a range of barriers to collaborative working including:

- Differing local priorities and command structures
- Approached to intelligence, ICT and disagreements over equipment bought collaboratively
- Technical and legal issues including staff terms and conditions
- 'Net donor syndrome' - forces and authorities, large and small, can see what they will have to contribute to the 'common good', but not what they will specifically gain. In each case, the contributor believes that the resources they commit will be disproportionately deployed away from the home force and into the area of a collaborative partner. Either way, none of the potential contributors believe it is in their interest to collaborate.<sup>7</sup>

## **Potential Skills Needs**

**Change management skills** – to support staff and the organisation with the changes taking place regarding increased collaborative working

**Collaborative working skills** – working effectively with colleagues and other forces in procurement of goods and services, and delivery of services.

**Data collection and management skills** – recording and collecting data in line with a particular system

**IT skills** – building IT processes and equipment to support collaborative working

**Leadership skills** – ability to motivate a group of people toward a common goal

**People management skills** - manage staff terms and conditions as well as operational role as part of collaborative working

**Process management skills** – initiate processes to support collaborative working

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<sup>1</sup> [HMIC \(2005\) \*Closing the Gap: A review of the 'fitness for purpose' of the current structure of policing in England & Wales.\* London: Home Office](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Bichard, Sir Michael \(2004\) \*The Bichard Inquiry report.\* HC 653, London: The Stationery Office Ltd.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Home Office \(2008\) \*From the Neighbourhood to the National: Policing our communities together.\* Cm 7448, London: The Stationery Office Ltd](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Protective services Improvement Programme](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Home Office \(2008\) \*Assessment of Policing and Community Safety.\* London: Home Office.](#)

<sup>6</sup> [House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee \(2007\) \*Police Funding.\* Fourth Report of Session 2006-07. HC 553, London: The Stationery Office Ltd.](#)

<sup>7</sup> [HMIC \(2009\) \*Getting together: A better deal for the public through joint working.\* London: HMIC.](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Flanagan, Sir Ronnie \(2008\) \*The Review of Policing: Final Report.\* Home Office: London](#)