

# TAYSIDE JOINT POLICE BOARD

14 May 2001

Report by the Chief Constable No. PB 21/2001

**SUBJECT: BID FOR 2001/2002 UNUSED POLICE GRANT**

**Abstract: This report details proposals to utilise the projected underspend for financial year 2000/2001 to enhance operational efficiency in the current financial year**

## 1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is recommended that the Board note:

- (a) the Chief Constable's proposals to utilise the projected carry forward working balance of £467,000 to enhance operational efficiency
- (b) the final figure for the carry forward working balance will not be available until the end of June at which time the proposals will be amended in line with the final figure

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 With reference to paragraph 4, Minute of Meeting of the Finance Sub-Committee of 28 March 2001, wherein the Sub-Committee approved Report No. PB12/2001 – 'Revenue Monitoring Statement and Provisional Outturn'.
- 2.2 Based on the net expenditure incurred by the Force over the eleven month period to 28 February 2001 and projections to the financial year end it was estimated that net expenditure will be £467,000 less than originally budgeted for. It was noted that this underspend had been contributed to by the receipt of 100% grant monies of £612,000 in respect of additional officers and £132,000 in respect of DNA. The additional £612,000 was for police purposes designed to support additional police officers and support staff.
- 2.3 This report also advised members that arrangements were being put in place which will allow Boards to bid for any unused police grant for 2000/2001. The Sub-Committee agreed in principle to the Board making a bid for any unused police grant for 2000/2001 to be matched by the police authorities share of any underspend subject to the total requisition being no greater than that budgeted for in 2000/2001.
- 2.4 In approving Report No. PB 12/2001 the Sub-Committee also noted the intention of the Chief Constable, in consultation with the Treasurer to bring forward a report detailing proposals to utilise the projected working balance of £467,000 to enhance operational efficiency including proposals to employ support staff to release police officers for front line duties.

## 3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 The Scottish Executive have written to forces requesting by 19 May 2001 the following details from forces that wish to carry forward working balances:
- (a) the force's underspend at the end of 2000-2001;
  - (b) how much of that underspend the force wishes to carry forward;
  - (c) the intended purpose or purposes to which any carry forward will be applied; and
  - (d) why that purpose could not be met from existing provision
- 3.2 The Board's Unaudited Abstract of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2001 will not be finalised by this date and are scheduled to be presented to the Board in late June. It should be emphasised that the projected underspend of £467,000 detailed in Report No. PB12/2001 was an estimate only and a firmer figure will not be available until the draft accounts are produced. It follows that any figure provided to the Scottish Executive in mid May will also be an estimate and at that stage for illustrative purposes only.
- 3.3 The Chief Constable has proposed the projected working balance of £467,000 for Tayside Police should be used to enhance operational efficiency. This report provides details of how this can be achieved including proposals to employ support staff to release police officers for front line duties.

#### **4. PROPOSALS**

##### **4.1 Funding for Themed Policing Initiatives**

It is intended to devote an additional 6,500 hours per annum (which equates to an average of 125 hours per week) to fund themed policing initiatives such as the recent operations which concentrated efforts in the areas of drugs (Operation Jaguar) and car crime (Operation Valiant). In addition Operation Combat which is designed to tackle violent crime in Tayside has been ongoing for some time and other initiatives are planned to address housebreaking (Operation Viper). Such operations have been very successful in the past and allow the Force to focus on its operational objectives. Use of experienced operational officers in such circumstances is efficient and effective and enhances the success rate of such operations. Achievement of this by overtime will ensure other priorities in the force do not suffer as a result of carrying out these operations. The estimated cost of allocating 6,500 overtime hours is approximately £100,000.

## 4.2 **Augmenting Secure Radio Communications**

The advent of Airwave will provide the Force with a secure digital radio structure. This is long overdue but the roll-out programme of this project across the UK means that Tayside Police will not benefit from this until 2004/2005. The problem is however more immediate and the increasing incidence of tapping into police radio communications means that operations and officer safety are increasingly compromised. While it would not be practical or economic to resolve this matter entirely the difficulties could be alleviated by investing in a number of new handsets which could provide clear encrypted voice transmission from and to Force Control Room and also through the provision of mobile phones in some beat cars. While some change to existing methods of transmission would be required there is considerable potential to enhance security and safety of officers prior to Airwave coming on-stream in 2004/2005.

Operationally the greatest benefits would be derived from a pilot area covering a whole division and logistically the preferred option would be to carry out the pilot in Central Division which covers the Dundee area. The estimated cost of purchasing 120 encrypted digital hand held radios including accessories and an appropriate number of vehicle kits to enable a pilot to be carried out is £140,000. It is proposed to extend the trial of using mobile phones in beat cars to Western Division which covers Perth and Kinross. The cost of this proposal will not be significant and can be contained within the existing overall revenue budget for 2001/2002.

One feature of Airwave is that it will provide a personal issue handset to each officer rather than the sharing arrangements which exist at present. This will significantly enhance efficiency and officer safety and in order to realise some of these benefits now while at the same time preparing the Force for Airwave it is proposed to move to a personal issue of radios in Eastern Division which covers the Angus area. The cost of this proposal can be contained within the existing overall revenue budget for 2001/2002.

## 4.3 **Multi-Agency Drugs Projects**

The proposals under this heading include funding for an Arrest Referral Scheme and also to roll-out the Angus Tutor Scheme project across Tayside. The latter project which is currently being run in Angus provides a professional input into drugs education and substance abuse within primary and secondary schools and its extension will result in a reduced involvement by a smaller number of officers which will release police officers to return to front line duties. It is proposed to utilise approximately £80,000 to fund such projects.

#### **4.4 Civilianisation of Posts**

It has been identified that civilianisation of the following posts would release police officers for front line duties:

- 2 x Fraud Investigators
- 2 x Driving Instructors
- 3 x Court Team Officers
- 3 x Firearms Enquiry Officers
- 3 x Citation Servers
- 1 x Admin Assistant (Family Protection Unit)

The cost in 2001/2002 of civilianising the above 14 posts is estimated to be £147,000 based on an average cost of £18,000 per annum (including employers costs). Staff would be appointed on a fixed term basis with half employed for approximately 8 months and the remainder for 6 months and it is anticipated they would allow an additional 14 police officers to be released for front line duties for an equivalent period in 2001/2002.

It would be necessary to employ the staff on fixed term contracts as the funding is only available as a consequence of using carry forward working balances. Such an arrangement would allow the Force to gauge their effectiveness and consideration will thereafter be given to formally civilianising these posts which would enable some of the 14 police officers to be retained for operational duties beyond 2001/2002.

### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The proposals detailed in paragraph 4 of this report are estimated to cost £467,000. This cost can be met from the estimated carry forward working balance available to the Force as a consequence of an underspend in 2000/2001.
- 5.2 It should be noted however the projected carry forward balance figure of £467,000 is at this stage an estimate only and a firmer figure will be available in June when the Unaudited Abstract of Accounts for the year end 31 March 2001 are prepared.
- 5.3 In addition there are costs associated with extending the use of mobile phones in beat cars and personal issue of radios in one division. The cost of these proposals are not considerable and can be contained within the existing overall revenue budget.

### **6. CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Treasurer and Clerk to the Board have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 Based on the net expenditure incurred by the Force over the eleven month period to 28 February 2001 and projections to the financial year end it is estimated that net expenditure will be £467,000 less than originally budgeted for. Report No. PB12/2001 which was approved by the Finance Sub-Committee on 28 March 2001 apprised members of this projected outcome. The Sub-Committee agreed in principle to the Board making a bid for any unused police grant for 2000/2001 to be matched by the police authorities share of any underspend subject to the total requisition being no greater than budgeted for in 2000/2001.
- 7.2 This report provides members with details of the Chief Constable's proposals to use this projected carry forward working balance to enhance operational efficiency. The proposals include plans to employ support staff on fixed term contracts to release police officers for front line duties in 2001/2002.
- 7.3 The projected underspend of £467,000 for 2000/2001 is at this stage an estimate only and it will be the end of June before the figure is firmed up. At this stage it may be necessary to amend the proposals in line with the final figure.

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