

Dear

Thank you for your email of 5 June 2013 where you requested information about the loss of the Humberside Police Mounted Unit.

Your request was framed as one under the Freedom of Information Act. However, a lot of the information you requested does not relate to "information held" but is more opinion or projection. In the interests of openness and transparency I will answer your questions and I hope that you will find them sufficient. For ease of reference I will use your questions to structure my response:

- 1. As Humberside will be commissioning mounted officers from other Police Authorities, the operational deployment of mounted officers is unchanged. The decision to axe the Humberside mounted division cannot therefore be operational and it has been stated that it is a cost-cutting exercise. Why is the PCC allowing the former Chief Constable to make decisions on what is clearly a matter for the PCC? Has the PCC reviewed and confirmed the decision of the former Chief Constable to disband the mounted section?***

I set the strategic direction for the Force primarily through setting out my aspirations and priorities in the Police and Crime Plan and allocating funding to the Force. The Chief Constable is responsible for delivering a policing service in line with that direction.

The financial challenge faced by myself and the Force is the same as the whole of the public sector. In response to this period of austerity, I (and formerly the Police Authority) have had to require the Chief Constable to deliver policing with over £30 million less, by April 2016. In response to this the Force have already reviewed over 25 policing functions, with the intention of identifying how best to make these significant savings, whilst at the same time maintaining an efficient and effective police service. Examination of the mounted section was incorporated within one of these reviews.

The findings concluded that the mounted section was not an essential operational capability and that it could be disbanded. This was an operational judgement made by the Chief Constable and he (Tim Hollis) briefed me on the issues he had considered. I supported that decision, as the business case for disbanding the section was clear.

- 2. How much will it cost for the Humberside force to use the mounted units of other forces and how sensitive are the charges to increases in cost of transport and other overheads?***

The police service has a system of providing mutual aid between Forces where a service is provided by one Force to another, on a 'cost per day' basis. The provision of mounted officers is one of those services. The cost of buying in mounted resources on mutual aid is expensive but is cheaper than having a permanent

Mounted Section. Approximate costs for a pre-planned operation are £572.73 for one officer and one horse per day up to £1855.91 for 4 officers and 4 horses per day. These costs relate to provision from within the Yorkshire and Humber region, hiring from outside of the region would incur an additional 5% administration fee. However, there are a whole range of operational tactics that can be used in response to potential public order situations and it may not be necessary at all to use the mounted units of other forces.

**3. *How much is the potential income for a retained Humberside Mounted Unit in supporting other forces?***

This information is not held. In the Yorkshire and the Humber region, both South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire have their own Mounted Sections. Due to its location it is unlikely that a Humberside Mounted Section would be called upon to support adjoining Forces.

**4. *Has a regional strategic review with other forces and PCCs taken place to ensure adequate capacity for provision in times of increased demand and if so, is this documentation in the public domain?***

In terms of regional discussions, an options appraisal for collaboration between the mounted sections in the Yorkshire and Humber region was undertaken. This considered provision on a 4, 3 and 2 force basis. This, however, is not being pursued. Ensuring adequate capacity to meet demand is an operational decision and other tactical options, other than mounted officers, are available to the Chief Constable and it is her decision how they should be deployed.

**5. *Is there a contingency plan in place for those occasions when horses from other units are required but not available, and if so, what is it and what would be the resultant costs?***

As indicated, this is very much a matter for the Chief Constable as her responsibility is to ensure that an adequate capability exists to respond to a wide variety of threats and risks likely to be faced by local people. I am satisfied from the information I have that the Chief Constable has properly considered the available options and the likelihood of a mounted section being an essential requirement for an operation remains very limited.

**6. *What checks and balances are in place to ensure that charges for the hire of horses and officers are not inflated to increase revenue for the host forces?***

As indicated above at 2, a system of mutual aid is in place for all Forces and costs have been calculated according to agreed formulas which already include a premium factor of 25% for scarce resources.

**7. What consideration with regards to animal welfare has been given, in light of the fact that horses being hired by the Humberside force will face considerable extra journey time and additional workload? Has expert opinion from equine veterinarians been sought and taken into account in the decision making process? Is any advice you have received in the public domain and if so, what is it?**

In relation to any deployment the host Force would take the welfare of the horses into account and plan accordingly. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner does not hold any documents containing equine veterinarian advice on this subject.

**8. Have livery yards been contacted to ascertain whether stabling costs could be reduced by benefiting from the economies of scale at establishments such as Bishop Burton College?**

Yes, private stables have been contacted and various options in relation to livery have been considered and discussed.

**9. Has the possibility of a reduction in livery costs been considered, eg. through the use of volunteers and civilian support staff on the existing yard rather than warranted officers being engaged in non-policing activities such as stable management? If so, what is the saving that could be made?**

The Force do not employ police officers to carry out this work. This is conducted by grooms and a civilian trainer. Any financial saving would therefore be minimal.

**10. Are there any contractual (eg. TUPE and constructive dismissal) or other employment legislation matters which will have an effect on budget regarding the redeployment of officers and other staff?**

Police officers are not subject to TUPE, they would be re-deployed elsewhere within the organisation which would enable other officers to leave and for the overall number of officers within the Force to be reduced. The police staff would be placed on the Force's redeployment register.

I hope you find this information helpful. If you think that we have not supplied information in accordance with our Publication Scheme or under general rights of access then you have the right to ask for an internal review. Any request for an internal review should be addressed to:

Kevin Sharp  
Chief Executive  
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside

Pacific Exchange  
40 High Street  
Hull  
HU1 1PS

Telephone: 01482 220787  
Fax: 01482 220794  
E-mail: [pcc@humberside.pnn.police.uk](mailto:pcc@humberside.pnn.police.uk)

We would aim to complete an internal review within 15 working days.

If you are not content with the outcome of an internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Grove  
Police and Crime Commissioner

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