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**N.B. Paper limited to maximum of 3 sides**

**SURREY POLICE**

PAPER For September Management Meeting

**OUT OF COURT DISPOSALS SCRUTINY PANEL**

In July 2012, the White Paper, *“Swift and Sure, The Government’s Plans for Reform of the Criminal Justice System”*, was published which outlined the Government’s support for the approach taken in some areas of having local oversight mechanisms for out of court disposals, particularly the involvement of magistrates in such processes. In June this year (2013) Police and Crime Commissioners were sent a letter from Senior Presiding Judge, The Rt. Hon. Lord Justice Gross, which confirmed support from the senior judiciary for magistrates to participate in local retrospective review of out of court sanctions. The letter, which was also sent to Chief Constables, included a guidance document which had been drawn up for magistrates providing background on the purpose of scrutiny arrangements and the responsibilities of magistrates engaged in them. The guidance places specific emphasis on the need for scrutiny to be retrospective and that it would not involve magistrates endorsing, rescinding, or otherwise changing individual out of court disposals in any way.

A scrutiny (Quality Assurance) panel for Out of Court Disposals in Surrey is in the process of being established with the inaugural meeting scheduled to take place on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013. Chaired by Superintendent Alison Barlow the scrutiny group will be an extension of the panel which has been in place since November 2011 and meets quarterly to consider youth disposals. Rather than create a separate forum to discuss adult disposals it was felt that extending the existing meeting (considering youth matters first and adults thereafter) would build on already established good practice and include many of the original attendees. Membership of the scrutiny panel will include Police (CID, Integrated Offender Management, Custody, Audit and Review, Diversity Directorate), CPS, Youth Service, Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner for Victims, magistrates and a lay member.

Terms of reference for the group are currently being finalised but, as is articulated in the guidance sent to magistrates, the primary focus will be on case review, identifying examples of where out of court disposals have been used appropriately and highlighting a need for learning/improvement where necessary – the group’s purpose is not to reverse decisions already made.

The establishment of this widened scrutiny panel aligns with the Force’s re-launch of Community Resolutions from Effective Resolutions at the end of September which follows a piece of work led by C/Supt Dave Miller focussing on improving the way in which officers and staff use this type of disposal and ensuring that accompanying guidance follows that which is

set nationally. This re-launch supported by a formal oversight mechanism provides a sound opportunity for there to be improved consistency and transparency in the way in which out of court disposals are used in Force.

The work of the panel will be reviewed after six months which will time with the half yearly review planned following the re-launch of Community Resolutions. An update with findings will be provided to a Management Meeting in Spring 2014.