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PCC MANAGEMENT MEETING

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SPECIAL CONSTABULARY UPDATE

Background

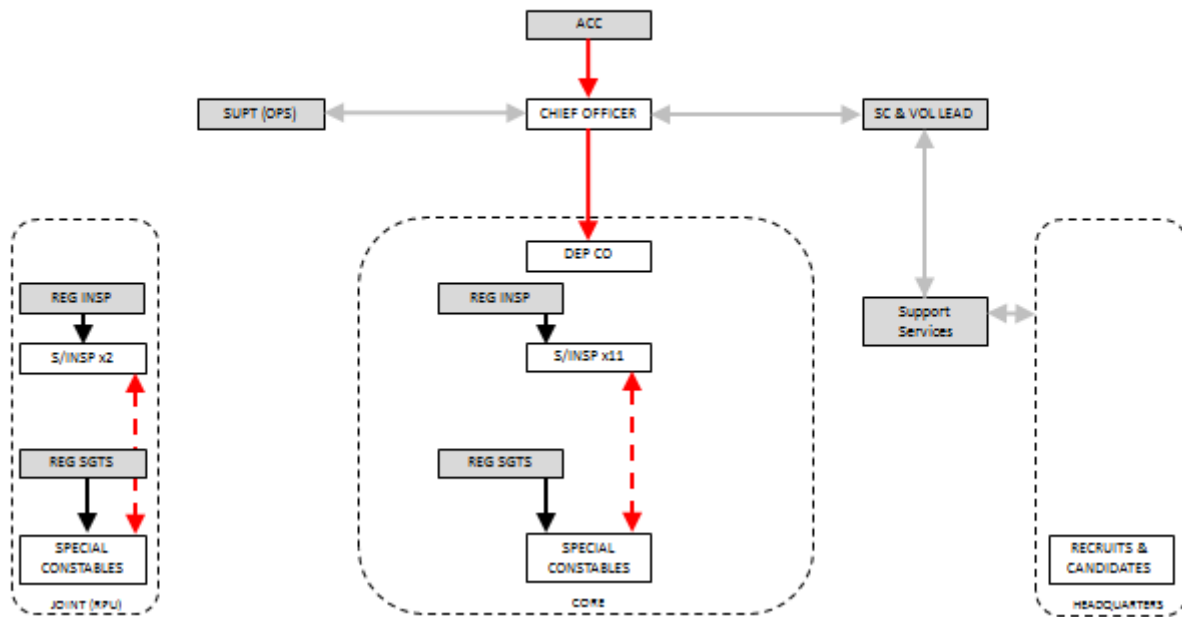
The Special Constabulary play a vital role in delivering the People’s Priorities and Surrey Police’s operational objectives. The number of active Special Constabulary colleagues over the last three years has reduced from approximately 300 to 100. A significant factor in this reduction is a focus on the quality and deployment of those who serve in the Special Constabulary, ensuring a higher proportion of Special Constables ready for independent patrol giving a full commitment to the role. The Force has found that high numbers do not automatically translate into additional operational benefit or a return on the training investment. Nationally the attrition rate is 25%, and whilst Surrey’s attrition rate rose to 32% following a review of Specials in 2012, it quickly fell back in line with the national figures.

However, the Force recognised a risk of higher attrition and a group chaired by ACC Stephens has been leading activity to recruit new Special Constables to meet operational need. This has been done in conjunction with work on developing a new Volunteering Strategy and appointing a new Volunteers Manager, Helen Hartley, who takes up role at the end of November 2015. In addition the portfolio lead for the Special Constabulary has been changed, with Temporary Superintendent Juliet Parker taking the role.

Structure & Integration with Policing in Your Neighbourhood

The diagram overleaf represents the current structure of the Special Constabulary. In order to integrate the Special Constabulary into the new organisational design following the Policing in Your Neighbourhood project it is envisaged that there will be some change in structure. Any changes will be cognisant of the Special Constabulary National Strategy and take full account of the views of the Special Constabulary team. Lessons learned since the review in 2012 will also be incorporated. It is anticipated that the Special Constabulary will re-take control of some line management functions, allowing proper progression and greater supervision. Achieving cohesive working with regular colleagues is a primary objective in the planned changes.

Current Special Constabulary Structure



Recruitment, Training and Development

A new recruitment drive for Special Constables is underway and an open evening was held recently for interested candidates and those in the current recruitment pool. The evening was led by Chief Superintendent Collins and Chief Officer Iredale. This event proved to be immensely positive ensuring that those that apply are the right people who are able to commit to the training and hours required as a Special Constable. These open evenings will be scheduled into the calendar year at regular intervals to ensure that the recruitment drive maintains momentum and is focussed on operational need. They will be co-ordinated with a selection and training calendar to make sure any natural attrition in numbers is met with new recruitment and that numbers on roll are increased to meet the operational requirement of the Force.

In addition to the new recruitment drive the training course delivered to Special Constables is being redesigned. This will make sure that it delivers the essential skills required to be able to perform the role and that the time is maximised for those volunteering their own time. The new approach is intended to improve both retention and operational return. Over the last 2 to 3 years some training courses have not had sufficient numbers to ensure we keep our overall Special Constabulary figures stable. A high attrition rate through training and initial deployment has led to a poor return on investment. The first new-style course will be delivered in January 2016 to 24 new recruits.

In addition to new recruit training there is a planned ongoing and phased training schedule to support continued professional development for Special Constables.

Conclusion and the Future Plans

The number of Special Constables will be increased over the next three years to reach a suitable figure to be able to support frontline policing across the three divisions and other operational

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departments. A target number has not yet been agreed as detailed planning on Policing in Your Neighbourhood is in progress. Recruitment, training and development will be focused on unmet operational need and requirements will be made clear to recruits at the outset to reduce attrition. Improved supervision and continued professional development, alongside better integration with regular colleagues will improve retention.

Whilst the core role of the Special Constabulary is to provide visible uniform support to deliver the People's Priorities, new opportunities for deployment into expanding areas such as cyber-crime, will be explored as part of the wider volunteering strategy.