

Committee(s): Police	Date(s): 27 th April 2012	Item no.
Subject: HMIC Report - 'Without Fear or Favour' Integrity thematic Inspection		Public
Report of: Commissioner of Police POL 25/12		For Information

Summary

As a result of integrity issues, mainly relating to the current and previous phone hacking enquiries, the police service has come under extensive scrutiny. This led to concerns about police integrity and corruption. Consequently, the Home Secretary commissioned HMIC to undertake a national inspection of police integrity. This report, 'Without Fear or Favour' was published on 15th December 2011.

This report to your Committee outlines the recommendations made within the HMIC report and the current position for the City of London Police in managing integrity issues through its Professional Standards Department. There is very little national guidance on the areas scrutinised by HMIC and they are managed by local policy and standard operating procedures (SOPs) detailed in the report covering the main areas of:

- Notifiable associations
- Gifts, Hospitality, Donations and Discounts
- Business Interests
- Unlawful and Inappropriate Disclosure of Information
- Information Security
- Purchase Card Usage
- Media Relations (SOPs currently under review).

The HMIC Report contained a self-assessment checklist against which the Force has assessed its current arrangements. Some areas for improvement have been identified and the Force is addressing these through an action plan.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the report be received and its contents noted.

Main Report

Background

1. In mid 2011 the Home Secretary, the Rt Hon Theresa May MP, wrote to Sir Denis O'Connor, HMIC, stating that the previous day in a statement to Parliament on the phone hacking enquiry a note had been made that this was not the only alleged example of corruption in the police service.
2. An announcement was subsequently made that HMIC had been asked to consider instances of undue influence, inappropriate contractual arrangements and other abuses of power in police relationships with the media and other parties; and make recommendations to the Home Secretary about what needed to be done.
3. The HMIC inspection was carried out across all forces using a variety of methods including interviews with PSD practitioners, focus groups with officers and staff from varying policing fields and examination of existing policies and processes.
4. Subsequently, a nation-wide inspection was carried out by HMIC resulting in the publication of the report 'Without Fear or Favour' released to the public on December 15th 2011.

Current Position

5. The report 'Without Fear or Favour' gave feedback on a national basis without individual forces being identified.
6. Included in this report were four main recommendations with guidelines as to timescales for action to be taken. The recommendations are as follows:
 - **Forces and authorities institute robust systems to ensure risks arising from relationships, information disclosure, gratuities, hospitality, contracting and secondary employment are identified, monitored and managed.** They should ideally do so on the basis of national standards and expectations – there are no geographical variables when it comes to integrity and there should not be local differences in standards. This work on national standards should be encouraged by the Home Office and promoted by leaders in the Service locally.

- **There should be clear boundaries and thresholds in relation to these matters. Such limits should be consistent and Service wide.** This in effect means identifying a clear message for staff on these issues as to what is acceptable, what is unacceptable and what areas of vulnerability to avoid. ACPO should lead this work in partnership with staff associations and those involved in police governance.
- **Training courses should include appropriate input in relation to integrity and anti-corruption. In particular, given the importance of leadership to securing high standards of integrity (a theme which runs through this review), the Strategic Command Course (in January 2012) and the High Potential Development Scheme should encompass these issues.** Chief Constables should review how much effort is being put into briefing their staff on the standards as to what is acceptable, unacceptable and on the areas of potential vulnerability.
- **Chief officer teams should review their corporate governance and oversight arrangements to ensure that those arrangements are fulfilling their function in helping promote the values of their force in the delivery of its objectives, and that they are, through their actions and behaviours, promoting the values of the organisation and making sure good corporate governance is seen as a core part of everyday business.**

Timescales

7. HMIC have stated in the report that it expects the Service to have detailed proposals in the above areas ready for consultation with all relevant parties by April 2012. An assessment relating to these matters should be conducted by HMIC by October 2012 to inform incoming Police and Crime Commissioners and Police and Crime Panels.
8. It was acknowledged that concerns that inappropriate police relationships represented endemic failings in police integrity were not borne out by the evidence examined by HMIC. However, the police service was not given a clean bill of health. Nationally few forces had these issues on their radar and the understanding of boundaries, checking mechanisms, governance and oversight in police relationships with others (including the media) varied hugely across the Service.
9. The report provided a 'Self Check' list of questions for forces to compare with their current arrangements and to provide areas for consideration, improvement and consolidation.

The City of London Police (CoLP) Position:

10. The majority of responsibility for scrutiny of these areas falls within the remit of the Professional Standards Department (PSD).
11. There are currently no national guidelines in relation to the majority of the areas examined by HMIC and so local policies provide the guidance for officers and staff.
12. The CoLP currently has Policies and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) published for the following areas:
 - Notifiable associations
 - Gifts, Hospitality, Donations and Discounts
 - Business Interests
 - Unlawful and Inappropriate Disclosure of Information
 - Information Security
 - Purchase Card Usage
 - Media Relations (SOPs currently under review).
13. These are available for all officers and staff to view on the CoLP Intranet. A brief overview of each of the Policy areas is detailed below for the information of Members.

Notifiable Associations:

14. This currently relies heavily upon self-disclosure to PSD by staff when they become aware of what may be a 'notifiable association'. There is no definitive list of associations that are notifiable, this is decided by an objective test. This test is whether a reasonable person would perceive that the association could compromise:
 - Their integrity;
 - The integrity of others;
 - Their impartiality;
 - The criminal justice system;
 - The reputation of the CoLP;
 - The reputation of the wider Police Service.

15. A notifiable association would include a member of the media where there was an ongoing relationship of any nature with a member of CoLP staff.
16. Media contacts are dealt with under the Media Relations Policy and overseen by the Corporate Communications Office. These are subject to disclosure as media engagement and are subject of scrutiny by PSD and ACPO.

Gifts, Hospitality, Donations and Discounts:

17. This SOP provides guidance on giving and receiving of gifts, hospitality, donations and discounts to officers and staff. It is not intended that this SOP be prescriptive but should be used together with common sense and sound professional judgement by the individual and their relevant line manager.

Gifts:

18. CoLP staff may provide and accept gifts in order to:
 - Recognise appreciation of visitors to the force
 - Reflect customary exchanges between professional organisations
 - Recognise support and contribution to the policing effort of the force

Hospitality:

19. CoLP staff may receive official hospitality providing it meets one of the following requirements:
 - Hospitality involved when staff attend seminars, presentations and other functions in their professional capacity, or
 - In developing professional relationships with private/public organisations to gain support for, or further the development of, police related activity.
 - Accepting recognition of achievement in police related matters. Normally these will include:

- Invitations from commercial organisations to attend public, trade, professional or business events including opening ceremonies, trade shows, celebrations etc.
- Invitations to social or award events in recognition of support, advice or guidance provided.

Discounts and Benefits:

20. The SOP states -

‘No staff will seek to obtain, negotiate or accept any individual or team discounts or benefits by virtue of their employment (temporary or otherwise) with the City of London Police. If such benefit or discount is offered to an individual or team it should be referred to the Human Resources Directorate or Federation for further advice.’

Donations:

21. The SOP states -

‘Staff must not accept money in the course of their duties under any circumstances except as donations, or as part of their responsibilities of their role. Where an offer of cash is made it will be politely declined. Any offer of money or presents in kind made to an officer or staff for services rendered in the ordinary course of duty will be politely declined.’

22. All instances of offers of gifts and/or hospitality must be recorded on the Hospitality Register which is readily available to all staff on the CoLP Intranet. These entries require an electronic authorization by the appropriate Directorate Head. This Register is subject to monthly scrutiny by PSD and referral to the PSD ACPO Lead.

23. The Hospitality Register is open to public scrutiny as it is readily available on the CoLP external web-site.

Business Interests (Secondary Employment):

24. This policy is overseen by the Human Resources Directorate (HR). All applications for a Business Interest are screened by the PSD and a full risk assessment carried out. This will include the financial impact on the applicant as well as any extended hours work, the nature of the occupation and the public perception of an employment sought.

25. All applications are subject to an annual review by HR and PSD. There are currently approximately 200 Business Interests declared by CoLP staff.

Unlawful Disclosure of Information:

26. There are a number of risks associated with unlawful and inappropriate Disclosure of Information. These include:

- endangering lives
- facilitating the commission of crime
- undermining the course of justice by disrupting operations and undermining legal process
- causing financial loss
- invading privacy,
- damaging the integrity and reputation of the City of London Police, its employees and the wider Police Service and ultimately destroying public confidence in the Police Service.

27. Such disclosures are therefore regarded as a serious matter and subject of primary legislation.

28. The aim of this SOP is to prevent corruption and the opportunity to engage in corruption or alleged corruption. It highlights threats and vulnerabilities resulting from the Unlawful or Inappropriate Disclosure of Information by staff of City of London Police and how they can conflict with our values of Integrity, Professionalism, Fairness and Respect and ultimately undermine public confidence in the Police Service.

Information Security:

29. This SOP is overseen by the Information Management section of PSD and deals with the security of IT systems and their potential misuse and abuse.

Other Areas of Potential Corruption:

30. The Head of PSD has monthly meetings with the ACPO Lead, currently the Assistant Commissioner, at which the following are examined and discussed:

- Use of Corporate Credit cards

- Use of CoLP provided mobile phones
 - Overtime
 - Expenses
 - Business Interests
 - Computer misuse
 - Media engagement
 - Hospitality
31. This meeting is held following examination and scrutiny of the data relating to the above, by the Counter Corruption Unit of the PSD, which looks at the highest and most frequent users and any identified anomalies. Any issues are referred back to PSD or the relevant Directorate Commander for the appropriate action.

Training:

32. An input is provided by a senior member of PSD to the following training courses:
- New recruits
 - Officers either promoted, given Temporary or Acting Rank
 - Custody Sergeants and Gaolers
33. This input is aimed at providing an experiential practical approach using historical events, including those from the Organisational Learning Forum, and examples to provoke thought, discussion and promote understanding. The precise content for each group is tailored to their situation, although clearly there are some common themes, which could be regarded as 'golden threads' that will run through any content.
34. The training specifically includes elements on integrity, professionalism, associations and the expected standards of behaviour.
35. Six monthly broadcasts are made over the Intranet and via Police Orders by PSD on a number of these issues and a recent campaign and 'amnesty' on undeclared Business Interests has given a much clearer view on the extent of this practice.
36. The Strategic Command Course and the High Potential Development Scheme are national programmes and as such the content is outside the control of the CoLP.

Recommended Self-Check List:

37. The PSD has co-ordinated an assessment based on the self check list and areas for improvement have been identified. Work is being undertaken by various departments to make improvements. An initial assessment was carried out on receipt of the report from HMIC.
38. Following this assessment an action plan was drawn up for all those areas identified as being either 'amber' meaning there were some systems in place but more work was required, or 'red' where it was considered that the CoLP had no systems in place to offset or manage the risk. Any area considered 'green' on the initial assessment was deemed to be satisfactory at that time.
39. In summary the main areas for improvement are:
 - To ensure that existing policies and SOPs are reviewed and cross-referenced with HMIC findings and recommendations.
 - Identify and address media training at all appropriate levels within the organisation.
 - Review process for capturing all media engagements adequately.
 - Improve process for monitoring secondary employment of officers and staff.

Conclusion:

40. The 'self check' list has provided an opportunity to review all current practices and to establish how robust current monitoring systems are. It is fully appreciated that with the impending budgetary cutbacks smarter solutions will need to be found to ensure the integrity of the CoLP not only in reality but also in the eyes of the community.
41. The report highlights that there is no national guidance on many of these issues and that this should be forthcoming in the first half of 2012. It is believed current practices, together with enhanced oversight by PSD and ACPO will provide sufficient resilience to consolidate the high standards expected and demanded by the COLP but that these can only be strengthened once the national guidance is forthcoming.
42. HMIC is due to re-inspect forces in the Autumn this year and a further update on progress will be brought to your Committee after the re-inspection has taken place.

Contact:

CI Norma Collicott

Professional Standards Department

020 7601 2203 norma.collicott@cityoflondon.police.uk