

## Training should not include 'bowling'

Officers in Hampshire say that they will lose ten rest days to allow for training days which could include 'bowling and paintballing'.

Changes to the shift system in Hampshire Constabulary, due to come into effect in February next year, have meant shorter shifts and less rest days to allow for training days and to make sure enough police officers are on duty during peak times when they are in demand by the public.

But officers at the Hampshire Police Federation open meeting last month questioned why suggestions for some of the training days on a local level included bowling and paintballing as 'team building' exercises.

Sgt Wendie Douglas, based at Portsmouth and a sergeants' federation representative, said this element of training was seen as a waste of time.

But Stephanie Morgan, temporary assistant chief constable of the force, said she had met with training managers who had suggested bowling and paintballing and made clear that was an 'unacceptable' way to spend the training days.

Alex Marshall, chief constable of the force, told the meeting that officers in Hampshire had 140 rest days, around ten to 20 more rest days than many neighbouring forces, and that there needed to be balance. But he added that bowling was not a good use of police officer time.

But the shifts changes have effectively meant officers losing rest days and although some of the days are being used for officer safety training and first aid courses, operational command units have to organise some training days locally.

Geoff Crowe, chairman of Hampshire Police Federation, said that OCUs ended up having to 'invent' training when officers would prefer more rest days.

The shift system has also meant overlaps built into shifts where officers would finish their paperwork have been scrapped so they have to come back into the office during time they would normally be patrolling.

## Budget shortfall of £4million prompts cutbacks

Hampshire officers called for 'someone to fall on their sword' over a £4million budget deficit which could mean staff cutbacks.

Nick Ellcome, a motorcycle traffic officer in the force, spoke out at the Hampshire Police Federation open meeting last month asking when someone would be held accountable for the massive gap in funding which had already resulted in a freeze on police officer recruitment.

Alex Marshall, chief constable of Hampshire Constabulary, said he was not prepared to roll someone out as a 'sacrificial lamb' as there was no one individual to blame.

But he said that they may have to stop certain jobs being carried out at headquarters and the force is planning to ensure all police officers are on frontline duties rather than desk bound or carrying out jobs that can be done by police staff.

Budgets were also devolved to operational command units and Mr Marshall said thousands of cheques had been signed by different people, not one individual, and he did not believe that they had spent money 'recklessly'.

Mr Marshall told the meeting of more than 200 officers that financial management will be included in professional development reviews for managers.

"Financial management is a really serious issue for the organisation and senior officers should be made accountable."

He added that the budget shortfall had been compounded by the soaring prices of fuel and other costs.

Mr Marshall said that although he would not dwell on past mistakes in finances, lessons would be learned.

Bowling: Not seen as an appropriate activity for police 'training'



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Budgets: Hampshire Constabulary has a £4million hole in funding



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