

Reshaping the Partnership Landscape

Briefing Note 3 Update – March 2011



Update on the Coalition Government's plans for policing and community safety

Briefing Note 3 in this series set out the background to Coalition plans on policing and community safety, as set out in the Home Office consultation paper - *Policing in the 21st Century*.¹

Following this consultation the Government is implementing its plans through legislation.

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill

The Bill was introduced into Parliament in November 2010. A copy of the Bill can be accessed from the Parliamentary website, along with Explanatory Notes at:

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/policereformandsocialresponsibility.html>

The parts of the Bill on policing relate almost entirely to enacting the Coalition commitment to **replace the Police Authorities in England and Wales with directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs)**.

The Bill also proposes the establishment of Police and Crime Panels at force level, made up of a minimum of 10 councillors. *'The role of the Police and Crime Panel will be to advise and scrutinise the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner.'* These Panels will have powers to veto a Commissioner's proposed budget (by a three quarter majority), and to veto proposed candidates for the post of Chief Constable.

For London, this proposed model has been adapted so that the Mayor takes on the role of PCC, and the Panel becomes part of the London Assembly.

Prior to the Bill, the LG Group argued that directly elected PCCs are not the best answer to an acknowledged need for stronger local accountability for policing.² Instead, the Group proposed an alternative solution, involving closer integration of policing and local authorities.³

More detailed evidence on several aspects of the Bill has since been submitted by the LG Group at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmpublic/policereform/memo/pr60.htm>

¹ See: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/consultations/policing-21st-century/>

² See: <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelid=15336145>

³ See: <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/aio/12504618>

Public Bill Committee Stage and next steps

The Public Bill Committee took oral and written evidence at its initial series of meetings in December 2010. It subsequently debated individual clauses in the Bill, concluding this stage in February 2010.

An updated version of the Bill showing the amendments made in committee is at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-public-bill-office/2010-11/compared-bills/Police-Reform-bill-110221.pdf>

Although, overall the proposals on directly elected commissioners were contested in the Public Bill stage of Parliamentary debate, **the focus now is starting to shift towards how the new arrangements will work out in practice.**

For those involved in Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), the future relationship between their partnership and the PCC will be crucial.

LG Improvement and Development's Safer Communities team are working with clusters of CSPs to help prepare for the transition to PCCs. For instance Devon, Cornwall, Plymouth and Torbay have established a working group to develop a comprehensive package of work and structures (including funding mechanisms) which they intend to present to their freshly elected PCC in May next year.

Among other things they are looking at peninsula-wide service delivery options for:

- Domestic Violence
- Integrated Offender Management
- Drug and Alcohol Intervention
- Community Engagement
- Licensing

They are also looking at developing a Single Commissioning Framework.

If you would like further information on how the Safer Communities team can help you to prepare for the transition to PCCs please contact **Chris Williams:** christopher.williams@npia.pnn.police.uk

Other resources:

The **Safer Communities Community of Practice** will be providing updated information as the role of PCCs takes shape.

There is already a useful slide-set on the likely relationship between PCCs and CSPs, (assuming the Bill is enacted without major changes), posted on the Community of Practice on the 8th March, at:

<http://www.communities.idea.gov.uk/c/1315521/home.do>