

Report to Safer Cleaner Greener Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting: 7th April 2011

Subject: Police and Crime Commissioners

Officer contact for further information: C Wiggins

Committee Secretary: A Hendry



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) To note the report; and**
- (2) Make any appropriate recommendations to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.**

Report:

Introduction

1. This report is an account of the National Community Safety Network (NCSN) and Home Office Consultation Event held in Leeds on 3rd March 2011, 'Community Safety Priorities & the New World Through Consultation'. It covers the latest information on the changes currently taking place within community safety.

KEY EVENT POINTS

2. From May 2012, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) will be elected in all force areas other than the Metropolitan Police and the City of London, and that they will have the power to appoint, suspend or dismiss the Chief Constable. They will issue the Police and Crime Plan, setting out police and crime reduction objectives, set the force budget, issue precept and produce an Annual Report on progress against police and crime objectives.

3. The office of the PCC will have its own legal personality, distinct from that of the person holding it, and it is in this separate capacity that the PCC will own property, employ staff, make contracts and take part in legal proceedings. The assets of a police force will be owned by the PCC in the same way that they are currently owned by the police authority.

4. Each PCC will be assisted by a support team comprising of at least 2 staff paid for by public funds.

5. Elections will be held in 2012 and in each subsequent 4 years. Elections will be administered in the same way as local elections.

6. The PCC will appoint a Police and Crime Panel, each local authority in the Police area will be represented on the Panel. It is likely that that this member will be the portfolio holder for Safer Communities or equivalent, and should provide a clear line of communication to the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

7. In a force area with more than one local authority, there will be a joint committee including Southend and Thurrock Unitary councils. It will consist of at least 10 members appointed from the local authorities in the police areas, and 2 co-opted members appointed by the panel itself.

8. The Panel will make its own rules of procedure, including making provision for there to be a chair of the panel. However, certain functions may only be exercised at a meeting of the panel as a whole, and not by a sub committee of the panel.

9. The Panel will have vital role in scrutinising the decisions made by the PCC and can use the power of veto over the appointment, suspension or dismissal of a Chief Constable and the policing budget. The Panel will also ensure that the PCC's Annual Report, Policing Plan, and any HMIC reports are shared with local authorities within the force area.

10. The PCC is not an alternative to the current statutory arrangements for Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs). CSPs will still need to continue to carry out a strategic assessment and produce a partnership plan and local authority crime and disorder scrutiny committees will continue to scrutinise the functioning of their local CSP. PCCs will be Responsible Authorities under S5 of the Crime and Disorder Act but only to work with the wider CJS – not to be a statutory partner on a CSP.

11. Although the PCC will not be a responsible authority on CSPs, they will have the following powers and duties relating to community safety:

- They will be able to bring together representatives from one or more CSPs at a force level, as well as have a power to require a report from a CSP where concerns arise.
- To support the PCC and local partners in tackling such issues, the PCC will be able to commission services from CSPs and other local providers.
- The PCC will be given control of the funding which previously was directed to CSPs.

12. PCCs will be able to compel CSPs to produce a strategy if they are not already doing so, and will be able to approve proposed mergers of CSPs, although they cannot force mergers through, all responsible authorities in each area to be merged would have to agree formally that this would be the best future outcome.

CONCLUSION

13. This report to go to Overview and Scrutiny Committee for members to consider with this Panel's recommendations.

14. The Funding to CSPs in 2011-12 is to be significantly reduced current estimates are around 70% and Essex County Council are proposing that the Community Safety Fund available for 2012-13 will be held as a strategic pot for cross county work. The CSP will have to consider how the Partnership will function in view of these changes.