

Agenda Item 7

Update on Police and Crime Commissioners and Police and Crime Panels

Introduction

Panel Members will remember that the public of Cumbria will be voting for their first Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in November 2012. They will replace the Police Authority and have the following key roles:

- Secure the maintenance of an efficient and effective the police force for that area;
- Issue a police and crime plan for a 5-year period and have regard to it in exercising their functions;
- Have regard to the Strategic Policing Requirement, which sets out threats and issues of national significance;
- Set the precept for policing;
- Issue an annual report on the exercise of the local policing body's functions and the progress which has been made in meeting the objectives in the police and crime plan;
- Hold the chief constable to account, in particular for delivering the police and crime plan, arrangements for collaboration, having regard to the Strategic Policing Requirement, engaging with local people, delivering value for money, exercising duties in relation to equality and diversity and the safeguarding of children;
- Appoint and, if required, dismiss the Chief Constable;
- Obtain the views of the public and victims of crime;
- Make crime and disorder reduction grants to any person as they feel appropriate;
- Publish information specified by the Home Secretary and on their own and the police force's performance;
- Adhere to a financial code of practice set by the Secretary of State.

The Commissioner will be scrutinised by a Police and Crime Panel, whose role includes:

- Having the power to request information which it considers relevant, except that which would jeopardise national security, an individual's safety, a prosecution or is otherwise prohibited from release under any enactment;
- Reviewing the draft police and crime plan and making comments, to which the PCC must respond and publish a response;
- Considering the PCC's annual report and making comments, to which the PCC must respond and publish a response;
- Vetoing the PCC's proposed precept (subject to regulations yet to be issued);
- Vetoing the PCC's proposed appointment for Chief Constable (subject to regulations yet to be issued);
- Holding a confirmation hearing in relation to a proposed appointment by a PCC of a Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, a Chief Executive or a Chief Finance Officer. The PCC does not have to act on these recommendations.

Update

Preparations for the incoming PCC are underway and being overseen by the Police Authority's Transition Board, which includes representatives of the County and district councils.

The Home Office ran a series of workshops for partners, including councils, to share information on how partners will need to work with PCCs. They produced a guidance document which can be viewed at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/police/pcc/what-partners-need-to-know?view=Binary>

Work is underway in Cumbria to establish the Police and Crime Panel through a working group made up of officers representing the County Council, the district councils and the Police Authority. This piece of work is being overseen by the Cumbria Leadership Board and the Leaders and Chief Executives of the councils met on 29th February to discuss the hosting and membership of the panel.

One area which the working group will need to consider is the links between the work of the Police and Crime Panel, which will be solely responsible for scrutinizing the Commissioner, and that of the council scrutiny panels which scrutinise work on community safety by their own organizations and wider partners through the CSPs. The diagram below attempts to illustrate the possible relationships. Recent Local Government Association guidance on PCCs commented:

'Crime and disorder overview and scrutiny committees will need to consider how local-level issues uncovered in their own work (but which relate to the PCC and decisions they may have made) are passed on to the police and crime panel. In drawing up their work programmes it seems sensible for the work programme of the police and crime panel to be taken into account to avoid duplication and maximise use of scrutiny resources. These issues will be explored in more detail in a forthcoming LGA guide.'

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Police and Crime Commissioners - Community Safety

