

15 January 2018

## **Developing the LGA's position on community engagement and neighbourhood policing**

### **Purpose of report**

For discussion and direction.

### **Summary**

Following concerns expressed by Board members about a decline in neighbourhood policing and the police's ability to engage with the communities they serve, members agreed at the September Board meeting that it would be useful for officers to undertake a piece of work on this issue.

The College of Policing has also launched a consultation on its new guidelines for modernising neighbouring policing, in response to recommendations made by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services Police Effectiveness Efficiency and Legitimacy reports in 2015 and 2016. This paper seeks members views on the new guidelines and "in practice" implementation materials. This paper also suggests next steps for developing the LGA's policy position on this issue.

### **Recommendation**

Safer and Stronger Communities Board members are asked to provide their views on the College of Policing consultation on the modernising neighbourhood policing guidelines and implementation materials. We also seek members' view on future work proposals on neighbourhood policing.

### **Action**

Officers to respond to the consultation on neighbourhood policing, on behalf of board members. Officers will progress with the work on neighbourhood policing as directed.

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## **Background**

1. Following concerns expressed by Board members during 2017 about a decline in neighbourhood policing and the police's ability to engage with the communities they serve, members agreed at the September Board meeting that it would be useful for officers to undertake a piece of work on this issue.
2. The Board's work programme for 2017/18 therefore includes a commitment to develop a piece of work to explore the concerns raised by members of the Board about neighbourhood policing and engagement; and additional capacity in the team means we are now in a position to take this forward.
3. The College of Policing has also launched a consultation on its new guidelines for modernising neighbouring policing, in response to recommendations made by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) annual inspections of police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) in 2015 and 2016.

## **Advantages of community engagement and neighbourhood policing**

4. Local government has much to gain from community engagement and citizen participation. With 69 per cent of citizens thinking it is important to feel they can influence decisions in their local area, it is important the residents feel empowered and consulted on decisions being taken in their local communities. This can help to ensure public services are shaped by citizens, which can lead to improved service design and outcomes.
5. Effective community engagement can also help to bring disengaged citizens back into the democratic process. Local areas with a strong track record of community engagement can help to build trust and credibility between residents and local government.
6. Successful community engagement requires the commitment of capacity and resources. This is at a time when local government continues to face a period of financial challenge. However, the benefits of engaging citizens effectively has the potential to balance out some of these costs.
7. It is important for councils to strike the right balance engaging with local communities to ensure all residents feel their voices are being heard. For example, digital engagement can provide a space in which people from a range of backgrounds and areas can participate in online discussion or access services quickly and efficiently. However, it can also exclude some people who do not have the equipment or knowledge to access it easily.

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8. Neighbourhood policing is an important aspect of community engagement. Public sentiment around police visibility can be strong and have a significant bearing on broader attitudes to policing and local safety. This is particularly important in addressing crime as British policing since its inception in the nineteenth century has been built around the concept of policing by consent. Without the active support of the communities they serve the police's ability to tackle crime would be significantly affected. Neighbourhood policing has a significant role in this agenda as it can make the police more visible, help to reduce fear of crime in the local community and improve public confidence in reporting crimes, provide intelligence and aid community engagement between the public and the police.
9. Neighbourhood teams are best placed to understand their local areas as they could use their local knowledge to gain intelligence and updates from the public. They have been particularly valuable in helping counter-terrorism teams, through their leadership on preventative work in local communities.

#### **Existing evidence on neighbourhood policing**

10. There is strong evidence that suggests residents feel that neighbourhood policing is in decline. In December 2017, HMICFRS [published the findings from an Ipsos Mori survey](#) on public views of policing in England and Wales 2017/18. Of the 12,662 people surveyed, 83 per cent of respondents felt that it was important to have a regular, uniformed police presence in the local area. However, just 17 per cent of respondents felt that there was a regular police presence in their local area. An increasing proportion of respondents said they had not seen a uniformed police presence on foot in their local area in the past year (44 per cent compared with 41 per cent in 2016 and 36 per cent in 2015).
11. Prior to this, HMICFRS [published](#) its 2016 annual inspection of police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL), to assess how effective police forces are at keeping people safe and reducing crime. The inspection warned of insufficient or eroding capability in areas such as neighbourhood policing. HMICFRS suggested the police service is no longer consistently implementing elements of neighbourhood policing known to be effective in preventing and tackling traditional crime, and has not yet applied these to 21<sup>st</sup> century threats, such as online crime and hidden and complex crimes.
12. The report followed an earlier 2015 HMICFRS warning that neighbourhood policing was being eroded, concluding that "this is likely to negatively affect forces' ability to undertake the vital proactive and preventative aspects of fighting crime." The inspection found that for prevention and neighbourhood policing, HMIC judged two forces to be 'outstanding', 30 to be 'good', 10 to 'require improvement' and one force to be 'inadequate', representing a decline of 11 forces and an improvement of three forces since the 2015 inspection.

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13. HMICFRS [recommended](#) that new national guidance was designed with the aim of preserving neighbourhood policing as the cornerstone of the policing model in England and Wales, and that all forces should then ensure that the service they provide meets that guidance. It recommended the College of Policing, working with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), review the existing evidence about what makes effective neighbourhood policing, and develop and issue guidance setting out the essential elements of neighbourhood policing which all forces should provide.
14. The APCC [responded](#) to the HMICFRS report in March 2017, welcoming the focus the report placed on neighbourhood policing, which the APCC said is of key concern to all Police and Crime Commissioners. The APCC recognised the importance of visible local policing which it said helped to generate trust and confidence in the local community and helped to address crime and anti-social behaviour; it argued that the importance of neighbourhood policing is evidenced by it being one of the key components for the Policing Vision 2025. The APCC said neighbourhood policing also featured in the work of the Police Reform and Transformation Board and they would continue to work alongside the NPCC and the College of Policing on this issue.

#### **Consultation on modernising neighbourhood policing**

15. In response to the HMICFRS [recommendations](#) from its 2016 annual inspection of police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL), the College of Policing has developed some guidelines for modernising neighbourhood policing. As part of the process, they have launched a consultation seeking views on the guidelines and the accompanying "in practice" implemental materials. They are interested in receiving the views of the LGA on this. The consultation closes on 2 February 2018.
16. The College of Policing explains that previous guidelines have been based upon the National Reassurance and National Neighbourhood Policing programmes and supported by substantial investment in dedicated neighbourhood resources. The focus was on establishing public priorities to reduce crime and the fear of crime and improve public confidence in the police, recognising the importance of this for maintaining police legitimacy.
17. The College of Policing has explained the context for neighbourhood policing now is different. It suggests that demand on policing services continues to escalate at a time of decreasing resources, particularly those dedicated to local roles, strengthening the need to find sustainable system-wide solutions across public services. Increased reporting of crime committed in private spaces, often against the most vulnerable in our communities, coupled with new and emerging threats means that the day-to-day activities of neighbourhood policing teams have changed dramatically. At the same time, they are using new technologies to engage communities and solve crime and strengthen partnerships, for example, around mental health and social care.

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18. The guidelines focus on activities and processes most likely to be effective at improving community safety, reducing crime, disorder and harm and improving public perceptions. The guidelines cover the following areas:

- 18.1. Fostering the right culture
- 18.2. Engaging communities
- 18.3. Building analytical capability
- 18.4. Solving problems
- 18.5. Targeting activity
- 18.6. Developing offers and staff

19. We are seeking member's views on the College of Policing consultation on the modernising neighbourhood policing guidelines and "in practice" implementation documents, both of which are attached in **Annex A**.

20. Questions on the modernising neighbourhood policing guidelines it would be helpful to have members' views on include:

- 20.1. Is the guidance easy to follow and understand?
- 20.2. Does the modern definition of neighbourhood policing reflect your understanding of neighbourhood policing, and does it provide clarity?
- 20.3. Do you think the guidelines, if implemented, will help forces deliver effective neighbourhood policing?
- 20.4. What impact do you think the guidelines, if implemented, will have?

21. Questions on the "in practice" implementation material it would be helpful to have members' views on include:

- 21.1. How useful do you think the 'in practice' and implementation materials are?
- 21.2. What more could be done to make the guidance relevant for frontline practitioners?
- 21.3. Are there any additional issues the guidance should address?

### **Gathering information on issues related to neighbourhood policing**

22. In order to inform the LGA's work around community engagement and neighbourhood policing, and as a means of identifying any other issues that councils are experiencing in

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their local areas around neighbourhood policing, members may wish us to conduct a survey of councils to ascertain their views on this issue. These findings could then help to inform further work the LGA may wish to take forward on neighbourhood policing with the APCC, the College of Policing and other partners.

### **LGA work on community engagement in policing and neighbourhood policing**

23. Subject to the views of board members, officers will draft a response to the College of Policing consultation on the modernising neighbourhood policing guidelines and implementation materials, and then seek Lead Members' approval of the draft response before it is submitted.
24. Following the consultation, it is expected the LGA will wish to engage with the College of Policing to help circulate the new guidelines and offer examples of best practice in local government.
25. There is also scope for the LGA to survey councils in order to understand levels of neighbourhood policing teams and local community engagement, and the impact of any changes in these areas.
26. Following a review of the available evidence and views of councils, it is expected that the LGA will wish to engage with the APCC, the College of Policing and potentially others to discuss specific concerns about these issues.

### **Next steps**

27. Members are asked determine which, or if any, of these points should be taken forward.
28. Officers will take forward any additional work agreed regarding neighbourhood policing, as directed.

### **Financial Implications**

29. All work can be carried out using existing LGA resources.