

## **Police and Crime Commissioners**

### **Purpose of report**

For noting and discussion.

### **Summary**

Members will hear from Deputy Chief Constable Robert Beckley of Avon and Somerset Police, Jane Kennedy ex Labour MP seeking to stand as the Police and Crime Commissioner in Merseyside, and Cllr Peter Jones Leader of East Sussex County Council who is seeking to stand as the Police and Crime Commissioner for Sussex.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to note the different perspectives provided by the presentations on the role of Police and Crime Commissioner, and raise any issues on the implications for local government.

### **Action**

As directed by the Forum.

**Contact officer:** Helen Murray  
**Position:** Head of Programmes  
**Phone no:** 020 7664 3266  
**E-mail:** [helen.murray@local.gov.uk](mailto:helen.murray@local.gov.uk)

## **Police and Crime Commissioners**

### **Background**

1. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act became law in September 2011, and as a result Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) will be elected on 15 November for 41 police force areas in England and Wales. London already has a PCC as the Mayor of London became the PCC for the Metropolitan Police on 16 January, through the Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime.
2. The PCC's main responsibilities will be to:
  - 2.1 secure an efficient and effective police force for their area
  - 2.2 appoint the chief constable, hold them to account and if necessary dismiss them
  - 2.3 set local policing and crime objectives through their five year Police and Crime Plan
  - 2.4 set the annual force budget and the police precept
  - 2.5 contribute to the national and international policing capabilities set out by the Home Secretary in the Strategic Policing Requirement
  - 2.6 co-operate with the criminal justice system, and
  - 2.7 work with partners to tackle crime and disorder.
3. While the PCC sets local objectives for their force and holds the police to account, the Policing Protocol published in November makes it clear that operational responsibility for the day-to-day work of the police remains with the chief constable.

### **A changing police relationship with councils**

4. Directed elected PCCs are one of the Government's flagship policies at the heart of the wider public sector reform agenda. Accountabilities and interdependencies with other emerging policies such as elected mayors in the major cities (also to be elected on 15 November), the transfer of responsibility for public health to councils and the creation of Health and Wellbeing Boards, still need to be worked through in order to avoid confusion at local level.
5. The role of PCCs will be a high profile one. Evidence shows that the most successful approach to cutting crime is multi-agency working. We can therefore expect working with local government to be an important part of a PCC's strategy, particularly in terms of preventing crime, enforcement and reducing re-

**Item 1**

offending. To reinforce the importance of that relationship there is statutory duty for PCCs and Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to co-operate.

6. Further change will come from the commissioning role PCCs will have. The PCC's budget will include funding previously given to CSPs through the Community Safety Fund as well as the Neighbourhood Policing funding. It is likely to include some of the Drug Intervention Programme funding, and an element of Youth Offending Teams' budgets. In Wales however, the Welsh Assembly Government plans to continue to provide Welsh CSPs with funding and this will not go to PCCs.
7. Councils will be responsible for scrutinising and supporting the PCC in their role through Police and Crime Panels. The Panel's key powers will be to require the Commissioner or a member of their staff to attend the Panel; veto the PCC's proposed precept; veto the PCC's proposed appointment of a chief constable; question the PCC on their annual report; and review the draft Police and Crime Plan. Panels in England will be set by councils, but in Wales they will be set up by the Home Office, while in London the Panel is a committee of the Greater London Assembly.

**Support for councils on the transition to PCCs**

8. The LGA has been raising awareness amongst councils of the implications of the elections of PCCs through a series of national and local events since last summer. We are now starting delivery of a comprehensive programme of support for councils in preparing for the elections of PCCs. This will include:
  - 8.1 continued awareness raising presentations at national and regional events
  - 8.2 specialist advice on those parts of the legislation relating to Police and Crime Panels and CSPs
  - 8.3 a growing range of publications building on the guide to PCCs for councils, guidance on setting up Panels, and guide for CSPs on preparing for PCCs that have already been published
  - 8.4 additional materials which will cover Panel arrangements and political proportionality on Panels, rules of procedure and terms of reference for Panels, and the relationship between Panels and overview and scrutiny crime and disorder committees
  - 8.5 support for CSPs to help them prepare for the new commissioning landscape
  - 8.6 access to peer support and peer mentoring on establishing Panels;
  - 8.7 a network for those involved in setting up Panels, supported by a community of practice on the LGA's Knowledge Hub for sharing ideas, information and experience, and
  - 8.8 the development of training and leadership packages for members and staff involved with Police and Crime Panels.

### **Who will be standing as PCCs?**

9. Members will be aware that the national political parties are putting in place arrangements to select candidates to stand as prospective PCCs. As a result an increasing number of people are expressing an interest in standing including Alun Michael MP, Lord Prescott and Colonel Tim Collins. The Government is keen that figures independent of party politics stand as well. A number of locally known independents have said they are considering standing, but those celebrities such as Nick Ross, who have been named as potential independent candidates, have so far ruled themselves out. It seems therefore that a number of PCCs will either be sitting or councillors or have strong links to local government.

### **A national body for PCCs**

10. It is likely that many PCCs will have made public commitments to tackle crime issues that the police are unable to deal with on their own. Indeed, a recent survey commissioned by the LGA showed that the public's top priority for any incoming PCC is anti-social behaviour. The crime element of a Commissioner's title is as likely to be as important as the policing element in ensuring they have a successful term of office.
11. Building relations with councils and other partners will therefore be important if Commissioners are to reduce crime and disorder. Establishing successful relationships as structures change and budgets reduce further will be a challenging task. We believe that job would be facilitated by strong links at a national level between PCCs and leaders of councils and other key organisations they have to work with. Bringing together the membership body for PCCs with the LGA would help ease the transition to the new arrangements while ensuring collectively the focus remains on driving down crime.
12. The LGA has therefore developed a business case and compelling membership offer for PCCs and will be enthusiastically promoting this over the coming months.