

Digest of Meeting

Title:	Councillors' Forum
Date and time:	21 November 2013, 12.30pm
Venue:	The Westminster Suite, Local Government House, Smith Square

Item	Action by
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Welcome and Introductions

Councillor David Sparks OBE, LGA Vice-Chairman, chaired the meeting in Sir Merrick Cockell's absence and welcomed members to the meeting.

The Vice-Chairman introduced Tim Passmore, PCC for Suffolk, Dr Eric Wood, Deputy PCC for Warwickshire and Ron Hogg, PCC for Durham.

1 Police and Crime Commissioners: One Year On

Ron Hogg, PCC for Durham, began by explaining some of the progress and challenges he had experienced in his first year as a PCC. Topics raised included:

- The need to improve the democratic element of PCCs so that they are more outward facing and can engage with the community.
- How PCCs have established communications with local authorities and police forces.
- The need to understand staff issues, which can be done through regular meetings with the police federation and unions, as well as a myriad of other partner agencies.
- The need to protect frontline services which can be done through effective estate management and collaboration with other emergency services.
- The difficulty of campaigning in such large areas.
- The importance of engaging with the voluntary sector.
- Working with academia on a strategy related to mental health and crime.

Tim Passmore, PCC for Suffolk, then spoke about some of the improvements that can be made going forwards. Points discussed

included:

- The opportunity that PCCs present for greater accountability and transparency in policing.
- The need for better financial management.
- The need for a proactive, long-term vision.
- Better estate management and better procurement of goods and services to support the UK economy.
- Building public trust in the wake of police controversy such as 'Plebgate' and crime statistics.
- The need to work more to combat economic and cyber crime.
- Exchanging troubled families data and safeguarding information more.
- Improving the commitment of those who sit on Police and Crime panels as they play an important role in the constitutional process. Tim mentioned he would welcome ideas from the LGA on how this could be done.

Dr Eric Wood, Deputy PCC for Warwickshire then discussed the following issues:

- The way that the policing landscape has changed in the last year.
- Ethics and probity being underpinned by austerity.
- The problem of no one authority having responsibility for mental health issues.
- Sharing services between police forces and the savings this can generate.
- His concern that the government intends to expand the remit of PCCs to include fire even though they have no democratic mandate for this and Police and Crime panels cannot hold them properly to account
- The changing nature of crime and the victimisation of the elderly through financial crimes.

Tim Passmore and Dr Eric Wood finished by taking questions from the floor. Members asked the following questions:

- What could the LGA do to make Police and Crime panels better?
- Has there been a shift in the way operations are conducted?
- Is there a role for commissioners and panel members in investigating complaints against the police?

2 Chairman's Update

Members noted and accepted the Chairman's report.

3 Programme Board Chairs' Reports

Members noted the updates from each of the LGA's Board Chairs.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 20 February 2014, 12:30pm – 1:30pm
The Westminster Suite (8th Floor), Local Government House