

Police and Crime Commissioners update

Purpose of report

For decision.

Summary

This report provides Members with an update on discussions with the Association of Police Authorities/Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and sets out the proposal for a Strategic Partnership Board to bring the two organisations together in order to facilitate strong links between local government and Police and Crime Commissioners.

Recommendation

That Members consider the Leadership Board's discussion on 19 September and decide whether to agree to set up a Strategic Partnership Board with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners.

Action

As directed by Members.

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Police and Crime Commissioners update

Background

1. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill was given royal assent in September 2011, and set the date for the election of police and crime commissioners (PCCs) for 15 November 2012. With PCCs' responsibility for crime issues as well as policing matters, the Leadership Board saw a clear benefit for local authorities and PCCs in building strong relationships. As a result the LGA then started to explore the scope for attracting PCCs into membership as was reported to the Executive in October 2011.
2. The LGA launched a prospectus setting out the LGA's offer to PCCs in February under the banner of the Police and Crime Commissioners Association (PaCCA). The Association of Police Authorities (APA) were also interested in setting up a national representative body for PCCs, and secured Home Office funding to finance them from when the APA ceases to exist in November through to 31 March 2013 when PCCs are expected to formally join the APA's successor body – the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC).
3. The LGA has been pursuing an overarching strategy since February to secure PCCs in membership. The strategy comprises three strands:
 - 3.1. engaging at the political level with potential candidates and using the Political Group officers to make contact, and raise awareness of the LGA's offer;
 - 3.2. using officer networks, principally through the Association of Police Authorities Chief Executives (APACE) as key influencers to highlight and further develop our offer;
 - 3.3. engaging the resources of the LGA with Principal Advisers, Public Affairs, Press Officers and others promoting the offer through networks and personal contacts, gathering intelligence and developing relationships to ensure the LGA's profile and offer is timely, relevant and persuasive.

Discussions with the APA/APCC

4. The APA/APCC have been keen to discuss the possibility of working with the LGA to put a joint offer to PCCs at the national level. An initial meeting in May between the APA's Chair, Cllr Mark Burns-Williamson OBE and Cllr Simon Duckworth the Chair of the APCC and the LGA's Chairman led to a workshop on 4 July to explore a joint venture between the two associations.
5. This workshop identified a willingness on the part of both the LGA and APCC to explore what they might be able to offer jointly to PCCs. A number of joint arrangements between the LGA and APCC ranging from membership arrangements within the LGA to the creation of a new bespoke joint body were developed and then discussed with the APCC. Having consulted their membership about these options, the

Item 5

APCC leadership were clear they favoured a partnership arrangement rather than a more innovative joint venture.

Possible joint Strategic Partnership Board

6. Details of what such a partnership arrangement might look like have been developed in discussion with the APCC. The result is that a new partnership board with its own identity is being considered by the leadership of the APCC and LGA. The Strategic Partnership Board between the LGA and APCC would enhance the work and activity of both organisations and in particular would support the working relationship of PCCs and local authorities. The Strategic Partnership Board would be a decision making body to:
 - 6.1. provide central support and assistance to PCCs and councils in England to build effective and efficient local partnerships;
 - 6.2. promote their work at a national level with government and other stakeholders; and
 - 6.3. consider any exceptional demands in relation to the work at national level.
7. The LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board would continue to be responsible for the LGA's work on behalf of councils on community safety, reducing re-offending, licensing, regulatory services, and emergency planning issues affecting councils. The Strategic Partnership Board's purpose would be to address those issues that affect PCCs and councils jointly and to help foster a good working relationship on the ground between them. It would have a budget provided by the LGA and APCC to commission work to support its activities, and it is envisaged that the Chair of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board would have a place on the Strategic Partnership Board.

Conclusion and next steps

8. The Leadership Board discussed the proposal to create the Strategic Partnership Board at its meeting on 19 September and a decision from the Executive is now sought. The next stage will be further work on the details of the Board's governance, budget and work programme.

Financial Implications

9. If the LGA agrees to creating the Strategic Partnership Board, the LGA's financial contribution will be a new pressure most likely to be identified through the mid-year review.