

Update on the Joint Strategic Partnership Board

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This paper sets out progress with establishing the joint Strategic Partnership Board that the LGA and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) agreed and the latest information about Commissioners' views of their national representative body.

Recommendation

That LGA officers are regularly in touch with the APCC and Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and will bring a further report back to the Leadership Board should PCCs wish to reconsider the role and remit of the Strategic Partnership Board.

Action

Officers to take forward as directed by members.

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Update on the Joint Strategic Partnership Board

Background

1. Following the steer from the Leadership Board in April 2012 that the LGA should secure police and crime commissioners (PCCs) as members, an LGA offer was developed and promoted. As the campaign progressed, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) were keen to develop a joint offer from the two associations which could be put to PCCs at the national level.
2. This resulted in agreement to set up an LGA/APCC joint Strategic Partnership Board. The details of the Partnership Board were subsequently agreed by the APCC in September, and also endorsed by the LGA's Executive and Safer and Stronger Communities Board.

The joint Strategic Partnership Board

3. The aim of the joint Strategic Partnership Board is to enhance the work and activity of both organisations and in particular support the working relationship between PCCs and local authorities. The Partnership Board will be a decision making body to:
 - 3.1 Provide central support and assistance to PCCs and councils in England to build effective and efficient local partnerships;
 - 3.2 Promote their work at a national level with government and other stakeholders; and
 - 3.3 Consider any exceptional demands in relation to the work at national level.
4. The Safer and Stronger Communities Board will 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 Partnership Board will address those issues that affect PCCs and councils jointly and to help foster a good working relationship on the ground between them. It has also been agreed that the Partnership Board will be able to commission work to support its activities from a budget jointly provided by the LGA and APCC.
5. LGA nominations have been agreed and we had hoped that the Strategic Partnership Board would be formally established in April 2013, with a meeting of the Partnership Board in shadow form at the end of February to discuss and agree the processes and procedures that would enable the Partnership Board to function effectively. The APCC also indicated they would be looking to secure PCCs' agreement to the creation of the Partnership Board at an event on 23 January 2013.

Progress since the PCC elections

6. PCCs' focus on the appointment of deputy PCCs and chief constables, setting the police precept and preparing their police and crime plans have been their priorities upon taking office. This has meant they have not been able to devote much time to establishing national level bodies or appointing representatives to them. The APCC has not therefore found it easy to find PCCs to serve on national forums or to secure agreement for a lead PCC to represent the group as a whole. The APCC event on 23 January therefore aimed to resolve this through a discussion about the need for a national representative body, and what form this might take. PCCs were not therefore invited to discuss the creation of the Partnership Board at that event.
7. We understand that much of the discussion at the 23 January event was around the fundamental question of whether a national body for PCCs was needed, and if it was, what it might look like. While PCCs agreed as a whole that they wanted a national representative body, there was less agreement about what services the national body might deliver. It was therefore agreed to set up a Steering Group of PCCs with equal representation from the three political groups of PCCs to make recommendations to the APCC Transitional Board about the services which are required.
8. These discussions are due to take place over the next few weeks with the Steering Group seeking endorsement from the wider group of PCCs on 21 February. The APCC will then need to determine whether it can deliver the services, and set out a subscriptions structure. If this proceeds satisfactorily, the intention is then for the APCC to have its inaugural meeting on 21 March, at which formal appointments to outside bodies will be made, which could include those to the Partnership Board.
9. It is unlikely that PCCs will agree to the creation of the Partnership Board on the same terms as those negotiated between the APCC and LGA last summer. From our contacts with PCCs, we know that PCCs are keen to have access to the LGA's Political Group Offices, which had previously been ruled out by the APCC. It may well be that the Steering Group revisits the wider range of partnership options that were discussed by the LGA and APCC last summer.

LGA engagement with PCCs

10. Since the elections the LGA has continued to engage directly with PCCs. After their election, the LGA Chairman wrote a letter of congratulation to PCCs offering confidential political support, providing copies of our materials, and free access to our events programme. Vera Baird, the new PCC for Northumbria, was also secured as the main keynote speaker for the annual Safer Communities Conference, one of the first conferences to be addressed by a PCC after taking office. PCC speakers have been secured for the Troubled Families event, the Licensing Conference in February and the Fire Conference in March. Our PCC event is scheduled for 17 April and we will again be organising a programme of workshops for the Annual Conference.
11. Councillor Khan has written to all deputy PCCs highlighting our services and successes and he also spoke at the Home Secretary's welcome event for PCCs in December, alongside representatives from the Association of Chief Police Officers, the College of

Item 8

Policing, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, chief executives from police and crime commissioners' offices and the chairman of the APCC. On the same day LGA officers hosted a meeting of the Association of Policing and Crime Chief Executives (APACE) – the chief executives of the offices of PCCs.

12. Subsequently the LGA's political group offices have been following up the offer to PCCs about political support. We have also continued to circulate our monthly bulletin to all PCCs, to highlight through weekly case studies the benefits of PCCs and councils working together, with the inclusion of a new PCC column, as well as circulating briefings on topical issues like the draft anti-social behaviour bill and the implications of the Police Arbitration Panel's decision on police pay and conditions. We continue to receive a raft of queries and have assisted PCCs on an individual basis with legal support, an understanding of Police and Crime Panels' functions and clarification about funding streams. We have also been instrumental in ensuring PCCs are invited to important Ministerial meetings such as the recent event on domestic violence.
13. The feedback we have received from PCCs and their chief executives is extremely positive. The personal relationships Members and officers have established are working well and we have quickly become a trusted and professional friend to PCCs and their offices and together we continue to identify new ways of working and fresh opportunities which will be of benefit to both communities.

Conclusion and next steps

14. The situation remains fluid and it is unclear whether the APCC will remain viable in the long term. Our work with both PCCs and the APCC positions the LGA well for the future.

Financial Implications

15. There are no financial implications arising from this report.