

Police Reform and Restructuring

Decisions

1. Members are asked to agree that the LGA take forward the work set out in paragraph 10.

Actions Required

2. Further lobbying to be carried out as set out in the report.
3. Work on modelling to be carried out in conjunction with the APA.

Action by: Safer Communities Board team

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Police Reform and Restructuring

Summary

1. This report informs members of the developments that have taken place on Police Reform since the last Board meeting.

Background

2. At the last Safer Communities Board meeting on 16 January, the Board heard feedback from the meeting with Hazel Blears MP and the high-level Home Office Police Force Structures Steering Group on 12 January and in light of these meetings discussed the LGA's position on police reform and restructuring. Based on the discussion, a position paper was subsequently circulated to and agreed by the Board. The position paper forms the basis of the ongoing LGA work on police reform.

Actions since the last Board meeting

National Developments

3. On 6 February, the Home Secretary issued a Written Ministerial Statement to parliament reporting progress on the review of police force structures. The Ministerial Statement explained that for Wales and three English regions – the North East, the North West and the West Midlands – there was only one acceptable option based on the HMIC assessment of the cases put forward.

Following subsequent discussions with police forces and authorities in these regions, on 3 March the Home Secretary announced that Greater Manchester Police will continue to stand alone as a strategic force and that Cumbria and Lancashire Constabularies and Police Authorities have requested to amalgamate into one strategic force area.

There will now be a 4 month consultation period during which police authorities, local authorities and chief constables can raise objections to the following proposed mergers:

West Midlands: Merger of Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Mercia and West Midlands

North East: Merger of Cleveland, Durham and Northumbria

North West: Merger of Cheshire and Merseyside

Wales: Merger of Dyfed-Powys, Gwent, North Wales and South Wales

The second tranche is expected to include Yorkshire and Humber, the East Midlands and East of England. Discussions with Chief Constables and Police Authority Chairs in these areas will begin shortly. The third tranche is expected to include the South-West and South-East and the fourth will include the City of London and the Metropolitan Police.

Police and Justice Bill

4. The government published the Police and Justice Bill on 25 January. The Bill implements elements of the policing White Paper as well as proposals from the Respect Action Plan.

The LGA key messages on the Bill are:

- The Police and Justice Bill provides welcome measures to help ensure local policing reflects the needs of residents and is accountable to the communities it serves. This is especially important given the creation of strategic police authorities.
- The Bill recognises the crucial role councils play in Crime and Disorder Partnerships (CDRPs) and in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. The LGA has argued that CDRPs should be the focal point for local crime reduction and community safety activity, and these measures enhance their role.
- We welcome the proposal for requiring co-terminosity between police Basic Command Units (BCU) and councils, which will enhance accountability to local communities.
- We hope to have further discussions with the government around proposals in the bill for the new single Inspectorate for Justice.

The LGA produced an 'on-the-day briefing' and briefings for MPs in advance of second reading on 6 March and will continue to lobby on the Bill throughout the legislative process.

Crime and Disorder Act (CDA) Review

5. The government published the CDA Review alongside the Bill on 25 January. The main recommendations from the CDA review are:
 - A distinction will be made between strategic and operational functions in both unitary and two tier areas.
 - CDRPs' strategic functions will be the responsibility of the Local Strategic Partnership. This will be at county level in two tier areas.
 - Local authority cabinet members with the portfolio for community safety should sit on the Local Strategic Partnership. The portfolio holder's participation in the CDRP strategic decision making process will be mandatory
 - Six monthly strategic intelligence assessments will have to be carried out. They will replace the three yearly audits currently being undertaken by CDRPs and CSPs
 - CDRPs will have to provide regular opportunities for local people to raise their concerns, and will have to provide 'face the people' question and answer sessions.
 - CDRPs will be required to produce regular reports to their communities, instead of the annual report to the Home Secretary.

- **The Home Office will be encouraging CDRP mergers but not enforcing them.**

The LGA is undertaking further work on the CDA Review to ensure that the recommendations will work in practice, that the strategic function will be the responsibility of elected and accountable members within the emerging new CDRP and LSP framework and that the strategic/operational split will ensure that the police are accountable to the communities they serve.

Police Authorities in Corporate Membership (PAICM)

6. **PAICM met on 7 February. Following detailed discussions it was agreed that a paper would be presented to the LGA Safer Communities Board setting out their position on some aspects of police reform. PAICM do not consider that the current LGA position paper on police reform fully reflects their views. The PAICM position paper has been circulated to the Board along with a response from Cllr Rudkin. Members are asked to endorse the response to the PAICM position paper.**

LGA/APA Chairs' Bilateral meeting

7. **Sir Sandy Bruce-Lockhart and Cllr Bryony Rudkin met Bob Jones, Peter Holland and Mark Burns-Williamson from the APA on 1 March. It was agreed that in future the LGA and APA will present joint positions wherever possible on the areas on which they agree. Both organisations accept that there will be areas where positions will differ but these will be shared. It was concluded that joint modelling work on accountability will be carried out and intelligence shared.**

Regular meetings will now be set up between LGA and APA leading members and LGA and APA officers.

LGA Policing conference

8. **An LGA conference on policing and local government will take place on 12 July. It has been confirmed that the Home Secretary will give the keynote address.**

Next steps

9. **The LGA will continue to lobby on the Bill throughout the legislative process and seek to influence the CDA Review to ensure that the police at all levels are accountable to the communities they serve.**

Future action

10. **It is recommended that:**
 - **Members endorse the suggested response to the PAICM paper**
 - **Further work is carried out with the APA on modelling**
 - **Further lobbying and representational work be conducted as set out in this report**

Implications for Wales

11. **The government's proposals relate to police forces in both England and Wales. It has however been agreed that accountability structures in Wales should be dealt with in Wales.**

Financial/Resource Implications

12. No exceptional implications have been identified at this stage.

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