

From the Chairman of the Association
Cllr Sir Merrick Cockell

The Rt. Hon. Eric Pickles MP
Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
Department for Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU

6 January 2012

Dear Eric,

Employer Supported Policing

Thank you for your letter of the 20 December requesting the LGA's support in promoting the Employer Supported Policing (ESP) scheme set up by the NPIA to increase the number of special constables.

The LGA is very supportive of volunteering in general, including those people who serve as special constables. We do support the principle behind the ESP scheme of encouraging employers to assist individual members of staff in serving as special constables, and have promoted the scheme to our members before. Following a presentation the NPIA gave to our Safer and Stronger Communities Board in October 2010 on the ESP scheme, we sought to raise awareness of the good practice amongst those councils who are part of the ESP scheme.

In the current climate, one of the most productive ways of raising this issue is to promote the good work already taking place in the sector, through case studies for example. We will update our information and highlight different benefits of the ESP through our magazine *First*, which goes to over 20,000 councillors on our member authorities. We will also discuss with the NPIA other ways in which the LGA can promote awareness of the ESP scheme and the work councils in areas like Humberside and Greater Manchester are doing to encourage members of the wider public to serve as special constables. LGA officers will be in direct contact with the NPIA to take this forward.

While we can understand the focus on the ESP scheme, the LGA would hope that those upstanding members of the public who are currently out of work would still be able to take part in the scheme. Many of those will have just the right skills and experience to make a valuable contribution, and of course for young people or the long term unemployed, this will provide experience and routes into future employment. We would therefore hope that the government and the NPIA give consideration as to how those members of the public in that position could be encouraged and supported to serve as special constables, including

looking at the interaction of the amount of hours they serve a week and any benefits they receive.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Merrick Cockell', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Sir Merrick Cockell,
Chairman of the LGA