

Police and Crime Commissioners Update

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

This report provides an update on councils' preparations to set up Police and Crime Panels; and provides Members with a paper on progress with our work to be the national representative body for police and crime commissioners (PCCs). An oral report will be provided on the outcome of the facilitated workshop on 4 July with the Association of Police Authorities (APA) which was arranged to explore a joint venture.

Recommendations

That Members:

1. note the work in hand with councils to establish Police and Crime Panels ahead of the Home Office's July deadline;
2. comment on the overarching strategy and work to date on a national membership body and identify any gaps; and
3. comment on the outcome of the LGA/APA workshop.

Action

As directed by Members.

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Police and Crime Commissioners Update

Police and Crime Panels

1. Members will be aware of the statutory duty under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 for local authorities in a force area to create a Police and Crime Panel, made up of elected representatives from each council plus a minimum of two co-opted Members. One council in the force area should be the “host authority”, responsible for the administration of the Panel. The composition of Panels should be politically proportionate. The Home Office have set a deadline of 16 July 2012 for confirmation that they have agreed the Panel arrangements and a host authority. Failure to submit plans for the Panel by this date will lead to the Home Office imposing a solution on councils.
2. The LGA has been pleased to play a leading role in ensuring councils are establishing Police and Crime Panels. This is a priority in our business plan and we continue to support areas in this transition. All our member authorities have access to:
 - 2.1 A Police and Crime Panel Peer Support network, consisting of 12 accredited expert officers from leading councils.
 - 2.2 A vibrant Knowledge Hub site dedicated to Panels, providing networking and support; all force areas and host authorities are represented.
 - 2.3 Technical guidance documents have been published: Panel arrangements and the balanced appointment objective; Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure for Panels. A forthcoming publication on the scrutiny role of Panels is being done with the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS); and a further guide on confirmation hearings. We are currently writing a guide on Panels’ first 139 days and decisions which need to be taken between 22 November and 31 March 2013.
3. Our latest information is that this is a success story, with most areas having made good progress. Leading areas include Sussex, Hampshire, West Yorkshire and Kent with meetings already being held. We held a very successful seminar in mid June with officers to answer problems and share experiences. We believe that 16 July deadline should be achievable for most areas to submit information to the Home Office, but have been urging a flexible approach as the information might not be complete.
4. There are a few areas where progress has been slower or local negotiations more protracted and our accredited peer experts have been deployed intensively in the past four weeks in order to support areas. There may be one

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or two cases where the Home Secretary needs to intervene but we are hoping to avoid this with a plan for the Home Office's Permanent Secretary to send a letter to the relevant Chief Executive setting out what the Home Secretary will be mandating if agreement is not reached. This might avoid the need for further Home Office action.

Police and Crime Commissioners

5. The Leadership Board discussed the LGA's work to establish a national representative body for police and crime commissions on 11 April and the direction Members gave was to secure potential candidates to be full Members of the LGA, under the banner of the Police and Crime Commissioners' Association (PaCCA).
6. The overarching strategy for securing PCCs in membership of the LGA comprises three strands:
 - 6.1 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.
 - 6.2 Using officer networks, principally through the Association of Police Authorities Chief Executives (APACE) as key influencers to highlight and further develop our offer.
 - 6.3 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.

Activity to date

7. Timings for confirmed PCC candidates are different for political parties. As nominations are declared, Lead Members are being invited to write personally to candidates, offering political briefings, advice on campaigning, and exposure to events. Cllr Khan is taking a leading role in organising a visits programme. This is potentially the most powerful and effective part of our campaign and we will provide Members with key messages and materials for use in the autumn Party Conferences.
8. Officers have a wide range of contacts, including the 41 Police Authority Chief Executives who will be advising new PCCs immediately they are appointed and this dialogue has been positive.
9. We are using the knowledge, expertise of staff throughout the organisation to promote our offer. Our new bulletin designed for PCC candidates includes

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briefings, news from partners and key policing issues and also features a regional focus with Inform data on a fortnightly basis. There have been several articles in *first* and a number of press notices have been designed to be of interest and value to PCCs and specialist police trade magazines. The line up for our Annual Conference session included Simon Weston, Tony Lloyd, Stephen Greenhalgh and Cllr Lisa Brett. Nick Herbert MP attended our question and answer session and our Panel comprised Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), a police authority chief executive and the Electoral Commission.

10. We continue to work with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) who anticipate being the representative organisation for the 4 Welsh PCCs.

Review of progress

11. There is no doubt that our activity has led the debate about a representative body for PCCs. The depth and reach of our activity has meant that many assume that we are the officially nominated body and it is widely acknowledged that our offer is comprehensive and provides good value for money. Police Authority Chief Executives have assured us that they will present our case objectively to new PCCs. A few candidates have given commitment to belong to the LGA if elected but there are also candidates who maintain strong links with the APA and have voiced support for the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), the successor body to the APA. There is also a view that some PCCs will want their own association, not affiliated to any existing organisation. We have collated a Frequently Asked Questions page on the web which is now publicly available (attached at **Appendix A**).
12. The Home Office support the APCC as an interim representative body only up to 31/3/13 and are clear that it will be for PCCs to decide how they wish to be represented in the longer term.

The Association of Police Authorities/The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners

13. APA's Chair, Cllr Mark Burns Williamson OBE and Cllr Simon Duckworth the new Chair of the APCC which is the successor body, met the Chairman on 21 May to propose that the APCC becomes a Member of the LGA under a corporate subscription arrangement. Although this is not viable from the APA/APCC perspective, the two organisations are holding a workshop on 4 July to explore the possibility of a joint venture. It makes good sense to join up our approaches and services at a national level to ensure PCCs, and the public, get the best possible value for money. An oral update will be provided at the meeting.

Conclusion and next steps

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14. Our activity to date has laid strong foundations to position the LGA at the heart of new arrangements. Members will want to consider progress to date in our strategy, identify any gaps and note the potential joint venture which would be brought back to Members for decision. We continue with our existing plans until we have a firm agreement in place.

Financial Implications

15. Addressed in the body of the report.