

**Policing Green Paper: 'From the neighbourhood to the national: policing our communities together'**

1. This Green Paper was published on 17 July and has a deadline for responses of 10 October. It runs to 98 pages in total. The Executive Summary (pages 5 and 6) is attached as Appendix A.
2. There is much to welcome in the Green Paper, especially the proposal (paragraph 7.13) that in future the Government will only set one quantified target for police forces, i.e. to increase local satisfaction (as measured by responses to the question 'do you think that the police and their partners are dealing with the crime and ASB issues that matter locally?'). Other points worthy of particular note include:
  - (a) the proposal to give Community Safety Partnerships a statutory duty to seek to reduce re-offending (paragraph 1.39)
  - (b) confirmation of ringfenced funding for neighbourhood policing for at least three years (paragraph 1.18)
  - (c) addition of Probation to the list of 'responsible authorities' in relation to community safety partnerships working (paragraph 1.39)
  - (d) the commitment to "reducing the bureaucracy faced by the police not simply so that officers spend less time filling in forms but so that they are returned the discretion and judgement to focus on issues that matter to local people, freed from targets that have been perceived in the past to push them towards 'perverse incentives' and able instead to deliver results that people value" (para 2.4) – this goes to the heart of the tension between sanction detentions and First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System.
3. However, the proposals for direct election to police authorities are likely to be more controversial. Much of the detail is not yet available, but the Green Paper suggests partially replacing nomination of Councillors onto Police Authorities by direct election of 'Crime & Policing Representatives' (CPRs). The current composition of Cleveland Police Authority, in line with the national formula, is 9 Councillors (nominated by a joint committee), three magistrates and five 'Independent' members (appointed by the Home Secretary). The Green Paper proposes the election of CPRs (method, timing and duration etc unknown as yet), in indeterminate numbers, but to form a majority on the Police Authority and that where locally elected mayors exist (as in Hartlepool and Middlesbrough) they would automatically become CPRs.

The Green Paper also states that

“A number of Councillors from some or all of the upper tier Councils in an area should be invited to sit on the police authority” and envisages that “some Councillors will stand as CPRs and that many of them will be successful”, but also refers to “allowing the public to elect a majority of their [i.e. police authorities] members directly from their communities”.

4. The Green Paper also suggests that the CPR, or one of them where there are more than one representing the locality, would automatically chair the CDRP / Community Safety Partnership. This is objectionable, on several grounds:
  - (a) it cuts across our long established Partnership constitution;
  - (b) it fails to guarantee the competence of the Chair (and nothing is said about how, if at all, a CPR would be removed from office as Chair); and
  - (c) it fails to guarantee that the Chair is someone who commands the respect of the members of the Partnership.
5. The Green Paper also suggests that the CPR (s) would manage the BCU Fund, in consultation with the Community Safety Partnership (para 1.82). The good news is that this implies that there will still be a BCU Fund, and the not so good news is that the proposal does not seem, as drafted, to require agreement with the Community Safety Partnership.
6. The Home Office has also prepared a 16 page response form, attached as Appendix B.
7. It is RECOMMENDED that
  - (a) members of the Partnership discuss the key issues, especially those issues detailed at paragraph 4
  - (b) following discussion, and any further comments submitted by the end of August, a response is drafted and agreed by the Chair and Vice-Chair prior to submission, and presented for information to the Partnership meeting on 4 November
  - (c) The Partnership agrees to amend its Constitution by adding to paragraph 2.1, under the heading ‘Aims’ the following text:-  
“(e) reducing reoffending in the Borough”.