

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS

PCC BULLETIN

No 7 – 03 April 2012

This bulletin is one in a series of regular updates keeping you informed about developments for the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners in 2012.

In this edition:

- PCC Partner events – feedback from the events across England and Wales;
- Guest writer: Mark Norris of the Local Government Association (LGA) explains what his organisation is doing to support councils to prepare for Police and Crime Commissioners;
- Details of an HMIC portal where PCC candidates can access information about police forces;
- Safer Future Communities programme networks;
- An online survey to help shape communications.

PCC Partner Events

We recently ran a series of 17 events across England and Wales. Each event brought together a range of partners from up to three police force areas to consider issues relating to the transition to PCCs. There were short, focussed sessions on key areas of work with presentations providing essential information, roundtable discussions, and the use of digital technology to capture questions and issues of concern, during the sessions.

Initial analysis of delegates' feedback indicates:

- an overall improvement in delegates' knowledge of PCC policy;
- the main presentations were well received, but there is still an appetite for more information, and greater communication of PCC policy details;
- the table discussions provided a useful opportunity for partners to benchmark their knowledge and progress with colleagues from neighbouring areas.

Some of the key themes that emerged included:

- Local variation in partners' engagement with police authority transition programmes;
- A desire for greater clarity on funding, particularly around what exactly will cease to be centrally funded; and
- The need for the Home Office to support sector leadership and communications.
- The composition of Police and Crime Panels.

Local transition programmes

We are aware that there is much work going on locally to prepare for the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners. Transition Boards are being encouraged to disseminate the details of their work to a wide range of local partners and secure their involvement in planning for the first PCC police and crime plan and related commissioning arrangements.

Clarity on funding

Further detail of funding arrangements in 2013-14 will be issued soon.

Communications with stakeholders

We are still reviewing the thousands of questions that were submitted at the events and will be using these to amend and improve the Frequently Asked Questions section of our website, and inform any future information we produce. PCC website: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/police/police-crime-commissioners/>. We will also be producing a short report on the themes arising from the events.

We have produced a short online survey that will help us to develop our communication with you. This is your opportunity to tell us what your information needs are and how you prefer to receive it. The survey shouldn't take more than 10 minutes to complete.

You can complete the survey here:

<http://www.homeofficesurveys.homeoffice.gov.uk/v.asp?i=46969lyjxy>

Home Office support for sector-led communications

We will be working with colleagues across government, sector leaders and other relevant organisations (such as LGA, NOMS and YJB) in their communications with local government, local agencies and delivery teams, helping them to explain the policy on PCCs and potential local implementation options. Where possible we will be happy to:

- attend sector-led conferences or workshops;
- fact check communications and guidance.

If you would like to involve us in your work, please contact us at:

PCCPartnersEnquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Or if you'd like us to 'fact check' your content email us at:

PCCFactChecker@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Local Government Association support for councils

Mark Norris, senior adviser at the Local Government Association (LGA) provides details of what the LGA is doing to support local authorities in the transition to PCCs.

In order to help councils prepare for the introduction of PCCs the Local Government Association has put in place a support programme that runs to December 2012. There are two main strands to this programme: helping councils in England set up Police and Crime Panels; and supporting community safety partnerships to prepare for the changes the election of PCCs will bring.

Police and Crime Panels

In addition to producing a guide to PCCs, the LGA and the Centre for Public Scrutiny have published joint guidance on setting up Police and Crime Panels, which can be found on the LGA website. The LGA has also established a community of practice on its new Knowledge Hub (with over 70 members already). The hub enables those directly involved in setting up Police and Crime Panels to share information and experiences. They are also able to raise questions and post documents and papers on panel arrangements; rules of procedures; and

calculating the political make up of the panel. For those interested in joining the Police and Crime Panel Support Group the LGA's Knowledge Hub can be found at:
<https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/>

The LGA is also in the process of recruiting Police and Crime Panel peers who from May 2012 will be able to provide areas with advice and assistance on setting up their panels. Further guides on panel arrangements and calculating political proportionality of the panel, and on rules of procedure and terms of reference for panels will be published in the near future. Please check the LGA website for further details: <http://www.local.gov.uk/>

Community Safety Partnerships

The LGA's guide to PCCs for community safety partnerships was published at the beginning of the year, and can be found on the LGA's website. The LGA has been working directly with a number of community safety partnerships since last year to help them think through the changes they might need to make to prepare for the election of PCCs. This includes looking at partnership structures, considering moving to a joint commissioning framework for the delivery of community safety activity, and producing a guide for the PCC on local community safety partnerships and key contacts in them. If your partnership would like assistance from the LGA please contact: community.safety@local.gov.uk

Wales

The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) has been working with the Home Office and Welsh Assembly Government on specific issues around the introduction of PCCs in a devolved context. The WLGA is providing support to councils in Wales on the setting up of the four Welsh Police and Crime Panels, as well as to local community safety partnerships. Further details will be provided in Wales Bulletin No 7.

HMIC Portal

HMIC has developed a web-portal where prospective PCC candidates can access performance information and download force specific and national HMIC reports. The site also includes Frequently Asked Questions and links to key partner and police force and authority websites. This should be online in early April, please visit the website: www.hmic.gov.uk for more information.

Safer Future Communities (SFC) voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) networks

The Home Office-funded Safer Future Communities project aims to support frontline VCSE organisations in preparation for the arrival of PCCs in November 2012. Safer Future Communities VCSE network leads have now been established in every police force area in England and contact details for these can be found at <http://www.clinks.org/services/sfc>

The local networks will be utilising their expertise to develop and communicate the case about local needs on community safety and how the sector can play its part in addressing these needs. As part of this work, networks will seek to engage with PCC transition arrangements in their area. Partnerships and others with an interest in the project are encouraged to make contact with and support their local network leads.

Contacts:

Safer Future Communities project co-ordinator: Jessica.Mullen@clinks.org

Home Office lead: Sara.featherstone@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Communications Update

Over the 6 week period of the PCC Partner events, Home Office Press Office targeted local media to secure coverage of the events, and put out key messages about the role of PCCs and the influence they will have in local policing. There was coverage in over 25 regional newspaper titles with a circulation of over 800,000. The Minister for Policing and Criminal Justice, Nick Herbert, was also interviewed on several regional radio stations, helping to build awareness among the public about the policy and what it means for people and policing in their area. Press Office plan to continue our media push through the Spring and Summer, making use of ministerial visits and speeches to gain further coverage.

There has also been media coverage recently around potential candidates and how we will communicate to the electorate about candidates in their areas. The Government recently completed a consultation with the Electoral Commission and others, which included consideration of how the public could receive information about PCC candidates. We are looking at options for this, and an important consideration will be to enable members of the public to access information through a range of means.

Information and communications

To find out more about PCCs you can find all the documents and other key information that's available so far on the dedicated PCCs section of the Home Office website:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/police/police-crime-commissioners>

An information booklet for potential candidates is also available:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/police/pcc/have-got-what-takes/got-what-it-takes>

Women, people from ethnic minorities and disabled people are under-represented in elected office. This is an opportunity for people from all walks of life to stand and make a difference.

We're sending out regular bulletins throughout the roll-out of Police and Crime Commissioners to keep you informed. We will also field any enquiries or questions you have. Contact us at PCCPartnersEnquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

We welcome your comments and questions throughout the development and implementation process.