

Police Authority Meeting
13th February 2009
Open
Report of the Chief Executive

POLICING AND CRIME BILL

RECOMMENDATION that the Authority notes the contents of the Report

The purpose of the Bill is to reduce bureaucracy and increase accountability in the Police Service and help reduce crime further.

Some specific elements of the Bill relate to: -

- Implementing reforms as set out in the Green paper
- Reducing bureaucracy in the police service
- Improving the arrangements for recovery of assets obtained through criminal means
- New local flexibility to enable the police to focus service on the citizen
- Firm legal basis for collaboration frameworks between Forces and Authorities

The specific elements of the Bill affecting the Authority are: -

PUBLIC VIEW

Section 6 of the Police Act 1996 currently sets out what the Authority must have regard to in discharging their functions – local and national objectives, targets and the strategic plan.

The Bill adds a further requirement to have regard to: -

➤ The views of people in the Authority's area about policing in that area

This will reinforce the need for Authority and Force to undertake appropriate community engagement to inform decisions taken.

There is also a requirement placed on HMI to have regard to this duty when undertaking an inspection. This is of concern because: -

- Police Authority inspections are joint by HMIC and Audit Commission
- The inspection process will cover all aspects of Authority functions why is this specific aspect identified for inspection? Is it not for the HMIC and AC to identify what they need to inspect based on risk assessment and evidence gathered?

POLICE COLLABORATION

The proposals in the Bill are causing a number of concerns: -

The Home Secretary would have power to give directions to chief officers – existing arrangements require these to be given by the Police Authority.

It is unclear whether forces or authorities can enter into collaboration agreements involving third parties e.g. for the provision of back office services.

The Bill predicates 'police force collaboration agreements' in situations where the chief officer considers this to be in the interests of efficiency or effectiveness not the Authority

Chief officers will be held to account but there is a need for clarity when a joint authority committee is involved

Home Secretary to be consulted before entering into an agreement with more than 6 parties – no clarity on how 6 parties is defined.

Home Secretary has wide powers to direct, prevent, alter or terminate collaboration agreements - no role identified for HMIC.

CDRPS

Probation Boards are responsible bodies under the Crime and Disorder Act.

Contact for further information:

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