

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods.
2.	Date:	20th September 2010
3.	Title:	Policing in the 21st Century
4.	Directorate:	Chief Executive's/NAS

5. Summary

Policing in the 21st Century: Reconnecting police and the people consultation was published on 26th July as part of the coalition reform

This report provides a summary of the government's proposals to transform the approach to local policing with a focus on those that have a significant impact on the Council. The report is accompanied with a prepared draft consultation response to the questions most relevant.

6. Recommendations:

That Cabinet Member:

- a) **Receive the information contained in the report**
 - b) **Consider and approve the consultation response to key questions set out in Appendix A.**
 - c) **Authorise the Chief Executive to submit the final consultation response to meet the 20th September deadline.**
 - c) **Request a future detailed report on publication of the 'Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill'.**
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7. Proposals and Details

The consultation for 'Policing in the 21st Century: Reconnecting police and the people' published 26th July sets out the governments plans for police reform some of which will become part of the 'Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill' expected in this Autumn.

The proposals put forward are based on three key principles:

- 1) Transferring power back to the people through the introduction of directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners
- 2) Transferring power away from national government through reducing bureaucracy
- 3) Shifting the focus of government through the creation of a New crime Agency.

The document covers five distinct areas; The challenge; Increasing democratic accountability; Removing bureaucratic accountability; A national framework for efficient local policing and finally Tackling crime together. This report considers in detail the new approach outlined to increase democratic accountability (Chapter 2) and tackling crime together (Chapter 5) as these are most relevant and have the greatest impact on the work of the Council.

Increasing Democratic Accountability

The government has stated its intention to introduce legislation which will allow the appointment of publicly elected Police and Crime Commissioners by May 2012 at force level replacing Police Authorities. It is expected that the public voting arrangements will be based on the existing framework for Local Government and Parliamentary elections.

The role of Police and Crime Commissioners will be to:

- Ensure representation and engagement of all those who live and work in the communities in the force area and identify their policing needs
- Agree a local strategic plan
- Holding the Chief Constable to account
- Set the force budget and setting the precept
- Appointment and removal where necessary of the force Chief Constable.

Commissioners will hold specific responsibility for:

- Local policing including neighbourhood policing
- Serious crime and protective services
- Working in partnership to address wider community safety and criminal justice – the government are considering creating enabling powers to bring together Community Safety Partnerships at force level and giving Commissioners a role in commissioning community safety activities.
- Accountability for efficient and effective use of resources
- Ensuring diversity in the police force.

The government intend to establish a new 'Police and Crime Panel' who will act as a advisory body to the Commissioner in developing policing plans and setting budgets and consider annual performance through the 'state of the force report'. The panel will consist of local elected councillors from constituent wards along with independent and lay members. Panel powers include the power to trigger a referendum on the policing precept recommended by the commissioner, the ability to summon the Commissioner to public hearings. The panel has no direct powers over the tenure of the Police and Crime Commissioner but are required to take concerns to the IPCC for investigation.

Tackling Crime Together

The government's aspiration is that these reforms underlying the proposed new approach will enable and encourage greater public cooperation with the police and increased involvement tackling neighbourhood crime. A key theme in Policing in the 21st century is the drive to 'strip away unnecessary prescription and bureaucracy in the partnership landscape'.

This is reflected in their intention to see an increase in the number of people volunteering with the police and the possibility of establishing a new police 'reservists' force. English forces will be encouraged to 'sign up to' local compacts with the voluntary sector.

The Government expects to revoke a number of the current regulations for Community Safety Partnerships while maintaining the central statutory duty on key partners to work together.

Attached: Appendix A: The Council's draft consultation response to the questions set out in Chapter 2 and Chapter 5.

8. Finance

It is not possible at present to determine the potential impact that the proposals bear on council's current resources and the nature of additional costs that may be incurred through implementation.

The government have committed themselves to make available the projected costs generated by the proposed Commissioner elections and associated activities in due course.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The detail of proposals will be set out in due course, following the consultation, including legislation. A more detailed analysis will be able to be made at that stage

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The proposals outlined in the Policing in the 21st Century document set out the direction of travel the government intend to take in reforming the police service and its governance supporting the principles of a 'Big Society' model.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Rotherham consultation response to “From the neighbourhood to the national: policing our communities together” – the Policing Green Paper. (October 2008).

‘Policing in the 21st Century: Reconnecting police and the people’. (July 2010).

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