



Durham Police Authority's Response to Policing in the 21st Century: Reconnecting Police and the People



Executive Summary

Durham Police Authority is passionate about the well-being of the local communities it serves. Our vision encapsulates this passion “to be the effective voice of our communities in securing delivery of high quality policing”. We, representing our local communities care about front-line policing and share the view that if it “isn’t broke don’t fix it”.

Home Office statistics published just days before this consultation paper on 15 July 2010 support this:

- Overall crime is down by 50% }
- Violent crime is down by 50% } on 1995 figures
- Property crime is down by 55% }
- The murder rate is at its lowest level since at any time over the past 20 years, and
- The chance of being a victim of crime is at its lowest level since records began in 1981.

At the local level, although it has been a challenging time we have achieved many successes. Recorded crime in Durham and Darlington has fallen by 9.6% in the last year which means that 3,950 fewer people have suffered at the hands of criminals.

These national and local statistics are evidence that police authorities have done a good job in holding to account their local police forces and do not suggest there is any basis for constitutional change at a time when financial restraint is even more essential. In the absence of a viable business case we also have to ask if this is the right time to change structures through additional elections, which is the equivalent to the salaries of 2150 police constables (source: www.police-information.co.uk/policepay).

Our overall assessment of the Consultation Paper is that the Government is proposing to place significant duties and responsibilities on the Police and Crime Commissioners without the necessary powers or capacity to ensure that they can effectively discharge them. The public will need to be reassured that the Police and Crime Commissioner will do a better job in representing the geographically dispersed populations of Durham and Darlington, which covers a predominantly rural area of 2,232 sq km, with more than half of its residents living in settlements of less than 10,000 people. The Authority’s current governance arrangements of 17 members covers 12 main towns and over 260 small towns and villages with a population of 609,000 (Office of National Statistics mid year estimate 2008).

We hope that the Government will listen to and take account of the Authority’s concerns before making such fundamental and far-reaching constitutional changes to policing governance. However, if the proposal for directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners is to go ahead, we propose a refinement of the governance arrangements in order to strengthen the checks and balances

and reduce the risks inherent in any major constitutional change of this nature. Our proposals are contained in Appendix 1 and we invite the Government to discuss these proposals/suggestions further with us.

Durham Police Authority welcomes other aspects of the Paper, such as the focus on reducing bureaucracy and issues of workforce reform. Alongside the Association of Police Authorities, we want to work with the Government during this challenging period. In the current fiscal climate and with Comprehensive Spending Review 2010 on our doorstep, the next two years are going to be the most challenging that Police Authorities are to face.

Additionally the demands on all Police Forces and Authorities linked to the forthcoming Olympics and indeed the Jubilee Celebrations will necessarily generate demands that we may well have difficulty in responding to professionally and properly. Clearly we also have to balance extremely difficult financial decisions whilst continuing to meet the needs and expectations of our communities.

One of the key tools which will help us succeed in this is a sound local governance structure which embodies all the safeguards necessary in a society which is becoming evermore diverse and complex but in which the fundamental concept of "policing by consent" still prevails. We do not feel that the proposals as currently drafted in the Consultation Paper approach that essential standard.

Chapter 2 Local Accountability

1. Will the proposed checks and balances set out in this Chapter provide effective but un-bureaucratic safeguards for the work of Commissioners, and are there further safeguards that should be considered?

The Government's proposals to replace Police Authorities with elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) are likely to weaken rather than strengthen public oversight of policing. The emphasis is on one person to deliver a range of functions currently being undertaken by a corporate body with the appropriate level of capacity and capability. The remit of the Commissioner is too broad in terms of duties, responsibilities and geographic coverage. Granting PCCs local discretion to determine his/her own support requirements moves away from the benefits of standardisation and introduces a whole new set of costly risks.

There should be clear criteria around who can become a Commissioner e.g. the person should live within the area represented and there should be no conflicts of interests as regards other positions held.

The role of the proposed Police and Crime Panel needs to be considerably strengthened in order to ensure appropriate checks and balances around the powers of the Commissioner. As the proposals are currently drafted, the Panel will largely be an advisory body sitting outside the tripartite structure. The PCP will hold the Commissioner to account rather than the Chief Constable. However, the Panel will comprise representatives of the public and should not be at one stage removed from the actual decision making of the Commissioner. On the contrary, there are many precedents for such Non-Executive Directors having a dual role, sharing in decision making but also challenging the Commissioner on behalf of the public. There should certainly be a requirement for the PCP to approve the budget and precept. The calling of a referendum is needlessly bureaucratic and costly.

The Commissioner should not be involved in the appointment processes to ensure that there can be no impropriety.

2. What could be done to ensure that candidates for Commissioner come from a wide range of backgrounds, including from party political and independent standpoints?

Awareness Raising - A wide ranging campaign is needed to raise awareness and set out clearly what the role of PCC will be. Public meetings will need to be held in communities to ensure a more diverse and independent selection of people come forward as well as web campaigns and other media options explored with disability and translation facilities. This will all need to be funded by the Government through a central PR and marketing budget as there is no local funding to support this.

PCC Candidate Campaigning - To address the financial gap posed through the support from political parties, a budget for all independent candidates should be provided. This set budget would be required to help with:

- Research
- Manifesto development and publication
- Administrative support
- Marketing and PR activities.
- Information Technology

3. How should Commissioners best work with the wider criminal justice and community safety partners who deliver the broad range of services that keep communities safe?

To promote confidence and effective future working relationships, partners should have a formal input into the selection process for PCCs. This approach is outlined in the Durham Model in Appendix 1.

Supported through legislation, PCCs should be a key stakeholder on major governance boards and should feed into the decision making processes. These include

- LCJB Board
- Community Safety Partnerships
- LSP / Area Action Partnerships / Joint Commissioning Boards

Key 'peer' decision makers such as Local Authority Leaders / Chief Executives, Prison Governors, Fire and Rescue Chairs/Chief Executives, Health Commissioners etc could be 'expert witnesses' for the Commissioner in terms of providing first hand knowledge of the progress of the Force in the area.

Ideally, a commissioning approach should be adopted across all relevant public sectors to enable better partnership working through a more streamlined decision making structure and where a joint commissioning framework would empower partner executives such as Commissioners to jointly design, procure and deliver services that are aligned more closely to achieving community outcomes.

4. How might Commissioners best engage with their communities – individuals, businesses and voluntary organisations - at the neighbourhood level?

Durham Police Authority currently covers over 30 strategic partnership meetings a week. This excludes those meetings at neighbourhood level. It would be impossible for a Commissioner to take on the volume of partnership and community engagement activities single-handedly. They would be finely spread and ineffective. He/she needs capacity to support the programme of

work but this could be potentially costly and lead to a public perception of an 'invisible commissioner'.

Engagement within communities should be widely publicised and regularly scheduled so that members of the public get used to the cycle of information. A range of different engagement methods and tools should be deployed so as to reach as wide an audience as possible. Best practice approaches from Police Authorities and other sectors should be adopted. The use of supermarkets, schools and social network sites (Facebook, Twitter) are not new concepts for Police Authorities and existing guidance and templates from these approaches could be transferred to save learning curve costs.

Community engagement would benefit from a more joined-up approach with partners. This would inevitably save resources and improve public confidence.

Proactive engagement with businesses and the 3rd sector is a key component of Durham Police Authority's proposed governance model as outlined in Appendix 1. We propose a structure that would allow for greater capacity to be released into communities to get to grips with their issues and concerns.

5. How can the Commissioner and the greater transparency of local information drive improvements in the most deprived and least safe neighbourhoods in their areas?

It is important that information is widely available but is balanced against the risk of promoting further social/economic gaps within a locality i.e., house prices in a neighbourhood could slump dependent on how data and information is presented and lead to further deprivation and crime.

With the wealth of web-based information available from Local Authorities, Health, Regional Development Agencies and others, it is imperative that the Commissioner works with agencies to ensure a joined-up approach that does not exacerbate social and economic deprivation.

It is also important that the risk of PCCs overly-politicising policing is addressed. This could be achieved through assigning powers to the PCP to manage the performance of the Commissioner ensuring that he/she does not provide more police in wealthier areas where more people vote than in deprived areas where there is more crime.

6. What information would help the public make judgments about their force and Commissioner, including the level of detail and comparability with other areas?

'Keep it simple' is key to meeting community information requirements. An easy to read/understand rating system that does not presuppose any technical skills i.e. a traffic-light based scoring system may be the best option as it is easy to understand and allows comparisons to be readily made. However, given the significance of this initiative, whatever platform is adopted

should be demonstrated and evaluated with the public prior to implementation.

In terms of content, it is important that information and data is presented 'like for like' to manage expectations. The public will want to compare crime stats to see dips and improvements. Performance data should be supported with contextual information provided by neighbourhood management partnerships.

The types of local data that the public may want to see include:

- Crime statistics and offences brought to justice
- Police numbers in a Neighbourhood Management Context (in addition to numbers of street wardens etc)
- Budgetary information i.e. capital, revenue, procurements, tender awards, cost of neighbourhood policing, cost of partnership preventative measures etc
- Performance against local policing priorities
- Commissioner Information
 - Profile / CV
 - Diary and calendar,
 - Daily Blog,
 - Surgeries and public meeting information with appointment booking facilities.
 - How to complain
 - Budget breakdown and monitoring
 - Key achievements

Chapter 3 Removing Bureaucratic Accountability

7. Locally, what are examples of unnecessary bureaucracy within police forces and how can the service get rid of this?

There are numerous examples of unnecessary bureaucracy in the police service from arduous form filling for sickness absence to pressures on police time to type up recorded transcripts to meet the needs of the wider Criminal Justice System. Better use of technology is a key enabler for change e.g. Voice to Data converters, Enterprise Resource Planning etc procured through best value frameworks.

Improved partnership arrangements are also necessary. Chasing targets and missing the point is an historical challenge throughout the partnership world. It is important that police and partners understand why information is being collected, for whom and how it is to be used; otherwise we will continue to waste valuable time and resources.

The Government's planned constitutional change may be counter productive since 'greater accountability' usually means an increase in bureaucracy. It is important that the new PCCs do not introduce new types of bureaucracy to satisfy political motives. Again, the PCP should be given powers to ensure that this does not happen.

8. How should forces ensure that information that local people feel is important is made available without creating a burdensome data recording process?

This links back to our answer in question 6 and the need to simplify the presentation of data / information in a way that promotes public understanding and empowerment. The information should be widely accessible to all communities and provided through proven conventional and web-based methods. Data and information should be provided through a partnership framework to maximise resources and avoid duplication of effort and the presentation of conflicting information.

To mitigate the risk of burdensome data capture, a data collection system that allows the police and partners to 'capture data once and use many times' would save valuable time and resources and help to provide the public with the 'bigger picture'.

9. What information should HMIC use to support a more proportionate approach to their 'public facing performance role', while reducing burdens and avoiding de-facto targets?

To avoid another burdensome performance management regime from re-emerging, HMIC should work with Forces and their partners to assess their approaches to threat, risk and harm posed. As a part of their role HMIC should encourage Forces to adopt more proportionate, common sense approaches that are based on ethical standards and professional judgement.

10. How can ACPO change the culture of the police service to move away from compliance with detailed guidance to the use of professional judgement within a clear framework based around outcomes?

A proportionate approach is needed that balances both requirements for detailed guidance and the exercise of professional judgements. Reliance too greatly on the latter carries a high risk of inconsistencies in the quality of service delivery.

The Tripartite needs to work together to help deliver cultural change inside a framework that promotes:

Clear vision and focus on delivering outcomes - Every force should have a clear vision of where they want to be in the future supported by clear outcomes. These should not be blurred by BCU or departmental

strategies and should be clearly communicated to all staff. Staff Appraisal Programmes should be linked to the delivery of these outcomes to ensure clarity of purpose and role.

Skills Mix - People with experience and skills from the private and independent sector should be encouraged to join the service and be incentivised accordingly. This will promote a broader skills set within the service and a transfer of these skills. This environment should encourage better professional judgements to be made. Whilst some Forces have imposed a freeze on recruitment, one option is to explore the concept of cross sector placements through existing partnership arrangements.

Empowering Neighbourhood Management Teams - Forces working with partners need to identify the problem areas in their communities and prioritise budgets to solve these.

Listening to and valuing staff - The best ideas come from a motivated workforce that feels involved in the design of new services and valued. Communications to promote internal suggestions are often more useful than the advice of external consultants who rarely know the industry.

11. How can we share knowledge about policing techniques that cut crime without creating endless guidance?

To avoid the creation of endless guidance, HMIC working alongside ACPO could act as a conduit in the interest of the public to share best practice. As a part of this role, HMIC could designate Forces post inspection with *Lead Force Status* and signpost other Forces to these for advice and guidance as well as provide an advisory service supported through a web based guidance bank.

Chapter 4 A National Framework for Efficient Local Policing

12. What policing functions should be delivered between forces acting collaboratively?

Informed decisions around collaboration should be based on identified need supported by a viable business case. We support the idea of collaboration around all policing functions where there exists a strong business case and where all stakeholders are equally committed to the benefits.

13. What are the principal obstacles to collaboration between forces or with other partners and how they can they be addressed?

Obstacles:

1. Mindset – bigger is not necessarily better. Smaller forces are typically more leaner and more resourceful
2. Collaboration set-up costs
3. Different policies, processes and systems
4. Political will
5. Vast differences in the unit costs of police functions
6. Fear of take-over / job losses.
7. Loss of local identity
8. Limited benefits.

Solutions:

1. Scalability – It would be useful for decision makers to have information on the unit cost of policing rather than overall force budgets.
2. An acceptance by decision makers to the upfront capital and revenue costs based on 'invest to save' principles.
3. Standardisation Programmes - but this goes against the current Government thinking,
4. Involvement from start to end – from vision shaping to benefits realisation.
5. To establish the true cost of policing functions and establish agreements to balance the risks and rewards
6. Communications/ Skills refresh programmes/ Redeployment Opportunities.
7. Retain and promote local identity
8. Ensure effective business case management.

14. Are there functions which need greater national co-ordination or which would make sense to organise and run nationally (while still being delivered locally)?

A business case is required to demonstrate where savings would be made. The business case should be informed by a review of identified opportunities across the 43 Forces and should also have links to the national procurement strategy.

15. How can the police service take advantage of private sector expertise to improve value for money, for example in operational support, or back office functions shared between several forces, or with other public sector providers?

We have addressed aspects of this question in question 10.

The Police Service also needs to develop an appetite for outsourcing. They should focus on their specialist talents and outsource other areas, such as credit card fraud, to agencies that have greater expertise in the relevant field.

Given current financial pressures, it is important that the policing service does not re-invent the wheel. The tripartite has a role here in ensuring that we look outside the policing box and across other public sector bodies to take

advantage of existing infrastructure and resources already in place. For example, the public sector procurement portal could be used and further rolled out across policing. It currently provides for over 500,000 products and services and is available through a network of over 1000 suppliers.

16. Alongside its focus on organised crime and border security, what functions might a new National Crime Agency deliver on behalf of police forces, and how should it be held to account?

Again the response to this should be supported through a business case informed through fact finding research with the 43 Forces. In terms of accountability, any governance model should be balanced to reflect the policing tripartite.

17. What arrangements should be in place in future to ensure that there is a sufficient pool of chief officers available, in particular for the most challenging leadership roles in the police service? Is there a role for other providers to provide training?

An approach could involve putting into place arrangements to enable senior officers to move from force to force, or to gain valuable private sector experience before returning into policing.

If we are moving into a world of joint commissioning to deliver community based outcomes there would certainly be a role for other training providers.

18. How can we rapidly increase the capability within the police service to become more business-like, with police leaders taking on a more prominent role to help drive necessary cultural change in delivering sustainable business process improvement?

It is important to lead by example. But again, it depends on the appetite for change. A radical shift in current policing operational structures may be explored, replacing for example an 'operational' Chief Constable with a 'strategic' Chief Executive. This approach could however conflict with the 'strategic' role of the Commissioner.

Seconding Police Officers and Staff across to Private Sector Companies and other Public Sector Agencies to gain valuable new skills, knowledge and experience should form part of an overall approach to Organisational Development and become a standard HR practice.

Chapter 5 Tackling Crime Together

19. What more can the Government do to support the public and take a more active role in keeping neighbourhoods safe?

The emphasis should not be purely on the Government. The Tripartite have a selling job to do here in a way that will win the hearts and minds of all communities.

The most crucial part of involving the public is actually gaining their interest and letting them know how they can become more active and what benefits are offered. The risk that 'the same old faces' take the lead should be mitigated. National and local campaigns would be needed in the first instance to raise awareness of how to become involved. A central point for information would be the next step so that the public has a one stop shop for information.

There must be benefits and incentives for people to put themselves out there, and they would need to be comfortable that they are not going to get repercussions from their actions.

There would need to be an appropriate support network in place and criteria agreed to ensure that the proposal for 'activists' and 'crime fighters' does not lead to people acting outside of the law or as "Vigilantes".

20. How can the Government encourage more people to volunteer (including special constables) and provide necessary incentives to encourage them to stay?

Again the Tripartite needs to demonstrate leadership here, working together to agree and promote the benefits of volunteering in terms of contributing to society and also contributing to one's own personal development. Incentives could include a support network through the Community and Volunteer Service, which would include access to training and personal development, and links to future careers using the experience and knowledge gained through volunteering.

There is a risk that 'activists' and 'crime fighters' could be perceived to fit a certain profile and it is important through any promotional work that the potential for stereotyping, and social stigma associated with participating in volunteering and community work (including looking like a 'police informant') is addressed from the outset. The selling of the benefits such as enhanced skills would make it a more attractive proposition, especially for those looking for a springboard to employment. An example of an incentive based scheme would be all those on Job Seekers Allowance having to participate in a volunteering scheme for say 5 hours per week to qualify for benefit or enhanced benefit. Another incentive would be for volunteers to receive reductions in council tax, as in the case of Hull's Special Constables who receive a 50% reduction.

21. What more can central Government do to make the LCJ system more efficient?

Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJB) are already in place and would be a prime building block to start from to make the CJS more visible, more joined-up and accountable. Structurally, they should be given greater powers with

the role of key stakeholders such as Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners formalised. Operationally, they should be given greater freedoms to deliver better outcomes. Paradoxically, from March 2010, the Government has removed all central funding from LCJBs which gives a conflicting message as to their value.

22. What prescriptions from the Government get in the way of effective and local partnership working?

The Government needs to re-address the balance here. Whilst we welcome the abolition of prescriptive national targets which have promoted a culture of target chasing and missing the point, these targets in many ways provided the common purpose for bringing partners together.

Whilst we agree with the Government's focus on delivering community outcomes, these need to be underpinned through agreed objectives, targets and success measures. Partners should be given the local freedoms to define and deliver these but at the same time, the Government should play a role in maintaining standards and safeguarding human rights.

It is essential that the Police and Crime Commissioner is made a statutory partner in all partnerships relevant to community safety, involving Local Strategic Partnerships.

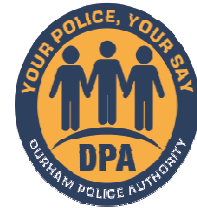
23. What else needs to be done to simplify and improve community safety and criminal justice work locally?

Greater transparency of the processes from start to end is needed across the entire CJS. To promote widespread understanding of the issues and ownership, this could be achieved through a 'citizen's journey' approach.

Partners through the LCJB / CSP should work together to identify gaps and inefficiencies e.g. areas of costly duplication across the entire system and agree on ways to streamline/simplify processes to deliver improved outcomes.

APPENDIX 1 – The Durham Model

The Durham Police & Crime Board



After reflecting on the potential risks and benefits of Directly Elected Police and Crime Commissioners as outlined in 'Policing in the 21st Century: Reconnecting Police and the People',



Members of Durham Police Authority have agreed that a refined governance model be submitted to the Home Office for consideration.

The Durham Model builds on the Government's plans to introduce a democratically elected component whilst also

embedding the necessary checks and balances through having in place a robust governance structure to mitigate a number of key risks. These include extremist leadership and the politicisation of policing.

We believe that our model would be more cost effective, business like and much more akin to proven models elsewhere in the public and independent sectors.

The Durham Model is based on the following criteria:

1. That Durham Police Authority be replaced by the **Durham Police & Crime Board** to help raise public awareness of its function in policing, to promote presence, purpose, to inform and to be consistent with other changes in governance across the public sector.
2. That the **Police and Crime Board** obtains Trust Status so that it can innovate funding opportunities from other National and European sources, from other public and private sector funding bodies, the Voluntary and Charitable Sector, for the overall benefit of the local communities that it serves.
3. That the **Police and Crime Board** be led by a **Directly Elected Commissioner** and supported by **5 Appointed Non-Executive Directors**.
4. **The 5 Appointed Non-Executive Directors** will include a mix of Elected Councillors and Independent Members and will be assessed against a rigorous competency framework.
5. **A Home Office representative** will join the local **Joint Committee** to **assess against prescribed criteria candidates for election as PCC's**. The Joint Committee (including the Home Office representative) **will also assess applications for and appoint the Non Executive Directors**. The local Joint Committee will include **elected members of all parties**.







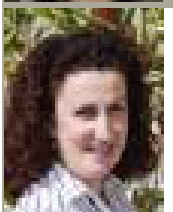
6. **The Home Office Representative and Local Joint Committee** will also agree a short-list of candidates for the PCC election process.
7. Following election for a 4 year term the PCC will report back to the electorate on his/her achievements on an annual basis through the **Police and Crime Board Annual Report**. A specified number of activities will also be agreed to be delivered by the **Police and Crime Board** and will be monitored by the **Police and Crime Board Standards Committee**.
8. The **Police and Crime Board** will engage with the **Chief Constable, partners and local communities** to define local policing priorities.
9. The **5 Non-Executive Directors** will also be appointed on a 4 year term and will be allocated **portfolios** to reflect these key local priorities.
10. The **Police and Crime Board** will have a **Commissioning Budget** to fund local priority crime prevention initiatives, research and the delivery of specific projects agreed by the PCC.
11. A strong capacity requirement of the Board will be developed through establishing **Volunteer Task and Finishing Groups**.
12. The **Police and Crime Board** will be supported by a **Commissioning Office**. This will be a lean support organisation consisting of some self-funded posts, some of which will be self-financing through sponsorship opportunities as well as some jointly commissioned posts working with Health, Fire and Rescue etc such as Community Engagement & Partnership activity.
13. If not appointed to the **Police and Crime Board, Local Authority Councillor Portfolio Holders for Community Safety** will have a default co-opted place on the Board to ensure consistency with **Community Partnership Strategies**.
14. In assisting the PCC to hold the Chief Constable to account, the **Police and Crime Board** will have regard for the needs and responsibilities of **Local Authority Overview & Scrutiny Committees** particularly in the provision of monitoring and programme assurance of Partnership activity in delivering the right outcomes for communities.



Durham's Proposed Governance Model for Local Policing



The benefits for the Public	Durham Police & Crime Board	The Current Coalition Government's Model
 <p data-bbox="386 1402 695 1472">"Keep Politics out of Policing"</p>		
 <p data-bbox="396 1619 691 1755">"Embed a culture of customer focus and value for money in public services"</p>		

The benefits for the Public	Durham Police & Crime Board	The Current Coalition Government's Model	
	<p>“Make sure that local communities are socially cohesive and protect us from extremist views”</p>		
	<p>“Help to keep us safe from serious crime & terrorism”</p>		
	<p>“Empower us through greater local representation so that we have a stronger voice on local policing”</p>	