

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	County Council
Date:	16 September 2010
Title:	Home Office Consultation "Policing in the 21 st Century – reconnecting police and the people"
Reference:	2067
Report From:	Chief Executive

Contact name: Robert Ormerod

Tel: 01962 845122 **Email:** robert.ormerod@hants.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 On 27 July 2010, the Home Secretary published a consultation "Policing in the 21st Century". The consultation closes on 20 September 2010. In the time available it has not been possible for the Cabinet to formally consider the consultation and shape a response to recommend to the Council for approval.
- 1.2 The Leader has agreed, exceptionally, that as the matter is of such importance to the County Council this report should come to the County Council before the consultation ends. The Chairman of the Council has therefore agreed to accept this matter onto the agenda as an urgent matter to allow the County Council to comment before the consultation closes. The County Council is asked to approve the four recommendations outlined at the end of this report.
- 1.3 This is one of a number of developments under the Home Office Structural Reform Plan. The proposals promote a radical shift in power and control and the stated intention of the reform is to shift the focus of the police away from government targets and bureaucracy and towards being better connected with the public they serve.
- 1.4 Some aspects of this consultation relate to how policies to which the Government is already committed in the Coalition Agreement might be implemented and other aspects relate to the development of wider policy. Some aspects of the consultation feedback will be used to inform the legislation in the *Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill* which will be introduced in the autumn 2010.

- 1.5 This is an important consultation and the Leader therefore wishes to provide all Members of the County Council an opportunity to consider the proposals and to agree a consultation response to meet the deadline of 20 September. A briefing note has been prepared which summarises the proposals and is appended to this report as Appendix 1.

2. **Recommendations:**

In responding to the consultation, it is proposed that the County Council highlight the following points:

- a) That Hampshire County Council agrees with the LGA response in terms of reintegration of the Police Authority into local government but does not endorse the LGA's opposition to Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs).
- b) That Hampshire County Council endorses the operational independence of Chief Constables but would point out that there is a tension between the operational independence of Chief Constables and the democratically mandated PCCs and their view on policing priorities.
- c) That Hampshire County Council is concerned that the Government's proposals, as they currently stand, increase the democratic bureaucracy within constabularies as the proposals would interpose PCCs.
- d) That under the authority's duty to co-operate, Hampshire County Council believes that as one of the upper tier authorities in Hampshire, it should exercise strategic overview and scrutiny of Police constabularies and any PCC.

BRIEFING REPORT ON A CONSULTATION

Title:	Home Office Consultation “Policing in the 21 st century – reconnecting police and the people”
Report From	Chief Executive’s Department Policy and Programme Office

Contact name: Robert Ormerod

Tel: 01962 845122

Email: robert.ormerod@hants.gov.uk

1. Introduction

- 1.1. On the 27 July 2010, the Home Secretary published a consultation “Policing in the 21st Century.” This note summarises the consultation proposals and their significance for the County Council. The full text of the consultation is available at:
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/consultations/policing-21st-century/policing-21st-full-pdf?view=Binary>
- 1.2. This is one of a number of developments under the Home Office Structural Reform Plan. There is currently a further consultation on rebalancing the licensing act aimed at addressing alcohol related harm and violence and a further consultation on the review of anti-social behaviour legislation is expected later in the year.
- 1.3. As part of the Coalition Government’s stated vision for a “free, fair and responsible society,” the proposals for reform promote a radical shift in power and control. The stated intention of the reform is to change the focus of the police away from government targets and bureaucracy and towards being better connected with the public they serve.
- 1.4. Some aspects of this consultation relate to how policies to which the Government is already committed in the Coalition Agreement might be implemented and other aspects relate to the development of wider policy. Some aspects of the consultation feedback will be used to inform the legislation in the *Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill* which will be introduced in the autumn 2010.
- 1.5. Members’ attention is particularly drawn to the proposals set out in Chapter 2 of the consultation document which relates to ‘increasing democratic accountability’ and which refers to *‘the abolition of Police Authorities and their replacement by directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners – ensuring the police respond to local priorities and are*

directly accountable to the public for delivering safer communities and cutting crime and ASB'.

- 1.6. The consultation includes a number of specific questions provided in Section 10 of this briefing. The consultation started on 26 July 2010 and ends on 20 September 2010 (8 weeks).
- 1.7. There will be an opportunity on the 15 September 2010 to share the views of local partners on this consultation at the County Strategy Group for Crime and Disorder which is chaired by Councillor Perry. The CSG may wish to consider submitting its own response to the consultation.

2. Summary of significance for the County Council

- 2.1. In general terms, the direction towards greater local influence over policing priorities, less central direction and bureaucracy is to be welcomed.
- 2.2. Of concern is the central proposal for a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), their role in directing police resources and wider partnership activity. The Government appears to have made a clear commitment to introducing Police and Crime Commissioners and the consultation is focused on the detail of implementation.
- 2.3. The Local Government Association (LGA) has challenged this proposal and proposed a model based on local Authority Police Executives and the County Council may still wish to challenge the concept consider whether it would back the LGA proposal instead or as well as commenting on the specific aspects of implementation. The LGA proposal is reproduced at Annex 1.

3. Leader's views

- 3.1. The Leader has considered the proposals and wishes to propose the following points in the County Council's response to the consultation:
 - That Members agree with the LGA response in terms of reintegration of the Police Authority into local government but do not endorse the LGA's opposition to PCCs.
 - That Members endorse the operational independence of Chief Constables but would point out that there is a possible tension between the operational independence of Chief Constables and the democratically mandated PCCs.
 - The Government's proposals, as they currently stand, increase the democratic bureaucracy within constabularies as the proposals would interpose PCCs.
 - Under the authority's duty to co-operate, Hampshire County Council believes that as the upper tier authority in Hampshire, it should exercise strategic overview and scrutiny of Police constabularies and any PCC.

4. Key aspects of the consultation

4.1. The consultation is structured around five components. These are:

- a) **Challenges** of accountability, disempowered professionals, police visibility and availability, and tightening resources. This is against a backdrop of comparatively high levels of crime and antisocial behaviour, low public confidence and the changing nature of crime including terrorism, a growth in serious organised crime and cyber-crime.
- b) **Increasing democratic accountability**, including the abolition of police authorities and their replacement with directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners
- c) **Removing bureaucratic accountability**, including removing top down targets, simplifying processes and improving police leadership
- d) **Creating a national policing framework** including value for money, inter-force collaboration for back office and service delivery for serious and cross-boundary criminality, simplifying national arrangements and the creation of a National Crime Agency.
- e) **Tackling crime together (partnership working)** including stronger public engagement and reform of the criminal justice system

Summary of proposals

5. Challenges

- 5.1. The Government argues that the UK spends comparatively more money on criminal justice but still suffers comparatively high levels of crime and it is one of the issues that people are most concerned about. People are less likely to do anything about it themselves and turn a blind eye often due to apathy or fear of the consequences.
- 5.2. Visibility and availability: It is calculated that only 11% of police officers are available to the public at any one time. It is recognised that increasing complexity of the nature of crime such as terrorism, serious organised crime, cyber crime, economic crime, child protection and domestic violence have become central to policing and take up significant resources. These demands need to be balanced with a focus on meeting the public expectations of increased availability and presence.
- 5.3. Tightening resources: The paper proposes that spending on the police has increased by 24% in real terms since 2000/01 with a focus on increased officer and staff numbers and other inputs rather than

outcomes. As part of the Chancellor's Emergency Budget, unprotected departments including the Home Office will face real cuts over the next four years. The October Spending Review will include Whitehall Departmental spending limits and individual Force budgets will follow.

6. Accountability

- 6.1. Accountability has been upwards to the Home Secretary with increased intervention in terms of legislation, regulation, guidance, standards, performance measures and targets and sanctions for areas of failure. It is proposed that the public need to be the natural democratic check and balance.
- 6.2. It is proposed that the tripartite relationship between Government, professional police leadership and the public is unbalanced. National targets and standards have not taken account of local needs and have eroded professional leadership. It is argued that Police Authorities have tried to improve police responsiveness and represent local communities but have themselves not been adequately visible and there is no direct way for the public to change or challenge those who govern policing on their behalf.
- 6.3. The Government is committed to increase democratic accountability by implementing the following by 2012.
 - Abolition of Police Authorities and their replacement by directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs);
 - Providing on-line crime and value for money information to help the public know what is happening in their area;
 - A more independent Inspectorate of Constabulary to help the public hold their Police and Crime Commissioner to account.
- 6.4. Police and Crime Commissioners
 - a) The Government intends the first elections for PCCs will be in May 2012. The PCC will be elected for the force area. The Government wants candidates for Commissioners to come from a wide range of backgrounds, including both representatives of political parties and independents. It is silent on the eligibility of serving councillors.
 - b) Commissioners will have a set four year term of office and term limits of two terms. The Government intends to apply the existing framework for the conduct of local government and Parliamentary elections including the recognised eligibility criteria for standing for public office, in preparing for the first set of elections in May 2012. It is considering the appropriate voting system, and believes that a preferential voting system is the right option. The Government will work closely with local government representatives and the Electoral Commission to ensure that these elections are coordinated effectively and represent good value for money.
 - c) PCCs will have duties in relation to

- Holding the chief Constable to account for visibility and availability of police, value for money and the diversity of the workforce.
 - Collaborating, in the interests of value for money and to tackle cross border, national and international crimes.
 - Playing a considerable role in wider questions of community safety and criminal justice
- d) PCCs will hold the Chief Constable to account for the full range of his current responsibilities and will have five key roles:
- Representing and engaging with all those who live and work in the communities in their force area and identifying their policing needs;
 - Setting priorities that meet those needs by agreeing a local strategic plan for the force;
 - Holding the Chief Constable to account for achieving these priorities as efficiently and effectively as possible, and playing a role in wider questions of community safety;
 - Setting the force budget and setting the precept. The intention is that precept raising will be subject to referendum. Further detail will be set out by the DCLG;
 - Appointing and, where necessary, removing the Chief Constable;
 - Commissioners will need to appoint and lead a team to support them in their important responsibilities.

6.5. Role of the Chief Constable

- a) The Government will protect absolutely the operational independence of the police as a fundamental principle of British policing. Chief Constables will have a clear line of accountability to directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners but this will not cut across their operational independence and duty to act without fear or favour. Chief Constables will have greater professional freedom to take operational decisions to meet the priorities set for them by their local community via their Commissioner. This will include being able to appoint all of their top management team.

6.6. Checks and Balances

- a) The Government recognises the public need to have the right information to judge the Commissioner's performance and they need to know the Commissioner can be called to account with effective scrutiny and appropriate checks and balances, in particular at the local level.

6.7. Scrutiny

- a) A new Police and Crime Panel will be established. This will ensure there is a robust overview role at force level and that decisions of the

Police and Crime Commissioners are tested on behalf of the public on a regular basis. Panels in each force area will be drawn from locally elected councillors from constituent wards and independent and lay members who will bring additional skills, experience and diversity to the discussions. It is not clear how this relates to the local authority scrutiny arrangements.

- b) PCC Panels will hold confirmation hearings for the post of Chief Constable. They will have a power to trigger a referendum on the policing precept recommended by the Commissioner. This mirrors the proposal for triggering a referendum on the local authority council tax. The Government will also require police forces to hold regular 'beat meetings' so that residents can hold them to account.

6.8. Transparency

- a) There will be more consultation on local policing plans.
- b) From January 2011, the Government will ensure that crime data is published at a level which allows the public to see what is happening on their streets and neighbourhoods. Police forces will be required to provide information about how much of the taxpayer's money they receive and what they are doing with it.
- c) PCCs and their support teams will be subject to transparency arrangements. The Government will publish estimates of the cost of the elections and other aspects of the Commissioners policy. The Government will make proposals for the pay of Police and Crime Commissioners.

6.9. HM Inspectorate of Constabulary

- a) Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) will become a stronger advocate in the public interest, independent from the Government and the police service.

6.10. Checks and balances at the national level

- a) The Home Secretary intends to retain powers to ensure that matters of national importance are dealt with effectively.

6.11. Complaints and recall

- a) Police and Crime Panels and the Independent Police Complaints Commission will have a role in dealing with formal complaints against PCCs. There will also be a power of recall for Panels and the public in relation to PCCs where the IPCC has ruled that serious misconduct has taken place. If a Commissioner should resign or be unable to do their job, the Panels will be able to appoint an interim Commissioner until a by-election can be arranged or the Commissioner can return to the post.

7. Removing Bureaucratic Accountability

- 7.1. The Government aims to achieve this by:
- Ending Whitehall interference in policing: freeing the police from central control by removing Government targets such as the confidence target in the LAA, and excessive centralised performance management;
 - Reducing bureaucracy and promoting professional judgement; and
 - Ensuring that the leaders of the service take responsibility for keeping bureaucracy to a minimum at force level.

8. A National Framework for Efficient Local Policing

- 8.1. PCCs are to be supported by effective national arrangements to ensure their budgets are used to deliver the best possible outcomes and ensure that their local communities are kept safe from criminals who may operate across force or national boundaries. The Government proposes that by collaborating with each other, police forces can make savings from back-office and support functions, and protect the public from serious and organised crime more effectively. And there are some things that need to be done just once, nationally. This will be achieved by:
- **Better value for money in local policing** – a review of remuneration and conditions of service for police officers and staff.
 - **Better collaboration between forces** to save money on back-office and operational support functions, and tackle serious and cross-boundary criminality more effectively.
 - Simplifying national arrangements, including creating a **new National Crime Agency** that will lead the fight against organised crime, protect our borders and provide services best delivered at national level.
- 8.2. The intention is not to create a much smaller number of “strategic forces” operating at regional level through compulsory mergers.

9. Tackling crime together (partnership working)

- 9.1. The three key elements will be:
- Enabling and encouraging people to get involved and mobilising neighbourhood activists;
 - Developing and implementing a radical Criminal Justice Service reform strategy; and
 - Stripping away unnecessary prescription and bureaucracy in the partnership landscape.
- 9.2. The Government is considering creating enabling powers to bring together Community Safety Partnerships at the force level to deal with

force wide community safety issues and giving Commissioners a role in commissioning community safety work.

- 9.3. The Government sees a potential future role for Commissioners in respect of the wider community safety agenda and the criminal justice services. Some of the proposed measures include:
- Exploring a cost effective way of establishing the number '101' single national police non-emergency number for reporting crime and ASB;
 - Promoting more active citizens;
 - Participatory budgeting;
 - Community engagement in restorative justice schemes;
 - Forces encouraged to sign compacts with the voluntary and community sector;
 - Sentencing reform to ensure that it is effective in deterring crime, protecting the public, punishing offenders and particularly cutting reoffending; and
 - Developing a new approach to the rehabilitation of offenders including reviewing the prison estate's contribution to rehabilitation and reducing reoffending.

10. Consultation questions

Increasing democratic 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?
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?
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?
4. How might Commissioners best engage with their communities – individuals, businesses and voluntary organisations - at the neighbourhood level?
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?
6. What information would help the public make judgements about their force and Commissioner, including the level of detail and comparability with other areas?

Removing bureaucratic accountability

7. Locally, what are examples of unnecessary bureaucracy within police forces and how can the service get rid of this?
8. How should forces ensure that information that local people feel is important is made available without creating a burdensome data recording process?

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

A national framework for efficient local policing

12. What policing functions should be delivered between forces acting collaboratively?
13. What are the principal obstacles to collaboration between forces or with other partners and how they can they be addressed?
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)?
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?
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?
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?
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?

Tackling crime together

19. What more can the Government do to support the public to take a more active role in keeping neighbourhoods safe?
20. How can the Government encourage more people to volunteer (including as special constables) and provide necessary incentives to encourage them to stay?
21. What more can central Government do to make the criminal justice system more efficient?
22. What prescriptions from Government get in the way of effective local partnership working?
23. What else needs to be done to simplify and improve community safety and criminal justice work locally?

ANNEX 1: Local Government Association Proposal for improving police accountability



IMPROVING POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY: THE LGA PROPOSAL

Introduction

The police need to be accountable to the public they serve, and that accountability needs to be strengthened. However, introducing directly elected individuals to oversee the police is not, in the LGA's view, the best way to strengthen police accountability. In fact we believe directly elected individuals will weaken the ability of the police, councils and other public services in the fundamental objective of cutting crime. In particular we are concerned this model will:

Fragment local partnerships which are vital in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour as competing manifesto commitments pull councils and the police in different directions;

Make a place-based budgeting approach, which is key in driving out savings and improving services, more difficult;

Increase the possibility that responsibility is passed between public agencies for failures to reduce crime;

Divert resources from important, but less visible police activity, such as tackling serious and organised crime and violent extremism; and,

Use scarce resources on servicing elected officials at the expense of frontline staff.

The LGA believes a more efficient and cost effective way of increasing police accountability would be to reintegrate police accountability structures with local government. This would enhance and strengthen partnerships, provide the public with a greater say in policing and ensures that every penny can be used for frontline policing.

What does strengthening accountability involve?

For an organisation to be truly accountable, accountability needs to be embedded throughout the organisation at all levels, both in structures and culture. The public most want to have a say in what the police do and challenge how they do it at a street and neighbourhood level. But in order to keep our communities safe the police operate at a number of interrelated levels, both in terms of tackling criminality and geographically - from the very local issues such as dealing with anti-social behaviour through to more serious crimes such as human and drugs trafficking, through to counter terrorism. The police therefore need to be

accountable at each level: from the street and neighbourhood level, to ward level, to district and borough level, to city level, through to police force and combined police force levels.

In a number of forces around the country this accountability from the street to the force level and beyond already exists. The challenge is how this good practice can be formalised, fully integrated into place-based local government approaches, and replicated everywhere. It is no longer good enough to rely on local practice and willingness, as mechanisms need to be more visible and transparent to the public so they can press for appropriate action if necessary.

Providing greater local police accountability

Street and ward level accountability

The public's greatest appetite for having a say on what the police do, and challenging how they do it, is at the street and neighbourhood level. People are most interested in the crime and anti-social behaviour issues in the area immediately around their home and in neighbouring streets, and want to know what is being done to tackle it.

Visible and accessible neighbourhood policing teams are already in place to deal specifically with these issues. In many places they are also working in close partnership with councillors and councils to make the communities they serve safer. **Timely and relevant information in person from police officers and PCSOs or councillors, contact with local residents (for example through neighbourhood watch or tenants' associations), along with letters and newsletters** informing people of what is being done about specific issues would ensure a close connection with and challenge from local people.

At a ward level the local partnerships of neighbourhood policing teams (and on occasion the neighbourhood policing inspector for the area) and councillors can also deal with the more persistent or widespread local issues that may affect several streets or neighbourhoods or a village. **Regular beat meetings involving representatives from all relevant public services, in conjunction with up-to-date local crime information**, would enable the public to hold the local agencies tasked with cutting crime to account.

City district accountability

Within the larger cities, more serious local crime issues such as tackling drug dealing and alcohol-related crime, are often dealt with at a district or area committee level. Police involvement at this level is usually led by inspectors through local non-statutory partnerships or operational task groups, which sit underneath the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

Where there is an area or district committee this already provides a forum for the public either directly or through their councillors to hold the police to account. They are regularly attended by the appropriate police personnel, most usually the local inspector, and discuss local crime issues. The public can - and do - attend and ask questions of the police and council.

District council and small unitary authority CSP accountability

More serious local issues and crime including licensing and youth work are dealt with at an authority level in district councils and small unitary authorities. Activity to prevent and tackle crime is driven by their CSPs. Typically police involvement in

these CSPs is provided by inspectors or Basic Command Unit (BCU) or divisional commanders.

Although the public are generally less interested in engaging at this level of decision-making, in order to provide greater checks and balances on the police and greater transparency to the public, we believe district council and smaller unitary authority CSPs should move from being an officer level group to having greater elected representative involvement. This can be achieved by ensuring that the **CSP is chaired by a member of the council's executive, usually the portfolio holder with responsibility for community safety.**

Greater integration of the police with councils at a management level would help improve crime reduction performance, increase their connections with other public services and strengthen accountability. There are already a number of examples of good practice of **integrating police officers into local authority corporate management teams.** But there also needs to be strong working at the political level with the appropriate **police personnel regularly attending the council's cabinet meetings – alongside the council's portfolio holder for community safety** - to answer questions on performance, to look at the force's budget proposals alongside those of the council and to work with councillors to decide how to meet public expectations. Further integration might include giving the council a role in the appointment of the inspector, or BCU or divisional commander.

The public can challenge the police and seek redress through cabinet meetings and crime and disorder overview and scrutiny committees where they are able to attend and ask questions, and through the use of Councillor Calls for Action. This could be further strengthened by the **co-option of voluntary and business sector, faith community, and neighbourhood watch representatives onto the overview and scrutiny committee** to ensure a whole systems approach of examining an issue where many partners play a role.

City, metropolitan district, and large unitary council accountability

In city, metropolitan district and large unitary councils, crime and community safety issues, such as gun and gang crime and prostitution, are also dealt with by CSPs. Typically, police involvement in these CSPs is provided by BCU or divisional commanders or other senior staff officers.

As outlined in relation to district councils we believe that the CSP should be chaired by a member of the council's executive, usually the portfolio holder with responsibility for community safety. We also believe there should be greater integration of police officers into council corporate management teams so that they regularly participate in executive meetings. As with the district level CSPs there could also be a role for the council in the appointment of the BCU or divisional commanders they work with. Again challenge and redress can be provided not only through the executive, but also through the overview and scrutiny committee responsible for crime and disorder matters, which could also be strengthened by co-option from interested groups such as Community Empowerment Networks, local associations and individuals.

Force level accountability

At force level, chief constables and their senior officers are responsible with partners for managing the force, developing strategic plans, and prioritisation of force-wide issues. We believe that partnership working at this level would be best

facilitated **by reintegrating police accountability into council structures**. This would:

- provide democratic accountability;
- be cost effective;
- require only minimal legislative changes;
- enhance and strengthen partnership arrangements;
- drive out duplicate spending; and
- deliver efficiency savings.

In 32 police forces we propose the establishment of new **Local Government Policing Executives** to replace police authorities. Upper-tier councils in these 32 forces would appoint two **policing champions** for their authorities. Directly elected mayors could also take on this role. The policing champions would then be their council's representatives on the Local Government Policing Executive.

The Policing Executives' functions would be similar to those currently accorded to police authorities: appointing and dismissing the chief constable and other senior police officers, establishing the priorities for the force, agreeing strategic policing plans and setting the police precept and the police force budget. A continued role for councillors in setting the police precept will preserve a critical link to local authorities and their budgets.

The size of the Policing Executives would depend on the number of principal authorities in the police force area, with equal representation irrespective of size of an upper-tier authority's population. This means the Executives would range from 4-20 members in size. The Executives could also be required to reflect the overall political balance across the authorities involved. The policing champions would be responsible for all policing activity in their areas, ensuring a good connection between local and force-wide issues.

The Local Government Policing Executives would be held to account and scrutinised by a nominated **joint policing overview and scrutiny committee drawn from the upper-tier authorities in the area**. These committees would be open to the public and allow questioning of the policing champions.

The size of the committee would be for the member authorities to agree, with the number of members nominated by each authority reflecting their population sizes. In order to ensure robust and effective scrutiny of the Policing Executives the membership of the committee would also have to reflect the overall political balance across the authorities involved. If necessary, the chair of the joint policing overview and scrutiny committee would be an opposition councillor. The committees, like other local authority committees would be able to strengthen further the scrutiny they provide by co-opting independent members to provide additional skills or local knowledge, and to ensure the interests of groups such as minority and ethnic and faith communities or the business sector were taken into account.

In local authorities, checks and balances on the Policing Executive are provided by overview and scrutiny committees and full council. To replicate this, **joint policing overview and scrutiny committees** would:

- make proposals to the Policing Executive;
- require the chief constable and other police officers to attend joint committee meetings to give evidence;

- approve the Policing Executive's draft budget for the force, with amendments requiring the agreement of at least 60% of the joint committee members voting.
- approve the Policing Executive's appointments of the force's chief officers, including the chief constable, through confirmation hearings.

In nine English forces (Cumbria, Hertfordshire, Gloucestershire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Suffolk, Surrey and Warwickshire) where there is just one principal authority – the county council – **the two county policing champions would form the Local Government Policing Executive** on their own. This structure would also facilitate even greater integration of police and council activity as the chief constable would be able to sit as part of the council's senior management team.

These two member Local Government Policing Executives would also be held to account by a joint policing overview and scrutiny committee. This would be formed by councillors from the county and districts in the county's area. Membership of the committee would have to reflect the overall political balance across the county and district councils, with the chair drawn from the largest opposition group on the county council.

Cross force accountability

Chief constables regularly liaise and meet with their counterparts in other forces to discuss serious or organised crime and counter-terrorism issues that cross force boundaries, or to seek assistance in relation to major incidents. **This level of activity should also see the police subject to democratic accountability.** This should be achieved in our view by each Local Government Policing Executive nominating two representatives (the nominations seeking to reflect the political balance on the Executive) who would work on an ad hoc basis with the chief constables to address the important issues being raised. They would then be able to report back to their Executives on the issues, with the Executives keeping local residents informed through their engagement with the public.

Improving performance

The new performance framework suggested by the LGA in our offer to the new government of **streamlined inspection structures alongside stringent self-regulation and a sector-led programme of work to develop data collection systems, analytical capacity, and activity through LG Improvement and Development peer reviews at least every three years** will help to drive up police performance while reducing bureaucracy and central targets. Ensuring effective operation of Local Government Policing Executives will be important. Given the experience and competence of community safety portfolio holders, this new role of policing champions will be a welcome and deliverable policy.

Conclusion

This model delivers our shared aim of improving police accountability from the local to the national levels. At the local level, it provides the public with a greater say in policing priorities; at the partnership level, it importantly enhances rather than compromises crime prevention and joint working; at the force level it provides a more dynamic and effective accountability. It is completely consistent with place-based budgeting and would deliver real financial savings, ensuring that every penny can be used for frontline policing