

To: Surrey Police Authority
Date: 6th February 2012
By: Alison Bolton
Title: Chief Executive's Report

Purpose of Report/Issue:

To cover issues not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Recommendation(s) -

That Members note the report.

The Localism Act and Standards

Further to the last update to the Authority, the impact of the new arrangements for codes of conduct, dealing with allegations, appointment of independent persons and members' registers of interest as arising from the Localism Act, have become clearer. We understand that the new standards provisions are likely to come into effect on 1st July and that, in spite of being just four months away from abolition, police authorities must comply with them.

From July, Police Authorities can still retain Standards Committees, but they are no longer statutory. We must still have a Code of Conduct in place, plus a mechanism for dealing with allegations of misconduct on the part of members. This process must include an 'independent person', but lawyers are still debating whether or not existing independent members on Standards Committees could fulfil this role. If not, we would have to recruit someone new or look to 'share' with a local authority.

The Association of Police Authority Chief Executives has written to DCLG to suggest that police authorities be exempted from the commencement of the new provisions, arguing that the existing arrangements could continue between July and November.

Business Partnering in Policing

Since the last update to SPA on 8th December, the Joint Programme Team has been working hard to prepare the OJEU notice and associated documentation for publication. As part of this process, every Force and Authority was asked to confirm whether or not they wish to be included on the notice. All bar one Force has been named on the OJEU. Whilst this does not constitute any obligation to participate in the procurement process, being named in the OJEU does give forces the option either to join or potentially buy services from the partnership at some later date. The OJEU notice was published on 23rd January 2012.

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January 2012

At the time of writing, the Memorandum of Understanding between Surrey, West Midlands and the Home Office was in final draft and due to be signed by all parties.

An additional meeting of the West Midlands Police Authority in January has meant that previously reported timescales have slipped. The next 'gateway' point, where the Authority is asked to make a formal decision on progressing is likely to be at the Authority's May meeting. In the meantime, the BPP team will be attending a March workshop to update members on progress.

A small scrutiny panel has also been established, as agreed at the December meeting, to review key documentation and financial information between the key gateway points. This panel will report to the full Authority.

Police and Crime Commissioners - Transition Update

Since the last meeting of the Authority, a number of key documents have been finalised. These include the Financial Management Code of Practice, laid in Parliament on 16th January 2012, which sets out the working relationship between the two 'corporations sole' and details of financial, audit and accountancy arrangements post November 2012.

Progress has been made in work with local authority colleagues as they seek to establish the Police and Crime Panel which will hold the Commissioner to account. The panel will be a joint committee of 14 members (one from each of Surrey's 12 local authorities plus two co-opted members) and it falls to the authorities themselves to set it up and run it. The Government intends for the panel to be established in advance of the arrival of the Commissioner and has been clear that it should not be seen as a 'continuity police authority'.

Surrey council leaders have recently considered a report which proposes that Surrey works towards having a 'shadow' panel in place in the summer of 2012. One authority will need to take the lead on setting up and ultimately 'hosting' the panel and it has been suggested by leaders, subject to discussion and a formal decision by all parties, that this role falls to Surrey County Council. The panel would most likely meet at various locations throughout the county. The Home Office proposes to make £30,000, plus on costs available to local authorities to support the work of the panel, although it is not yet clear whether this will be a one-off payment or how it will be paid.

Colleagues in Surrey County Council are now working closely with the Police Authority and District and Borough representatives to prepare the necessary arrangements for the panel so that members may be appointed to it soon after the May local elections.

On 17th January, SPA officers met with their counter-parts in the South East region to discuss progress on preparing for the arrival of Commissioners and consider where best practice could be shared and duplication of effort identified and avoided.

HMIC Inspections

HMIC made a number of visits to Surrey in November and December to examine our progress in meeting the financial challenges facing the Force over the spending review period. Now HMIC has completed its programme of inspections, it has identified a number of forces which will be subject to closer scrutiny. Surrey is not among them. HMIC will however, be continuing to examine plans for closing the existing budget gap.

HMIC will be returning to Force in early February to look at the Force's policies and strategies for addressing anti-social behaviour. Inspectors are also planning to examine Force's provisions for public accessibility to services and will be looking in more detail at our plans for transition to new forms of police governance.

Equalities and Human Rights Implications – None arising.

Risk- None arising.

Attachments –	None
Background papers -	None

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