

SPA Partnership Briefing on Change to Police Governance - Elections

When are the planned elections for Police and Crime Commissioners?

A recent amendment to the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill (September 2011) moved the planned date of elections for Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) from May 2012 to 15 November 2012. There is opposition to this date with issues around the extra cost of a November election, predicted low turn out rates for a winter election, extra workload required for a November election and clashes with council work on the electoral register at that time of year. The Labour Party would like the date moved back further to May 2013. The Bill is being debated in Parliament and we may know more later in September.

The Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA) has made representations against the date. Surrey Police Authority has also written to the Home Office against a November election.

How will the elections be run?

A PCC will be elected for each policing area. The Surrey Police area is co-terminus with council boundaries. Local Returning Officers will run the election in each borough and district council in Surrey. The elections will be overseen and co-ordinated by the Police Area Returning Officer (PARO). Guildford Borough Council will provide the PARO for Surrey; they will be responsible for receiving local count totals, collating the totals and announcing the result.

Voting will be under the Supplementary Vote (SV) system. SV allows voters to mark their first and second choice in an election. If no candidate receives the majority of first choice votes, the top two candidates will go to a second round of counting where second preferences from eliminated candidates are counted. The candidate with the highest number of first and second preference votes will be elected. SV is used for directly elected mayors. The Home Office is developing guidance.

Who will pay for the elections?

Government will pay for the elections centrally, although it is unclear whether any costs will fall on local councils.

What we doing in Surrey to prepare?

Until the Bill is passed, we are unsure of dates and whether the plans for a PCC will go ahead. We are making contact with partners to develop good working relationships.

If the Bill is passed, Surrey Police Authority will be holding a briefing session, with Guildford Borough Council, for potential candidates on the nomination and election process.

How can I find out more?

Surrey Police Authority's website will be updated with transition plans when the legislation is passed: www.surreypa.gov.uk

The Bill and its progress can be read at:

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/police-reform-and-social-responsibility.html>

If you wish to speak to any SPA officers about transition please contact Katie Kempen or Johanna Burne on 01483 630200 or at spa@surrey.police.uk