



Policing in the 21st Century - Home Secretary announcement

26.07.10

For info please find below a link to the consultation paper, 'Policing in the Twenty-first Century' as outlined by the Home Secretary this afternoon. The key areas outlined include;

- Soca will be replaced by the National Crime Agency, which will include a new border police unit, the child exploitation and online protection centre (Ceop) and parts of the National Policing Improvement Agency, which it is thought will be phased out. The new agency will focus on cross-border organised crime and drug trafficking, as well as providing support to individual forces.
- At a local level police authorities, which currently hold the 43 forces in England and Wales to account, are set to be abolished. Elections will take place in May 2012 for police and crime commissioners to replace them. Their replacements will have the power to set police force budgets and hire and fire chief constables.
- Power will also be transferred away from government with the premise of 'trusting police professionals'. The government will do away with central targets. According to Theresa May frontline staff will 'no longer be form writers but crime fighters: freed up from bureaucracy and central guidance and trusted to use their professionalism to get on with their jobs.'

Please click the following link for the full report;

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/consultations/policing-21st-century/>

Federation thoughts:

We will need to fully assess the implications of the report before giving an official response; however our initial thoughts are;

- There is very little new in this paper – for example the proposal to look into the non-emergency number has been around for many years and it is slightly concerning that this is considered a priority when budgets are so tight.
- The Federation is not against the proposal for elected commissioners but we would urge detailed consideration and a firm business case. Whilst we are fairly open minded our stipulation is that policing must remain independent.

- On the proposal for the disbandment of Soca – assuming the new agency has the same set up as the previous one it is important that officers are made aware that transferring over will mean they are no longer covered by the Federation, should they need it.

Home office press release for more info:

Radical reforms for police announced

A radical new programme of reform to change the face of policing and re-establish the link between the police and the public, tackle organised crime and protect our borders was unveiled by the Home Secretary today.

Policing in the 21st Century: Reconnecting Police and the People sets out how the police service in England and Wales will become more accountable to the public and responsive to local people, more focused at a national level and more effective at tackling crime, as well as providing better value for money.

Key elements of the new strategy include:

- the first election of Police and Crime Commissioners, to hold police forces to account and strengthen the bond between the police and the public, in May 2012;
- a powerful new National Crime Agency to lead the fight against organised crime and strengthen our border security;
- greater collaboration between police forces to increase public protection and drive savings;
- phasing out the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA);
- cutting bureaucracy, removing restrictive health and safety procedures and freeing up officers' time; and
- a clear role for everyone, including members of the public, in cutting crime through beat meetings, neighbourhood watch schemes and voluntary groups.

Prime Minister David Cameron said:

"It is vital that police officers are free to tackle the crime and antisocial behaviour that matters most to people, not tied-down by bureaucracy and form-filling. The fundamental reforms we are announcing today continue our work to deliver a police service that is visible and accountable to the very people it serves in communities up and down the country.

"By replacing invisible police authorities with directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners, we can forge a direct link between the police and the public,

ensuring that the public have a voice in setting police priorities and have the power to hold the police to account for keeping our streets safe and secure."

Home Secretary Theresa May said:

"For too long, people have been faced with crime levels that are too high and a police service that has been too focused on Whitehall targets to really get to grips with what matters locally.

"Today, I am starting an ambitious programme of reform for policing in the 21st Century. At the strategic level, this includes a new National Crime Agency to strengthen the fight against organised crime and toughen policing at the border. On a local level, it will put local people at the heart of policing by giving them the power to elect Police and Crime Commissioners.

"I am also setting out how we will ensure police forces work more efficiently to strengthen the fight against crime while providing taxpayers with better value for money in these tough economic times."

The publication of Policing in the 21st Century marks the start of a public consultation on key features of the Government's reform programme, including directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners who will hold forces to account, and in turn be directly accountable to the public. This will focus the police on local people's priorities rather than responding to what national politicians and civil servants think these priorities are.

This radical new approach will ensure that everyone has a say in how their area is policed, via their local commissioner, and that everyone plays their part in cutting crime within the Big Society. This includes more opportunities to get involved in keeping neighbourhoods safe through attending beat meetings and being members of Neighbourhood Watch. It will also provide more opportunities for citizens to volunteer with the police service, and within the wider criminal justice system.

The strategy also sets out how the Government will tackle the bureaucratic burden on police officers by returning more responsibility to the police to charge in minor offences, scrapping unnecessary paperwork like the 'stop' form, and abolishing central targets.

The Government will also work with the police service and the Health and Safety Executive to strengthen guidance on applying a common sense approach to health and safety. This will include scrutinising procedures that act as a barrier to intervening and recognising those officers who put themselves in harms way.

A new National Crime Agency will lead the fight against organised crime, protect our borders and provide services best delivered at a national level. It is envisaged that the new Agency will be made up of a number of operational 'commands', under the leadership of a chief constable. This powerful new body will harness and exploit the intelligence, analytical and enforcement

capabilities of the existing Serious Organised Crime Agency and the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre and better connect these capabilities to those within the police service, HM Revenue and Customs, the UK Border Agency and a range of other criminal justice partners.

The policing landscape will be further simplified through the phasing out of the NPIA and clearer roles for the Association of Chief Police Officers and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary.

Police and Crime Commissioners will be required to ensure that police forces work more efficiently by collaborating with each other across a much wider range of policing functions than at present, to strengthen public protection, but also ensure better value for money.

Many of the proposals will feature in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill, to be published in the autumn.

Ahead of the launch of this Bill, the Government is seeking the views of both the public and professionals across the criminal justice system on specific aspects of the reform programme.