

# **Safe Newcastle**

**23 September 2008**

## **Policing Green Paper - From the Neighbourhood to the National: Policing Our Communities Together**

**Report by: Community Safety Co-ordinator**

### **1. Summary**

1.1 The Policing Green Paper continues a series of reforms within the police service with the aim of 'giving the police more freedom and power and the public more say and action on crime in their neighbourhoods'. The paper has considered the challenges and recommendations contained in a number of reports including the independent Review of Policing led by Sir Ronnie Flanagan and the Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime review. Submissions were also received from the Association of Police Authorities (APA) and the Association of Chief Police officers (ACPO).

The paper sets out the Home office vision for the future of policing, including measures to improve the connection between the public and the police, an increased emphasis on neighbourhood policing in partnership with local partners, reform of the membership of Police Authorities, and a greater freedom to establish local priorities.

### **2. Recommendation**

2.1 To discuss the report and formulate a Safe Newcastle response to the consultation on the Green Paper.

### **3. Introduction/Background**

3.1 The Policing Green Paper continues a series of reforms to the police service in the last decade, designed to sustain the downward trend in crime over that period of time. The Green Paper outlines the steady fall in crime since 1995 and the corresponding improvements in customer satisfaction and public confidence in the police, though noting that these have not been as striking. One of the reasons it offers for this is a perception gap between the reality of crime figures and people's perceptions of the levels of crime and anti-social behaviour within their communities.

3.2 Although crime has fallen, a significant number of people believe that crime has risen. It should be noted here that experience of anti-social behaviour can impact significantly on people's perceptions of crime in general.

The paper seeks to address this through a series of measures including the provision of better information on crime to local people and cutting bureaucracy and improving technology to ensure police officers spend more time in communities. While the focus of the Green paper is on the police service there are significant direct and indirect implications for local authorities, Crime and Disorder Partnerships and police authorities.

#### 4. **Text**

4.1 The Green Paper proposes a number of changes and developments under a range of broad themes including;

- standards of service
- neighbourhood policing
- empowering local communities
- improving police technology
- supporting police staff development

4.2 The majority of the document relates to specific improvements proposed within the organisation and management of the police, including reducing bureaucracy, improving leadership, developing the workforce, and collaboration between police forces.

4.3 This report focuses on those areas where there are significant implications for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and other public service partners, notably in improving the connection between the police and the public.

#### 4.4 **Key proposals within the Green Paper**

##### 4.5 **Neighbourhood Policing**

4.6 The paper stresses the importance of linking neighbourhood policing teams very closely with local councils and neighbourhood management arrangements, and confirms that funding for neighbourhood policing will be ring fenced for at least the next three years. Proposals on neighbourhood policing concentrate on integrating with other services at a neighbourhood level to better tackle community problems, with an emphasis upon local authorities as the key partner for the police in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour issues.

4.7 In Newcastle this concurs with developments in local governance and neighbourhood management. Neighbourhood policing teams are well established and working with partners through ward level Safe Neighbourhoods Action and Problem Solving Groups (SNAPS).

4.8 The role of Police Community Support Officer's (PCSO's) in neighbourhood policing will be maintained and developed with a core role and principles. They will either be integrated into a neighbourhood policing team or deployed to directly support neighbourhood policing teams, with increasing standardisation of uniform, powers and training. Safe Newcastle will need to consider how changes to PCSO roles may impact upon the wider 'police family', including Council Neighbourhood Wardens, and whether the range of powers available are integrated and complimentary.

##### 4.9 **Neighbourhood Partnership Standards**

4.10 The Green Paper suggests a new set of core principles for partnerships at the neighbourhood level, complemented by a degree of local flexibility to meet local needs. These principles will include;

- Strong local leadership at strategic level to drive integration
- Clearly defined and agreed neighbourhoods
- Shared and publicly-negotiated local community safety priorities
- Shared information, feedback and communication processes
- Teams consisting of police, council and other relevant organisations, co-located where possible
- Evidence-based deployment of resources
- Nominated officers in police forces and councils to act as contact points on joint

- action and drive integration of engagement and service delivery
  - A neighbourhood lead (e.g. neighbourhood manager or co-ordinator)
  - Strong joined up community engagement with partner involvement at neighbourhood policing public meetings and vice-versa
- 4.11 Newcastle already adopts and reflects a range of these partnership standards at both a city level through Safe Newcastle and locally through the operation of SNAPS groups. Safe Newcastle operate to a set of Crime and Disorder Partnership minimum standards set down by the Home Office. Strategic leadership is offered through Safe Newcastle's Board, and the partnership is recognised as a high performing one. Shared priorities are identified through strategic assessments and reflected in Safe Newcastle's strategy, but also at a local level through ward plans. Joint working is reflected at a number of levels through the strategic board, Operational Delivery Group which directs operational resources, and ward level SNAPS groups implementing work in local communities.
- 4.12 **Community Safety Participatory Budgets**
- 4.13 To underpin this integration of neighbourhood partnerships, the Home Office will support the use of participatory budgeting involving local community safety resources. Community Safety Participatory Budgets will be piloted in a few volunteer forces this year. Newcastle City Council would be well placed for involvement in this with a national reputation on Participatory Budgeting and status as an Engagement Champion.
- 4.14 **Community Crime Fighter Programme**
- 4.15 Community groups will be encouraged to play a stronger role in tackling crime through the Community Crime Fighter programme. The Green Paper does not at this stage provide any further detail, but this does represent another move towards more engagement with local communities.
- 4.16 **Reducing Re-offending**
- 4.17 Reducing re-offending increasingly requires the co-ordinated action of housing, health services, local authorities and other agencies in resettlement and rehabilitation, and in order to encourage and formalise this, the Green Paper proposes two changes to CDRPs:
- Add, by statute, probation trusts to the list of CDRP responsible authorities
  - Expand the statutory duties of CDRPs to include reducing re-offending
- 4.18 Within Newcastle the governance has already been configured to manage this objective, and reducing re-offending is an existing priority for Safe Newcastle.
- 4.19 **Reform of Police Authorities**
- 4.20 The paper proposes new accountability arrangements to provide stronger, clearer accountability for local communities against agreed outcomes by legislating to reform police authorities, making them more democratic and more effective in responding to the needs of the local community.
- 4.21 The proposals in the paper aim to strengthen the democratic link between the public and the people who hold the police to account through the introduction of directly elected Crime and Policing Representatives (CPR) with responsibility for ensuring local priorities are tackled.
- 4.22 The majority of members on each police authority will no longer be formed from local

councillors, although at least one will be retained along with at least one magistrate member. There will be directly elected 'Crime and Policing Representatives' (CPR) who will form the majority on police authorities **and also chair the local CDRP**. In areas with a directly elected mayor, e.g North Tyneside the mayor will automatically become the crime and policing representative. Councillors will be permitted to stand for election as a CPR. It is worth noting that since the formation of Safe Newcastle, the chair has been the Council lead executive / cabinet member. Police Authorities will remain similar in size to their current form meaning that local authority representation on police authorities will be significantly reduced.

4.23 Possible issues to consider in relation to this proposal include the possibility of individuals being elected on the basis of major national issues which may not reflect local problems (the present media focus upon knife crime would be such an example). In addition to having considerable implications for the composition of police authorities, and particularly the role of councillors within it, these proposals also have implications for the governance of CDRPs.

#### 4.24 **Community Safety Fund**

4.25 The paper proposes to create a 'Community Safety Fund' available to CPRs to enable them to address locally identified priorities. The fund will be created from resources in the existing Basic Command Unit Fund. The fund would be held by the police authority, and the CRP would be required to consult with CDRP partners and local people on spending the fund.

4.26 This proposal has significant implications for the funding role of Safe Newcastle, seemingly suggesting that current operational budgets are to be held by the police authority and overseen by the CPRs. Potentially this undermines a long history of co-ordinated work on budgets between the police, council and other CDRP partners.

4.27 However, the aim of this proposal in the Green Paper is actually to increase the participation of local people in the budgeting process and therefore to increase the engagement and involvement of local people in policing and community safety.

#### 4.28 **Policing Pledge**

4.29 The paper proposes to create a new Policing Pledge with national and local elements clarifying what citizens can expect from the police, underpinned in each area by a set of local priorities. The pledge will concentrate on customer service, neighbourhood policing, contact management and services to victims and witnesses. All areas will implement the policing pledge by the end of the year.

4.30 Through the Policing Pledge police forces will be expected to make every effort to engage with hard to reach groups such as young people. Neighbourhood policing teams will need to consider how they engage in partnership locally with others who are working with young people.

4.31 Locally, the policing pledge potentially provides a 'bridge' between neighbourhood policing and neighbourhood management, and an opportunity to align services and define relationships to local approaches such as ward plans and neighbourhood charters.

#### 4.32 **Improving performance in policing**

4.33 The paper proposes reshaping the performance management system for the police and its partners to reflect the challenges of the new Public Service Agreements

(PSAs). This will include both increasing the extent to which the police service is held to account at a local level and reducing the top down burden.

4.34 An end to the plethora of national targets and centralised performance management, with only one top down national target – to deliver improved levels of public confidence in whether they are identifying and addressing the community safety issues that matter most in each local area. The measure for this will be the PSA indicator from the British Crime Survey that asks ‘whether people think that the police and their partners are dealing with the crime and anti-social behaviour issues that matter locally’. It is important to note that this is a perception indicator.

4.35 The paper proposes reinforcing the focus on reducing crime through strong partnership working, supporting CDRPs to build their capacity, and providing support to local partnerships in meeting LAA targets on crime, alcohol and drugs. The Home office will operate only through the LAA process and not set targets for partnerships outside of that.

#### 4.36 **Conclusion**

4.37 There are a number of implications and potential considerations for members that relate directly to the business of Safe Newcastle;

- The relationship between developing neighbourhood governance and management arrangements and a Green Paper emphasis on neighbourhood policing and integrating partner services at a local level
- The relationship between a changing PCSO role and council services such as wardens
- The ability of Newcastle to reflect the proposed new partnership standards for local joint working
- The proposed role of participatory budgeting in community safety budgets, and the role of Safe Newcastle Strategic Assessments within this
- The new statutory role for the CDRP to address re-offending
- The implications of proposals for new legislation to alter the composition of police authorities with the consequence of fewer council members, and the new role of directly elected Crime and Policing Representative
- The influence of local council arrangements and services on the development of the policing pledge

4.38 The Green Paper proposes a range of consultation questions with a closing date to respond of Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2008. it is recommended that Safe Newcastle responds directly to the consultation.

## 5. **Background Papers and Contact Officer Details**

5.1 1. Home Office Green Paper, From the Neighbourhood to the National: Policing Our Communities Together

5.2 **Contact Officer:- George Kelly, Head of Corporate Planning, Programmes & Research, ext. 25890**