

Policing in the 21st Century: Re-connecting the police and the people

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Response to Consultation Paper

In responding to this consultation paper The London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham has answered many of the questions asked although other agencies will have specific expertise in certain areas. Our response makes reference to 'A New Settlement for Government' (attached, with a summary below) which has been submitted jointly with Wandsworth and Westminster Councils and demonstrates the pivotal role that forward-thinking local authorities can have in developing a new approach to policing.

Introduction

The government has stated a commitment to decentralise services. Excellent councils, such as LBHF (LGC Council of the Year 2010) are hampered in their ability to innovate and provide good quality services at low cost. This is due to centrally-imposed restrictions that create insufficient operational freedom and a lack of financial control in their areas. For these reasons this council believes that the government should trial the devolution of more power to local authorities with a proven track record in excellent service delivery – Foundation Councils. Creating Foundation Councils would demonstrate the wider savings and better outcomes possible by reducing the duplication of local and national agencies. It would also match payment and results, provide place based budgets, building productivity and competitiveness into the delivery of public services. 'A New Settlement for Government' focussed on several areas and a summary of the relevant elements are discussed below.

Devolved Beat Policing

It is calculated that local neighbourhood policing costs the MPS and LBHF just under £10m and 200 officers are deployed on 'community policing' duties. We control about a third of this spending. By pooling budgets, understanding and identifying needs and goals, better outcomes can be achieved at less cost. If LBHF were able to commission or pool budgets for neighbourhood policing there would be an increase in accountability to local people via both the already established Community Safety Partnership, Community Safety Board, Ward Panels and elected local ward councillors. This fits in broadly with the ethos of the recent Home Office report – Policing in the 21st Century - by transferring the power of policing and replacing bureaucratic accountability with democratic accountability. Via the local Community Crime Fighter initiative and the local success of Neighbourhood Watch, there is the potential to provide a platform for showcasing how Big Society can help address issues such as ASB. Discussions have commenced with neighbouring boroughs to consider such an approach within a wider area, covering more than one local authority.

Annex 4 – Overview of the CDRP 2010

Chapter 1

LBHF QUESTION	RESPONSE
How can H&F be considered an exemplar in this new approach to policing?	We have radical proposals for delivering services (see attached proposals)
ADDITIONAL ISSUES/COMMENTS	
Replacing bureaucratic with democratic accountability	<p>Commissioning/local pooling of budgets would meet this expectation and Foundation Councils could play a key role.</p> <p>Local commissioning within borough (including health) would meet the democratic accountability aims of this paper</p>
1.10 – Offenders Brought to Justice was a perverse target	Outcomes must be focused on improving public confidence/safety

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Chapter 2

No.	CONSULTATION QUESTION	COMMENT/RESPONSE
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?	<p>Further information is needed to assess if the new process will be less bureaucratic. Concerns raised include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who pays for elections • Why can't new voting systems be trialed in this borough? • What are the exact boundaries for Commissioners? • In London would it just replace the MPA? <p>A model to scrutinise the elected commissioner could be delivered by Council Leaders performing this function. It is doubtful whether the GLA have local in depth knowledge to do this</p>
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?	Selection process must be equitable and for parties to field the right candidate. Independent candidates must prove their ability to do this role to the electorate.
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?	<p>CSP/CDRP must be the conduit here with additional new statutory partners. Commissioners must have the power to mandate partners to engage and deliver and they must be held to account.</p> <p>ALL partners must be mandated to be part of it to be effective and assist the elected Commissioner.</p>
4.	How might Commissioners best engage with their communities – individuals, businesses and voluntary organizations – at the neighbourhood level?	<p>Depends on how many in London. Perhaps local engagement could be fed up to the Commissioner from local partnerships.</p> <p>Community Safety Boards cannot perform public function – Neighbourhood Watch could do it but their density varies in different areas. A wider third sector (Big Society) could join into CSP/CDRP – H&F would be happy to pilot such an approach.</p>
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?	<p>Depends on the effectiveness of the information gathering and the solutions so it needs a real commitment</p> <p>Clearly the public mistrust current crime data as there is more than one data set. A simple uniform system such as Neighbourhood Safety Score is needed as a way of judging improvements/poor performance. This score would be arrived at by using weighted crime figures and public confidence.</p>

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6.	What information would help the public make judgments about their force and the Commissioner, including the level of detail and comparability with other areas?	Regular and simple data about Total Notifiable Offences Data concerning Police visibility/satisfaction. Comparison with other areas needs further clarification as to exactly what is meant.
ADDITIONAL ISSUES/COMMENTS		
	Do we approve of electing Commissioners?	Yes but is city wide the right level? The democratic principle is good but how can the public be engaged to believe that this will genuinely positively help in making their area safer and their quality of life better.
	What are the Commissioners boundaries?	Are they based on policing or political boundaries? Could a Chief Constable be working with more than one Commissioner

Chapter 3

No	CONSULTATION QUESTION	COMMENT/RESPONSE
7	Locally, what are examples of unnecessary bureaucracy with police forces and how can the service get rid of this?	An example of this might be case files – police would no doubt have their views.
8	How should forces ensure that information that local people feel is important is made available without creating a burdensome data recording process?	Once the information that local people want is agreed a process to supply the public's priorities together with short focused data should be put in place. Too much analytical background with baselines must not be provided even if 'practitioners' feel the data is insufficient. This could be accompanied by the Single Safety Score
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?	The elected Commissioner and national body will vary area to area. It is important not to create a new industry. The CAA has proved to be a bad example and should not be replaced by further complexity for public consumption.
10.	How can ACPO change the culture of the police service to move away from compliance with detailed guidance to the use of professional judgment within a clear framework based around outcomes?	Commissioner and national body will vary area to area and this is for the local commissioner to do.
11	How can we share knowledge about policing techniques that cut crime without creating endless guidance?	Police response required
ADDITIONAL ISSUES		
	Can we assist in cutting bureaucracy with police adopting lean principles?	(Page 27) need to avoid lots of administrators LBHF is willing to consider a pilot project to show how this could be rolled out nationally by using the Briefing 'A New Settlement for Government' (attached) as a blue print.

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Chapter 4

No	CONSULTATION QUESTION	COMMENT/RESPONSE
12	What policing functions should be delivered between forces acting collaboratively?	Specialist squads, traffic, firearms, etc, as well as shared procurement of services and vehicles. HR / Finance could also be joined
13	What are the principal obstacles to collaboration between forces or with other partners and how can they be addressed?	Different objectives and goals. Political and Commissioners elections are not likely to be done at the same time which would be an additional obstacle. However the National Crime Agency could still deliver.
14	Are there functions which need greater national co-ordination or which would make sense to organize and run nationally (while still being delivered locally)?	These include Transport, Ports, Security/Protection/Terrorism/ Organized Crime
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?	Police must be better at 'not being ripped off' by private sector. This may be achieved by those purchasing services using a system based approach as has been used by the private sector. As described by John Seddon in his book 'Systems Thinking in the Public Sector'
16	Alongside its focus on organized 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?	See 14
17	What arrangements should be in place in future to ensure that there is a sufficient pool of chief police officers available, in particular for the most challenging leadership roles in the police service? Is there a role for other providers to provide training?	By combining with military/civil service or other command courses/university accreditation.
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?	By use of business acumen in the right positions again by private sector support but not through contracts with the related high costs. A Total place concept is required with a wider remit
ADDITIONAL ISSUES/COMMENTS		
	Big society and involvement of the local community	A range of activities that relied on the public such as locking parks or expanding the role of Neighbourhood Watch would fit into the Big Society.

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Chapter 5

No	CONSULTATION QUESTIONS	COMMENT
19	What more can the Government do to support the public to take a more active role in keeping neighbourhoods safe?	Through rewards and incentivisation for being an active player in the Big Society
20	How can the Government encourage more people to volunteer (including as special constables) and provide necessary incentives to encourage them to stay?	As above
21	What more can central Government do to make the criminal justice system more efficient?	Bring it closer to the real world. The Courts work should be publicly available with cases and verdicts readily available. This would make them accountable and then they would take stock of the public view. As it stands individual judges (Magistrates Court) can have personal crusades without any accountability to the public and their decisions are never subject to scrutiny unless it generates media interest. The use of District Attorney style approach (elected prosecutor to work with and for the elected commissioner) would break this mould.
22	What prescriptions from Government get in the way of effective local partnership working?	Old style performance/procurement/central and EU bureaucracy.
23	What else needs to be done to simplify and improve community safety and criminal justice work locally?	CSP/CDRP should be accountable and CJS must be part of it
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/ISSUES		
	Link to wider CJS reform	Process to bring courts closer to the community needs speeding up (as per 21)