



---

## Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

### Executive Board

Date: 8th October 2008

Subject: Policing Green Paper, From the Neighbourhood to the National: Policing Our Communities Together

---

#### Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted  
(Referred to in report)

#### Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the re

---

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Following publication of the Policing Green Paper, '*From the Neighbourhood to the National: Policing Our Communities Together*' on 17 July 2008, the Executive Board Member for Environment and Neighbourhoods asked officers to produce a paper in response. This report is submitted to the Executive Board in line with the consultation process outlined within the green paper, meeting the scheduled deadline for responses of 10 October 2008.
2. The report outlines key proposals in the Policing Green Paper, identifying a key concern with the recommendation to directly elect Community and Policing Representatives in the place of Council Members. The proposals undermine the role of local government in contributing and leading partnerships. The report goes on to illustrate how many of the objectives set out in the green paper are already being met

in Leeds but also to make constructive alternative proposals through which better engagement of the community can be achieved.

## **1.0 Purpose Of This Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to comment on the green paper and outline concerns with some of the key proposals.
- 1.2 The report , however, will also showcase good practice in Leeds that demonstrates that a focus on crime reduction, increased local accountability and partnership can be effective within the current arrangements. Nevertheless, the report acknowledges that issues of public engagement need to be addressed and sets out some constructive ideas to improve public confidence.

## **2.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 The Policing Green Paper constitutes the government's formal consultation on the future of policing in Britain. It is strongly influenced by two recent reports: *Sir Ronnie Flanagan's 'Review of policing'* and *'Engaging Communities in fighting crime'* by Louise Casey. Links can also be seen to other recent government publications, such as the CLG's White Paper *Communities in Control: real people, real power* and the 2007 National Policy review *Building on Progress: Security, Crime and Justice*. The paper should not be seen in isolation but rather represents the latest publication from the government that addresses the localisation agenda and public engagement. A copy of the Green Paper can be found at the following [LINK](#)
- 2.1 Of most importance to Local Authorities are the recommendations contained within Chapter 1 of the green paper: *Empowering Citizens: Improving the connection between the Public and the Police*. Whilst other chapters are of interest, for example, containing details on the reduction of police bureaucracy, the recommendations within them deal largely with operational matters within Police Forces. It is for this reason that the report deals primarily with Chapter 1. The Police Authority will be making a separate submission which deals in detail with policing matters.
- 2.3 The concerns set out below have been discussed at the Safer Leeds Executive and are supported by all partners. A more detailed response to the questions raised in the paper will be submitted in tandem to this report.
- 2.4 It is understood that the findings of the green paper consultation will be used to inform a Police and Crime Reduction Bill planned for the next session of parliament.

## **3.0 Main Issues**

- 3.1 Chapter One of the Green Paper is entitled, *Empowering Citizens: Improving the connection between the Public and the Police*. The paper is wrestling with the fact that despite notable decreases in the levels of recorded crime, there has not been a parallel rise in public satisfaction and confidence at a national level. This is attributed to a perceived absence of an individual for the public to associate with at a local level, a more general lack of public profile of partnership activity and the acknowledgement that the roots of dissatisfaction with community safety lie often outside recordable crime but in broader issues of neighbourhood nuisance.

The centrepiece of the proposals is the recommendation that Chairs of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships should in future be directly elected. Directly elected chairs (Crime and Policing Representatives, or CPRs) would also serve as the majority of members of the Police Authority, with one taking the Chair. The Chair of each CDRP would receive a budget drawn from Basic Command Unit funding from which to fund priorities in their area. In cases where local authorities already have a directly elected mayor, the mayor would serve as Chair.

Clearly the intent of the proposals is to raise the profile of policing and community safety within an area, to provide a sharper focus for accountability and to provide for some flexibility to be responsive to local demand. There are, however, numerous concerns with the proposals as they stand.

Before discussing broader issues of principle, there are considerable gaps in the proposals in terms of detail. The Green Paper draws its illustrations from a straightforward arrangement in which there is a single Basic Command Unit. In the case of Leeds there are three police divisions and the representation of Councillors on the West Yorkshire Police Authority is weighted to relative size. The paper does not set out whether Leeds would have one or three directly elected representatives, with obvious problems of a lack of representation of Leeds, if one is chosen but a lack of clarity and focus for the people of Leeds, if three are chosen. The government, if it wishes to pursue the idea, needs to clarify its position and set out how these problems will be mitigated. The role and number of Councillors on a police authority is not discussed.

- 3.2 There are, however, more profound objections, some of which have been well set out by the LGA. At a time when the government is in other spheres calling upon local government to take a lead in place shaping and partnership, these proposals effectively sideline elected members. The CPR proposals risk undermining Local Authority involvement in policing and community safety matters and show a lack of faith in the capacity of councils to lead on the public service reform agenda. The recent White Paper from Communities and Local Government (CLG) *Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power* proposes devolving more power to local communities and increasing participation in local democracy, with local government seen as a key player in this process. In contrast, proposals contained within the Policing Green Paper look to reduce the influence of local authorities on community safety matters. By replacing local councillors with the CPR and confusing local accountability by having two sources of elected representatives, the government is sending out mixed messages. Government proposals should place local authorities at the centre of all aspects of the public service reform agenda, including Community Safety issues.
- 3.3 As an illustration of the confused messages, the role of the directly elected chair is not easily reconciled with the new emphasis on Local Area Agreements and Comprehensive Area Assessments. At present Local Authorities, along with key partners, are accountable for the delivery of the LAA. Crime reduction and drug treatment targets are a high priority for agreement in Leeds, signed up to by all our partners. Giving ultimate accountability to a directly elected chair cuts across these arrangements. Nor is easily understood how in such circumstances staff employed by the key organisations could be directed by the elected Chair or held accountable.
- 3.4 These concerns have been echoed by the Local Government Association (LGA), particularly on the grounds that creating parallel local elected posts would result in competing electoral mandates that could be confusing to the public. As a consequence of the proposals, it possible for a CDRP chair to be elected from a

different party to the ruling administration. The individual, at best, under such circumstances will not carry the influence enjoyed by an Executive Board Member on Council policy as under current arrangements. The worst scenario is that there are strong differences of opinion between the directly elected chair and the Council, leading to impasse.

- 3.5 The consequences of the proposed change are potentially very damaging to the mature partnership arrangements enjoyed in Leeds. The reduction in the influence of the Council under these arrangements may well bring into doubt the considerable commitments that the Council presently makes to this area of activity. On an annual basis Leeds City Council currently funds over £4.0m of the activities of the Leeds CDRP, including CCTV, PCSO and ASBU initiatives. The Council has recently agreed to spend one million pounds on updating its CCTV. In addition, many other initiatives carried out by the Council, such as the Signpost project, aimed at dealing with problematic families, which do not fall under the CDRP, are vital to reducing crime and ASB. These key services would be threatened by politically confused leadership brought about by these proposals.
- 3.6 Whilst the proposals may raise the profile of community safety, it is harder to see how they can achieve the objective of establishing genuine local representation. Whether one or three individuals are elected in Leeds, they cannot represent the issues raised at a neighbourhood level, given the size of the population. A constructive alternative to address this objective is set out below.
- 3.7 The issue of the councillor call for action is raised once again in this green paper. The proposals do not represent a significant change from existing processes made available by the council. Members of the public can ask for scrutiny of issues at scrutiny board level and single issue groups also have access to the decision making process through the Council deputation. It is worth noting that the proposals would create another level of accountability in policing to add to the force itself, the police authority and the CDRP, rather than simplifying local accountability it could in fact complicate it.
- 3.8 There are, however, a number of proposals which are welcomed. The commitment to ring fence funding for PCSOs for at least the next 3 years and the creation of a Community Safety Fund from existing Basic Command Unit (BCU) budgets represent welcome funding pledges. Adding the Probation Service to the list of responsible authorities on CDRPs represents a formalisation of a practice that is already carried out in Leeds through the Safer Leeds Partnership. The wider government agenda, aimed at increasing public confidence in policing, reducing crime and increasing local accountability and decision making in public services, is already being progressed in Leeds.

### **Existing Good Practice in Leeds**

This section of the report sets out some of those areas of existing good practice in Leeds which demonstrate that current partnership arrangements can be highly effective in tackling the problems the government is seeking to deal with through the Green Paper.

- 3.9 The introduction of the 5 PCSOs per ward, jointly funded by West Yorkshire Police and Leeds City Council, is a good example of how public confidence can be improved through a regular and familiar policing presence on the streets. These officers provide regular police contact for local people and now form part of the wider Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) structure. This provides more officers with

increased local accountability that are tasked with reducing crime in local communities, increasing public confidence and providing a reassuring presence on the streets.

- 3.10 The Council and the Police commitment to partnership working co-ordinated through Safer Leeds can be seen through Operation Champion. These operations target areas of high crime with high visibility, multi agency operations that deal with issues specific to the locality, as well as dealing with environmental issues over a number of days. These operations are aimed at having a direct influence on crime in the area but they also serve to increase public confidence in enforcement agencies throughout the city.
- 3.11 The issue of participatory budgeting has also been progressed in Leeds. Two pilots are currently in operation in Drighlington in South Leeds and the Broadlees area of Bramley in West Leeds. The pilots are aimed at increasing the involvement of the local communities in decision making, developing the confidence of local residents to take action to improve their local areas, improve community cohesion through increased participation and develop the community leadership role of local councillors. The pilots are ongoing but a number of projects have been established and funded through participatory budgeting in these areas.
- 3.12 The green paper stresses the importance of putting the victim first. In Leeds, there are number of initiatives to promote this philosophy. For example, specialist Victim Support Officers are co-located with the anti-social behaviour unit.
- 3.13 Encouraging community participation and regular consultation with the public is also well established in Leeds. Last year, Safer Leeds, in conjunction with Leeds Tenants Federation, hosted a Face the People event, with the Executive Member for Community Safety and senior officers from the Safer Leeds partnership meeting a large audience of Leeds residents. This year, Face the People will be held with pupils at Roundhay School. Further initiatives are planned to develop community consultation and participation. Two pilots are planned: the first links Operation Champion and a local Face the People event with an area committee meeting; the second will be identifying areas of high community tensions for partnership action.
- 3.14 There is also good practice evident in the schemes developed to deliver restorative justice, with a clear recognition of the value a restorative approach can bring to tackling anti social behaviour and incidents of Youth Crime. The restorative approach involves the victims of criminal acts and through this it is possible to help offenders accept personal responsibility for their actions and, where possible to make amends. The process of making amends may take the form of an apology (if that is what the victim wishes) or of putting right what has gone wrong where that is practicable.
- 3.15 The Council has been active in developing restorative justice schemes in Leeds. The Youth Offending Service is involved in the delivery of a number of restorative justice schemes including: work in schools which involves restorative justice awareness training delivered (jointly with Leeds Community Safety Youth Crime Reduction Officer) to key senior staff from 26 High Schools; the Inclusion of Restorative Justice as an effective method of diversion & resolution in Leeds Youth Crime Prevention Strategy & Children & Young Persons Plan; delivery of restorative justice interventions in Final Warnings and other Court ordered interventions in which the Leeds Youth Offending Service is involved; promotion and support of restorative justice approaches in the youth crime prevention agenda and with prevention projects and delivery of restorative justice training and seminars for partner agencies involved in work with children & young people.

- 3.16 A local focus to policing and community safety is provided through the ten Area Committees. Neighbourhood Policing Inspectors attend Area Committees on a regular basis to provide updates on activities in each area jointly with the Area Community Safety Co-ordinators (ACSCs) who work from within the Area Management Teams. This work is further enhanced by the involvement of Area Management teams and Area Committees in setting local priorities for tackling crime and grime within the locality; this gives considerable influence to local councillors in setting priorities within the community. ACSCs also attend the Divisional Community Safety Partnership meetings where strategic decisions are made regarding partnership working and priorities. Area managers also attend these meetings on occasions. This local perspective enables a more flexible and responsive approach to the concerns of local people and brings decision making on policing and community safety closer to local communities.
- 3.17 Most importantly it is clear that the investment and work undertaken in Leeds is beginning to produce positive results. The Council's last annual survey results demonstrate that public concern about anti-social behaviour and crime in Leeds is falling, that these issues are felt to be less of a problem (mirroring the data) and that people feel better informed than they used to be. Further evidence of positive progress can be seen through the significant reduction in crime over the last three years. Between July 2005 and July 2008 BCS comparator crime has fallen by 32%. While the police should take a considerable amount of credit for this, the partnership work co-ordinated by Safer Leeds has also played a significant part. Rather than seeking to overhaul this and potentially jeopardise its activity, the government should seek to build on good practice here in Leeds and elsewhere.

### **Further proposals**

- 3.18 Despite the above success, it is acknowledged that more needs to be done to address both public confidence and the issue of local responsiveness. The following suggestions will therefore be given further consideration and subject to more detailed development.
- Further enhancement of the public profile of the CDRP chair to create a more direct link between the performance of the CDRP and the local councillor who chairs the partnership, making a clearer link between the democratic process and CDRP performance.
  - Increased community involvement in the NPT structure, with a feasibility study for the establishment of panels consisting of local people who are involved in setting NPT priorities and in providing feedback to the CDRP on local
  - Depending on the outcome of the participatory budgeting pilots, further consideration will be given to establishing similar pilots for community safety initiatives with the new Community Safety Fund proposed in the green paper used to facilitate this.

## **4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance**

- 4.1 The introduction of the elected CPR will remove local authority involvement in the appointment of the CDRP chair and will also reduce or completely remove Local Authority involvement in appointments to the Police Authority.

## **5.0 Legal And Resource Implications**

- 5.1 The government commitment to ring fenced funding should allow a continued contribution from West Yorkshire Police to the match funding arrangement currently in place for PCSOs in Leeds.
- 5.2 The establishment of a community safety fund could place additional resources at the disposal of the CDRP.

## **6.0 Recommendations**

- 6.1 Members of the Executive Board are asked to approve this report as the formal response to the Government's Policing Green Paper: *From the Neighbourhood to the National: Policing our Communities Together*.

## **Background Papers**

Policing Green Paper [LINK](#)

LGA Response -[LINK](#)