

## COLLABORATION ISSUES

### PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the issues around collaboration following the Protective Services Workshop on 18 November 2008, the Response to the Green Paper published in November 2008 and the recent draft Policing and Crime Bill which commenced in December 2008.

### BACKGROUND

2. Following on from the last meeting of this Committee on 18 November 2008, Members will recall a workshop which considered the progress to date with Protective Services issues. Two key issues came out of the workshop, namely:
  - High Risk Areas – Members wanted to cover a small sample of these at future Committee meetings in greater detail to assure the Police Authority; and
  - Collaboration Issues – Members wanted to consider extending the remit of the Protective Services Committee to cover collaboration issues beyond those of Protective Services.
3. The first of these key issues is covered elsewhere on this agenda.
4. In respect of extending the remit around collaboration, there are a number of changes both nationally and regionally which warrant serious consideration. These are covered in the remainder of this paper.

### GREEN PAPER RESPONSE

5. Members will be aware of the original proposals in the Policing Green Paper Consultation from July 2008 which discussed a number of issues around collaboration. In late November 2008, the Government published their response to the consultation, closely followed by the draft Policing and Crime Bill in mid December 2008.
6. The response to the Policing Green Paper consultation focused on reinforcing collaboration between forces. The Government's vision was stated as follows:

*"... support Chief Constables, police forces and police authorities to work in the interests of regions and the country. We expect forces to continue to **collaborate to achieve** this and we will be reviewing the legal governance frameworks to ensure this is facilitated. In developing and applying a new decision-making model, we will consider **requiring collaboration** for those police forces where there is an operational and business imperative for decisions to be taken jointly at particular levels and in a consistent manner. Close*

*collaboration across a range of business areas will be encouraged as an important first step for those exploring the possibility of voluntary merger”.*

7. The Government’s response and next steps focus on the new Strategic Policing Priorities for 2009/10. These priorities make clear the importance that the Government attaches to improving protective services, including tackling serious and organised crime and counter terrorism. In recognition of this, there is an existing requirement for police authorities to collaborate where it is in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness.
8. The Green Paper response also welcomes the finding in the recent Home Affairs Select Committee Report which supported the approach to strengthening collaboration and requiring joint working where it necessary. As part of this, the Government has started consulting with stakeholders on ways to bring absolute clarity to the legal and governance frameworks which facilitate and underpin such collaboration.

### **POLICING AND CRIME BILL AND SUBSIDIARITY SCOPING EXERCISE**

9. The recently published draft Policing and Crime Bill proposes to make the law clear about the Government’s ability to require robust collaborative frameworks to be established, if this is considered necessary in the public interest.
10. The Green Paper response also stated that, in terms of reinforcing collaboration, the Home Secretary had asked Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) to carry out a short piece of work with key policing stakeholders to explore further when it was right for decisions on particular policing functions to be made at the national, regional and local level; what appropriate delivery frameworks above force level would be needed to deliver these functions jointly; and to explore the respective roles of police forces, police authorities, national bodies (APA and ACPO) and the Home Office in this area. The Home Secretary has asked HMIC to report its findings to the National Policing Board early in 2009.
11. The Home Office sent out a letter in late November 2008 (“the Subsidiarity Scoping Exercise”) and HMIC confirmed that a small team had been assembled to develop a position statement for the National Policing Board in January 2009. The areas of particular interest to the team are:
  - What collaborative ventures or arrangements exist within forces?
  - What is the business imperative for initiating the collaboration ventures?
  - What resources or staffing are deployed in collaborative ventures?
  - Has there been any evaluation or investment appraisal for the collaboration ventures?
12. The focus of HMIC at this stage is apparently around the more formal arrangements which are in place, e.g. the regional team, as opposed to the informal mutual aid arrangements. The Strategic Development Manager (Corporate Business) is currently assessing the draft Regional Response and will report back to Members in greater detail at the meeting of this Committee in greater detail on 6 January 2009.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

13. The financial implications will need to be considered as the issues around collaborative legislation develop.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

14. The Policing and Crime Bill developments will be monitored by the Police Authority Secretariat and reported back to the Police Authority as necessary.

## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

15. None identified at present.

## **CHILDRENS ACT 2004**

16. None identified at present.

## **CONCLUSION**

17. This report clearly identifies that the issues around collaboration are developing and it will be important that the Police Authority inputs to the debate as the Policing and Crime Bill develops over the coming months. It is also important for this Committee to determine its future remit in light of these changes.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

18. It is recommended that Members:
  - (i) Discuss the issues raised in the report;
  - (ii) Determine any issues with the proposed regional response; and
  - (iii) Receive further updates as and when they become available both locally and nationally as appropriate.

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**Background Papers:** Letter from Home Office regarding the "Subsidiarity Scoping Exercise"  
Summary of Green Paper Consultation Responses and Next Steps (Home Office)