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Newsletter

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"Securing outstanding policing for local people"

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Chair's Opening

Hello and welcome to the November edition of the Police Authority newsletter.

As you have read in previous newsletters the coalition Government published the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill (PRSRB) in December 2010. One of the key elements of the PRSRB is the proposal to replace Police Authorities with directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) in November 2012. The ultimate aim being to improve the democratic accountability of the police service to the public, by enabling local people to vote for Commissioners in their police force area.



This Bill received Royal Assent on 15 September 2011. Elections for Commissioners are scheduled to take place on Thursday 15 November 2012, with the successful candidate taking up office and assuming their legal responsibilities on Thursday 22 November 2012.

Until that time Humberside Police Authority will continue to serve local people and strive to drive up policing performance for all of the communities across Humberside. As Chair, I am confident that we, as Members, supported by able staff within our Secretariat, will continue to maintain our day to day services whilst at the same time overseeing a change programme that will allow a seamless transition from Police Authority to Police and Crime Commissioners.

Whilst the new law heralds changes to policing governance structures not seen in many years, my fellow Police Authority Members and colleagues are working hard to ensure that it is introduced in the smoothest possible way, while placing the needs of communities at the forefront and improving policing for local people.

In this newsletter you will hear from my Chief Executive, Kevin Sharp, who will explain in more detail what the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners will mean for local communities.

Ros Taylor MBE

Chair Humberside Police Authority

What does the Bill mean for Policing Services and Local Communities?

The real impact of this fundamental change to policing will not be known until you actually elect the first Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside.

The election will take place after a significant period of electioneering by candidates, all of whom will presumably be telling local people what changes they will seek to bring to the policing in our area. They cannot interfere with operational policing decisions, so they cannot influence who is arrested or how operations are carried out. However, what they must do is all of the following and a whole lot more:



- Secure an efficient and effective police force for the area
- Appoint the chief constable, hold him/her to account for the running of the force and, if necessary, dismiss him/her
- Set the police and crime objectives for their area by producing a five year Police and Crime Plan (in consultation with the chief constable)
- Set the annual for budget and police precept, and produce an annual report setting out their progress against the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan
- Contribute to the national and international policing capabilities set out by the Home Secretary in the Strategic Policing Requirement
- Co-operate with the criminal justice system in the area
- Work with partners and fund community safety activity to tackle crime and disorder

So, although the Police and Crime Commissioner will set the local objectives for their force and hold the police to account for them, operational responsibility for the day-to-day work of the police remains with the chief constable.

The Commissioner will be voted for by the residents of Humberside and will hold an initial term of office of up to four years. Commissioners can be re-elected, providing of course local people continue to believe they are the best person to do the job. If they don't convince the public that is the case they will not be elected again. So without doubt the Commissioner will be accountable to you and work for all the residents within the Humberside Police area.

Although local people will ultimately decide if the Commissioner is doing a good job, the four local unitary authorities in our area must establish a Police and Crime Panel to scrutinise the work of the Commissioner. This panel will be made up of at least 10 councillors, with an additional two members co-opted.

In addition to scrutinising all the decisions of the Commissioner, the Panel must also review the Police and Crime Plan for the area, the Commissioner's Annual Report and any proposal to increase the level of precept.

It is inevitable that the Commissioner will want ongoing conversation with local people, to ensure that the local policing meets their needs. As part of the preparation for the Commissioners arrival we will be engaging with local residents and communities to find out exactly how you will want to work with him/her in the future.

For example, we are currently asking all 6,000 members of our Citizens Panel how they would like to contact the Commissioner and the types of events and meetings they would want him/her to attend in local communities. We will also be holding a series of focus groups throughout 2012 to explore in more detail how you would expect the Commissioner to work with local communities to provide better policing and community safety services, how they can work in partnership with local communities and other service agencies and how you would like to access them in order to raise matters of local concern, policing and community safety issues.

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Working with Partner Agencies and Other Stakeholders

The introduction of PCCs will have an impact on local authorities and other key community safety partners.

From the start of April 2013, the Commissioner be handed the Home Office's Community Safety funding that has previously been paid directly to the Community Safety Partnerships.

The Commissioner will be able to fund, or commission, community safety services and projects at his/her own discretion. Community Safety Partnerships will therefore want to have a strong, close relationship with the Commissioner now that they hold the 'purse strings'.

The Government sees this as an opportunity to save money and re-vamp the community safety landscape by delivering services in new and innovative ways, in conjunction with community groups and a range of partner agencies that can provide various, and sometimes previously unused, skills and knowledge.

Without doubt this fundamental change in policing is intended to make improvements to local policing and although there are many differing opinions about the wisdom of this change the Police Authority have given a commitment to do anything it possibly can to make the change as smooth as it possibly can.

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Influencing Policing Priorities

We have launched our annual survey to discover whether the policing



priorities set last year are still at the top of the list for local people.

Over 6000 residents across the region took part in the 'BIG Conversation' last autumn which revealed police response to incidents and call handling was the number one priority for local people. Investigation and neighbourhood policing came in at a close second and third.

This led to the Police Authority setting tough targets for the Chief Constable to meet – For call handling the Authority asked for 97 out of 100 emergency calls to be answered within 10 seconds, currently Humberside Police are answering the majority of calls within an average of 3 seconds, amongst the best in the country.

This year through the survey we want to find out if these are still what local people value most and also how they have found the service over the last 12 months - we're asking if local residents feel police visibility has increased or decreased in the area they live and how safe do they feel in their neighbourhood.

To have your say on next year's policing priorities log onto the Police Authority's website www.humberside-pa.org.uk and complete a survey or call 01482 220789 to request a paper copy.

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