

GOVERNMENT REVIEW OF THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER MODEL



REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

For Information

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the review of the role of the Police and Crime Commissioners to consider how to: strengthen the accountability, resilience, legitimacy and scrutiny mechanisms of the existing model to drive up standards; identify and share best practice across the sector; and examine the effectiveness of the relationship between PCCs and Chief Constables and the checks and balances currently in place.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members note the report and receive further updates.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On the 22 July 2020 Kit Malthouse Minister for State of Crime, Policing and the Fire Service set out to Parliament details of a review into the role of Police and Crime Commissioners.
- 3.2 The Government's manifesto committed to strengthening the accountability of PCCs and expanding their role. Police and Crime Commissioners were introduced in 2012 to give the public a direct say over policing in their area. Since coming into post, it is believed that they have brought real local accountability to policing and are working to give local communities a stronger voice.

4. REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS

- 4.1 After eight years, the Government believe that it is right that they step back and consider how they can continue to evolve the PCC model, including ensuring that PCCs are strong, visible leaders in the fight against crime and have the legitimacy and tools to hold their police forces to account effectively.
- 4.2 To deliver this commitment, the Minister announced a two-part internal review into the role of PCCs.
- 4.3 **Part One** commenced in late July with the expectation that the report to the Home Secretary and the Minister would be completed by October 2020. It is anticipated that the report will be focussed on the changes required to strengthen the model which, where possible, can be delivered ahead of the 2021 PCC elections.

In particular, it will:

- consider how to strengthen the accountability, resilience, legitimacy and scrutiny mechanisms of the existing model to drive up standards;
- identify and share best practice across the sector; and
- examine the effectiveness of the relationship between PCCs and Chief Constables and the checks and balances currently in place.

The ministerial statement also confirmed the intention to use part one of the review to help us map out our longer-term ambition for the expansion of the PCC role.

4.4 In relation to the Fire and Rescue Service, the Government consider that further reform of fire and rescue services is required in order to respond to the recommendations from Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and to build on the findings from Sir Tom Winsor's State of Fire and Rescue Report, both of which demonstrate the clear challenges and improvements required in professionalism, people and governance. Under Part Two, the review will consider further options and opportunities to strengthen fire governance and accountability, drawing on the lessons from the first cycle of fire governance transfers to PCCs.

4.5 The review will also be fully aligned with the Government's commitment to expand the benefits of devolution across England through the Local Recovery and Devolution White Paper. Mayors of Combined Authorities should be powerful local figures with the ability to drive public safety, as well as economic growth and local recovery. We plan to develop the role of PCCs with that longer-term trajectory in mind, building on the models in London and Greater Manchester.

Equally, it was clearly stated that neither Part One nor Part Two of the review will consider a wholly new governance model for policing or examine the 43 police force model.

4.6 An Advisory Group will support Part One of the review, comprising senior external stakeholders with expertise in the policing and fire sectors. It will also be important that the public's views on those who represent them in policing are heard and the review team will seek to engage a sample of citizens and local and national victims' groups as appropriate.

4.7 **Part two** of the review will commence after the 2021 elections and will allow us to consider further ways to strengthen and expand the role of PCCs, including the role PCCs play in tackling re-offending to help reduce crime. It will focus on longer-term reforms and the potential for wider efficiencies to be made within the system with a view to implementation ahead of the 2024 elections.

5. RESPONSE

- 5.1 In response to Part One of the Review, the Chief Fire Officer supported the national Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) response to the Home Office research questions.

The NFCC response is attached as Appendix 1.

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