

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel **DATE:** 21 June 2012

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PART I

FOR INFORMATION

THAMES VALLEY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

1. **Purpose of Report**

To inform the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel of the latest situation with the police reforms in light of the passing of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

2. **Recommendations**

That the Panel note the arrangements that have been made for the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel.

3. **Sustainable Community Strategy Priorities**

- Safer Communities

Slough Borough Council is working collaboratively with partners to address the underlying causes of crime so communities feel safe and able to play an active part in making Slough a better place to live, work and visit. In dealing with crime, the creation of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Police and Crime Panel is to bring greater public transparency and accountability to the Policing process.

4. **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)**

One of the JSNA's priorities for 2012 is to reduce violent crime, domestic abuse and sexual abuse and Slough Borough Council will be working with the Police and Crime Commissioner so that this priority is reflected in the priorities of the new Commissioner, and that the Police and Crime Panel scrutinises whether this priority is being adequately addressed.

4. **Supporting Information**

Background

- 4.1 There are a number of elements that make up the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act, and the impact on Community Safety Partnerships is one

element (see report to Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel, 15 September 2011), but this report focuses specifically on the changes to the Police Authority body and the creation of a Police and Crime Commissioner and Police and Crime Panel.

- 4.2 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill was introduced into Parliament in December 2010, and proposed the most significant reforms to policing accountability and day-to-day operations in the UK in the last 50 years. The Bill received Royal Assent in September 2011.

The most significant change to the arrangements is the creation of a directly elected Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), replacing the traditional Police Authority. The election of the first PCCs will take place on 15 November 2012, with four-year terms and a limit of two terms for any one individual. Currently there has been registered interest, but no confirmed candidates for the Thames Valley. Candidates must have declared their intention to stand by 19 October 2012.

- 4.3 The PCC is responsible for the efficient and effective running of the Police Force, and must hold the Chief Constable (CC) to account in this (including the power to hire/fire the CC).

- 4.4 The PCC must produce a five-year Police and Crime Plan which will set out their police and crime objectives, financial resources available to the CC, performance measures and information relating to available grants. Following this, annual reports will be required.

- 4.5 The new Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel (PCP) is the scrutiny body which is intended to hold the elected PCC to account. The Thames Valley PCP will comprise of councillors from the 18 Local Authorities in the policing area along with two independent co-optees. Councillor Sharif was appointed as Slough Borough Council's representative on the PCP for the 2012/13 municipal.

- 4.6 The main role of the PCP is advising, influencing and recommending to the PCC. However, the PCP does have specific functions:

- Contributing to the development of the PCC's Police and Crime Plan (on which it will be a statutory consultee)
- Scrutinise and make reports and recommendations on matters relating to the PCC
- Review PCC appointments
- Monitor complaints
- Question the PCC on the Annual Report at a public meeting
- Veto power on precept and Chief Constable appointment

- 4.7 Buckinghamshire County Council will be hosting the Thames Valley PCP, and have begun the recruitment of a dedicated Scrutiny Officer to support it. The high-level Panel Arrangements have been agreed and procedural rules will be signed off by the PCP at its first meeting in July 2012. It is expected that recruitment of the independent co-optees will commence in June 2012 with appointments being made by the PCP over the summer 2012.

5. **Conclusion**

- 5.1 The Local Authorities across the Thames Valley have been working collaboratively in order to put in place a workable process for the Thames Valley PCP to carry out its duties under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. This report is to update the Panel on the progress that has been made and to inform later discussions as the PCC is elected and the priorities in the Police and Crime Plan are developed.

6. **Background Papers**

- 1 - Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 published by TSO (The Stationery Office)
- 2 - Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill report to the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel on 15 September 2011.
- 3 - Policing White Paper (Policy Briefing 5, Centre for Public Scrutiny) July 2010
- 4 - Policing and Social Responsibility Bill (Policy Briefing 8, Centre for Public Scrutiny) February 2011