

POLICY AND FAIR TREATMENT APPRAISAL (PAFT)

CONSULTATION PAPER: YOUR VOICE YOUR CHOICE COMMUNITY AND POLICE PARTNERSHIP

RATIONALE

This is a Consultation paper which seeks to obtain the views of the Northern Ireland community on two quite distinct matters, both of which relate to policing.

Part one of the Paper looks at the current method of making appointments to the Police Authority. It deals with the present method of appointing the Police Authority and invites comments on it. The document puts forward three options for changing the appointments process. These are as follows:

- A better geographic spread - this includes appointing members on either a County basis or by using the current District Council Environmental Group system.
- A more democratic system of appointments. This includes either direct elections or the appointment of Councillors in proportion to the strengths of their political parties.
- A combined Authority which considers the option of having elected representatives in either of the ways already described added to which some independent candidates would be appointed by the Secretary of State in line with

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the criteria for public appointments laid down by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

The final option in this Part of the Paper considers allowing the Police Authority membership, once it has been appointed, to elect its own Chairman. This option could be combined with any of the previous ones.

Part two of the Paper is divided into two distinct sections. The first section looks at existing links between the police and the community. It looks at the network of Community Police Liaison Committees and considers whether they should be developed by:

providing a legislative framework within which they should operate, or

imposing a requirement on District Councils to establish at least one Committee in each District Council area.

The second section of the paper invites views and suggestions on how community and partnership-based structures and activities can best work with and complement those of the RUC, Community Police Liaison Committees and the criminal justice system as a whole. This section is aimed purely at generating public debate and seeks innovative ways of bringing together the police service and other agencies that deal with the prevention of crime.

PAFT IMPLICATIONS

There are no PAFT implications for this document as it is a Consultation Paper which is seeking the views of the entire

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community on ways of developing an even closer link between the community and the police service. If a broadly acceptable policy evolves as a result of these responses, then it will be necessary to look at how such policies are likely to have PAFT implications.

task of upholding law and order. A law abiding society provides safety and justice for all, and maintains the standards of individual freedom and respect for human rights that everyone has a right to expect. The continuing violence in Northern Ireland has however presented the Royal Ulster Constabulary with tremendous problems in carrying out its task of maintaining law and order in a way which delivers a service of the highest possible quality to the people of Northern Ireland and ensures the safety of both the public and of its officers. The RUC's achievements are worthy of unstinting admiration. But terrorism and the difficulties which it produces have affected not only the police, but also the other two partners in the tripartite structure which governs policing in Northern Ireland - the Government and the Police Authority for Northern Ireland. Much has been achieved despite the difficulties but all three partners believe that much more is possible.

2. Our aim in this consultation paper is to put forward for discussion some options for developing an even more effective partnership approach. To do that, we need to look at ways of involving the whole community more extensively in the work of the police service and in the fight against crime. This paper considers ways of doing that at both local and Northern Ireland-wide levels.

1. This paper is divided into two parts. Part one looks at the existing partnership structure and provides a number of options for a more participative role for the community in the appointment of the Police Authority. Part two is divided into two sections and deals with links between the police and the community. Section one of this part considers the future development of Community and Police Liaison Committees following the implementation of the current Police (Northern Ireland) Bill. That legislation will cover a range of matters but one of the more relevant new requirements is that the community will have to be consulted about new, statutory policing objectives. Section two looks at the wider picture of how crime should be tackled in the

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