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Colleagues

POLICE REFORM GREEN PAPER

At the Superintendents' Association Conference on 13th September the Home Secretary announced her intention to publish a Green Paper to build on the findings and recommendations of Sir Ronnie Flanagan's Review of Policing and to consult on wider policing issues. I am writing to you now to outline the shape which we expect the Green Paper to take and to let you know how we propose to work with you to develop its content prior to publication early next year.

Why is a Green Paper needed?

It is not our intention to re-open the whole police reform agenda, since a great deal of progress is already being made. White papers in 2001 and 2004 initiated a significant programme of reform for the police service, leading to radical changes, particularly around the role of policing and its contribution to tackling crime and improving community safety. These changes and in particular perhaps, the decision not to proceed with force mergers, have left a somewhat confusing landscape.

In addition, the context of policing has continued to change and expectations may now be different to those of 2004. A number of recent events, surveys and reviews, including Sir Ronnie Flanagan's Review of Policing, have highlighted the need to study more closely a range of new ideas and suggestions for improvements in the Police Service. Publication of a Green Paper will provide the means for wider consultation on these issues and afford an opportunity to move forward now on the issues where we need to make more significant progress and to set out more coherently what we expect the police service to deliver.

What will it contain?

The Green Paper will offer an opportunity not only to examine where police reform has now reached but also to address any problems that this progress has brought to light. In addition it will also look at options for tackling areas where progress has stalled or proved problematic and how a step-change in performance might best be realised.

The Green Paper should also include issues that the police themselves might raise, such as professionalism, front line effectiveness and the need for partnership working as indicated in the Crime Strategy.

There are issues of accountability, inspection arrangements and performance architecture and the Green Paper will need to address the question of local versus national separation.

Accordingly, we intend the Green Paper to explore the progress to date in achieving the Government's aims for police reform and focus on areas which will best deliver the ongoing agenda, within the context of four key themes:

- Getting the best use from our resources and capacity
- Effective leadership and governance
- Clear, effective performance machinery
- Clarity and cooperation over competing demands

How will we approach it?

It is our intention to work closely with you to ensure that the Green Paper properly reflects your concerns and proposals and explores the scope for implementing joint initiatives wherever possible. I would be glad to receive any initial suggestions you may have on the issues that you believe should feature in the Green Paper.

I am also convening a Ginger Group which I will chair to provide a further element of expert challenge on the Green Paper as it develops and to ensure that it is informed by a robust evidence base, reflects key stakeholders' interests, addresses the tough questions, and concentrates on effecting real improvement and making the best use of available resources.

The Green Paper provides an exciting opportunity to take stock of where we are and to determine the best way for the police service to develop in the years ahead. I look forward to receiving your contributions.



TONY MCNULTY