

## SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

### Question 1

***Do you agree in principle that we should be aiming to create fully integrated partnerships at local level as the new councils come into being in May 2011?***

### Comments received

57 responses were received to this question, with four fifths of respondents indicating that they were in favour of an integrated partnership.

Those in favour of an integrated partnership felt there is an obvious overlap in duties performed by DPPs/CSPs, and that the proposal to integrate them is therefore a logical and welcome path to take. As well as being an opportunity to avoid duplication and confusion, it was thought it could also deliver better value for money. Many respondents believed that councils should be given a leading role and allowed as much flexibility as possible to tailor local arrangements to best meet local needs. This would be particularly important with the advent of community planning, and it was noted that it was crucially important for the plans and timetables for both pieces of work to be dovetailed.

Some respondents suggested that the scope of the review should be widened to consider linkages to other existing partnerships (such as PACTs). The issue of the lack of co-terminosity between policing districts and council boundaries was also highlighted, and it was noted that this would need to be carefully managed.

Some respondents, while agreeable in principle, affirmed their concern that the good practice that is already in place should not diminish.

Those who disagreed in principle to integrating the partnerships expressed the view that DPPs and CSPs currently fulfil very distinctive roles and felt this distinction should be retained. In particular, they believed there was a continuing need to independently monitor police performance and that integration risked diluting the monitoring functions and identity of the DPP. There was also concern expressed that moving ahead with this exercise too quickly risked leaving us out of step with the future framework for community planning, which is still at the early stages of development, or cause us to miss the opportunity to maximise potential synergies (on, for instance, good relations).

A number of respondents also flagged up that the timescale for creating the new partnerships was likely to be very challenging, with some suggesting it might be preferable to phase in the changes. Others felt, however, that we needed to press on in recognition of the impact on staff of continuing uncertainty.

There was a high level of consensus that the new partnership would require statutory underpinning, and that the principal focus needed to be on meeting local needs. Some respondents thought it would be more correct to refer to the new partnership as a “single” (rather than “integrated”) partnership since some differentiation between monitoring and delivery would still be required.

Finally, a number of respondents emphasised the need for the NIO and Northern Ireland Policing Board to work closely together as the review progresses.

## **Response**

We welcome the fact that a clear majority of responses were in favour of creating a single partnership in each council area. However, we take note of the concerns that have been expressed, and suggestions offered, and will ensure these are factored into how we take forward the outcomes from next

stage of the consultation, which will deal with the creation of the new model. In particular, we will ensure that our plans complement ongoing work on the development of a community planning framework and that the quality of the delivery of the partnerships' existing functions is not diminished. We agree that the new arrangements will need to be enshrined in legislation and will factor this into our forward planning. Both the NIO and NI Policing Board agree that it will be important that they work closely together on how this work is taken forward. There has been a great deal of positive co-operation already and the commitment is there for this to continue.

## **Question 2**

***What steps can be taken now to more closely align the existing Partnerships?***

### **Comments received**

About half the respondents who gave a positive response to the first question also provided information in relation to this question. There was naturally a greater appetite for close working in those areas where it already happens but it was evident that different areas were starting from different points and there was a wide range of experiences.

A number of responses identified options in terms of both processes and projects and included suggestions on ensuring clear roles/responsibility and accountability and the need to formalise agreement in advance of greater integration. A number of different bodies favoured having the same Chairperson for both Partnerships but others questioned whether the fact that the CSP Action Plans have been agreed for the next two year would restrict the scope for closer working.

The recommendations broadly fell under either the sharing of information and resources or joint working at a variety of levels. These are summarised below under these headings.

#### **Shared:**

- public engagement events;
- statistical or other information;
- line management;
- work programme;
- admin support; and
- accommodation.

#### **Joint:**

- Chair;
- Membership;

- project working;
- press releases;
- surveys & questionnaires;
- conferences/training events;
- Chairs/Vice Chairs of sub-groups;
- meetings of sub-groups;
- attendance at public and private events & meetings (including CSP attendance at DPP Private Meetings); and
- reciprocal reporting arrangements.

Certain types of projects were highlighted as being particularly fruitful areas for closer co-operation, including:

- Neighbourhood Watch;
- anti-social behaviour initiatives;
- business crime projects; and
- crime prevention campaigns.

## **Response**

A number of examples of good practice were received, which demonstrate that close co-operation is not only possible but can deliver positive benefits to local communities.

The picture across all 26 council areas shows that different areas are starting from different points and have varying distances to travel to achieve the optimal level of co-operation. It is probably unrealistic, therefore, to attempt to achieve uniform good practice in one leap and it would seem to be more practical to consider what graduated steps might be taken and over what timescale.

In order to maintain the momentum for change we wish to highlight to all partners that the interim steps we propose should be seen as the minimum that is expected. Those partnerships who have already achieved this level of local co-operation are encouraged to continue to find ways of moving further towards single partnership working. All moves towards closer links must be

fully endorsed, and will be closely monitored, by both NIO and the Policing Board (as the respective funding bodies) to ensure maximum local buy-in.

The first staging post should be this autumn, by which time we are asking each council area to work to achieve the following:

- Sharing of information between the partnerships;
- Reciprocal reporting arrangement to be put in place (for each partnership to notify the other of its main activities and outcomes, and with a view to informing joint plans);
- Sharing consultation and priority setting to assist the development of future local policing plans;
- Shared public engagement events;
- Each area to identify a couple of joint projects for collaboration; and
- Some members of the DPP attending the CSP meetings and vice versa.

These changes should not require any structural or contractual changes and are, therefore, capable of being implemented very quickly. Since they represent a floor rather than a ceiling, other opportunities should be grasped to improve co-operation should be grasped whenever they arise – for instance at the point at which contracts are being renewed, accommodation moves are being planned, etc. Councils should, of course, be mindful of the wider transition process in implementing any changes and may wish to consult within their clusters on how best to complement this process.

The next staging post will be spring 2010, by which time we would expect most areas to be at, or very close to, the current exemplars of good practice. In order to assist partners in preparing for this, we plan to hold an event in the early autumn, when we will have developed further the detail of the future model. The event will include presentations from those areas acknowledged as operating “good practice”, and will be designed to help stimulate ideas for how the next staging post can be achieved.