

11 POLICE AND FIRE REFORM - LOCAL SCRUTINY AND ENGAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION NETWORK (AN17-2012)

The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Bill, which was introduced recently to the Scottish Parliament, includes a framework for new local scrutiny and engagement arrangements involving local authorities and the new police and fire services.

The Scottish Government is establishing a Local Scrutiny and Engagement Implementation Network, inviting local authorities to join the Network as Pathfinders, trialling ways of implementing the new arrangements, or as Networkers, keeping in touch with developments, contributing to discussions and learning from the experience of Pathfinders elsewhere.

Following discussions with our partners in Tayside Police and Tayside Fire and Rescue Service, it is proposed that Dundee City Council registers its interest in becoming a Pathfinder in terms of scrutiny and engagement arrangements with the Police, and a Networker in terms of Fire and Rescue Service arrangements.

As a Pathfinder for Police reform, Dundee would be invited to trial new local scrutiny and engagement arrangements which include:-

- the designation of a Local Commander with significant delegated authority and devolved resources.
- the production of a Local Policing Plan, prepared by the Local Commander and agreed by the Council.
- the creation of a strong formal relationship between the Council and the Police e.g. by establishing a local committee through which elected members can play a role in shaping local priorities and scrutinising performance.

Subject to meeting the requirements above, the Scottish Government will not prescribe a particular approach to the Pathfinders - it is up to participants to decide on the methods that will best suit their local circumstances and improve local scrutiny and engagement.

Acting as a Pathfinder allows for a degree of experimentation to find the right model without the risks of doing so during the full implementation process, while participating in the Network offers the opportunity to tap into wider learning and benefit from professional evaluation. The work of the Network will be overseen by a project board comprising members from the Scottish Government, COSLA, SOLACE, ACPOS, CFOAS, the Police Authorities Conveners' Forum, the Scottish Fire Conveners' Forum and the Improvement Service.

It is recommended that:-

- Dundee City Council register its interest in joining the Network as a Pathfinder for new local scrutiny and engagement arrangements with the Police, and a Networker for new arrangements being trialled elsewhere for scrutiny and engagement arrangements with the Fire and Rescue Service. Expressions of interests will be reviewed by the project board in February, following which the Scottish Government will contact the Council for an introductory meeting.
- the Chief Executive is remitted to bring forward proposals for local scrutiny and engagement arrangements with the Police, which will be trialled and evaluated.