

“ PPP ”

People for Proper Policing in North Wales

Policy Exchange has called for elected police commissioners for Every town 07 November 2009 <http://www.policyexchange.org.uk/>

Every town should have an elected police commissioner responsible for meeting the needs of local people, a think tank said. Direct public accountability would deliver a radical shift in how our neighbourhoods are made safe, a report by Policy Exchange said.

The study, **Partners in Crime**, said a commissioner should be elected to represent each smallest policing area, known as a basic command unit. It also recommended the abolition of police authorities because few people know who they are or what they do.

Natalie Evans, of the Policy Exchange think tank, said *“the current police structure, driven by Home Office priorities, is “failing” local communities. She said “anonymous and unaccountable” police authorities should be scrapped and replaced with a commission for each force area made up of elected commissioners. The simple reality is that against a backdrop of constrained public spending, and potential funding cuts, we must have a radical reform of the police if the service is to provide more for less.”*

The 46-page report by the right-leaning Westminster think tank said elected commissioners would hold regular public meetings.

They would also handle complaints and promote close working relationships between those on local authorities and police officers. The reports' authors said the change would release chief constables from government oversight and allow them to respond to community priorities.

The policy would **mirror the situation in the United States** and its supporters claim it will force senior officers to tackle street crime and antisocial behaviour.

The changes have met opposition from **the Association of Chief Police Officers (Acpo), the Association of Police Authorities (APA) and the Police Federation.**

Former **APA chairman Bob Jones** said *“it will not work”* and **Police Federation boss Paul McKeever** labelled it *“sheer madness”*.

The PPP comments ... Commissioners for every Town seems many steps too far and yet another level of highly paid beaurocrats, doing what?. We currently have elected councillors for each county representing the council (not the ratepayers) on the Police Authority together with appointed ‘independent’ representatives for each area. The selection, accountability and effectiveness of both groups is seriously suspect. The Authorities do pay lip service to keeping the public informed and involved and the success of this system is mainly dependent on the interest of the local people which is generally lacking. The Police Authorities’ influence over local policing operations and priorities is limited to rubber stamping government policy.

We believe that a hierarchy of accountability of the local Politicians is required such that MPs must oversee their Police Force’s and the PA members’ performance.

We believe the scale and costs of the Police authorities should be reduced after their role and responsibilities are redefined.

Party politics will interfere but as with cross party select committees in Parliament the system could be made to work. This proposal is in line with our overriding policy of getting more from the people the taxpayers already employ whether it is police officers or politicians without increasing the public payroll.

This aspect of an MP's role would be a significant issue at election time. Currently back benchers appear to have very few meaningful and measurable performance factors and minimal accountability to their constituents.