

THE NATIONAL POLICING IMPROVEMENT AGENCY (NPIA): REGULATORY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1. Title of proposal: The National Policing Improvement Agency

2. Purpose and intended effect:

i) The objective -

2.1 To support i) the delivery of more effective policing and ii) a culture of self-improvement in the police service by establishing the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA).

ii) Background –

2.2 The national policing landscape currently comprises the following organisations: Centrex, which leads on police training and development; the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) which leads on IT delivery to the police service; the Home Office Policing Policy Directorate; the Home Office Police Standards Unit (now the Police and Crime Standards Unit); some of the Association of Chief Police Officers' (ACPO) functions; and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC).

2.3 There is wide agreement between the tripartite policing partners at the national level, namely the Home Office, ACPO and the Association of Police Authorities (APA), and within the police service generally, that the present configuration of the national landscape is suboptimal and results in a number of obstacles to progress in police service delivery. As a result, ACPO proposed the creation of the NPIA in response to the Government's 2003 Green Paper *Building Safer Communities Together*.

2.4 The problems with the construction of the existing landscape and the need for the NPIA were broadly summarised by the Police Reform White Paper *Building Communities, Beating Crime* published in November 2004. The White Paper stated:

“At present, the mechanisms for national policing improvements are disparate and overlapping. The lines of accountability and responsibility are often blurred. The Agency is intended to change this by providing a radically different model of police service participation in the process of continuous improvement. We want to enable the police service and its leaders to have a much more systemic – and full time – role in the process of developing standards and operational capability. This will be combined – for the first time – with those functions of the Home Office and other national bodies concerned with how the Service discharges its operational activities. It is essential that the culture of the Agency should be professionally driven but outward looking – connected to the citizen and committed to working in partnership with others.”

2.5 The following subsection sets out the present problems in more detail. In broad terms, however, tripartite partners and the police service more widely, agree that there are currently too many agencies and too many staff involved in policing improvement. Roles and responsibilities at the national level need to be more clearly defined and more accountable, as the Bichard Inquiry made plain following the tragic events in Soham 2002. There also needs to be a step change in the way critical business change processes, in particular Information Communication and Technology (ICT) systems, are delivered to the police service to support operational policing. The McFarland End-to-End Review of PITO lucidly demonstrated this and the NPIA will support the delivery of these vital reforms.

2.6 Under this proposal Centrex and PITO will be abolished. We are also in consultation with stakeholders as to how the NPIA will transform the national policing landscape more widely by taking on responsibility for some of the non-core, semi-operational functions that the Home Office currently leads on and possibly some of ACPO's policy functions too. About 2600 staff are currently engaged in supporting the delivery of policing at the centre across all the organisations listed in paragraph 2.2. The creation of the NPIA will reduce this by over half.

2.7 Crucially, the new Agency will be police "owned" and led. In practice this means that in form and design the NPIA will be strongly reflective of and responsive to the needs of the police service – a structure that the service would argue is lacking within Centrex and PITO. In partnership with tripartite stakeholders, the Agency will drive improvement in policing and support the delivery of the Home Secretary's annual mission critical priorities for the police service. As such the NPIA's establishment is an integral part of the Government's wider police reform programme; it is a key enabler, along with force restructuring, for the delivery of a more responsive, modern, effective service by dynamic, skilled officers and staff. Without reform to the national landscape the police service will not be adequately supported to reduce crime and the fear of crime.

2.8 Provisions to establish the Agency are included in the Police and Justice Bill, which will drive forward key elements of the police reform programme. This Bill is designed to help sustain further improvements in crime reduction and bringing offenders to justice at neighbourhood, basic command unit, force, national and international levels.

2.9 The Agency is scheduled to come into existence in shadow form later in 2006, and, subject to the necessary legislation receiving Royal Assent, will then be established on 1 April 2007.

iii) Rationale for Government Intervention:

2.10 This subsection provides more detail on the current barriers to policing improvement. It also explains the reasons why these problems will not be resolved of their own accord and delineates the consequences of the Government not taking remedial action. It is important to recognise what

existing agencies' services and a pervasive sense that there is no ownership by the police of the services that PITO and Centrex provide. Buy-in to the services provided by the NPIA will be achieved by police service membership of the key governance and operational boards, involvement of police as Associates, and professional validation for key areas of work by nominated ACPO leads.

- Flowing from the above there is more generally a **failing paradigm** in the current approach to critical policing business change processes because they are considered separately and individually rather than holistically and strategically. For example, the development of ICT is driving business change processes, when in fact the reverse should be true: business need should drive ICT development. To resolve this, there will be clear contracts between the NPIA and local police forces with negotiated implementation commitments from both, linked to funding and regular performance reporting. There are also currently multiple change programmes in place, which impact negatively on each other. Another of the NPIA's roles will be to provide analysis of the impact of new programmes on existing change programmes, and advise on prioritisation and sequencing.
- Also, there is currently an **absence of capacity, capability and co-ordination** to deal with national policing challenges. For example, the police service lacks the systemic ability to identify national policing problems and challenges early enough to prevent potential crises or reduce the impact of real crises. One of the roles of the NPIA will be to provide this function.
- **The national landscape, as presently configured, is too complex.** As the aforementioned 2004 White Paper identified, the national landscape suffers from blurred lines of accountability and responsibility. In short there are too many competing organisations with overlapping agendas and misaligned goals which reduces the efficiency and effectiveness of policing. Below is a diagrammatic representation of the complexity of the current national landscape. It illustrates the extent to which providers overlap in their responsibilities which, as mentioned above, is a key driver for reform.

