

# WHO CHOSE THE SHERIFF?

*Finding quality candidates for the police and crime commissioner elections*

An ideas paper

## 1. Summary

A year from now, in November 2012, elections will be held across England and Wales to elect Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to oversee each of the 41 police forces outside Greater London. The recent creation of these posts was not without controversy but, whatever their merits, PCCs are coming soon to a police area near you.

The success of PCCs will depend heavily on the quality of candidates that come forward to take up these positions. However, with PCC elections just a year away, the parties do not appear to have decided how they will select candidates – or even in some cases whether they will field candidates at all. While all parties agree that they would be happy for strong independent candidates to come forward, it also appears that few concrete steps have been taken to ensure that independents will stand.

This is worrying, not least because high-calibre candidates are urgently needed to motivate voters to turn out at the ballot box. Public awareness of PCCs is currently low, with a recent poll finding that only 27% of adults know that PCC elections are planned. And the standalone election date of November 2012 threatens to reduce voter turnout, despite the significant powers that PCCs will hold, potentially undermining the PCCs' individual mandates and even the legitimacy of the office itself.

In turning to the urgent question of PCC candidate selection, government and the parties face a set of complex and unfamiliar challenges. These are entirely new posts and there is not yet clarity on the skills that candidates will require. The role of PCC is an inherently political, though not necessarily a *party* political, post. It will therefore require a slightly different set of competencies to parliamentary or local councillor roles, and assessment processes will need to reflect this. Specifically, candidates will need a higher degree of competence in organisational and budget management but internal party-political skills may become less critical for success.

PCCs will also be elected in a new political geography with which the parties are not familiar and for which candidate selection processes are not defined. Voters and the media are also unfamiliar with political campaigning at the level of police areas.

Further, since PCCs will be sole-person executive figures, it is impossible to ensure that there is diverse representation in any particular area in terms of gender and ethnicity.

This paper is not the product of a major research project into PCCs, and consequently, we do not presume to have definitive answers to these complex challenges. However, below, we set out eleven provisional recommendations for the parties and government to consider. These recommendations focus on widening the pool of candidates, ensuring that diverse and high quality candidates are selected, and building transparency and wider public involvement into party selection processes. We hope that these ideas are debated among those who will ultimately decide how the candidates for the 41 PCC jobs will be chosen – and, as importantly, that they stimulate prompt action.

### *Widening the pool of candidates*

1. The party leaders should issue an open call for applications to become PCC candidates, including from people with no party political background but with other relevant skills and experience, who could then run under a party banner.

2. As an *additional* way of finding candidates, an arm's-length or third sector body such as HMIC, LGA or the Association of Police Authorities should manage a headhunting process to find candidates based on role requirements and criteria agreed across parties. Those identified might then choose to stand as independents or to apply to party selection processes.

### *Ensuring quality and diversity*

3. Parties should build a high degree of transparency into their selection processes, publishing a clear set of criteria and details of the assessment and selection processes to be used. Parties might require applicants to submit an open application statement (in written and/or video form), which would be published online.
4. Parties should build on existing competency-based assessment processes for MPs to assess aspiring PCCs. However, role-specific elements should be included, to ensure candidates have the requisite management skills and basic knowledge of policing and crime issues in the local area. These could be devised at a cross-party level by the same independent body that carries out the headhunting.
5. Party leaders and headquarters should take a lead in devising candidate selection and assessment processes but actual shortlisting and selection should take place at the local level, to reflect the local nature of the role. This will require bespoke party structures at the police area tier.
6. Parties should consider diversity requirements for local candidate shortlists, taking into account gender and the ethnic community balance of the area in question.
7. The Electoral Commission should provide proactive briefing and training for PCC candidates, including independents, on the election campaign and election itself.

### *Engaging the public*

8. The parties should consider involving non-party members in the selection process, for instance through public hustings for shortlisted candidates. Also, local professional and community representatives might be invited to interview candidates in public.
9. Where parties have two or more strong candidates, and particular in areas where they are reasonably confident of electoral success, consideration should be given to the use of primary elections, where non-party members directly participate in selection, as trialled by the Conservative Party for parliamentary selection processes before the 2010 election.
10. Given the high costs of postal primary elections, creative ways to reduce costs would be needed. Voters might be required to pay for their own postage in returning the ballot, or could be offered an online voting option. Each party might at least trial a primary election in a single area where they are likely to win the election.

### *Funding better candidate selection processes*

11. Additional government funds are unlikely to be forthcoming for headhunting, assessment, training or primary elections. However, around £4 million extra funding could be found over the PCCs' four-year term by reducing PCC salaries to between £65,000 and £100,000 in line with the recommendations of the Senior Salaries Review Body.

## 2. Aims

This short paper addresses the question not of whether PCCs are a sensible idea, but of how candidates for the PCC elections should be selected. Specifically, our paper has three aims:

- To raise awareness of the fact that PCCs are on their way, within the parties and among the wider public and media.
- To think through the questions and challenges that need to be addressed between now and the PCC elections next November in the candidate selection process.
- To set out some provisional recommendations for what the parties and the Government could do at each stage of the process, and to provide some assessment of the trade-offs involved.

## 3. Background

### *The role of police and crime commissioners*

On 15 September 2011, the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act became law. The centrepiece of the bill and the source of much debate during the Bill's ten-month journey through Parliament is the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), a long-standing Conservative Party policy and a jointly agreed commitment with the Liberal Democrats, as set out in the Programme for Government.

These new elected post-holders will be introduced in England and Wales' 41 police areas outside of London (see appendix A). In the capital itself, the Mayor or his appointee will effectively perform the PCC role. According to the Home Office, lead department for the policy, the PCCs will "set and shape the strategic objectives of their force area" and will "hold the relevant chief constable to account" for the performance of their role and the performance of the police force overall.<sup>1</sup>

PCCs will take on functions of the abolished police authorities of England and Wales and will have significant formal and informal powers, including the rights to:

- Set the police budget, based on receipts from the national grant and the police precept (part of local council taxation)
- Vary the police precept within agreed constraints
- Set the police area strategic direction
- Appoint and (where necessary) dismiss the police force chief constable
- Be consulted (by the chief constable) on Detective Chief Constable and Assistant Chief Constable appointments.

<sup>1</sup> *Police and Crime Commissioners*, Home Office website, November 2011. At: [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/police/police-crime-commissioners/](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/police/police-crime-commissioners/)

In addition, PCCs will have obligations to:

- “drive community safety and overall security in the area
- work with local partnerships and national and regional criminal justice agencies and services
- build and foster relationships with the chief constable and community groups to achieve common goals
- contribute to national policing capabilities.”<sup>2</sup>

Police area chief constables will retain responsibility for (and autonomy over) operational policing decisions and there are significant checks and balances on the PCCs’ powers over local policing. As well as being accountable to the Home Secretary for efforts to support national policing objectives, PCCs must answer for their decisions and actions to new Police and Crime Panels (PCPs), which will comprise a minimum of ten councillors representing councils within the police area and two independent co-optees. Police and Crime Panels will have the right of veto by two-thirds majority over PCC proposals on the force precept and over the appointment of the chief constable.<sup>3</sup>

Outside these facts, the precise nature of the PCC role has not, however, been specified in great detail. This is a deliberate choice by the Government not to “shackle Commissioners with realms of guidance and prescription on their role” to ensure that “their local focus will be largely determined by the public”.<sup>4</sup> Further guidance on the roles and responsibilities of PCCs is due to be published shortly, however.

Discussions are also ongoing over the level of PCC pay, which will be set by the Home Secretary and will be a clear factor in which candidates come forward. Initially, the Home Office set aside an annual budget of around £5 million for PCC salaries, with early statements suggesting that PCCs could be paid over £120,000 in some areas.<sup>5</sup> However, in November 2011, the Senior Salaries Review Body suggested that salaries should be in the region of £65,000 and £100,000 per year depending on the scale of the police force area being overseen and regional pay variations. This would mean an annual salary bill for PCCs of £4 million, around £1 million less than currently budgeted.<sup>6</sup>

### **Transition planning**

The Government is planning a range of activities to support the transition to PCCs and accompanying governance reforms. A national level ‘Transitions Team’ has already been set up comprising leading figures from UK policing bodies and senior government officials, and the Home Office has announced further steps to ensure a smooth migration to the new model, including:

<sup>2</sup> *Police and Crime Commissioners*, Home Office website, November 2011. At: [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/police/police-crime-commissioners/](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/police/police-crime-commissioners/)

<sup>3</sup> *Police and Crime Commissioners Update No. 2*, Home Office, September 2011, p. 2. At:

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/police/police-crime-comms-bulletin/pcc-bulletin-2?view=Binary](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/police/police-crime-comms-bulletin/pcc-bulletin-2?view=Binary)

<sup>4</sup> Home Office, (2010), ‘Policing in the 21st Century: Reconnecting police and the people’, Cm 7925 (The Stationery Office Limited; London). Retrieved online on November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/consultations/policing-21st-century/policing-21st-full-pdf?view=Binary>

<sup>5</sup> ‘£130m Elected Police Chiefs ‘Value For Money’ in *Sky News*, 1 December 2010. At:

<http://news.sky.com/home/politics/article/15843963>

<sup>6</sup> Elected police commissioners should be paid up to £100,000 according to review body in *The Guardian*, 3 November 2011. At: [www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/nov/03/elected-police-commissioners-paid-review?newsfeed=true](http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/nov/03/elected-police-commissioners-paid-review?newsfeed=true)

- The provision of funding for the local authority who will lead on the set-up of each area's Police and Crime Panel.
- "Deep dives" in autumn 2011, during which the West Midlands, West Yorkshire, Leicestershire and South Wales areas will conduct detailed analysis of the impact of the PCC policy locally. Deep dives will map issues, the changing partnership landscape, how the PCC may operate in practice and what this might mean for the police and their partners.
- "Engagement events" in spring 2012. These events, which will draw on findings from "deep dives", will provide further detail on the PCC and PCP policy as well as a space for partners to consider what action they need to take locally prepare for the upcoming changes.<sup>7</sup>

A number of these strands will touch on the importance of ensuring that PCCs come to their new roles with a sufficient understanding of the tasks ahead of them, and sufficient support to make a positive contribution. But the first step in ensuring that PCCs are set up to make a difference is the identification and selection of strong PCC candidates. Little has been written about this process, despite the fact that, as a research report from Deloitte concluded, "Such is the power of the role that a PCC's personal style may significantly influence the governance structures and processes around them".<sup>8</sup>

### *The PCC elections*

The first elections for PCCs will take place on 15 November 2012. This is a change from the originally proposed timetable, which promised that the first PCC elections would take place in May 2012 – made, according to the Home Office, on the grounds that the delay would ensure best possible administration of elections and "allow good quality independent candidates to benefit from the additional time to plan and campaign".<sup>9</sup> The change, however, also reflects a political compromise, with the Liberal Democrats requesting that the elections be moved so as not to clash with local council elections. The extra costs of holding the elections on a separate date, rather than alongside the local elections as originally planned, has been estimated at £25 million.

Voting in the PCC elections will take place under the 'supplementary vote' system (as used in the London mayoral elections) assuming there are three or more candidates (if not, then the simple majority system will apply). The electoral system should ensure that successful candidates win the backing of over 50% of voters. However, since the Supplementary Vote is not used in any elections at present across most of the country, there is a potential risk of voter confusion about the process. PCCs will be elected for fixed four-year terms, although the understanding is that the first term will be three-and-a-half years long, so that future PCC elections do coincide with local elections as originally planned.

The Home Office is responsible for publicising the fact that PCCs are coming into existence, and for encouraging candidates to come forward, which it has started to do via its website. The Electoral

<sup>7</sup> *Police and Crime Commissioners Update No. 2*, Home Office, September 2011, p. 3. At:

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/police/police-crime-comms-bulletin/pcc-bulletin-2?view=Binary](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/police/police-crime-comms-bulletin/pcc-bulletin-2?view=Binary)

<sup>8</sup> Deloitte, (2011), 'Negotiating the bill. The introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners in England and Wales', p.4, *Deloitte research paper*. At: [www.deloitte.com/assets/Dcom-UnitedKingdom/Local%20Assets/Documents/Industries/GPS/uk-gps-negotiating-the-bill.pdf](http://www.deloitte.com/assets/Dcom-UnitedKingdom/Local%20Assets/Documents/Industries/GPS/uk-gps-negotiating-the-bill.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> *Police and Crime Commissioners Update No. 2*, Home Office, September 2011, p. 1. At:

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/police/police-crime-comms-bulletin/pcc-bulletin-2?view=Binary](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/police/police-crime-comms-bulletin/pcc-bulletin-2?view=Binary)

Commission will regulate the conduct of the election itself. It has no formal role in party candidate selection processes for PCCs but it should, according to the 2011 Act, “Take such steps as it considers appropriate to raise public awareness about the election and how to vote in it”.<sup>10</sup>

The Government is funding the conduct of the elections but is not currently planning to provide additional state support to parties in order to cover either candidate selection or election expenses. The Government is, however, granted statutory powers by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act to “make provision as to – the conduct of elections of persons to be police and crime commissioners” and specifically regarding “funding and expenditure, in relation to elections of police and crime commissioners, of candidates, political parties and other persons incurring such expenditure”.<sup>11</sup> This means that while candidates and/or their political parties must currently secure funding to support their campaigns from within existing resources, it remains possible for the state to provide additional financial support for candidates, should this be deemed necessary.

#### 4. Challenges for PCC candidate selection

*“The candidates who run to become police and crime commissioners will need to be of the highest calibre. They’ll need to inspire their electorate.”<sup>12</sup> (Theresa May, Home Secretary, October 2011)*

*“It is likely that we will field candidates – however, no decisions have been taken.” (Vernon Coaker MP, Shadow Policing Minister, 27 September 2011)<sup>13</sup>*

*“The Federal Party will not provide any financial resources to support candidates in these elections, and there is a presumption against Liberal Democrat candidates standing. As an alternative, individual Liberal Democrats may support non party-political candidates.” (Jonathan Davies, Chair of the English Party, Liberal Democrats, November 2011)<sup>14</sup>*

The selection of candidates for election is frequently a divisive matter within political parties. And yet, given the prevalence of ‘safe seats’ in British elections, it is very often at the candidate selection stage within parties, rather than on polling day itself, that the result of the election is in effect decided. Consequently, as we discuss in our recent report on the selection of parliamentary candidates, all parties have introduced numerous reforms into their selection processes in recent years, with innovations ranging from all-women shortlists, gender quotas, the Conservative A-List and primary elections.<sup>15</sup> In reforming their processes, parties have sought to improve the diversity of their candidates, to engage the public, and to ensure that successful candidates have the requisite skills and competences, while avoiding disruptive conflict between the central and local party tiers. Through this

<sup>10</sup> *Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011*, Houses of Parliament, September 2011, chapter 6, 53, p.37. At: [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmhaff/511/51106.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmhaff/511/51106.htm)

<sup>11</sup> *Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011*, Houses of Parliament, September 2011, chapter 6, 58, p.40. At: [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmhaff/511/51106.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmhaff/511/51106.htm)

<sup>12</sup> Theresa May, ‘Speech to Conservative Party Conference’, in *ePolitix.com*, 4 October 2011. At: [www.epolitix.com/policy/energy-environment/energy-article/newsarticle/speech-in-full-theresa-may-1/](http://www.epolitix.com/policy/energy-environment/energy-article/newsarticle/speech-in-full-theresa-may-1/)

<sup>13</sup> [www.guardian.co.uk/politics/blog/2011/sep/27/labour-conference-2011-live-coverage?CMP=twf\\_fd](http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/blog/2011/sep/27/labour-conference-2011-live-coverage?CMP=twf_fd)

<sup>14</sup> [www.libdemvoice.org/opinion-what-next-for-elected-police-commissioners-25791.html](http://www.libdemvoice.org/opinion-what-next-for-elected-police-commissioners-25791.html)

<sup>15</sup> These reforms are discussed in the Institute for Government’s recent report on candidate selection: Rhys Williams and Akash Paun, *Party People: How do – and how should – the political parties select their parliamentary candidates?* (November 2011), available at: [www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publications/49/party-people](http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publications/49/party-people)

reform process, the parties have found that there is a complex set of trade-offs between their various goals for candidate selection, and that no system can deliver everything at once.

Almost all of these challenges apply for PCCs too. But our research and interviews highlights that identifying and selecting suitable candidates for these new political posts posits a set of specific new challenges that must also be overcome.

**First**, the introduction of PCCs was a highly contested policy in the first place. Only the Conservatives had the policy in their manifesto; Liberal Democrat backing has been lukewarm at best; while Labour, as well as smaller parties such as Plaid Cymru and Greens, have flatly opposed the policy, fearing politicisation of the police as well as arguing that the policy is a waste of money. Consequently, with the legislation now enacted, the parties have varying degrees of commitment and interest in competing for the elections.

At present, none of the parties have decided upon the most appropriate approach for selecting candidates and contesting elections, or even whether to put up party political candidates at all. At the time of writing, both the Labour and Conservative Parties appear likely to field candidates in some areas at least, though both parties have also expressed a willingness to consider stepping aside and supporting non-party members as independent candidates in specific areas.<sup>16 17</sup> At the Conservative Party Conference in October 2011 Theresa May announced the first person to put themselves forward as a Conservative Party candidate as being Colonel Tim Collins, an Iraq war veteran. But since then, no names of candidates have been announced by any of the parties. Instead, one interviewee suggested to us, the parties appear to be engaged in stand-off, waiting to see who moves first before responding.

As for the Liberal Democrats, it appears that they are unlikely to contest a significant number of Police and Crime Commissioner elections. On 2 November, the party's Federal Executive communicated the decision "that the Federal Party will not provide any financial resources to support candidates in these elections, and that there is a presumption against Liberal Democrat candidates standing. As an alternative, individual Liberal Democrats may support non party-political candidates. This is a continuation of the view that Liberal Democrats in government and parliament have been expressing as the legislation has gone through Westminster: that whilst effective accountability of the police is essential, it is imperative that operational policing does not become a political football."<sup>18</sup> However, there is an ongoing debate within the party about whether this is the right way forward, and many party activists are keen that candidates with a party political label do stand.

**Second**, there are additional complications created by the restrictions imposed by the Police and Social Responsibility Act on who can stand for election. Many of the regulations are standard for most elected posts: candidates must be over 18 and a British, Irish or Commonwealth citizen; and may not be a current MP, or member of the police, civil service, armed forces or judiciary. But in addition, the legislation requires that candidates are resident in the electoral area at the time of nomination and on election day itself.

<sup>16</sup> [www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/sep/27/labour-boycott-police-elections-yvette-cooper](http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/sep/27/labour-boycott-police-elections-yvette-cooper)

<sup>17</sup> <http://conservativehome.blogs.com/thetorydiary/2011/09/should-the-party-run-candidates-for-election-as-police-commissioners.html>

<sup>18</sup> Email from Jonathan Davies, Head of the English Party, to all Liberal Democrat Party Members, 2 November 2011

This residency restriction rules out anyone based in London, which includes many senior figures in all parties. But also, it may prove difficult for the parties to find suitable candidates in areas where they are less strong – such as much of the south for Labour, and much of the north for the Conservatives. This rule may increase the likelihood of independents being given a free or less contested run by the parties. This restriction also means that the parties cannot draw up a single national list of potential candidates in the way that all do for parliamentary elections. Instead there will need to be separate long and short lists created separately for each area.

Interestingly, elected mayors (other than the Mayor of London) are not barred from standing, raising the intriguing possibility that mayors of English cities such as Middlesbrough or Hartlepool might also stand for the PCC post for the police area their city is part of.

**Third**, the fact that PCCs are entirely new jobs, and largely without precedent in the UK context as directly-elected figures with responsibility for a single public service, poses a challenge in terms of identifying what kind of candidate would be most suited to the role, and what background, competencies and expertise they should be expected to have. When the Home Office publishes its additional guidance on the roles and responsibilities of PCCs these matters should become clearer, but the flexibility being built into the job description means that precisely what the job will entail may not be fully known until the successful candidates are in post and doing the job.

For the parties it is therefore difficult at this stage to know where to look. Professionalisation of parliamentary selection processes has led to all parties using standardised competency frameworks to assess aspiring MPs. But will *these* assessment processes be suitable for the wholly different role of PCCs? Parties will have to move quickly to decide what – if any – standardised assessment processes they will use to decide who can stand under their respective banners next November.

**Fourth**, not only the posts of PCCs but also the areas that they will be responsible are novel from the perspective of both parties and voters. The political geography of police force areas is a tier at which the parties have never had to organise or campaign. Some of the police areas do correspond with county council borders (e.g. in Norfolk and Lincolnshire), but most stretch across numerous local authorities, as well as other subnational structures such as Local Enterprise Partnerships (see appendix B for the West Yorkshire example). Parties will have to find new bespoke structures to select candidates and campaign for the PCC elections.

The unusual political geography may also make it more difficult for independent candidates, since few will have a sufficiently strong local profile across the entire police area. And public debate will be further limited by the fact that the police areas do not easily coincide with local media markets either.

**Fifth**, the muted debate that has so far taken place about PCCs means that public awareness of the posts and the forthcoming elections remains very limited. A recent poll found that only 27% of voters are aware that the PCC elections are happening.<sup>19</sup> As a result there is a risk that engagement in the campaigns and turnout in the elections may be low, undermining the legitimacy of the new system for police accountability before it has even got under way. This is a challenge that the Government and the political parties will need to tackle through public education campaigns, through their choice of

<sup>19</sup> Local Government Association Police Commissioners Poll, conducted by Comres (November 2011). At: [www.comres.co.uk/poll/561/local-government-association-police-commissioners-poll.htm](http://www.comres.co.uk/poll/561/local-government-association-police-commissioners-poll.htm)

candidates, and through the design of selection processes. For instance, how transparent will selection processes be, and will the wider public be engaged directly in the selection of candidates, for instance through primary elections?

**Sixth**, all parties have in recent years taken steps to increase the diversity of their candidates for parliament and other elected tiers of government, through the use of quotas, local shortlist restrictions and other mechanisms.<sup>20</sup> Efforts have also been made to ensure that the 17-member Police Authorities, which PCCs replace, are representative of the communities they serve, in part through the appointment of independent members alongside council appointees, who in turn are appointed to reflect the political balance of the area. By contrast, the election of single individuals to the posts of PCCs begs the question of how diversity can be built into the new accountability arrangements for police, something that might be particularly important in ethnically-mixed police areas where community tensions or friction with the police are an issue. While Police and Crime Panels and the possibility for PCCs to select deputies may offer additional opportunities for generating diversity, achieving a reasonably representative ethnicity and gender balance of PCCs across the country will clearly be challenging.

**Seventh**, some critics of the PCCs policy have suggested that there is a risk that the elections might be won by extremist or populist candidates capitalising on low turnout, particularly given that the PCC elections will no longer coincide with local elections. For instance, a New Local Government Network pamphlet argued that “Holding elections for local authorities and for Police Commissioners separately could result in low turn-outs in certain areas, thereby leading to divisive, single-issue, or extremist candidates being elected.”<sup>21</sup>

We do not feel that this is a particularly likely outcome since the areas covered are quite large, so extremist candidates would need to attract significant support across a range of different localities to have a chance of success. Also, the electoral system means that second preferences come into play in the event that no single candidate wins an outright majority of votes. This militates against extremists who are unlikely to pick up many second preference votes. Nonetheless, as noted above, without public education and/or high-profile candidates coming forward there is a danger of low turnout undermining the elections, which could open the door to some unexpected electoral results.

## 5. Overcoming the challenges

As the clock ticks towards the first PCC elections, government and the political parties must act quickly to ensure that in November 2012 there are suitable candidates on the PCC ballot papers across England and Wales. In total, a minimum of 82 credible candidates need to be found to ensure that there is a competitive election in all regions. In fact, success would be represented by the presence of significantly more serious candidates than this, probably at least two party candidates plus independents in most regions. Our provisional recommendations are summarised in the first section of this report, and are designed to further three main objectives: widening the pool of candidates; ensuring quality and diversity; and engaging the public.

<sup>20</sup> As discussed in Williams and Paun (2011), *Party People* (op cit).

<sup>21</sup> Olivier Roth (2010), *A Fair Cop? Elected Police Commissioners, Democracy and Local Accountability A Fair Cop?* (New Local Government Network, p.23. At: [www.nlgn.org.uk/public/wp-content/uploads/A-Fair-Cop.pdf](http://www.nlgn.org.uk/public/wp-content/uploads/A-Fair-Cop.pdf))

### *Widening the pool of candidates*

To find 100-plus high calibre candidates, the first stage of the process will be to invite applications from within and outside of the political parties. As noted, one of the problems at present is that awareness of the PCC roles is low, meaning that potentially suitable candidates may not even know of the new posts' existence. It is therefore important that the Home Office and the Electoral Commission focus on raising awareness about the posts and the coming elections. The Home Office will have a particular responsibility to set out more clearly what being a PCC will entail, how the PCCs' offices are likely to be organised, and what ongoing support and training successful candidates will be offered, in order to persuade senior figures that this is a job worth doing.

Aside from general awareness-raising, use might also be made of executive search professionals to identify candidates. Once the Home Office has published a clearer set of criteria and competencies associated with the job of PCCs, professional headhunters could be used to identify suitable individuals irrespective of political affiliation. Alongside this, a similar campaign to the "Be a Councillor" initiative launched in 2009 to find fresh talent for local government by the Local Government Leadership group should be developed.<sup>22</sup> Organisations that might be involved in conducting an independent search for suitable candidates include the Local Government Association, the Association of Police Authorities, and HM Inspector of Constabulary.

The independent talent search should seek to identify a cadre of potential candidates for each police area, who might then opt either to stand as independents or to apply to run on a party ticket. The political parties will also need to accelerate their own searches for suitable candidates, but given the nature of the posts, we suggest that the parties should be prepared to be flexible as far as their eligibility criteria are concerned. Typically, to become a parliamentary candidate for one of the major parties, one needs to demonstrate a history of party activism. In some cases (in the Liberal Democrats, for instance) a minimum length of party membership is a formal requirement.

In the case of PCCs, we believe it would be advisable for the parties to issue a wider call for applications along the lines of David Cameron's 2009 initiative, when at the height of the expenses scandal he invited people with "a belief in public service, and a desire to clean up our political system" to come forward to become parliamentary candidates, whether or not they had any background in the Conservative Party.<sup>23</sup> This initiative was a success, with over 4,000 inquiries received, and some 150 additional candidates eventually added to the party's approved candidates list. A similar openness to non-traditional candidates should be adopted here. And parties should also welcome qualified candidates identified through the independent search process.

### *Ensuring quality and diversity*

As aspiring PCCs come forward, the parties will need to devise assessment, shortlisting and selection processes to determine who their candidates will be in each of the 41 regions. Typically, for *parliamentary* candidate selection processes, aspiring MPs must pass through a standardised assessment centre in order to be placed on a national approved candidates list – all three main parties used this model in one form or another before the last election. Approved candidates can then apply to

<sup>22</sup> Details of this campaign can be found at: [www.beacouncillor.org.uk](http://www.beacouncillor.org.uk)

<sup>23</sup> David Cameron, 'MPs' expenses: Why I want to open up Tory candidate selection', *Daily Telegraph*, 25 May 2009. At: <http://tgr.ph/12hsO5>

particular constituencies, with local party executives responsible for drawing up the shortlist of candidates, before all party members in the constituency vote on the final selection (sometimes with a degree of public input through primary elections).

The parties' competency frameworks for assessing potential parliamentary candidates offer a reasonable starting point for assessment of potential PCCs. For instance, the Conservative Parliamentary Assessment Board assesses candidates against six competencies: communication skills, intellectual skills, relating to people, resilience and drive, leadership and motivation and political conviction. The Liberal Democrats use a similar framework. These competencies are likely to be relevant to the PCC role, though PCC assessment processes should be designed in a way that allows candidates with limited party political experience to compete on a level playing field with long-serving party activists.

In addition, it might be necessary to develop new elements of the assessment process to reflect the particular challenges of the role such as organisational and budget management, as well as knowledge of crime and policing issues in the local area. Such bespoke assessments might be designed and delivered by an independent body on behalf of all the parties, most logically the same organisation(s) responsible for the independent talent search process.

Given the unusual geographical scale of these elections, the parties will also need to create new structures and processes to conduct the final interviews, draw up shortlists and manage the selection of the final candidate at the police area level. In so doing, a careful balance will need to be struck between the national and local parties.

Party HQs will probably need to be responsible for designing the overall shape of the selection process, laying down some rules at the national level about how the local constituency parties within each police area should come together to conduct the selection process. National parties might also set gender or ethnicity quotas for local shortlists, for instance requiring that the final shortlists of candidates take into account the ethnic mix of the local area. But given that PCCs will be intrinsically local political figures, their credibility is also likely to rest on having been selected locally rather than parachuted in by party leaders, so final shortlisting and selection decisions should be left to those at the local level.

### *Engaging the public*

Given the risks of public disengagement from the process, serious thought should be given to how non-party members could be involved in the selection process. At a minimum, parties might organise public hustings events for their final shortlist of candidates to enable voters to question and engage with those on the shortlist before party members make the final selection decisions.

More innovatively, the selection process might be designed in such a way that ordinary voters and local community representatives are directly involved. For instance, building on the Conservative 'Big Event' selection process, local community figures such as youth activists, faith leaders, chief constables, headteachers and others might be invited to interview shortlisted candidates about their plans and priorities, and to feed their opinions about each candidate to the party membership.

We are also attracted to opening out candidate selection processes beyond party members alone. The Labour Party has recently committed to creating a new network of registered supporters, who will be given a say in future party leadership elections. There is a good case for enfranchising this group in the PCC selection processes too.

Further, we believe that open primary elections, in which the general public is entitled to vote in party selection processes, offer a positive way to engage voters. In Totnes and Gosport in 2009, the Conservatives used postal primary processes to select their candidates and succeeded in attracting the participation of 25% and 18% of voters respectively. We suggest that parties should consider adopting open primaries to select at least some of their PCC candidates, particularly in areas where they have two or more strong candidates, and where they are reasonably confident of electoral success.

A guiding principle of all the parties' assessment and selection processes, as well as any initiatives developed to attract non-party candidates, is that they should be made as transparent as possible. Home Office guidance on the roles and responsibilities of PCCs will form a crucial part of this. The Electoral Commission should also provide proactive briefing and training for PCC candidates (including independents) on the electoral process itself, including rules relating to campaign expenditure and so on. And the parties must themselves make their candidate selection process much more transparent from the outset, so aspiring PCCs know what they need to do to get selected as party candidates, and so the wider public knows how and when they can have their say. Also, candidates might be required to submit public applications (for instance in video form), setting out their suitability for the role.

### *Funding better candidate selection processes*

Primary elections, as well as headhunting and awareness raising activities, are not free goods, and an obvious question is where the funding could come from. Creative ways to reduce the costs would need to be found. The Conservative Party's postal primary elections cost a reported £40,000 each. Scaled up to the size of an average police area, and the costs would easily reach into six figures, making it highly unlikely that either the parties or the Government could fund such processes. However, a major part of the costs represented the freepost envelopes sent to all voters. Requiring voters to pay for their own postage, or enabling them to vote online, would significantly reduce costs.

We believe that much of this package could be paid for through a reduction in PCCs annual salary in line with the proposal from the Senior Salaries Review Body recommendations. The SSRB has proposed salaries of between £65,000 and £100,000 per year, which would mean a total cost of £4 million per year compared to £5 million budgeted by the Home Office. Multiplied over the four years of the PCCs' term this would save £4 million. We believe that while a competitive salary is an important factor in attracting high calibre candidates, high pay is unlikely to be – nor should it be – the overriding motivation for those seeking election as a PCC, meaning that this money is better spent not on salary but on the other methods we have highlighted for attracting more diverse and higher calibre candidates.

## **6. Next steps**

There is an urgent need for the Government, the political parties, and other interested parties to consider seriously how they will contribute to ensuring that high quality candidates from diverse backgrounds contest the first elections for PCCs in 2012. Whatever their merits, PCCs are coming and will have a significant influence on the future of policing and crime in the UK. The electorate deserves to be presented with a strong list of candidates when it sees its first Police and Crime Commissioner ballot papers next year. We therefore hope that the ideas raised in this paper prove a starting point for debate and welcome further discussion – and action.

## *Acknowledgements*

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All conclusions and recommendations reflect the authors' views alone.

## Appendix A: Police force areas in England and Wales

	Police force area	Population <sup>1</sup>	Area size (km <sup>2</sup> ) <sup>2</sup>	Indicative revenue allocations, 2011/12 (£m) <sup>3</sup>	No. of police officers (FTE) <sup>4</sup>	Local authorities areas covered
	<u>England</u>					
1	Avon and Somerset	1,605,623	4,777	192.6	3210	Non-metropolitan county of Somerset and districts of South Gloucestershire, Bristol, North Somerset and Bath and NE Somerset
2	Bedfordshire	605,253	1,246	76	1214	Unitary authorities of Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton
3	Cambridgeshire	778,186	3,389	87.1	1398	Non-metropolitan county of Cambridgeshire and unitary authority of Peterborough
4	Cheshire	1,005,684	2,155	127.5	2079	Unitary authorities of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington
5	Cleveland	559,984	597	100.7	1655	Unitary authorities of Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Stockton on Tees and Redcar and Cleveland
6	Cumbria	495,043	6,768	71.5	1180	Non-metropolitan county of Cumbria
7	Derbyshire	1,004,369	2,625	119.7	2021	Non-metropolitan county of Derbyshire and unitary authority of Derby
8	Devon and Cornwall	1,671,361	10,270	198.7	3436	Non-metropolitan county of Devon and unitary authorities of Cornwall, Plymouth, Torbay and the Isles of Scilly
9	Dorset	710,202	2,653	70.2	1452	Non-metropolitan county of Dorset and unitary authorities of Bournemouth and Poole
10	Durham	606,875	2,676	95.5	1431	Council area of Dumfries and Galloway
11	Essex	1,720,375	3,670	190.5	3577	Non-metropolitan county of Essex, unitary authorities of Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock
12	Gloucestershire	589,132	3,150	64.7	1262	Non-metropolitan county of Gloucestershire
13	Greater Manchester	2,600,900	1,276	485.9	7791	Metropolitan county of Greater Manchester
14	Hampshire	1,869,775	4,149	219.9	3658	Non-metropolitan county of Hampshire, unitary authorities of Southampton, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight
15	Hertfordshire	1,095,470	1,643	129.3	2048	Non-metropolitan county of Hertfordshire
16	Humberside	917,637	3,517	135.1	1952	Unitary authorities of East Riding of Yorkshire, Kingston upon Hull, North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire
17	Kent	1,665,855	3,736	207.6	3668	Non-metropolitan county of Kent and unitary authority of Medway
18	Lancashire	1,445,701	3,075	215.2	3448	Non-metropolitan county of Lancashire and unitary authorities of Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen
19	Leicestershire	987,784	2,538	125.1	2211	Non-metropolitan county of Leicestershire and unitary authorities of the City of Leicester and Rutland
20	Lincolnshire	697,925	5,921	70.4	1202	Non-metropolitan county of Lincolnshire
21	<i>London, City of *</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>2.6</i>	<i>62.8</i>	<i>878</i>	<i>City of London</i>
22	Merseyside	1,350,577	645	281.2	4297	Metropolitan county of Merseyside
23	<i>Metropolitan Police*</i>	<i>7,556,916</i>	<i>1,578</i>	<i>2127.4</i>	<i>32441</i>	<i>Region of Greater London excluding the City of London</i>

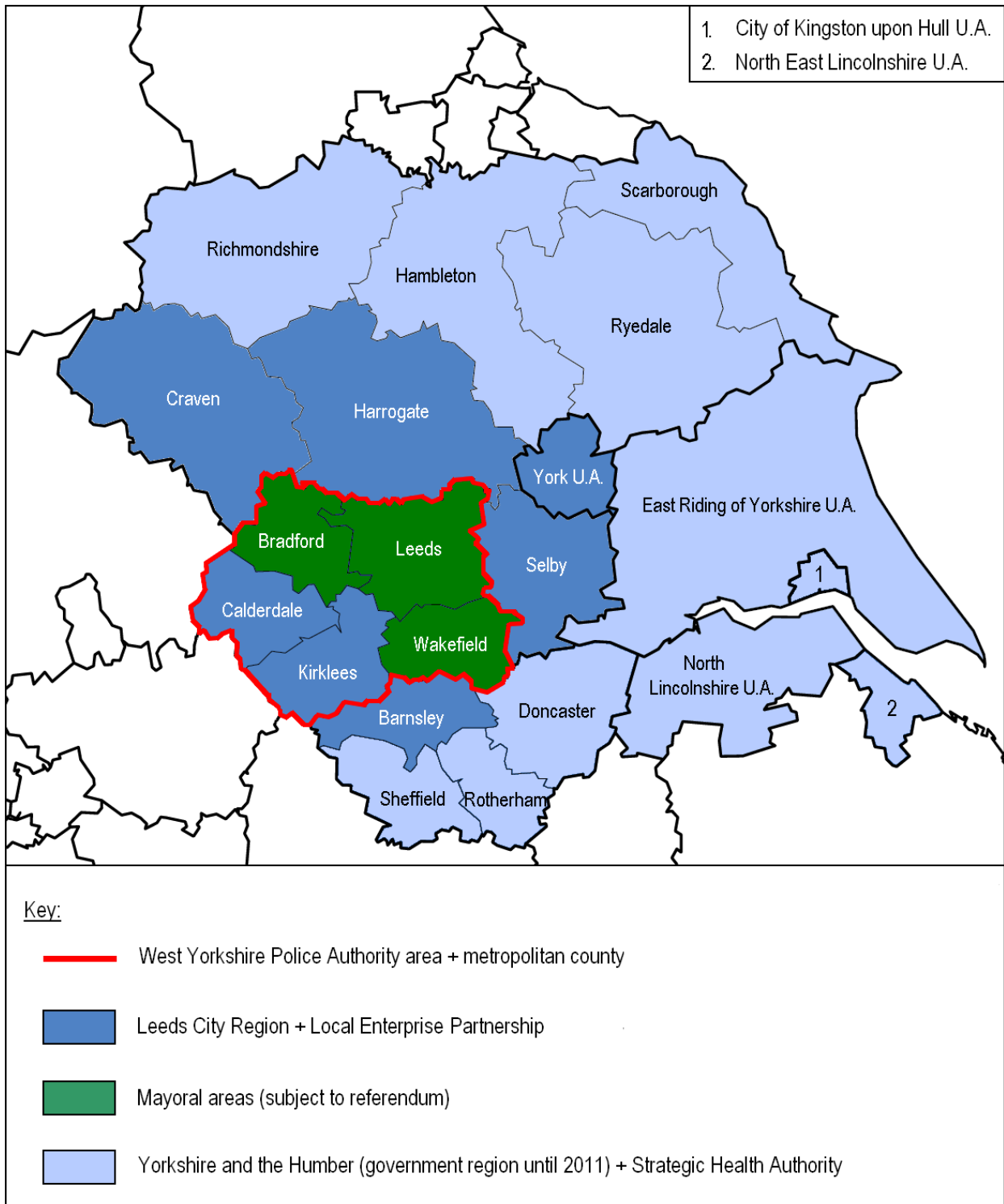
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24	Norfolk	853,368	5,371	94.8	1598	Non-metropolitan county of Norfolk
25	Northamptonshire	683,791	2,364	80.4	1306	Non-metropolitan county of Northamptonshire
26	Northumbria	1,417,403	5,553	260	4102	Metropolitan county of Tyne and Wear and unitary authority of Northumberland
27	North Yorkshire	796,454	8,310	82.3	1458	Non-metropolitan county of North Yorkshire and unitary authority of York
28	Nottinghamshire	1,077,371	2,160	149.3	2319	Non-metropolitan county of Nottinghamshire and unitary authority of Nottingham
29	South Yorkshire	1,317,311	1,552	211.9	2888	Metropolitan county of South Yorkshire
30	Staffordshire	1,067,597	2,713	127.6	2079	Non-metropolitan county of Staffordshire and unitary authority of Stoke-on-Trent
31	Suffolk	713,973	3,801	76.3	1244	Non-metropolitan county of Suffolk
32	Surrey	1,113,108	1,663	109.7	1885	Non-metropolitan county of Surrey
33	Sussex	1,561,379	3,783	182.1	3102	Non-metropolitan counties of East Sussex and West Sussex and unitary authority of Brighton and Hove
34	Thames Valley	2,225,601	5,742	256.8	4375	Non-metropolitan counties of Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire and unitary authorities of Bracknell Forest, Milton Keynes, Reading, Slough, Wokingham, West Berkshire, and Windsor and Maidenhead
35	Warwickshire	535,073	1,975	58.1	919	Non-metropolitan county of Warwickshire
36	West Mercia	1,189,751	7,408	131.6	2251	Metropolitan county of Worcestershire and unitary authorities of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin
37	West Midlands	2,638,658	902	513.8	8149	Metropolitan county of the West Midlands
38	West Yorkshire	2,226,712	2,029	357.9	5536	Metropolitan county of West Yorkshire
39	Wiltshire	654,925	3,485	69.4	1099	Unitary authorities of Swindon and Wiltshire
	<u>Wales</u>					
40	Dyfed-Powys	506,328	10,976	59.5	1157	Principal areas of Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Powys
41	Gwent	560,409	1,555	86.3	1501	Principal areas of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen
42	North Wales	678,750	6,172	86.4	1530	Principal areas of Wrexham, Conwy, Flintshire, Denbighshire, Gwynedd and the Isle of Anglesey
43	South Wales	1,253,832	2,074	189.2	3100	Principal areas of Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Neath Port Talbot, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Swansea and the Vale of Glamorgan
	Total:				139107	

\* No PCC election being held.

1. Based on Amardeep, D. & Kaiza, P. (2011), *Police Service Strength: England and Wales*, 31 March 2011, Home Office Statistical Bulletin, table 4. At: [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/police-research/hosb1311/hosb1311?view=Binary](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/police-research/hosb1311/hosb1311?view=Binary)
2. Wikipedia, 'Table of police forces in the United Kingdom'. At: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Table\\_of\\_police\\_forces\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_Kingdom#England\\_and\\_Wales](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Table_of_police_forces_in_the_United_Kingdom#England_and_Wales)
3. Based on Home Office (2010), Allocations of grant to police authorities in England and Wales, Table 3. Retrieved on 16 November 2011 at: [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/about-us/parliamentary-business/written-ministerial-statement/allocations-police-england-wales?view=Binary](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/about-us/parliamentary-business/written-ministerial-statement/allocations-police-england-wales?view=Binary)
4. Amardeep & Kaiza (2011), *Police Service Strength* (op cit).

## Appendix B: West Yorkshire police area and overlapping subnational governance boundaries



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