

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 22 September 2011

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Police and Crime Commissioner Update
and Elections May 2012

WARDS: All Wards

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To update Members on Government proposals to establish Police and Crime Commissioners for all English Police Authority Areas

To inform Members of the appointment of the Chief Executive as the Police Area Returning Officer (PARO) for the Cheshire Police Force Area for the proposed Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May 2012.(should these elections proceed)

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

1) the contents of the report be noted; and

2) the Council notes and supports the appointment of the Chief Executive as the Police Area Returning Officer (PARO), for the Cheshire Police Force Area for the proposed Police and Crime Commissioner Elections in May 2012. (should these elections proceed)

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill is currently before Parliament and if enacted will introduce directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) across England and Wales from May 2012.

The proposed legislation is controversial and not universally supported and is currently the subject of tension between the House of Commons and the House of Lords. However, current indications are that the Government remain committed to the proposal therefore there is a strong probability the legislation will be enacted in some form or another.

The first PCC elections would take place on 3 May 2012. The boundaries for the elections will be the 41 Police Force areas in England and Wales. Each of them will require a Police Area Returning Officer (PARO) who will be responsible for the overall conduct of the election for the relevant Police Force area.

Applications for the PARO role were requested by the Home Office and had to be submitted by 15 August.

With the support and agreement of the Chief Executives of Warrington, Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester, the Police Authority and the Cheshire and Warrington Leadership Board the Chief Executive was invited to submit an application.

The Chief Executive has been informed that this application was successful and has been appointed PARO for the Cheshire Police Force Area, should these elections proceed.

The PARO role is key to these elections.

The Chief Executive will liaise with and co-ordinate the work of the Local Returning Officers who cover the Cheshire Police Force Area in his capacity as the PARO, in a similar way to the role of the Regional Returning Officer for the recent European Parliamentary Elections and this years AV Referendum.

PCC elections will be combined with the local elections where they are taking place on the same day as is the usual practice when there are multiple elections.

4.0 POLICY, FINANCIAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific policy or financial implications.
The Government will fund the proposed Elections.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton** – There are no implications arising from this report.

6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton** – There are no implications arising from this report.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton** – There are no implications arising from this report.

6.4 **A Safer Halton** – There are no implications arising from this report.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal** - There are no implications arising from this report.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

A full risk assessment will be undertaken to ensure the smooth running of the PCC and any local elections . A detailed risk assessment election

plan for the May 2012 Elections (Local and PCC) will be drawn up when the PCC legislation is finalised by Parliament.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 The PARO will be required to ensure all eligible voters can vote in the PCC Elections (and any other local elections) and that access arrangements to polling stations are available to all whatever their disability

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None under the meaning of the Act.