

Summary of substantive policy discussions
at Liberty Council meeting
January 2014

Police Accountability

The meeting discussed recent policing scandals and the failings of current police accountability mechanisms. Specifically, the meeting discussed problems with the operation of the Independent Police Complaints Commission and began considering what a replacement body might look like. Key issues for any new body would include – remit, powers, obligations, skills, capabilities and management structure. The muddled nature of the IPCC's mandate and remit was noted and contributions highlighted the need for a replacement body to serve principally as a 'police force for the police'. The meeting considered the problem with the volume of ex and retired police officers employed by the IPCC and the impact of this on institutional culture and perception. The meeting considered the importance of staffing and training for a new body, in particular the importance of creating a system which allowed for recruitment and expert training of skilled investigators and lawyers who would be truly independent of police. The meeting discussed the importance of examining institutional parallels - including the Criminal Cases Review Commission, the Serious Fraud Office and the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland – in devising a new system for England and Wales. The meeting discussed powers and how best to ensure that a new body would use its powers robustly and effectively.

Council members agreed that the office should produce a more detailed paper on options and policy proposals for a new police watchdog that would form the basis of a future Council policy discussion.