

Committee on Standards in Public Life

Local Leadership and Public Trust: Openness and Accountability in Local and London Government

Home Office submission in response point 3.24 of the Issues and Questions Paper

This submission refers specifically to the Metropolitan Police Authority:

What should an effective accountability framework for the functional bodies look like and how well do the current arrangements work in practice?"

Whilst the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) must be a body that is independent from other strands of local government, for the MPA to be effective, it must deliver through partnership with other bodies. The framework for these partnerships should be centred on the Mayor of London and the Greater London Assembly.

The Mayor has the opportunity to chair the police authority or select the Chair, so that every Londoner has the opportunity to influence their policing in a very direct way.

That is why the current arrangements for membership of the Metropolitan Police Authority were introduced at the end of last year. These are still new and need to be properly explored before any further changes are made.

How open is the decision-making process of the functional bodies both to the GLA and to Londoners, and what measures could be taken to improve openness and transparency?

The MPA's accountability is provided through the Greater London Assembly; nearly half the members of the assembly sit on the MPA and therefore interchange of information between the two is very good. This is reinforced by the fact that Londoners can get involved with the MPA directly as independent members, and each MPA member is a champion for a specific area of London.

Legislation also requires the MPA to obtain the views of London's people directly, and to consider this when putting together their policing strategy.

There is always more work to be done by any body to ensure greater openness and transparency, but the Home Office believes the work done to this end by the MPA is of a very high standard, and the current arrangements need to be properly explored before any changes are made.