

# Response to the Home Office Consultation on Reforming the Powers of Police Staff and Volunteers

## Responding Organisation/Individual:

Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner

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## Which of the following best describes your organisation or the professional interest? Please select one option:

- a. Police force
- b. Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)**
- c. Victims' group
- d. Voluntary sector / community organisation
- e. Government department or agency
- f. Academic institution or think tank
- g. Representative body
- h. None – I am responding as a member of the public
- i. Prefer not to say
- j. Other (please specify) .....

## In which of the following areas are you based? Please select one option:

- a. East Midlands
- b. East of England
- c. Greater London
- d. North East England
- e. North West England
- f. South East England**
- g. South West England
- h. Wales
- i. West Midlands
- j. Yorkshire and the Humber
- k. Prefer not to say
- l. Other (please specify) .....

**Consultation Questions:** (Please note the boxes will expand as you type in them)

**Q1. Do you agree with the idea of giving greater control to chief officers over the powers of their designated staff?**

In principle, yes. The proposed chief officer powers offer greater flexibility to ensure the effective delivery of frontline policing and are consistent with the principles underpinning the full 'stage 2' transfer of police staff employment responsibility from the PCC to the CC, as implemented within Thames Valley Police.

The contribution of staff and volunteers is already recognised and extending their powers would augment the work of warranted officers and allow them to focus on their own role. Forces will need to consider where and how these 'greater powers' are best used, particularly to meet the challenges of modern policing in areas such cyber-crime and counter-terrorism. In this regard, police staff could be given different designated powers which fall just short – but still complement – the role of a warranted officer.

The College of Policing would need to play a key role in ensuring the implementation of national standards and professional practice. 'Check and balances' would also be required to ensure that skills are robustly assessed and training meets the requirements associated with each role.

Further cost benefit analysis will determine the true savings if designated powers afforded to police staff are genuine, particularly when key areas such as the impact on salary costs, training and accreditation need to be recognised.

If greater control is given to chief officers over the powers of their designated staff, then PCC's will clearly have an important role in ensuring there is a 'continuum' in the governance and accountability of Chief Constables.

**Q2. Do you have any views on the proposed new role titles?**

**Q3. Do you agree with the concept of a single list of the 'core' powers that would remain exclusive to police officers?**

**Q4. Is the proposed 'core' list correct, or should other powers be added or removed?**

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**Q5. Do you agree that it would be helpful to include an order-making power to enable the Home Secretary to add to the list of powers which designated officers cannot have?**

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**Q6. Should chief officers also be able to designate volunteers with powers?**

I endorse the approach and concerns expressed by my Force in Thames Valley which are set out as follows:

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*There is no doubt that the police service can build resilience through designating powers as appropriate through non-warranted police staff and volunteers. For example, there is a long standing evidence base that demonstrates this works well with Special Constables who now have the full powers of regular police officers. These powers should not be ubiquitous but introduced proportionally to reflect local demand and community concerns.*

*There are consequently caveats beyond the scope of Special Constables. These are as follows:-*

- *There must be a clear understanding on police demand to know exactly what powers are required, where and why.*
- *Designated powers should be role specific and sit within a national framework clearly set out by the College of Policing.*
- *The College of Policing must monitor implementation and oversee national standardisation through a continuum of approved professional practice.*
- *Designated volunteers should subscribe to a memorandum of understanding that sets out the requirements of the role and the level of commitment expected.*
- *The volunteering roles should always be to support police officers and staff, rather than replace them altogether.*
- *Both police officer and police staff associations must be consulted at each step of the process.*
- *There must be assurance that the application of powers is easily taught, monitored and controlled.*
- *The new approach of allowing chief constables to designate any power outside of those exclusive to police officers is seen as absolutely necessary but should not be used as a substitute to backfill warranted police officer or police staff posts.*

**Q7. Should we abolish the office of traffic warden?**

<b>Q8. Do you have any other comments?</b>

Please now e-mail your response to the following e-mail address:

[SpecialConstabularyEnquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:SpecialConstabularyEnquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

Or send it by post to:

Complementary Policing Team  
Police Integrity and Powers Unit  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor NW, Fry Building  
Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
LONDON  
SW1P 4DF

Comments must be received by 31 October 2015; we cannot undertake to consider any responses received after that date.