


You are here: > [Home](#) > [News Releases](#) > [APA Welcomes New Home Secretary](#)

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APA Welcomes New Home Secretary

The Association of Police Authorities (APA) has welcomed the appointment of Theresa May MP as the new Home Secretary.

APA Chairman, Rob Garnham, said: "Police authorities look forward to working with the new Home Secretary, Theresa May MP, to continue to improve policing on behalf of the communities we serve. We are also eager to build on the increase in public confidence in the police service which has become apparent in recent years.

"Quite rightly, the public expects a police service which meets the needs of everyone in our society, but also provides good value for money. Police authorities have a pivotal role to play in this, with our diverse mix of elected and non-elected representatives. We want to continue to put communities at the heart of policing. But the service needs to do much more than listen to communities. Working with police authorities, we believe the police service must be seen to act according to local needs, whilst ensuring that ways of developing an enhanced dialogue with communities are continuously improved.

"We will be seeking a meeting with Theresa May at the earliest opportunity to discuss how we can continue to work for the improvements in policing which everyone seeks. We want everyone to know that police authorities have an important job to do and that we are working hard at national and local levels to improve policing on behalf of our communities. Police authorities are committed to ensuring that people understand what we do and the benefits we bring in making policing accountable to everyone."

Notes to Editors

1. The Association of Police Authorities (APA) represents all police authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as the British Transport Police Authority, the Civil Nuclear Police Authority, and the Ministry of Defence Police Committee.
2. Local police authorities, along with the Home Secretary and chief officers of police, make up the tripartite relationship which is responsible for the governance of policing

in England and Wales.

3. Police authorities are currently made up of local people: a mix of local councillors and independent members (selected from the community) of which one must be a magistrate.
 4. The tripartite partners are the Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Association of Police Authorities.
 5. The job of police authorities is to:
 - o Consult with local communities to find out what they want the local police to do
 - o Set the strategic direction for policing locally and decide what the police should focus their attention on locally, based on consultations with local communities
 - o Set the budget for their police force, and decide how much local people should pay for policing in the local council tax
 - o Make sure the police force is continuing to do a better job
 - o Appoint (and, if necessary, dismiss) chief constables and senior police officers
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You are here: > [Home](#) > [News Releases](#) > [Ensuring Continuation of Effective and Efficient Policing](#)

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Ensuring Continuation of Effective and Efficient Policing

The Association of Police Authorities (APA) has congratulated Nick Herbert MP on his appointment as the new Minister for Police, and has asked for early talks with the Minister to ensure the continuation of effective and efficient policing, especially during the expected further tightening of public spending.

APA Chairman, Rob Garnham, said: "The urgency of the present economic situation demands that police authorities concentrate now on ensuring an effective policing service that delivers real value for money in the current financial climate. But while finance is important, the police service must not take its eye off protecting the public, whilst continuing to tackle crime and drive up public confidence.

"Having worked closely with Nick Herbert in successful opposition to previous plans for compulsory police mergers, police authorities recognise his commitment to improving the service, and look forward to working with him and the new Home Secretary Theresa May, to continue this process. We are keen to ensure that the police continue to be held robustly to account for what they do, yet remain able to work effectively and efficiently on behalf of everyone in our local communities, without overt political interference.

"As police authorities we already have the structures in place to deliver value for money in policing, whilst ensuring that service levels are not diminished. Conversely, police authorities are not afraid of change where this is in the interests of communities. The devil is in the detail when it comes to delivering real improvement in policing, and we look forward to working with the Minister to ensure that the service develops in ways which reflect the unique needs of our communities, whilst still improving public confidence in policing.

"Police authorities are conscious that the new government will need time to consider future developments in policing, including police accountability, and we look forward to examining their proposals. We are constantly striving to improve the service delivered to

the public and look forward to contributing to any new policing policies, but we see some areas of risk including politicisation of the service, which we believe give real cause for concern.

“Police authorities are made up of locally elected councillors and appointed independent members of the public. This mix ensures that local community links and understanding of community needs is at the heart of everything we do. We will continue to hold police rigorously to account on behalf of those local communities, and will work to ensure that their interests remain at the top of the policing agenda.

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