

THAMES VALLEY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL ARRANGEMENTS

Originally published: 26 April 2012

Amended: 18 November 2022

This document was agreed by a Joint Committee on 19 April 2012 on behalf of the following Authorities and updated on 18 November 2022 to reflect a recommendation from the Panel on hosting arrangements and the appointment of named substitutes for elected members and local authority co-opted members.

- Bracknell Forest Council
- Buckinghamshire Council
- Cherwell District Council
- Milton Keynes Council
- Oxford City Council
- Oxfordshire County Council
- Reading Borough Council
- Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council
- Slough Borough Council
- South Oxfordshire District Council
- Vale of White Horse District Council
- West Berkshire Council
- West Oxfordshire District Council
- Wokingham Borough Council

In this agreement:

- the above Authorities are referred to singularly as ‘Authority’ and together as ‘the Authorities’;
- the “Panel” is the Police and Crime Panel for the Thames Valley Police Force;
- the “Secretariat” is the financial, administrative, scrutiny and other officer support to the Panel;
- the “Host Authority” is the council which hosts the Secretariat at the relevant time;
- the “Act” is the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011;
- the “Thames Valley Local Authority Chief Executives” are the chief executive officers of the “Authorities”;
- the “Panel Arrangements Document” is this document, as amended from time-to-time; and
- the “Rules of Procedure” are the Rules of Procedure as agreed by the Panel from time to time.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 This Panel Arrangements Document will normally be reviewed every four years by all Authorities, alongside a review of the Rules of Procedure. Proposed changes to the Panel Arrangements Document will be referred to the Thames Valley Local Authority Chief Executive Officers (or to other such arrangement as may be agreed by all Authorities) for comment prior to the decision by the Panel.

- 1.2 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 ('the Act') introduces new structural arrangements for national policing, strategic police decision making, neighbourhood policing and police accountability.
- 1.2 The Act provides for the election of a Police and Crime Commissioner ('PCC') for a police area, responsible for securing an efficient and effective police force for their area, producing a Police and Crime Plan, recruiting the Chief Constable for an area, and holding him/her to account, publishing certain information including an annual report, setting the force budget and police precept and requiring the Chief Constable to prepare reports on police matters. The PCC must co-operate with local community safety partners and criminal justice bodies.
- 1.3 The Act requires the Authorities to establish and maintain a Police and Crime Panel ('the Panel'). It is the responsibility of the Authorities for the police area to make arrangements for the Panel ('Panel Arrangements').
- 1.4 The Thames Valley is a multi-authority police area ('the police area') as defined in Schedule 1 of the Police Act 1996. All the Authorities, as the relevant local authorities within the police area must agree to the making and modification of the Panel Arrangements. If the Authorities are not able to agree the Panel Arrangements the Secretary of State is able to establish a Police and Crime Panel for the Police Area.
- 1.5 Each Authority and each Member of the Panel must comply with the Panel Arrangements.
- 1.6 The functions of the Panel—to be known as the "Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel"—are to be exercised with a view to supporting the effective exercise of the functions of the PCC for that police area.
- 1.7 The Panel must have regard to the Policing Protocol issued by the Home Secretary, which sets out the ways in which the Home Secretary, the PCC, the Chief Constable and the Panel should exercise, or refrain from exercising, functions so as to encourage, maintain or improve working relationships (including co-operative working); and limit or prevent the overlapping or conflicting exercise of functions.
- 1.8 The Panel is a scrutiny body with responsibility for scrutinising the PCC and promoting openness in the transaction of police business in the police area.
- 1.9 The Panel is a Joint Committee of the Authorities and as such is subject to the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972 and subsequent legislation
- 1.10 The Authorities by being parties to this Agreement signify their agreement to the Panel Arrangements.

2.0 Terms of Reference and Functions

- 2.1 The overarching role of the Panel is to scrutinise the work of the PCC in the discharge of the PCC's functions in order to support the effective exercise of those functions.

- 2.2 To undertake this scrutiny role the Panel will carry out the functions set out in the Act. These functions relate to the scrutiny of the Police and Crime Plan, PCC's Annual Report; confirmation hearings of appointments; issuing of precepts; and the appointment of the Chief Constable. These functions may not be discharged by a sub-committee of the Panel.
- 2.3 The Panel is a statutory consultee on the development of the **PCC's Police and Crime Plan** and must:
- a) review the draft Police and Crime Plan (or a variation to it); and
 - b) report and/or make recommendations on the draft Plan which the PCC must take into account.
- 2.4 The Panel must comment upon the **Annual Report** of the PCC, and for that purpose will:
- a) question the PCC on the Annual Report at a public meeting;
 - b) make a report and/or recommendations on the Annual Report to the PCC.
- 2.5 The Panel must hold **confirmation hearings in respect of proposed senior appointments** made by the PCC. This includes the posts of the PCC Chief Executive; Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Police and Crime PCC in accordance with the requirements set out in Schedule 1 of the Act. The Panel will review the appointments and make a report and/or recommendations to the PCC.
- 2.6 The Panel must hold a **confirmation hearing in respect of the appointment of the Chief Constable** by the PCC. The Panel has the right of veto for the appointment of this post in accordance with the Act and regulations.¹
- 2.7 The Panel must review the **precept** proposed by the PCC in accordance with the requirements set out in Schedule 5 of the Act, and will have a right of veto in respect of the precept in accordance with the Act and Regulations made thereafter.
- 2.8 The right of veto will require that at least two-thirds of the persons who are Members of the Panel at the time when the decision is made vote in favour of making that decision.²
- 2.10 The Panel may appoint an Acting PCC if necessary.
- 2.11 The Panel may suspend the PCC if he/she is charged with an offence carrying a maximum term of imprisonment exceeding two years.
- 2.12 The Panel will have any other powers and duties set out in the Act or Regulations made in accordance with the Act.
- 2.13 The Panel may carry out in-depth reviews into the work of the PCC. This work may be delegated to a Sub-Committee or Task Group.

3.0 Membership

¹ Subject to Home Office regulations

² Ibid.

Elected Members

3.1 The Panel comprises:

- a) 14 elected members (one from each of the Oxfordshire district councils (4), one for each of the Unitary Authorities in Berkshire (6), and one each for Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council and Milton Keynes Council. Buckinghamshire Council will have one member plus three further local authority co-opted Members and Milton Keynes Council will have one further local authority co-opted Member to meet the balanced panel objective (see 3.1 c) and d)).
- b) Two co-opted members who may not be members of the local authorities in the Thames Valley Police area;
- c) Three co-opted members from Buckinghamshire Council to meet the balanced appointment objective (in addition to 3.1 a)
- d) One co-opted member from Milton Keynes Council to meet the balanced appointment objective (in addition to 3.1 a)
- e) The elected members and the local authority co-opted members can have named substitute members appointed by their respective local authorities, who can attend Panel meetings in their absence.

3.2 Appointments of elected Members to the Panel shall be made by each of the Authorities in accordance with their own procedures and in making their appointments to the Panel each individual authority shall have regard to the requirement in the Act that appointments shall be made with a view to ensuring that the 'balanced appointment objective' is met so far as is reasonably practicable. It is recognised that each Authority may choose to appoint from within the membership of the majority group.

3.3 The balanced appointment objective requires that the Panel should (when taken together), and as far as is reasonably practicable:

- a) represent all parts of the police area;
- b) represent the political make-up of the Authorities (when taken together);
- c) have the skills, knowledge and experience necessary for the Panel to discharge its functions effectively.

3.4 In the event that an Authority does not appoint a Member in accordance with these requirements, the Secretary of State will appoint a Member from the Authority to the Panel in accordance with the provisions in the Act.

Term of Office

3.5 A member shall be appointed annually to the Panel to hold office for the following municipal year, and all such appointments shall be notified to the Secretariat no later than 31 May in each year, subject to the following proviso that he or she:

- a) shall cease to be a member of the Panel if he or she ceases to be a member of the Authority (and does not on the same day again become a member of the Authority).

- 3.6 Each Authority will give consideration to the 'balanced objective requirement' in its annual appointment process. Where possible, an Authority will give consideration to continuity of membership to enable the Panel's expertise and skills to be developed for the effective scrutiny of the PCC.

Resignation and removal of elected members on the Panel

- 3.7 An Authority may decide in accordance with its procedures to remove its Member from the Panel at any time and upon doing so shall give written notice to the Secretariat of the change in its Member.
- 3.8 A Member may resign from the Panel at any time by giving notice to the appointing Council who will inform the Secretariat.
- 3.9 In the event that any Member resigns from the Panel, or is removed from the Panel by his or her Authority, the Authority shall immediately take steps to nominate and appoint an alternative Member to the Panel, applying the considerations given in paragraph 3.2-3.3 above.
- 3.10 Where a Panel Member fails to attend meetings of the Panel over a six month period then the Secretariat shall recommend to the relevant Authority that due consideration is given to removing the member from the appointment to the Panel and the appointment of a replacement member from that Authority.

Non-local authority co-opted members

- 3.11 Two co-optees shall be appointed by the Panel who may not be members of the local authorities in the Thames Valley police area.
- 3.12 those co-optees shall:
- a) be disqualified from being appointed if:-
 - i) he or she has not yet attained the age of eighteen years, or
 - ii) neither his or her principal or only place of work, nor his or her principal or only place of residence, has been in the police area during the whole of the period of twelve months ending with the day of appointment.
 - b) be disqualified from being a member so appointed if, at any time, neither his or her principal or only place of work, nor his or her principal or only place of residence, is within the police area.
- 3.13 The following shall be disqualified from being appointed, and from being a co-opted Member if so appointed:
- a) the PCC for the police area;
 - b) a member of staff of the Police and Crime PCC for the area;
 - c) a member of the civilian staff of the Police Force for the area;
 - d) a Member of Parliament;
 - e) a Member of the National Assembly for Wales;

- f) a Member of the Scottish Parliament;
- g) a Member of the European Parliament;
- h) a member of the uniformed Police Force for the area;
- i) a member of a principal council within the Thames Valley Police Authority area.

3.14 A co-opted Member shall be a Member of the Panel for four years. The maximum time length that a co-opted member may serve for is two terms.

3.15 The appointments of co-opted Members are undertaken in accordance with the following principles:

- a) The appointment will be made on merit of candidates whose skills, experience and qualities are considered best to ensure the effective functioning of the Panel.
- b) The selection process must be fair, objective, impartial and consistently applied to all candidates who will be assessed against the same pre-determined criteria.
- c) The selection process will be conducted transparently with information about the requirements for the appointment and the process being publicly advertised.
- d) The selection process will endeavour to encourage applications from candidates which reflect the breadth of communities in the Thames Valley and will welcome applications from all eligible people irrespective of gender, ethnic origin, religious belief, sexual orientation, disability, age or other factor.

3.16 Costs of the recruitment process shall be met from within the existing budget approved by the Panel as set out in section 5. Costs will be minimised by utilising existing networks and advertising online through the national public appointments website, rather than by paid advertisement in newspapers.

3.17 A co-opted Member of the Panel may resign from the Panel by, giving at least three months written notice to the Secretariat. In exceptional circumstances the Panel may agree to a shorter notice period.

3.18 The Panel may at any time terminate the appointment of a co-opted Member of the Panel by notice in writing with immediate effect if:

- a) he or she has been convicted of a criminal offence but not disqualified in accordance with 3.21(c); or
- b) reasonably satisfied that the member is otherwise unable or unfit to discharge his functions as a member; or

3.19 In the event that a co-opted member fails to attend the meetings of the Panel over a six month period the Panel shall give due consideration to the termination of the appointment of the co-opted member.

- 3.20 Where, in accordance with Paragraphs 3.17 and 3.18 a co-opted Member resigns from the Panel or is removed from the Panel following a decision of the Panel, the Panel shall ensure that a replacement is sought as soon as possible in accordance with the principles set out in paragraph 3.15.
- 3.21 Subject to the exemptions set out in paragraphs 3.21 and 3.22, a person shall be disqualified from being appointed as or being a member of a Panel if:
- a) a bankruptcy order has been made against him or her or his or her estate has been sequestrated or he or she has made a composition or arrangement with, or granted a trust deed for, his creditors;
 - b) he or she is subject to a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986, to a disqualification order under Part II of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, to a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 or to an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986(failure to pay under county court administration order); or
 - c) he or she has within five years before the date of appointment or since appointment been convicted in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man of an offence, and has had passed on him or her a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of not less than three months.
- 3.22 Where a person is disqualified under paragraph 3.20(a) by reason that a bankruptcy order has been made against him or her or his or her estate has been sequestrated, the disqualification shall cease:
- a) unless the bankruptcy order is previously annulled or the sequestration of his estate is recalled or reduced, on his obtaining a discharge; and
 - b) if the bankruptcy order is annulled or the sequestration of his estate is recalled or reduced, on the date of that event.
- 3.23 Where a person is disqualified under paragraph 3.20(a) by reason of having made a composition or arrangement with, or granted a trust deed for, creditors and pays debts in full, the disqualification shall cease on the date on which the payment is completed, and in any other case it shall cease at the end of the period of five years beginning with the date on which the terms of the deed of composition or arrangement or trust deed are fulfilled.
- 3.24 For the purposes of paragraph 3.20(c) the date of a conviction shall be taken to be the ordinary date on which the period allowed for making an appeal or application expires or, if an appeal or application is made, the date on which the appeal or application is finally disposed of or abandoned or fails by reason of its non-prosecution.
- 3.25 **Balanced appointment objective**

- 3.26 The balanced appointment objective is the objective that local authority members of the Panel (when taken together) represent all parts of the police area as well as the political make-up of the local authorities in the police area (when taken together); and have the skills, knowledge and experience necessary for the Panel to discharge its functions
- 3.27 The Panel resolved on 22 November 2019 that subject to the Secretary of State's agreement to appoint up to four additional co-opted members, who are members of Buckinghamshire Council to the Panel to meet the balanced appointment objective. Appointments and resignation and removal of elected members on the Panel will be the same as Rules 3.5 to 3.10.

4.0 Host Authority

- 4.1 The Panel shall agree a Host Authority for the Secretariat for the Panel, which shall provide such scrutiny, legal, financial, administrative and other support as is reasonably required to enable the Panel to undertake its functions within the resources agreed by the Panel.
- 4.2 In accordance with the Panel's agreement made at the meeting held on 18 November 2022, Oxfordshire County Council shall act as the Host Authority until 31 March 2023. Buckinghamshire Council shall act as the Host Authority from 1 April 2023 till 31 March 2026, until such time as either:
- a) The Panel resolves at its annual meeting (held in June of each year) that another Authority should carry out this function, provided that such other Authority agrees. In which case, the function will be transferred six months after the Panel decision unless a shorter period is agreed between the existing Host Authority and the new Host Authority; or
 - b) The existing Host Authority serves notice that it no longer wishes to be the Host Authority and this function is transferred to another Authority in which case, a six month notice period will apply, unless a shorter period is agreed between the existing Host Authority and the new Host Authority; or
 - c) In the event that no Authority comes forward to act as Host Authority the home Council of the current Chairman of the Panel shall be expected to be the Host Authority.
- 4.3 The staff employed to support the Panel will be employed by the Host Authority. Should the Host Authority change the TUPE legislation which is in force at the time shall apply as necessary.

5.0 Budget and Costs of the Panel

- 5.1 An annual draft budget for the operation of the Panel shall be drawn up each year by the Host Authority and approved by the Panel. All monies (which are not ring-fenced) provided by the Home Office to support the operation of the Panel shall be taken into account in preparing the Budget.

- 5.2 For the first year of operation (until April 2013), the Host Authority will provide a level of service to the Panel within the resources granted by the Home Office, excluding some of the on-costs which will be covered by the Host Authority.
- 5.3 If in subsequent years, the Panel considers that the Budget is insufficient to support the functions of the Panel, the Panel may make a funding request to all Authorities, which request shall be made via the Thames Valley Local Authority Chief Executives.
- 5.4 Any additional costs arising under paragraph 5.3 shall be borne between the Authorities in equal shares.

6.0 Allowances and Expenses

- 6.1 Each Authority has the discretion to pay its representatives on the Panel Special Responsibility Allowances, and to reimburse reasonable expenses incurred. No allowance or expenses payments will be made by the Panel itself to elected members. Any allowances or expenses which may be made to elected members arising out of Panel Membership shall be determined and borne by the appointing Authorities for each Panel Member individually.
- 6.2 The Host Authority, on behalf of the Panel will reimburse reasonable expenses to co-optees provided that this is agreed as part of the annual budget approved by the Panel.

7.0 Promotion of the Panel

- 7.1 The Panel shall be promoted and supported by the Host Authority and the Secretariat through:
- a) The inclusion of dedicated webpages on the work of the Panel, with the publication of meeting agendas; minutes; and papers where those papers are public, in line with the rules of procedure and legal obligations under the Local Government Act 1972. All reports and recommendations made, with responses from the PCC will be published. Information on member attendance and other publications will be included.
 - b) Media and communications support provided by the corporate communications team, this includes the issuing of press release where required.
 - c) Clerking support to be provided for all public Panel meetings. This includes sending out agendas; minutes; procedural advice.
 - d) Legal advice where required for the Panel to carry out its duties effectively.
 - e) Independent policy advice to the Panel through a dedicated scrutiny officer, this includes written and oral briefings to Panel members.

7.2 The costs of the promotion work identified above will be identified as part of the annual budget approved by the Panel. Costs will be met as set out in section 5 above.

7.3 The Panel shall be promoted and supported by each Authority through:

- a) Ensuring that briefings take place for local stakeholders on the work of the Panel. This includes officer briefings to respective members in each authority to support the work of the Panel (executive/non-executive members including Panel member) on a regular basis to ensure that members are fully informed about local relevant matters.
- b) Information on each respective website about the work of the Panel and links to the main web-pages.
- c) Sharing of information on the work of the designated statutory Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee in order to ensure that the work programme of the Panel complements local scrutiny work and vice-versa.

8.0 Validity of Proceedings

8.1 The validity of the proceedings of the Panel shall not be affected by a vacancy in the Membership of the Panel or a defect in appointment.

8.2 All Panel members (including co-opted members) must observe the Members Code of Conduct and any related Protocols as agreed by the Panel *[further regulations may follow on this issue]*.

9.0 Rules of Procedure

9.1 The Panel shall determine its Rules of Procedure (in accordance with the statutory requirements and regulations).

9.2 The Rules of Procedure shall include arrangements in relation to:

- a) the appointment, resignation and removal of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman;
- b) the appointment of sub-committees;
- c) the appointment of Task Groups;
- c) the making of decisions;
- e) the circulation of information;
- f) the frequency, timing and place of meetings;
- g) public participation; and
- h) minority reporting.