

Eighth annual conference for Police (Fire) and Crime Panels

Monday 18 – Tuesday 19 November 2019

Scarman House, Warwick Conference Centre

Conference breakout session: Effective scrutiny

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www.frontlineconsulting.co.uk

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A Police and Crime Panel's purpose

- A Police and Crime Panel is a scrutiny body
- Its purpose is to:
 - ✓ scrutinise and challenge the Police and Crime Commissioner as a 'critical friend'
 - ✓ support the PCC in the effective exercise of their functions
 - ✓ promote openness in the transaction of police business



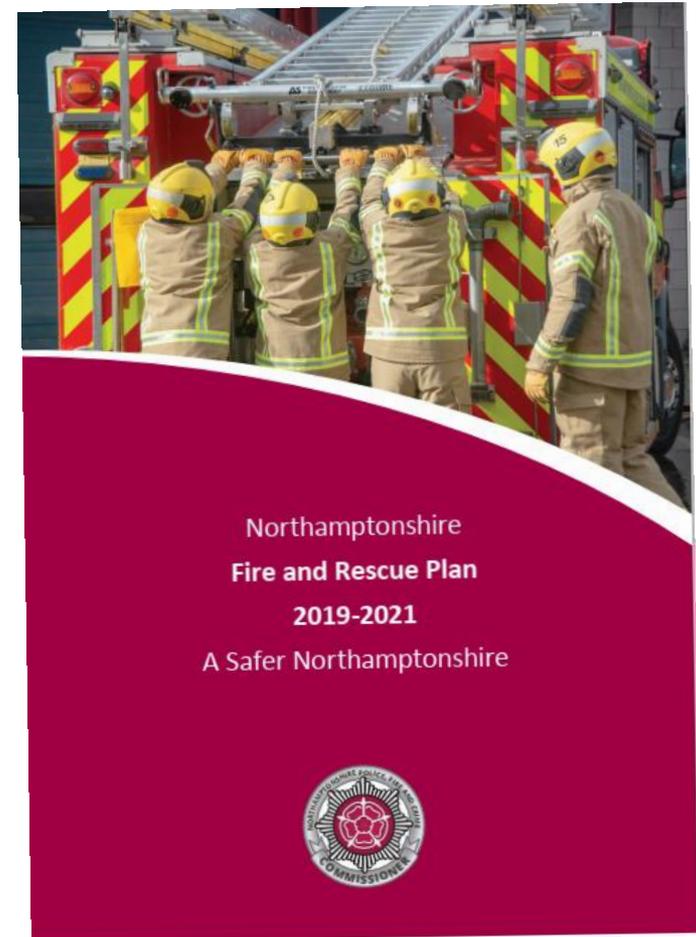
A PCP's statutory functions, scrutinising:

- PCC's Police and Crime Plan – *Section 28 (3)*, Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011
- PCC's proposed Precept – *Schedule 5*
- PCC's Annual Report – *Section 28 (4)*
- PCC's appointment of the Chief Constable and a call for the CC to retire or resign – *Schedule 8, Parts 1 & 2*
- certain senior appointments and holding public confirmation hearings for these posts – *Schedule 1, paras. 10-12*
- complaints about non-criminal behaviour of the PCC – *Schedule 7, paragraph 3(2)(b)*

	£'M
Budget Requirement	104.606
Police Grant	(40.567)
Formula Funding	(23.461)
Legacy Council Tax Grants	(4.637)
	35.941
Surplus on the 2014/15 Council Tax collection fund	(0.849)
Precept	35.092
Apportionment between Unitary Councils	
Bedford Borough	9.698
Luton Borough	8.457
Central Bedfordshire	16.937
Precept	35.092

A PFCP's additional responsibilities

- Scrutinise an additional Fire Plan (although this may be amalgamated into a single Police, Fire and Crime Plan)
- Agree precept levels for both Fire and Police (separate consideration)
- Scrutinise the appointment, suspension and removal process of the Chief Fire Officer



What is effective scrutiny?

- Making a positive impact on the PCC's execution of their duties and delivery of their priorities
- Adding value through contributing to improving policing, increasing community safety and reducing crime
- Making a difference to local people



PANEL SURVEY QUOTES

"The panel has improved community projects, community liaison and retention of community support officers."

"There is a good dynamic between the PCC and PCP. There has been a build up of trust. The panel has been effective at maintaining focus on areas of prime concern to the communities, and areas of performance by the constabulary."

"The PCP has been effective by working together constructively towards a common goal – with very few political differences being obvious. The PCP has established and developed positive working relationships with the PCC and his officers and supported the PCC in the implementation of his strategic priorities as contained within the police and crime plan. There has been on-going, effective scrutiny of the PCC, including positive media coverage of the work of the panel."

"The panel has sought information on topical issues such as CSE [child sex exploitation] to promote public confidence in the policing service."

"The PCP has been effective in improving crime data integrity scrutiny, helping to ensure value for money from the transformation fund and scrutinising the PCC's precept proposal, drawing on independent expertise from one of the local authorities. The PCP has also been effective in triangulating what is being said in panel meetings with HMC and the independent audit committee. The PCP is pushing for a workforce strategy."

"The PCP has been effective in its inquiry work on FGM [female genital mutilation], safer travel, procurement and community safety funding and establishing a complaints process."

What's broadly necessary for effective scrutiny?

- Clarity of role and good Panel/PCC working relationship
- Insight/understanding of the strategic policing landscape in the local area
- A sense of focus and direction – prioritisation of workload
- Adequate staffing support
- Commitment by Panel members
- Sound use of resources
- Availability and timely supply of information to Panel



Delivering effective scrutiny: precept and budget

Key questions

- Precept provides funding to deliver priorities?
- Is VfM being secured?
- Is there a robust monitoring framework?

Approaches

- Year-round approach: panel working group, usually meeting quarterly (eg Cleveland, Thames Valley, Derbyshire, West Mercia, Warwickshire) or link person (N. Wales)
- Briefings provided by PCC's Chief Finance Officer (CFO), and/or:
- Training - eg by host authority's CFO (Derbyshire) or budget/precept workshop (Essex)



2019

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Delivering effective scrutiny: PCC Annual Plan

Key questions

- Does the Plan reflect local need assessments?
- Are resources/arrangements in place to deliver Plan objectives?
- Is Victims Services' commissioning and Crime & Disorder grant-making appropriate?
- Partnership working and collaboration?

Approaches

- Making recs on plan priorities, performance measures and service improvements
- Ongoing, focus on single or grouped objectives
- Using scoping template to brief OPCC for report (eg Lincs)
- Preparation workshop devising Lines of Enquiry (Suffolk)

DRAFT Project Scoping Template

Topic: Review the Commissioner's role and relationship with HM Courts and Tribunals Service

Objectives and Key Issues:

- To examine the relationship of the PCC with the courts service to include the areas the PCC has discussed with them and any improvements that have been made as a result of these discussions.
- To scrutinise recent court closures and what impacts there have been on access to justice particularly in relation to difficulties of access to hearings/trials for witnesses and victims.
- To seek information on the PCC's role in the changes being made to the probation service following the failure of the government's attempts to privatise probation services. During this period of privatisation the average number of re-offences per offender rose by 22% nationally.

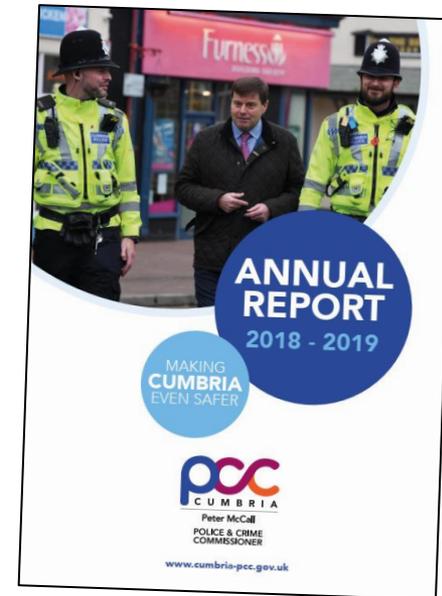
Delivering effective scrutiny: PCC Annual Report

Key questions

- State of force/services, policing and crime
- Performance and outcomes against priorities and budgets
- PCC's role and record in meeting objectives

Approaches

- Strategic: look back at last year's successes and challenges, forward to next year's opportunities and priorities
- Challenge: use panel's own insights/research/evidence/work to evaluate report, any actions required
- Support: the PCC to hold the CC to account
- Not a tick box exercise – involve public, stakeholders



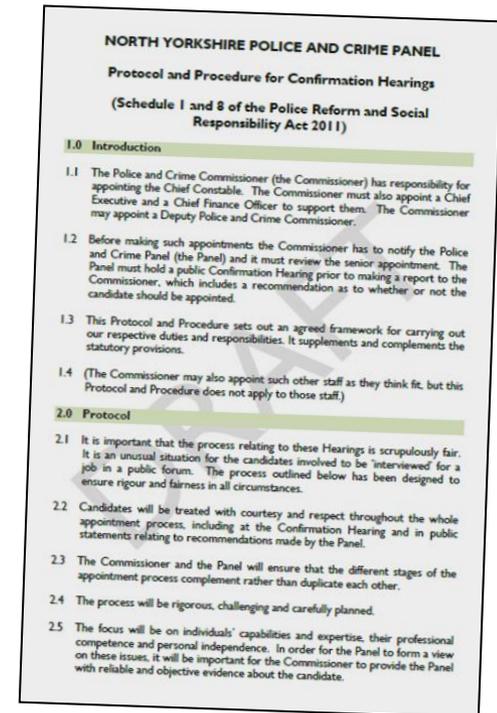
Delivering effective scrutiny: confirmation hearings

Key issues to explore:

- Has the appointments process been fairly and properly conducted?
- Does the candidate have the required professional competence (and personal independence) to exercise the role?

Approaches

- Hold a preparation meeting, with all necessary information in advance
- Sort out questioning themes and specific questions
- Be clear what's permissible and what isn't
- A PCC-PCP protocol (eg N.Yorks, Hampshire, Leics): common understanding of timescales, responsibilities etc



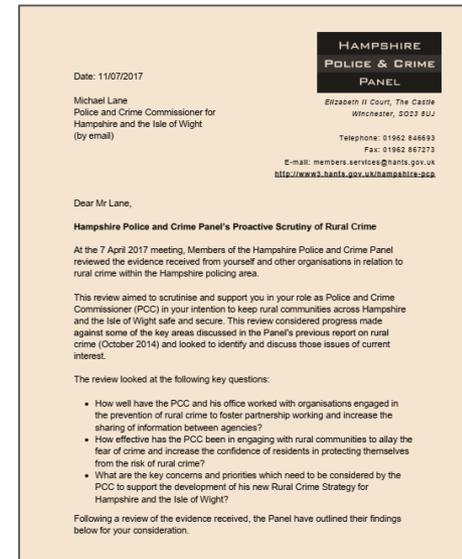
Delivering effective scrutiny: Task and Finish groups

Key questions

- What is the issue here? What is our focus?
- Can we add value? Is it timely?
- What broad outcome(s) are we seeking?
- Can we scope and deliver a result?

Approaches

- Small working group: informal meetings, site visits, witnesses – or stakeholder events (eg Cheshire, Th.Vy)
- Key Lines of Enquiry
- Evidence gathering and triangulation
- See for example Hampshire's 15 reports (bit.ly/2qJLbIQ) and West Midlands's mini-inquiries (bit.ly/2qFefRU)

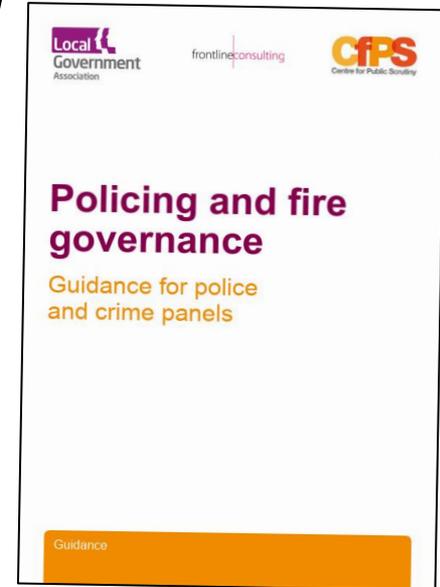


Effective scrutiny: achievements, barriers and possible solutions

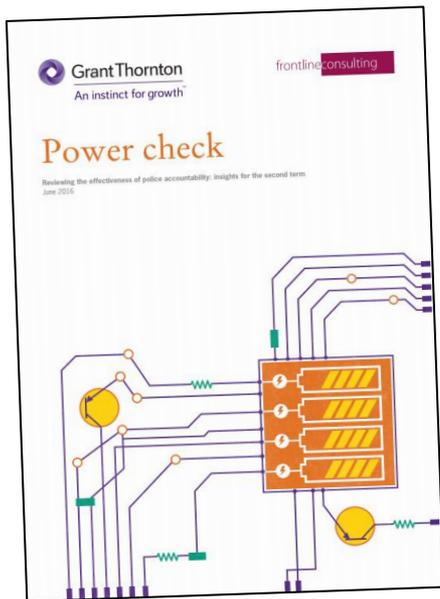
- What are your good examples of delivering effective scrutiny?
- What has helped the Panel to do so?
- Have you faced any barriers to effective scrutiny?
- How have you tried to overcome them?
- What has worked in doing so?

Resources

Policing and fire governance: guidance for police and crime panels (Local Government Association, Frontline Consulting, Centre for Public Scrutiny, July 2019) at [bit.ly/ 2X8oFWr](https://bit.ly/2X8oFWr)



Power check: reviewing the effectiveness of police accountability: insights for the second term (Grant Thornton, Frontline Consulting, June 2016) at [bit.ly/ 36YYpIK](https://bit.ly/36YYpIK)



Various resources at www.pcps-direct.net/information/ including Frontline Consulting Guides on *Chief Constable confirmation hearings* and *Regional Collaboration questions*



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