



District Councils' Network Briefing Police and Crime Panels

What are Police and Crime Panels (PCP)?

Schedule 6 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act establishes provisions for PCPs.

A Police and Crime Panel is a collection of local representatives covering a force area which will hold the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to account. The Chief Constable will be accountable to the Police and Crime Commissioner, not to the Police and Crime Panel.

The panels will be made up of locally elected councillors and lay people.

Who sits on the PCP?

The PCP will be a joint panel of all the local authorities in the area. Each panel will have a minimum of 10 councillors, with each council in a force area being able to appoint a councillor. The panels should not exceed 20 members. But increases from 10 councillors need to be agreed by the Home Secretary.

The government will not prescribe who sits on the panels as the local authority representative. However executive mayors in a force area will have a guaranteed seat. The other representatives can be determined by the individual local authority and there is no prescription as to whether these should be Executive or non Executive members.

It will be the first time district councils have had a formal involvement in policing governance.

Each PCP will have two lay members. These can be either members of the public or members of other public bodies without a statutory place on the panel, such as the NHS or probation service.

What responsibilities/duties do police and crime panels have?

The PCP is designed to support and scrutinise the functions of the PCC. They will do this through the following duties;

- Making comments and recommendations on the Police and Crime Plan to the PCC, who has a statutory duty to consult with the PCP on the Plan.

- Reviewing the PCC's proposed precept; the PCP can veto this with 2/3rds majority
- Reviewing the appointment of the chief constable, chief executive, chief finance officer and a deputy police and crime commissioner, through confirmation hearings
- Scrutiny of the PCC. This takes a number of forms, including receiving evidence from the chief constable and from officers of the PCC secretariat; investigating decisions made by the PCC; commenting on and questioning the PCC on the annual report.

How are PCP's funded?

The Home Office has estimated the total cost of PCP's and has allocated approximately £53k for each force to deliver the scrutiny function and up to £920 per member for expenses. PCP members will not be paid an allowance.

There should be no additional cost to district councils as the government has set aside money for expenses and the hosting authority will administer this. However local authorities within a police force area can supplement this if they wish to. This will be a locally made decision and each area will vary.

Why have the government chosen to have PCCs and PCPs?

Police and Crime Commissioners will be directly elected and consequently directly accountable to their communities. The Government's intention is that PCCs will make the police force more democratically accountable, directly to their electorate and indirectly through the PCPs.

When will this change take place?

Shadow Police and Crime Panels must be in place by July 2012. The panels need to be ready for Police and Crime Commissions to take up their responsibilities on 22 November 2012, following elections on 15 November.

What should districts be doing to prepare for PCPs

All local authorities in a force area should begin now to talk about and agree the process of setting up their PCP. A host authority will need to be agreed. It is suggested that this be the largest authority in an area; but it is not a requirement that it be the largest authority.

As a district in a force area, you need to ensure that you are part of these conversations.

Internally, you will need to consider who your representative will be. Careful consideration will need to be given to who it might be and where conflicts of interest might arise.

Where can I find further information?

The LGA has put together information on PCPs and PCCs

[Preparing for police and crime panels](#)

[Police and crime panels: guidance on role and composition](#)

