

**LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND POLICE AND
CRIME PANEL – 8 JUNE 2018**

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to enable Members to consider whether the Panel should become a member of the Special Interest Group (SIG) entitled 'The National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels'.

Background

2. Since the establishment of Police and Crime Panels, concerns have been raised that unlike Police and Crime Commissioners who have established a National Association, the effectiveness and development of Police and Crime Panels has been restricted by the lack of a collective voice through which representation to Government and the sharing of best practice can be channelled.
3. On 17 August 2017 Hertfordshire Police and Crime Panel circulated a consultation paper to all Police and Crime Panels seeking views on the creation of a national representative association and the form that such a body might take. The paper set out three possible options:
 1. An independent National Association;
 2. A Special Interest Group within the Local Government Association;
 3. A combination whereby Option 2 was considered a stepping stone to Option 1.
4. The majority of Police and Crime Panels expressed a preference for option number 2: A Special Interest Group within the Local Government Association. Consequently some preliminary proposals were circulated by the Chairman of Hertfordshire Police and Crime Panel setting out the format the SIG could take.
5. On 28 March 2018 the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel considered a report containing the available information on the proposals for the SIG, and the Panel resolved that further information was required regarding the Terms of Reference before a decision could be made on whether to join.
6. On 19 April 2018 a Steering Group meeting was held at the Local Government Association offices in Westminster in order to decide upon the detailed framework for the SIG. This meeting was attended by representatives of 21 different Police and Crime Panels including the Chairman of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel, Mr. J. T. Orson JP CC. At the commencement of the Steering Group meeting Mr Orson made it clear that he was present in an observational capacity and had limited authority from his Panel to vote on matters under discussion. During the Steering Group meeting

representatives from 15 Police and Crime Panels confirmed that they would be joining the SIG. It was noted that other Panels could join the SIG at a later date. No commitment was made at that stage that the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel would join.

Legal framework

7. It is open to any 10 or more full Local Government Association Members with common features, interests or concerns to form a SIG subject to approval of an application by the LGA's leadership Board. SIG's are able to make representations direct to government and elsewhere on matters arising directly from their special interest. All SIGs are required to submit a full report at the end of April each year to the Leadership Board, covering such matters as their dealings with Government departments.

Proposals for the SIG as agreed at the Steering Group meeting

8. At the Steering Group meeting on 19 April 2018 it was agreed that the name for the SIG would be 'The National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels', though legally it would be a Special Interest Group not a National Association. The view of some Panel representatives present was that this name would cause confusion given that in the paper originally circulated on 17 August 2017 consideration was given to creating an Independent National Association rather than a Special Interest Group. However, the majority present at the Steering Group meeting voted for the above name as they believed that in the eyes of the public it would put the Group on a par with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, and the general public would not know what a Special Interest Group was.
9. Membership of the SIG would be restricted to those Panels as constituted under Schedule 6 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 including those that have subsequently taken on fire service matters as part of their remit.
10. Mr John Gili-Ross was elected as interim Chairman of the SIG until the Annual Frontline Conference in November 2018. Mr Gili-Ross is an independent member of the Essex Police and Crime Panel. Alison Lowe (West Yorkshire PCP) and John Adams (Dorset PCP) were elected as Deputy Chairmen.
11. The agreed Terms of Reference for the Special Interest Group were as follows:
 - To provide a forum for collaborative discussion of issues relating to and impacting on Police and Crime Panels (PCPs);
 - To share ideas and experience in response to the expanding role of PCCs and thereby PCPs;
 - To create a mechanism for direct liaison between PCPs and the Home Office;

- To provide an opportunity for dialogue with relevant bodies such as the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, Association of Police and Crime Chief Executives and others;
- To support the development of joint PCP responses to relevant consultations;
- To promote professional standards;
- To share good practice and create guidance and other supporting materials for PCPs;
- To ensure stability and collective memory in a landscape where PCPs can have significant changes in membership;
- To provide capacity for horizon scanning across all PCPs;
- To promote better understanding of the role of PCPs.

12. The workplan for the Special Interest Group's first year should be as follows:

- Meetings with relevant partner organisations and the Home Office;
- The development of guidance for PCPs on handling complaints;
- Updating the existing suite of LGA / Centre for Public Scrutiny guidance for PCPs;
- Exploring the impact of changes to FRA governance and the enhanced role for PCCs, and therefore PCPs, in this area;
- A review of panel resourcing;
- Promoting and sharing best practice;
- Increasing the public's understanding of the role of panels.

Subscription fee

13. The subscription fee for Panels to join the Special Interest Group will be £500 per annum, though this figure could be revised in future. The £500 figure has not been based on specific costings and it is yet to be clarified exactly what the money will be used for. There is no cost to register a Special Interest Group with the LGA, above and beyond the fee that Authorities already pay to become a member of the LGA. There is a limited amount of LGA support available to host and minute SIG meetings so further administrative support will be required. The Secretariat for Essex Police and Crime Panel have agreed to take on some of the administration for the SIG on the basis that the Chairman of the SIG is one of their Panel members.

14. Frontline Consulting, who currently organise the Police and Crime Panels Annual Conference and conduct the administration for the East Midlands Network for Police and Crime Panels, have stated that they are able to support the SIG but the cost of this would depend on what the group wanted to do.

15. Until the money gained from subscription fees is spent it will be banked by the Authority that hosts the particular Police and Crime Panel that the SIG Chairman is a member of; currently Essex County Council.
16. The conditions of the Home Office Grant for Police and Crime Panels stipulate that the Grant cannot be spent on activity which influences or attempts to influence government or political parties. Consequently the Terms of Reference of the SIG have been carefully drafted to ensure that the subscription fee can be paid out of the Home Office Grant. At the Steering Group meeting on 19 April 2018 verbal indications were given by the Chairman of the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Panel that the Home Office would permit the Grant being used for the purposes of the SIG. Mr Orson CC asked for written confirmation from the Home Office, and it was agreed that this would be requested and forwarded onto Police and Crime Panels. At the time of writing this report the written confirmation had not been received and the Secretariat has been informed that the Home Office has referred the matter to its legal department. The Secretariat will continue to pursue the written confirmation and will table the relevant document at the Panel meeting on 8 June 2018 if it arrives in time.
17. If the Home Office Grant cannot be used for costs associated with the SIG then an alternative funding source for the £500 subscription fee would have to be found by each Panel. The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel is comprised of seven District Councils, Leicester City Council, Rutland Council and Leicestershire County Council. Should the subscription fee be divided equally amongst the constituent authorities that would mean a contribution of £50 each per authority. Agreement to this would be required from each individual authority that makes up the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel and if one authority were not to agree it would present difficulties for the Panel overall to join the SIG. A further difficulty arises in relation to the processing of invoices. At the Steering Group meeting on 19 April 2018 it was confirmed that separate invoices for the £50 contribution would not be sent to the individual authorities which make up the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel and instead only one invoice for the whole £500 would be sent out to the host authority. The processing of the invoice by the host authority and sending individual invoices to the other authorities would create an additional administrative burden for the host authority.

Recommendation

18. The Panel is asked to consider the following:
 - (a) Whether it wishes to become a Member of the Special Interest Group for Police and Crime Panels entitled 'The National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels;
 - (b) That if the Panel does agree to become a member of The National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels, and the subscription fee is permitted to be paid out of the Home Office Grant, whether the £500 subscription fee should be paid out of the Home Office Grant allocated to the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel.

- (c) That if the subscription fee for the SIG is not permitted to be paid out of the Home Office grant whether it can be agreed that each authority that has representation on the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel contribute £50 towards the subscription.

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