

**LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND POLICE AND
CRIME PANEL – 5 FEBRUARY 2020**

**THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME
PANELS**

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update Members on developments regarding the Special Interest Group (SIG) entitled 'The National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels' and to enable the Panel to consider whether it now wishes to join the Association.

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. 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.
4. On 19 April 2018 a Steering Group meeting was held at the Local Government Association offices in Westminster attended by representatives of 21 different Police and Crime Panels. A decision was made to form a Special Interest Group entitled 'The National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels' and Terms of Reference were drafted. It was agreed that 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. Mr John Gili-Ross, independent member of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel, was elected as interim Chairman of the SIG until the Annual General Meeting in November 2018. The subscription fee for Panels to join the Special Interest Group was set at £500 per annum. During the Steering Group meeting it was queried whether the subscription fee could be paid out of the Home Office Grant or whether Panels would have to find an alternative funding source to pay the subscription if they wished to join. It was agreed that written confirmation from the Home Office would be sought on this point.
5. At its meeting on 8 June 2018 the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel deferred making a decision on whether the Panel should join

The National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels, in order to allow the Home Office time to provide clarification on what the Home Office Grant can be used for.

6. On 15 October 2018 the Home Office provided written confirmation that the use of the Home Office Grant to pay subscription to the National Association was not within the scope of the Grant
7. On 5 November 2018 the Chairman of the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels wrote to Police and Crime Panel Chairmen asking them to write to the Policing Minister Nick Hurd requesting a change to the current Home Office grant conditions to allow greater flexibility in the use of the grant for Police and Crime Panel related purposes.
8. At its meeting on 12 December 2018 the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel resolved to write to the Policing Minister Nick Hurd requesting a change to the current Home Office Grant conditions to allow the Grant to be used for the subscription fee for the National Association for Police, Fire and Crime Panels, and agreed to defer joining the National Association until the Home Office Grant conditions had been changed.
9. On 31 January 2019 the Policing Minister wrote to the Chairman of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel confirming that the use of Home Office Grant funding to pay subscriptions to a national Association of Panels was not within the scope of the Grant Agreement.

Recent developments

10. On 19 November 2019 the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels was held. Mr John Gili-Ross was re-elected as Chairman. It was reported at the meeting that whilst 25 Panels had originally expressed an interest in joining the Association, only 16 had so far paid the subscription fee. The other Panels had withdrawn their interest when it was confirmed that the subscription could not be paid from the Home Office Grant. Of the money received from subscription fees only £700 had been spent so far on development of a website for the National Association.
11. Due to the amount of Police and Crime Panels which were unable to join the National Association because of the subscription fee, it was proposed at the AGM that there no longer be a subscription fee for the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels. This proposal was voted on and carried.

Purpose of the National Association of Police Fire and Crime Panels

12. The vision for the National Association is to provide a collective voice for Police and Crime Panels and therefore it is believed to be important that as many Panels as possible join the National Association so that its voice carries greater weight.
13. A question was asked at the Annual General Meeting in November 2019 about whether the National Association would now be able to take part in 'lobbying' of

Government if the subscription fee was not coming out of the Home Office Grant. In response it has been confirmed that the National Association will seek to provide a collective voice for Panels with regard to national issues that fall within the remit of Panels. Due to the abolition of the subscription fee the focus of the National Association's work has moved away from its original aim of commissioning bespoke training and research from external organisations, to providing guidance on best practice and providing a forum for collective discussion.

Level of involvement required from each Panel

14. Once a Police and Crime Panel has become a member of the National Association it can decide the level engagement it wishes to have with the Association. Meetings of the National Association take place at Local Government Association offices in London and there has yet to be a meeting where all National Association members were required to be present. It is expected that should such a meeting need to be arranged Panel members will be able to join in remotely. The minutes of the meetings are circulated to all National Association members.
15. The National Association has an Executive Committee which holds regular meetings using audio technology. Whilst all member Panels have an input into how the Association develops, it is the Executive Committee that steers the day to day decisions. There is no expectation that a representative from all Panels becomes a member of the Executive or takes part in Executive Committee meetings.

National Association of Police Fire and Crime Panels Terms of Reference

16. The agreed Terms of Reference for the Special Interest Group are as follows:
 - To provide a forum for collaborative discussion of issues relating to and impacting on Police and Crime Panels and Police, Fire and Crime Panels (PCPs/PFCPs);
 - To share ideas and experience in response to the expanding role of PCCs and PFCCs and thereby PCPs/PFCPs;
 - To create a mechanism for direct liaison between PCPs/PFCPs 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 /PFCP 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/PFCPs can have significant changes in membership;
 - To provide capacity for horizon scanning across all PCPs/PFCPs;

- To promote better understanding of the role of PCPs/PFCPs.

Decision for the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel

17. In light of the recent developments, particularly with regards to the subscription fee, the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel is requested to consider whether it now wishes to join the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels.

Officer to Contact:

Euan Walters, Democratic Services, Leicestershire County Council

Tel: 0116 305 6016

Email: euwan.walters@leics.gov.uk

Appendix

Constitution of the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels