



**POLICE & CRIME  
COMMISSIONER**  
For Leicester,  
Leicestershire & Rutland

Your Communities - Your Commissioner

**Police and Crime Panel for Leicester,  
Leicestershire and Rutland**

**12 March 2024**

**Ethics and Transparency Panel Update**

<b>Report Date</b>	21 February 2024
<b>Report Author</b>	Shruti Pattani, Evaluation and Scrutiny Officer
<b>Security Classification</b>	Official

## **Purpose of Report**

1. In his role as the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), the Commissioner is responsible for holding the Chief Constable to account for the performance of his officers and staff and for monitoring complaints made against the Force.
2. In addition, the PCC has a responsibility to ensure that policing across LLR is carried out in a way that enhances internal and external trust and confidence in ethical and transparent governance and decision-making.
3. The PCC brings this report to outline for the Police and Crime Panel how he is fulfilling his duty through his Ethics and Transparency Panel. They have been established to improve and strengthen the delivery of policing services to the public by adding value beyond audit and scrutiny.
4. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the work undertaken by the Ethics and Transparency Panel, provide an overview of the revised scrutiny structure due to be implemented and highlight any feedback and recommendations to date.

## **Request of the Panel**

5. In light of their role in scrutinising the actions and decisions of the PCC, the Commissioner requests that the panel examines the contents of this report. He would specifically like to ask the panel their opinion on the following questions;
  - a. Is the Panel supportive in the way that the PCC received additional assurance from the scrutiny and assurance panels?
  - b. Would the panel like to make any recommendations to the PCC in relation to this matter?

## **Summary**

6. It is recognised that the trust and confidence in the Police service is reducing, and the policing landscape is becoming more challenging and complex. It is through the Ethics and Transparency Panel that more emphasis can be placed on the policies, processes and procedures allied to reducing corrupt behaviour, malpractice, misuse/abuse of powers or other types of criminal behaviour. It allows for a forum where this is able to be constructively challenged while enhancing fairness and transparency and encouraging ethical decision-making to promote good practice and organisational learning.
7. The Ethics and Transparency Panel has an advisory role in providing assurance to the Commissioner that ethics and integrity are embedded within Leicestershire Police, and that the highest levels of professional standards of service delivery are maintained by the Chief Constable.

8. The Panel fulfils this activity through the scrutiny and consideration of policies, processes, ethical dilemmas and broad thematic issues, both at a local and national level. This report will highlight some of the work being undertaken by the Panel to provide this assurance.
9. It is the opinion of the PCC that with the scrutiny structure currently in place there is a robust process for independent assurance with regards to the ethical and transparent policing. The PCC is dedicated to making this process as strong as possible, which is why he is also supporting the enhancement of these arrangements as outlined in this report.

## **Background**

10. The Ethics and Transparency Panel is currently made up of six independent members. Which includes an elected Chair and Deputy Chair. Membership of the Panel has been recruited to reflect the culturally diverse local communities that are served by Leicestershire Police. Members are appointed for a two-year term.
11. To date, five Ethics and Transparency Panel Meetings have taken place since the Panel's conception in September 2022. Meetings take place on a quarterly basis, with members receiving advance notice of future dates. Similarly, for any scrutiny dip-sampling, annual scheduled dates are shared with members in advance of the sessions.
12. Members currently scrutinise a variety of different elements as part of the Ethics and Transparency Panel agenda. The agenda includes the following standing items at each of the quarterly meetings alongside any other requested papers:
  - Gifts and Gratuities
  - Emerging National and/or Local Issues
  - Policies and Procedures
  - Ethics Dip-Sampling
  - Ethical Dilemma
13. The Forward Plan for 2024-25 is a live document and includes future topics, scrutiny dip-sampling and papers requested for the quarterly meetings. The forward plan now also incorporates the new revised scrutiny structure that has recently been implemented into the Ethics and Transparency Panel.
14. The papers and minutes from the Ethics and Transparency meetings can all be found on the OPCC website. [Ethics and Transparency Panel \(pcc.police.uk\)](https://www.pcc.police.uk)

## **Enhancing the Scrutiny Structure**

15. To date, the Ethics and Transparency Panel have had the opportunity to review closed complaint files and to scrutinise body-worn video footage. The PCC felt that in order to strengthen accountability and have greater transparency in the processes and procedures carried out by the force, there would need to be more in-depth scrutiny into key areas. This is especially important when looking at best practice and unpicking those areas where individual and organisational learning may be key.
16. As a result, and in line with new national guidance for community scrutiny panels being released by the Government, a review of all scrutiny and assurance panels was conducted and presented to the PCC in November 2023.
17. As a result, an enhanced scrutiny structure was agreed, which introduced four key review functions overseen by the Ethics and Transparency panel. These four functions are Out of Court Resolutions, Custody Records, Hate Crime and Complaints.

### **Revised Scrutiny Functions**

- a. *OOCR (Q1)* – involves the scrutiny of adult cases and the review of a paper provided by the Youth Offending Service (YOS) which were dealt with by OOCR with 30% domestic cases. Panel members will review whether the handling was classified as appropriate or inappropriate and the minutes and annual report of themes and trends will be published and include demographics and horizon scanning.
- b. *Custody Records (Q2)* – involves the scrutiny of custody records selected at random to review the individual's journey through the custody and identify any learning and best practice. Panel members will supplement the work of the Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) and provide assurances around detainees being managed in an ethical, proportionate and appropriate manner. Reference will also be made to quarterly ICV data.
- c. *Hate Crime (Q3)* – involves the scrutiny of closed hate crime cases selected at random and reviewed by an independent Hate Crime Panel. A member from the Ethics and Transparency Panel will sit on the Hate Crime Panel and an annual report will be provided to the Panel on themes to raise and consider. This will include immediate actions (learning for individual officers) to be handled following the meeting, horizon scanning and quarterly figures.
- d. *Complaints (Q4)* – involves the scrutiny of closed complaint cases provided by the Professional Standards Department (PSD). Cases are selected at random by Panel members and then dip-sampled to review how well the complaint was handled, whether the outcome was appropriate and identifying any themes or trends, especially around individual and

organisational learning. There is also an opportunity to review themes with regard to misconduct cases and gain an oversight of PSD performance.

18. In addition to the four key review functions, the panel will continue to review body-worn video footage and maintain an oversight of the gifts and gratuities registers of both the OPCC and Force and discuss ethical dilemmas.
19. This enhanced structure will run on an annual reporting cycle, with one area receiving a deep dive each quarter i.e. Quarter 1 will be focused around Complaints. During these deep dive meetings, the Panel members will also review national trends and performance information relating to that topic area. The relevant training, tools and support are provided to Panel members respectively for each of these scrutiny areas to allow them to carry out their work.
20. The Ethics and Transparency Panel members were consulted on this new structure on 27 February 2024 to allow them to ask any questions and provide some feedback and formal sign off ahead of the next Panel meeting on 19 March 2024.
21. All feedback from the dip-samples undertaken by the Ethics and Transparency Panel members will be recorded on a Feedback Form and returned back to Force for their comment. There is a similar process in place for the review of body-worn video footage and the panel member's comments will be captured and returned to force for feedback. Data will be collected and included in the Ethics and Transparency Annual Report.

### **Recommendations and Feedback**

22. In addition to reviewing the minutes of each meeting the Commissioner receives an annual from the Ethics and Transparency Panel outlining their observations, feedback and recommendations on the insights and access that they have been provided with thus far.
23. The latest such report was received in January 2024 and can be found at Appendix One. Overall, there were no major issues raised and the feedback was positive. There has been demonstration of good practice and recommendations for areas where there may be an opportunity for improvement and/or reflective learning including:
  - a. Where necessary, further detailed reports to be provided by Leicestershire Police and the Commissioner's Office.
  - b. Increased consistency in the attendance of key leads at the Panel meetings would be beneficial. If a deputy is required, it would be useful for the Panel to receive an introduction from the individual deputising on their role to enable members to have a better understanding.

- c. Improved consistency with Ethics and Transparency Panel meeting agendas with a greater focus on the forward plan for 2024/25.
  - d. Scheduling a second tranche of Familiarisation Visits would be beneficial with possible insight into the more operational side of policing where the most critical and crucial decisions are made.
  - e. Development of an Action Tracker to allow follow-up on action and discussion points from meetings.
24. All recommendations are in progress. A further update on the implementation of these recommendations will be provided at a future Police and Crime Panel meeting.
25. Over the last 12 months, the force has openly welcomed the Ethics and Transparency Panel members to a number of different departments through various insights and familiarisation visits. It was felt by Panel members that the force had been forthcoming with information required and answered all questions asked. Panel members were particularly complimentary of the unprecedented access that they have been granted to the review novel elements of the panel such as the scrutiny of body-worn video footage.
26. Through the reflective learning encouraged by the Ethics and Transparency Panel, there have been various elements of learning that have been a key takeaway and have added value. Examples of these include:
- a. Some of the language and imagery often used in reports and/or papers reviewed by the Panel have been noted as contributors to the barriers in preventing victims of crime from coming forward and engaging with the force. Examples of the language used is 'victim refused' and 'victim not willing to support.' It was acknowledged that use of language is key when interacting with victims of crime and that despite often having to use certain terminology to allow for consistency when measuring crime nationally, when reports are provided for the Panel and the public, there needs to be an increased emphasis and sensitivity around victims of crime and ensuring that the correct language is used.
  - b. Through the first tranche of Familiarisation Visits undertaken in 2023, it was identified that there are often similarities and some overlap between force departments; for example, the Prevent Team, the Domestic Abuse Resolution Team (DART) and the Safeguarding Hub. It was acknowledged that there could be better sharing, learning and communication between teams going forward to increase efficiency, effectiveness and promote a more collaborative approach to investigating and supporting victims of crime.

c. It was felt that increased promotion and more detailed exposure of the work undertaken by various departments across the force would be beneficial to community perception and public trust and confidence in Leicestershire Police. Public briefings by teams/departments, for example the DART, would allow for the team to be known to those who either work with victims or assistance to those that are experiencing any form of domestic abuse and be that first point of contact for providing help and guidance.

27. Overall, the Panel felt that all of the visits and dip-sampling undertaken so far had demonstrated best practice is being adhered to across the Force and that they were satisfied that the Force is performing to a high standard. In addition to this, it was felt that the Force appears to be successfully utilising modern ways of operation and collaborating well with stakeholders.

28. The Chair shared, on behalf of himself and the Panel, their commitment to providing independent scrutiny, highlighting any areas for improvement and opportunities for reflective learning, while at the same time increasing the trust and confidence of the general public. Over the next year the Panel will continually push the boundaries of their scrutiny work and report back to the Commissioner accordingly.

*Appendix One: January 2024 Report from Ethics and Transparency Panel*

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