

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

Appointment of Independent Lay Co-Opted Member

Information Pack

Thank you for your interest in becoming an independent lay co-opted member of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel.

The closing date for applications is **5pm on Friday 16 May 2025**

The role of the Panel member is an important and demanding one. The typical commitment required from a Panel member is expected to average one day a month, including preparation time. Meetings will generally be held during normal office hours at locations within West Mercia.

All Panel members can claim reasonable travel and subsistence expenses in respect of time spent on Panel business.

As an independent lay co-opted member, you will be subject to Worcestershire County Council's Members' Code of Conduct when acting for the Panel:

[Code of Conduct](#)

All Panel members receive induction and other appropriate familiarisation training.

The following background information is attached:

- The arrangements for police governance and accountability in England – a summary
- Summary of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel Arrangements
- Required competencies, personal skills and qualities
- Application Form

If, having read the contents of the Pack you would like any further information about the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel, please contact Samantha Morris, Interim Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager for Worcestershire County Council, 01905 844963 or sjmorris@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Information: The Arrangements for Police Governance and Accountability in England – a summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 introduced significant changes in police governance and accountability, replacing the Police Authorities with directly-elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC). This note summaries the arrangements and the respective roles of key players in England (slightly different arrangements apply in London).
- 1.2 In summary, the public accountability for the delivery and performance of the police services within each force area is placed into the hands of the PCC on behalf of their electorate. The PCC draws on their mandate to set and shape the strategic objectives of their force area in consultation with the Chief Constable. They are accountable to the electorate; the Chief Constable is accountable to their PCC. The Police and Crime Panel (the Panel) within each force area is empowered to maintain a regular check and balance on the performance of the PCC in that context.

2. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

- 2.1 The PCC within each force area has a statutory duty and electoral mandate to hold the police to account on behalf of the public.
- 2.2 The PCC is the recipient of all funding, including the government grant and precept and other sources of income related to policing and crime reduction. All funding for a force must come via the PCC. How this money is allocated is a matter for the PCC in consultation with the Chief Constable, or in accordance with any grant terms. The Chief Constable will provide professional advice and recommendations.
- 2.3 The PCC has the legal power and duty to:
 - (a) Set the strategic direction and objectives of the force through the Police and Crime Plan, which must have regard to the Strategic Policing Requirement set by the Home Secretary;
 - (b) Scrutinise, support and challenge the overall performance of the force including against the priorities agreed within the Plan;
 - (c) Hold the Chief Constable to account for the performance of the force's officers and staff;
 - (d) Decide the budget, allocating assets and funds to the Chief Constable; and set the precept for the force area;
 - (e) Appoint the Chief Constable;

- (f) Remove the Chief Constable subject to following the process set out in Part 2 of Schedule 8 to the 2011 Act and regulations made under section 50 of the Police Act 1996(a);
- (g) Maintain an efficient and effective police force for the police area;
- (h) Enter into collaboration agreements with other PCCs, other policing bodies and partners that improve the efficiency or effectiveness of policing for one or more policing bodies or police forces in consultation with the Chief Constable (where this relates to the functions of the police force, then it must be with the agreement of the Chief Constable);
- (i) Provide the local link between the police and communities, working to translate the legitimate desires and aspirations of the public into action;
- (j) Hold the Chief Constable to account for the exercise of the functions of the office of Chief Constable and the functions of the persons under the direction and control of the Chief Constable;
- (k) Publish information specified by the Home Secretary and information that the PCC considers necessary to enable the people who live in the force area to assess the performance of the PCC and Chief Constable;
- (l) Comply with all reasonable formal requests from the Panel to attend their meetings;
- (m) Prepare and issue an annual report to the Panel on the PCC's delivery against the objectives set within the Plan;
- (n) Monitor all complaints made against officers and staff, whilst having responsibility for complaints against the Chief Constable.

2.4 The PCC must not fetter the operational independence of the police force and the Chief Constable who leads it.

2.5 In order to enable the PCC to exercise the functions of their office effectively, they will need access to information and officers and staff within their force area. Such access to any information must not be unreasonably withheld or obstructed by the Chief Constable and/or fetter the Chief Constable's direction and control of the force.

2.6 A PCC has wider responsibilities than those relating solely to the police force, namely;

- (a) A specific responsibility for the delivery of community safety and crime reduction;
- (b) The ability to bring together Community Safety Partnerships at the force level;

- (c) The ability to make crime and disorder reduction grants within their force area;
- (d) A duty to ensure that all collaboration agreements with other PCCs and forces deliver better value for money or enhance the effectiveness of policing capabilities and resilience;
- (e) A wider responsibility for the enhancement of the delivery of criminal justice in their area.

3. The Chief Constable

- 3.1 The Chief Constable is responsible for maintaining the King's Peace and has direction and control over the force's officers and staff. The Chief Constable holds office under the Crown but is appointed by the PCC.
- 3.2 The Chief Constable is accountable to the law for the exercise of police powers, and to the Commissioner for the delivery of efficient and effective policing, management of resources and expenditure by the police force. At all times the Chief Constable, their constables and staff, remain operationally independent in the service of the communities that they serve.
- 3.3 The Chief Constable is responsible to the public and accountable to the PCC for:
 - (a) Leading the force in a way that is consistent with the attestation made by all constables on appointment and ensuring that it acts with impartiality;
 - (b) Appointing the force's officers and staff (after consultation with the PCC, in the case of officers above the rank of Chief Superintendent and police staff equivalents);
 - (c) Supporting the PCC in the delivery of the strategy and objectives set out in the Police and Crime Plan;
 - (d) Assisting the PCC in planning the force's budget;
 - (e) Providing the PCC with access to information, officers and staff as required;
 - (f) Having regard to the Strategic Policing Requirement when exercising and planning their policing functions in respect of their force's national and international policing responsibilities;
 - (g) Notifying and briefing the PCC of any matters or investigation on which the PCC may need to provide public assurance either alone or in company with the Chief Constable (PCCs will be subject to the same duties in relation to sensitive material as Government Ministers);

- (h) Being the operational voice for policing in the force area and regularly explaining to the public the operational actions of officers and staff under their command;
- (i) Entering into collaboration agreements with other Chief Constables, other policing bodies and partners that improve the efficiency or effectiveness of policing;
- (j) Remaining politically independent of their PCC;
- (k) Managing all complaints against the force, its officers and staff, except in relation to the Chief Constable, and ensuring that the PCC discharge their statutory obligations in relation to complaints in a regular, meaningful and timely fashion. Serious complaints and conduct matters must be passed to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) in line with legislation;
- (l) Exercising the power of direction and control in such a way as is reasonable to enable their PCC to have access to all necessary information and staff within the force;
- (m) Having day to day responsibility for financial management of the force within the framework of the agreed budget allocation and levels of authorisation issued by the PCC.

4. The Police and Crime Panel (the Panel)

- 4.1 The Panel provides checks and balances in relation to the performance of the PCC. The Panel does not scrutinise the Chief Constable – it scrutinises the PCC's exercise of their statutory functions. While the Panel is there to challenge the PCC, it must also exercise its functions with a view to supporting the effective exercise of the PCC's functions. This includes:
- (a) The power of veto, by a two thirds majority of the total Panel membership, over the level of the PCC's proposed precept;
 - (b) The power of veto, by a two thirds majority of the total Panel membership, over the PCC's proposed candidate for Chief Constable;
 - (c) The power to ask Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) for a professional view when the PCC intends to dismiss a Chief Constable;
 - (d) The power to review the draft Police and Crime Plan and make recommendations to the PCC who must have regard to them;
 - (e) The power to review the PCC's annual report and make reports and recommendations at a public meeting, which the PCC must attend;
 - (f) The power to require relevant reports and information in the PCC's possession (except those which are operationally sensitive) to enable them to fulfil their statutory obligations;

- (g) The power to require the PCC to attend the Panel to answer questions;
 - (h) The power to appoint an acting PCC where the incumbent PCC is incapacitated, resigns or is disqualified;
 - (i) Responsibility for complaints about a PCC, although serious complaints and conduct matters must be passed to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) in line with legislation.
- 4.2 The Chief Constable retains responsibility for operational matters. If the Panel seeks to scrutinise the PCC on an operational matter, the Chief Constable may be invited to attend alongside the PCC to offer factual accounts and clarify (if needed) the Chief Constable's actions and decisions. The accountability of the Chief Constable remains firmly with the PCC and not the Panel.

5. The Home Secretary

- 5.1 The Home Secretary is accountable to Parliament and charged with ensuring the maintenance of the King's Peace within all force areas, safeguarding the public and protecting our national borders and security. The Home Secretary has reserved powers and legislative tools that enable intervention and direction to all parties, if it is determined by the Home Secretary that such action is necessary in order to prevent or mitigate risk to the public or national security. Such powers and tools should be used only as a last resort, and not to interfere with the office of constable, unless the Home Secretary is satisfied on the advice of HMIC that not to do so would result in a police force failing or national security being compromised.
- 5.2 The Home Secretary retains the legal accountability for national security and the role that the police service plays within the delivery of any national response. The Home Secretary has a duty to issue a Strategic Policing Requirement that sets out what are, in her view, the national threats at the time and the appropriate national policing capabilities that are required to counter them.

6. Operational matters

- 6.1 The operational independence of the police is a fundamental principle of British policing. It is expected by the Home Secretary that the professional discretion of the police service and oath of office give surety to the public that this shall not be compromised.
- 6.2 The police force, and the civilian staff of a police force, is under the direction and control of the Chief Constable of the force.
- 6.3 The direction and control of a Chief Constable includes:
- (a) The ability to issue a warrant to an attested officer with which that officer may exercise their police powers;

- (b) Decisions in relation to the appointment and dismissal of officers and staff;
 - (c) Decisions concerning the configuration and organisation of policing resources including whether, or whether not, to deploy police officers and staff;
 - (d) Total discretion to investigate or require an investigation into crimes and individuals as he or she sees fit;
 - (e) Decisions taken with the purpose of balancing competing operational needs within the framework of priorities and objectives set by the PCC;
 - (f) Operational decisions to reallocate resource to meet immediate demand; and
 - (g) The allocation of officers' specific duties and responsibilities within the force area to meet the strategic objectives set by the PCC.
- 6.4 The Chief Constable is expected to ensure that their PCC is regularly informed of their decisions and operational activity in a timely manner so that the PCC can hold their Chief Constable to account for the totality of policing within their force area, including the operational delivery of the police service. The direction and control of the Chief Constable does not just remain under the scrutiny of the PCC but is open to investigation and scrutiny by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) within the parameters of their terms of reference.
- 6.5 The PCC and Chief Constable must work together to safeguard the principle of operational independence, while ensuring that the PCC is not fettered in fulfilling their statutory role.

7. Financial Responsibilities

- 7.1 The PCC is ultimately accountable to the public for the management of the police fund. The PCC and Chief Constable share a responsibility to provide effective management of the policing budget and to secure value for money on behalf of the public that they both serve.
- 7.2 The Chief Constable has day to day responsibility for managing their allocated budgets after they have been approved by the PCC. The Chief Constable must ensure that the financial management of their allocated budget remains consistent with the objectives and conditions set by the PCC.

Further information can be found at the following websites:

- Local Government Association: [Police and crime panels | Local Government Association](#) and specific guidance at [Policing and fire governance: guidance for police and crime panels | Local Government Association](#)
- [West Mercia PCC](#)

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

Summary of the Arrangements for the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

1. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 introduced significant changes in police governance and accountability, in particular replacing the Police Authorities by directly-elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs). This note summarises the arrangements for the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel.
2. The public accountability for the delivery and performance of the police services within each force area is placed into the hands of the PCC on behalf of their electorate. The PCC draws on their mandate to set and shape the strategic objectives of their force area in consultation with the Chief Constable. They are accountable to the electorate; the Chief Constable is accountable to their PCC. The Police and Crime Panel within each force area is empowered to maintain a regular check and balance on the performance of the PCC in that context.
3. The West Mercia Police and Crime Panel covers the area served by the West Mercia Police (i.e. the geographical area covering Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Worcestershire).
4. The 10 local authorities in the West Mercia area have agreed to the formal Panel Arrangements, which include the appointment of two independent lay co-opted members.
5. As a minimum the Panel consists of 10 councillors appointed from the 10 local authorities (at least one from each authority), and two independent lay members (not councillors) co-opted by the Panel. In order to reflect geographical and political balance of the West Mercia area, a further five councillors are appointed by the Panel. All 17 members have equal voting rights. When co-opting the independent lay members, the Panel must ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the appointed and co-opted members together have the skills, knowledge and experience necessary for the Panel to discharge its functions effectively.
6. The 10 local authorities have agreed that Worcestershire County Council is the lead local authority for the Panel.

Required Competencies, Personal Skills and Qualities for Independent Lay Co-Opted Members of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

1. Who is eligible to be co-opted as an independent member?

- 1.1 You must be at least 18 years old
- 1.2 You must live or work in the West Mercia Police force area (i.e. Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Worcestershire). If you have more than one job or more than one home, then your main residence or place or work must be in the force area. If you move house or jobs and no longer live or work in the force area, you will no longer be able to serve on the Panel.
- 1.3 You must not be:
 - The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for West Mercia
 - A member of staff of the PCC for the West Mercia area
 - A member of the civilian staff of the West Mercia police force
 - A Member of Parliament, National Assembly for Wales or Scottish Parliament
 - An elected member of Herefordshire Council, Shropshire Council, Telford and Wrekin Council, Worcestershire County Council, Bromsgrove District Council, Malvern Hills District Council, Redditch Borough Council, Worcester City Council, Wychavon District Council and Wyre Forest District Council.
 - A Police Officer

2. What qualities do I need?

- 2.1 As well as being of good character, candidates will need to possess most, if not all, of the following competencies, skills and qualities:
 - **The ability to think strategically** – to have breadth of vision, to rise above detail, and to see problems and issues from a wider, forward-looking perspective and to make appropriate linkages
 - **The ability to scrutinise and challenge** – to be able to rigorously scrutinise and challenge constructively, using appropriate data, evidence and resources
 - **The ability to be analytical** - to interpret and question complex written material – including financial and statistical information and other data such as performance measures – and identify salient points
 - **The ability to communicate effectively** – to be able to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing - and to interact positively with other members of the Panel, the PCC and the public.

- **Enthusiasm and Drive** – the ability to be proactive in seeking out learning and developmental opportunities to enhance knowledge and understanding for example on financial matters and statutory requirements
- **Respect for others** – the capacity to treat all people fairly and with respect, to value diversity and respond sensitively to difference
- **Decisiveness** – the ability to show resilience even in challenging circumstances, remaining calm and confident and able to make difficult decisions.

3. Other requirements?

- 3.1 Candidates must be able to attend meetings during normal office hours (Monday to Friday 9.00a.m to 5.00pm) usually at venues across West Mercia at least four times a year as well as attend any appropriate briefing and training sessions. The typical commitment required for a member of the Panel is expected to average one day a month including preparation time. Panel members will be able to claim reasonable travelling expenses and will receive induction and other appropriate training.
- 3.2 The law requires that the Panel, when co-opting independent lay members, must ensure (as far as is reasonably practicable) that the members of the Panel (when taken together) have the skills, knowledge and experience necessary for the Panel to discharge its functions effectively.