

Summary note of Committee on Standards in Public Life's police area visits

The Committee selected and invited Chief Constables, Police and Crime Commissioners and Police and Crime panel members in 5 police areas (Essex, West Midlands, Greater Manchester, Northumbria and Warwickshire) to meet with them. Where possible, the Committee also met with key stakeholders in each police area visited and met with the public in order to gather their views on the system of policing accountability.

The police area visits were selected on the basis of ensuring a good regional coverage of England, a mix of urban and rural areas, areas that were highlighted as innovative and areas that had a high amount of public interest.

The aim of the visits was to collect evidence, discuss and explore what is working well in the current model of accountability as well as to identify any gaps and how to address them.

The visits will inform the Committee's consideration of possible recommendations intended to inform the government's thinking ahead of any reforms to the policing accountability model.

Themes arising from discussion

Listed below are some of the main themes arising from discussions. Not all of the themes were discussed in each of the five areas.

General views on the current accountability model

The current accountability model, the importance of personalities and relationships in the model as well, as the potential scope for quick decision-making and collaborative working enabled by having a standalone PCC.

Police and Crime Panel

The level of scrutiny versus support provided by the Police and Crime Panel, the variable access to information from the PCC and the remit and powers of the PCP.

Complaints

The process of complaint management, the need for a proportionate but robust complaints system, and the need to ensure feedback to forces so that lessons are learnt more widely.

Appointment of Chief Constables

Contract renewal and appointments of Chief Constables and the governance of the process. We also discussed whether steps need to be taken to ensure a wide pool of candidates for the role of Chief Constable.

Crime statistics

Integrity of crime statistics and the differing methods used by Chief Constables and PCCs to ensure that recording of force crime statistics is accurate.

Ethical standards

The importance of embedding the College of Policing's code of ethics and the various ways forces have embedded the code. The role PCCs play in providing assurance. Discussions also included the use of ethics committees in promoting high ethical standards and the importance of upholding high ethical standards in procurement and commissioning processes.

List of police areas visited and meeting attendees

Police area	Stakeholder meeting	Attendees
Essex	Police and Crime Commissioner	Nick Alston (PCC) Carly Fry (Assistant Director, Scrutiny and Performance) Susannah Hancock (Chief Executive of the Office of the PCC)
	Chief Constable	Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh
	Police and Crime Panel	Cllr John Jowers (Chair) Cllr Mike Danvers John Gili-Ross
	Additional stakeholder meetings	Heather Robbie (Victim Support) Lindsey Read (CARA)
West Midlands	Police and Crime Panel	Cllr Darren Cooper (Chair) Vice Chair Jess Philips Cllr Joe Tildesley John Pollock Benita Wishart
	Chief Constable	Chief Constable Chris Sims Deputy Chief Constable Dave Thompson
	Police and Crime Commissioner	David Jamieson (PCC)

		Jacky Courtney (Chief Executive)
	Additional stakeholder meetings	Chief Inspector Sean Russell
Greater Manchester	Chief Constable	Deputy Chief Constable Ian Hopkins
	Police and Crime Commissioner	Tony Lloyd (PCC) Jim Battle (DPCC) Alan Adam (Chief Executive)
	Police and Crime Panel	Lord Peter Smith (chair) Donna Hall (GM lead Chief Executive) Jeanette Stale (GM policy advisor) Cllr Mike Connolly (Lead leader police and crime) Julie Connor (GMST lead)
	Additional stakeholder meetings	Professor Francesca Gains (University of Manchester) Professor Colin Talbot (University of Manchester) Bishop David Walker (Chair of Greater Manchester Ethics Committee)
Northumbria	Police and Crime Commissioner	Vera Baird (PCC) Ruth Durham OPCC (Director of Policy) Councillor Bryant
	Police and Crime Panel	Councillor Mole Jeanette Guy
	Chief Constable	Chief Constable Sue Sim
Warwickshire	Police and Crime Commissioner	Ron Ball (PCC) Neil Hewison (Chief Executive) Eric Wood (Deputy PCC) Ben Twomey (PCC Support Officer)
	Police and Crime Panel	Cllr Harvey Georgina Atkinson (Democratic services team leader)
	Chief Constable	Chief Constable Andy Parker