



Home Office

Rt Hon Damian Green MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR POLICING AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF
www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Police and Crime Panel
Host Authorities

Dear Colleagues

21 NOV 2012

Police and Crime Panels

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for the hard work and considerable effort that you have invested in establishing police and crime panels (PCPs). I am pleased that every police force area has a PCP, ready to take on their vital role in the new police governance arrangements.

PCPs are a crucial element of the reform package and will provide a strong check and balance to the work of police and crime commissioners (PCCs). Their role and powers are clearly set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and the Policing Protocol Order 2011.

Section 28 of the Act sets out the functions of PCPs outside London. Under section 28(5) the general role of a PCP is to review or scrutinise the decisions and actions of the PCC. It is important to note that PCPs do not replace police authorities. They do not have a role in scrutinising the performance of the force – this is the role of the PCC under section 1(7).

While the PCP's functions of scrutiny or review will necessarily require them to challenge the PCC at times, section 28(2) explicitly states that the functions of a PCP must be exercised with a view to supporting the effective exercise of the functions of the PCC.

PCPs will want to focus their attention on the key strategic actions and decisions taken by the PCC. As outlined in Section 28(3), (4) and (6), PCPs have powers to make reports and recommendations about any actions and decisions taken by the PCC and have a specific role in scrutinising the draft Police and Crime Plan and the Annual Report.

Section 29 gives PCPs the power to require the PCCs and their staff to attend meetings, and under Section 28 (4) they have a specific responsibility to question the PCC in public in relation to the Annual Report.

Section 29(6) allows a PCP to request the Chief Officer of Police to attend a meeting which the PCC has been required to attend. I want to stress; however, that the Act does not include provision for the PCP to compel the attendance of the Chief Officer of Police.

Earlier this year, the Home Secretary wrote to you providing a statement on the role, responsibilities and powers of PCPs. Effective, strategic scrutiny will rely on strong working relationships between the PCP, the PCC and other local partners. We expect PCPs to work constructively with PCCs, acting as a critical friend; providing both challenge and support, as outlined in the Act.

I look forward to the important contribution that PCPs will make to this directly accountable model of policing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Damian Green', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Damian Green MP