

## **GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL**

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025

Subject: Overview of Support Provided to Police Fire and Crime Panel

Report of: Lead Chief Executive – Lynne Ridsdale (Bury Council Chief Executive)

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### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report outlines the range of support activities provided to the Police Fire and Crime Panel in the delivery of the Panel's role and responsibilities. The report also highlights which organisations provide this support.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. The Panel is requested to note the information in the report.
2. The Panel is requested to agree that the Host Authority is aligned with the authority whose Chief Executive has GM portfolio responsibility for Safer and Stronger Communities.
3. The Panel is requested to note and agree the support arrangements in place for the next 12 months.
4. The Panel is requested to agree that these arrangements be reviewed at each AGM.

### **CONTACT OFFICER:**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Greater Manchester Police, Fire and Crime Panel (the Panel) meets in person and publicly at least six times a year. The Panel is responsible for holding the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for Police, Fire and Crime to account on policing and fire and rescue issues. At all times the work of the panel should aim to be transparent, ensuring meeting papers are publicly available, and enabling the public to hold their PCC to account.
- 1.2 The Panel has a wide statutory remit to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor in connection with the discharge of their PCC and fire and rescue functions<sup>1</sup>. This includes having oversight of key documents, decisions and reports, requiring them to provide information and answer any questions which the panel considers necessary.
- 1.3 Prior to the inception of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and Police and Crime Panels (PCPs), the Police Authority was responsible for the governance role for policing and in GM, was hosted by Salford City Council. Salford City Council continued these host authority arrangements for the new PCC and PCP following the election of Sir Tony Lloyd as the first GM PCC in November 2012.
- 1.4 At this time, the responsibility for leading on the support function to the Panel was moved to AGMA, which, was integrated in May 2017 in the formation of the GMCA.
- 1.5 Since that time, the role of host authority to the Panel has continued without review.
- 1.6 In order to effectively carry out its functions, the Panel requires a range of support. This report sets out those support activities as well as where they are provided from.
- 1.7 This report seeks to clarify the support responsibilities that are required by the panel, which authorities undertake these functions, and which authority takes the lead for hosting the Panel.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Established under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the

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<sup>1</sup> In GM, the Panel has the extended remit that covers fire and rescue functions as well as policing and crime. The Policing and Crime Act 2017 introduced the opportunity for the Mayor to take on the responsibility for fire and rescue governance.

Panel is responsible for scrutinising the work of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. Greater Manchester has a directly elected combined authority Mayor who exercises PCC and fire and rescue functions as part of their wider role which in , most part, is devolved to the Deputy Mayor.

- 2.2 The role and responsibilities of the Panel are set out in the Panel's Rule of Procedure, which are approved annually at the Panel's Annual General Meeting.
- 2.3 The Panel has 18 members in total – made up of 10 appointed councillors from each of the Greater Manchester local authority areas, five co-opted political members, and three independent members.
- 2.4 The Panel is a body of the local authorities within the police force area and in GM is a joint committee of the 10 local authorities, in accordance with the provisions of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

### **3.0 GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL – ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES.**

- 3.1 The powers and responsibilities of the Panel are set out in sections 28 to 30 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and Policing and Crime Act 2017 (for Fire and rescue related functions).

Taken together, they give the Panel the authority to:

- To consider the Mayor's proposed precept. The panel is able to veto the proposal (the panel may only veto the first proposed precept, which requires a two-thirds majority).
- Scrutinise all decisions or actions in connection with the discharge of the PCC functions.
- Require the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to provide information and answer questions.
- Make reports and recommendations on the Police and Crime Plan and Annual Report, which must be taken account of and responded to.
- Hold public meetings to discuss the Annual Report and to question its contents.
- Carry out confirmation hearings when the Mayor proposes a Deputy Mayor.
- Work to resolve complaints made about the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.
- Publish all reports and recommendations.

- Suspend the Mayor if they are charged with an imprisonable offence which carries a maximum term of two years or more.
- Appoint an acting Mayor if the elected one cannot carry out their role due to suspension\*.
- Play a role in any call made by a Mayor for a Chief Constable to resign or retire under section 38 of the 2011 Act.

(\*The appointment of an acting commissioner will depend on the circumstances, including any potential conflict of interest. The GMCA Chief Executive, Treasurer and Monitoring Officer have agreed to the inclusion of their roles in the Panel's Rules of Procedure, as specific options for the Panel under section 18.5 **APPENDIX 1**).

Fire and Rescue functions:

- Carry out confirmation hearings when the Mayor proposes to appoint a Chief Constable (and Chief Fire Officer).
- Scrutinising the delivery of GMFRS responsibilities.
- Scrutinising the fire and rescue precept.
- Scrutinising the Fire and Rescue Plan and making reports or recommendations to the Deputy Mayor.
- Reviewing the fire and rescue statement, including arranging a public meeting as soon as practicable after receiving the statement, and asking appropriate questions of the Deputy Mayor at the meeting.
- Requiring the Deputy Mayor to provide any information necessary to allow the Panel to carry out its functions.
- Requiring the Deputy Mayor and staff to provide information or attend panel meetings.
- Confirming the appointment of the chief fire officer.

## **4.0 SUPPORTING FUNCTIONS TO THE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL**

- 4.1 Home Office guidance<sup>2</sup> sets out the supporting functions that a Panel can expect, in order to fulfil its role and responsibilities. This includes administration support, legal advice, communications and democratic services support.

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<sup>2</sup> See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-and-crime-panels/police-fire-and-crime-panels-guidance#panel-arrangements>

- 4.2 The guidance recognises that effective supporting officers are vital to effective scrutiny, providing independent and impartial advice to chairs and members.
- 4.3 Experience, knowledge and collective memory enables the Panel to develop and sustain their input regardless of member changes, ensuring the smooth running of panel meetings and activities through a broad range of support and advisory functions. The guidance specifies the support that is required, and the table below sets out the current GM resourcing arrangements for each support function:

<b>Support Function</b>	<b>Provided by</b>
a. Arranging and planning panel meetings, liaising with chairs, members and the Deputy Mayor.	Salford City Council Head of Community Safety Resilience and Neighbourhoods (Salford City Council) Supported by GMCA – Scrutiny & Governance, Safer and Stronger Communities
b. Providing advice to members during meetings.	GMCA Deputy Monitoring Officer Salford City Council Supported by GMCA – Scrutiny & Governance
c. Co-ordinating panel requests and supporting chairs and members by conducting research and providing advice.	GMCA – Scrutiny & Governance
d. Ensuring access to expert advice in Community Safety, finance, procurement, public safety and other technical areas.	Salford City Council with GMCA – Legal, Scrutiny & Governance, Finance and Safer and Stronger Communities
e. Managing any complaints made against the Deputy Mayor, according to the Panel's	Lead Chief Exec, supported by Salford City

Rules of Procedure, and liaising with the Independent Office for Police Conduct where appropriate.	Council, with Sancus (procured by Salford City Council) GMCA Deputy Monitoring Officer
f. Arranging confirmation hearings for senior appointments, such as the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer.	GMCA – Scrutiny & Governance Supported by GMCA People Directorate
g. Reviewing statutory requirements and guidance for panels and any changes to the legislation that may impact on their work, amending panel procedures where appropriate.	GMCA Deputy Monitoring Officer
h. Liaising with the Local Authority Monitoring Officer on code of conduct matters for panel members.	GMCA Deputy Monitoring Officer
i. Providing ongoing training to the Panel, including to new members.	Salford City Council GMCA – Director for Safer and Stronger Communities
j. Monitoring expenditure on panel budget, ensuring that allowances and expenses paid to panel members are permitted.	Salford City Council GMCA Finance
k. Liaising with the Home Office, including processing mid-year and end-of-year claim requests and changes to Panel Membership arrangements.	Salford City Council supported by GMCA Finance
l. Ensuring that the Panel website is up to date and has relevant information for the public to understand the work of the Panel, including membership arrangements, reports from previous meetings and webcast provision (where applicable)	GMCA Safer and Stronger Communities Team

4.4 In the case that resources are not available as identified, the Host Authority will liaise with the relevant organisations to put alternative arrangements in place.

- 4.5 It is also noted that those actions identified to be undertaken by Salford City Council are delivered by the Head of Community Safety, Resilience & Neighbourhoods. Should it be the case that this capacity is not available, it is expected that the Host Authority will seek the equivalent support from the other nine Heads of Community Safety.

## 5. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 5.1 The Panel receives annual funding as set out in the table below:

<b>Police &amp; Crime Budget</b>			
	<b>23/24</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>25/26 (estimated)</b>
	<b>£000's</b>	<b>£000's</b>	<b>£000's</b>
AGMA Police & Crime Panel Budget	74	77	77
Home Office: Police & Crime Panel Grant	69	68	68
Total funding	143	145	145
<b>Expenditure</b>			
AGMA Contribution to Democratic Services to support Police & Crime Panel	50	50	50
AGMA Contribution to PCC (devolved to CSPs for Hate Crime)	50	50	50
Salford - Management of Police & Crime Panel (estimate 24/25)	12	12	12
Capacity for the management of Panel Complaints (Mayor & Deputy Mayor)		5	5
Independent Member expenses			
Total Expenditure	112	117	117
<b>Net Outturn*</b>	<b>- 31</b>	<b>- 28</b>	<b>- 28</b>

- In 2023/24 it was agreed that £350k of combined reserves would be returned to districts through AGMA. The current level of reserves specific to Police and Crime as at 31/3/25, is £ 40,175.

## 6. MANAGEMENT OF COMPLAINTS

- 6.1 The Panel responsibilities include the handling of Complaints against the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and Section 19 of the Panel's Rules of Procedure state:
- 6.1.1 19.1 - Criminal and non-criminal complaints in relation to the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor for Safer and Stronger Communities will be dealt with and/or delegated in accordance with the Police Reform Act and the Complaints and Misconduct Regulations as modified by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (Transfer of Police and Crime Commissioner Functions to the Mayor) Order 2017.
- 6.1.2 19.2 - The GMPFCP's Procedure for dealing with complaints in relation to the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor for Safer and Stronger Communities is set out in a separate Protocol.
- 6.1.3 The Procedure is attached at **APPENDIX ONE**.
- 6.2 The Procedure places responsibility for carrying out this function, with the Lead Chief Executive, supported by the GM Community Safety lead (Salford City Council).
- 6.3 A report of the complaints received by the Panel, and their outcomes is presented to the Panel at the AGM. On average, approximately 10-12 complaints are received annually and approximately half are eligible for consideration under the Panel's Complaints Procedure.
- 6.4 Many of the complaints are submitted with lengthy supporting documents and reports, and the capacity required to undertake this function can no longer be absorbed as part of the day-to-day work of the GM Community Safety lead (under delegated authority).
- 6.5 To this end, and with the agreement of the Panel Chair and Lead Chief Exec, GM Community Safety lead (Salford City Council) has procured the services of a specialist independent company who will undertake a significant element of this work, reporting to Lead Chief Exec and GM Community Safety lead.
- 6.6 The organisation will be directed by the Lead Chief Exec and GM Community Safety lead and make recommendations and draft responses on their behalf and for their approval.
- 6.7 The cost of the service has been estimated at £5,000 per annum and the has been procured for 2 years. This is a new approach to managing Panel complaints and will be reviewed at six-month point.



## **7. HOST AUTHORITY & LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 As outlined in section 1 of this report, Salford City Council previously hosted the Police Authority, and their involvement continued in respect of supporting the newly developed Police and Crime Panel from late 2012, with AGMA taking on the role of arranging panel meetings.
- 7.2 The 'Host Authority' arrangements to the Panel have continued without review.
- 7.3 As noted in the report, in accordance with para 4 (5) of Schedule 6 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Panel is a joint committee of the Greater Manchester local authorities. In that regard, Home Office guidance states that the role of Host Authority be carried out by one of the local authorities that make up the Panel.
- 7.4 The Host Authority responsibilities are to:
  - 7.4.1 Ensures that resources are available so the panel can hold meetings and carry out their business.
  - 7.4.2 Ensure arrangements are in place to provide administration support, legal advice, communications and democratic services support to the panel.
  - 7.4.3 Make any relevant requests on behalf of the panel to the Home Office – for example, membership change requests or mid-year grant claim requests.
- 7.5 Following discussion with the Lead Chief Executive, it is therefore proposed that the Host Authority be aligned with the Lead Chief Executive with portfolio responsibility for Safer and Stronger Communities who will ensure that the arrangements set out at section 4 of this report, are sufficiently resourced by the organisations identified.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 Appear at the front of the report.

## **APPENDIX ONE**

### **18.5 Appointment of an Acting Commissioner (Taken from the Greater Manchester Police Fire and Crime Panel (GMPFCP) Procedure Rules)**

- 18.5.1 The GMPFCP must appoint a person to exercise the Mayor's PCC functions (the "acting commissioner") if the Mayor is suspended from the exercise of PCC functions in accordance with section 30 of the Police Reform Act.
- 18.5.2 The GMPFCP may appoint a person as acting commissioner only if the person is a member of staff of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority deployed wholly or partly in relation to the Mayor's PCC functions, (with specific consideration to the GMCA Chief Executive, Treasurer and Monitoring Officer ) or the Deputy Mayor for Safer and Stronger Communities at the time of the appointment.
- 18.5.3 The GMPFCP may not appoint as acting commissioner any person appointed as a Deputy Mayor under section 107C of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.
- 18.5.4 The appointment of an acting commissioner ceases to have effect upon the occurrence of the earliest of these events:
- 18.5.4.1 the election of a person as Mayor.
  - 18.5.4.2 the termination by the GMPFCP, or by the acting commissioner, of the appointment of the acting commissioner.
  - 18.5.4.3 in a case where the acting commissioner is appointed because the Mayor is suspended from the exercise of PCC functions, the Mayor ceasing to be so suspended.

## **APPENDIX TWO**

**Procedure for Dealing with Complaints made against the Greater Manchester Mayor and the Greater Manchester Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime.**