

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE, FIRE & CRIME PANELS



Dear Chair,

It was a great pleasure to meet so many Chairs, Panel members and support officers at the NAPFCP AGM and Frontline annual conference on 9<sup>th</sup> November and I trust that your Panel representative(s) benefitted greatly from the excellent speakers that contributed to the conference. Panel representatives confirmed the appointment of the NAPFCP executive committee and a list of these members is included at the end of this letter.

The NAPFCP Annual Report was sent to each Panel and detailed the work undertaken in the year. For ease, a copy of the annual report is provided with this letter.

I was pleased to announce that NAPFCP membership has now reached 40 out of a maximum of 41 Panels and whilst this is encouraging it remains a disappointment that 100% membership has not been achieved. All members benefit by having a strong supporting voice when interfacing with the Home Office and LGA, and especially when the NAPFCP responds to the various Panel orientated consultations and surveys issued during the year. The annual report listed some of the consultations that were issued and responded to this year.

Three Commissioners from Durham, Essex and Humberside were invited to present at the annual conference; each contributed greatly to the different debates during the day. The clear message that flowed through the many topics discussed is the importance of a respectful, trusting and professional relationship existing between a Panel and the commissioner. This can be a difficult challenge but one that when achieved can benefit all parties and, in particular, the public.

The Home Affairs Select Committee has recently launched an inquiry entitled "Police and Crime Commissioners - Ten Years On". All Panels were invited to submit a response to two specific questions for inclusion in the LGA's response to the enquiry and the NAPFCP was directly invited by the Committee to respond to a further seven questions as follows:

- What impact have PCCs had since 2012?
- To what extent do PCCs provide effective oversight and democratic accountability for local policing?
- How effective are PCPs at scrutinising PCCs?
- How well do relationships between PCCs and Chief Constables function? How clear are their respective roles and responsibilities as set out in the Policing Protocol?
- How effective are PCCs at driving collaboration to improve public safety?

- How effective are PCC at commissioning services, including those for victims?
- How effective are PCCs at performing their roles in the complaints system
- What impact has there been when PCCs have taken on responsibility for fire and rescue services, and why have so few PCCs done this so far?
- What further reform, if any, is needed to the PCC model?

A copy of the association's response is attached.

To inform their work, the Home Affairs Select Committee has begun what is believed to be a series of inquiry sessions with relevant organisations and subject matter experts being invited to address the committee. The first session has been held and a video recording is available on BBC iPlayer and can be viewed at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m001sl96/select-committees-police-and-crime-commissioners-10-years-on-inquiry>

The recording is most informative and the speakers provide great insight into PCC's interaction, performance and relationship working with policing area partners. I highly recommend viewing the recording.

Unfortunately, not everything that is happening within our sector is positive and this is particularly evident when a PCC has their integrity of decision-making or behaviour called into question. Two recent examples relating to the Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire commissioners have resulted in significant adverse publicity.

A recording of the Northamptonshire PFCP meeting is available through the link below which provides valuable learning for any Panel having to address controversial decisions made by the Commissioner. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GuPnxni6QBI>

The Lincolnshire PCC was the subject of an IOPC investigation (Operation Motala) in respect to an allegation that he sought to manipulate a Chief Constable selection process. I will leave it to the reader to form their own conclusions on the allegations as set out in the report, however extracts from correspondence between the PCC and PCP and the inflammatory Tweet by the PCC clearly contradict the views and statements of the three commissioners who presented at the Frontline Annual Panel Conference.

The extracts include:

'PCPs in current form are worse than a waste of money they are a negative drain on resources. That doesn't mean they could [sic] be better.'

'We are subject to substandard scrutiny though which is much more dangerous. Some of that 'scrutiny' is very politically motivated and very corrosive. PCPs are, in my experience a costly waste of time and a massive distraction from delivering quality service for the public.'

'The cost isn't the issue it's the structure. We are accountable to the public at the ballet [sic] box, the police authority didn't have a PCP. We need a standardised structure for mediation with Chiefs nut [sic] the rest is political. The Panel is a pointless distraction.'

The IOPC report - Operation Motala can be read here:

<https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/publications/operation-motala-executive-summary>

The majority of Panels' focus between now and February will be on Police (and Fire and Rescue) budgets in preparation for precept reviews in the new year. Hopefully more Commissioners now hold budget workshops for Panel members to help in understanding the current financial drivers that underpin the budget which drives the resulting precept demand. Setting the 2024 precept will be challenging and particularly as 2024 is an election year.

In closing I would like to wish you, your Panel members and support officers a wonderful festive season and prosperous 2024.

With Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J Gili-Ross". The signature is enclosed in a thin yellow rectangular border.

John Gili-Ross

Chair - National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels

Chair - Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel

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## NAPFCP Executive Committee

The following were elected unopposed at the November 2023 AGM

John Gili-Ross

Evan Morris MBE

Gill Mercer

Suma Harding

Ged Potter

Pat Astbury

Professor Ian Rolfe

Joyce Welsh

Paul Downing

Following the resignation of Siobhan Monaghan, the executive committee co-opted Chris Burke at its November 2023 meeting.

Executive Committee support is provided by Emma Tombs