



**Cheshire
Police & Crime
Commissioner**

Scrutiny and Oversight handbook 2024-2028



Introduction

This handbook outlines and explains the processes that are completed by the Police and Crime Commissioner to hold the Chief Constable of Cheshire Constabulary to account.

This scrutiny ensures that the Constabulary are providing an efficient and effective service to Cheshire's communities, helping them to thrive, and creating a hostile environment for criminals.

Role of the Commissioner

The Police and Crime Commissioner is an elected person who makes sure the police are doing a good job and spending their money wisely. They represent the public and help set priorities for local policing.

The Police and Crime Commissioner is NOT a police officer, and his office is a separate organisation from Cheshire Constabulary.

Key responsibilities

The key responsibilities and powers of the Police and Crime Commissioner are:

Accountability and public service

- To hold the Chief Constable and Cheshire Police to account to the communities they serve.
- To prepare and issue an annual report on delivery against the objectives set within the Police and Crime Plan.
- To publish information to enable people to assess the performance of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable.
- To monitor complaints made against officers and staff, whilst having responsibility for complaints against the Chief Constable.

Setting strategic objectives

- To set the strategic objectives and direction of Cheshire Police, ensuring community needs are effectively met, whilst regarding the Strategic Policing Requirement set by the Home Secretary.

Allocation of funding

- To set the police budget and receive funding for policing and crime reduction, including government grants and the policing precept (council tax), and is responsible for allocating these resources to the force.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner and their team can bid for additional funding pots from the Home Office for specific projects which will help prevent and tackle crime and / or support victims and survivors

Appointments and dismissals

- To appoint the Chief Constable, and if necessary, dismiss them.

Police and Crime Plan

- To develop and implement a police and crime plan for Cheshire, which outlines their priorities and strategies for tackling crime and improving local policing.

Supporting victims / survivors and crime prevention

- To commission victims' and survivor services and crime prevention programs that benefit their communities.
- To enhance the delivery of criminal justice in Cheshire

Partnership working

- To work with various agencies and community groups to create a unified approach to preventing and reducing crime, as well as building confidence and restoring trust in policing.
- To bring together Community Safety Partnerships at the force level.
- To ensure that all collaboration agreements with other Police and Crime Commissioners and forces deliver value for money or enhance the effectiveness of policing capabilities and resilience.

Scrutiny and oversight performed by the Police and Crime Commissioner

The list below highlights the scrutiny and oversight that is performed by the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner.

- One to one meetings with the Chief Constable
- Public Scrutiny Meeting
- His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS)
- Police Force Performance and Governance panels
- Independent Ethics Panel
- Joint Management Board
- Joint Audit Advisory Committee
- NW Joint Oversight Collaboration Committee
- Engagement such as Parish Council meetings
- Local Criminal Justice Boards
- Police Dog Welfare volunteers
- Independent Custody Visitors
- Call Handling Auditors
- Out of Court Resolution Panels
- Custody Cohesion Group
- Public correspondence
- Complaint reviews
- Annual report

Types of oversight and scrutiny

The following pages detail the different methods used to fulfil the oversight and scrutiny responsibility of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

One-to-one meetings between the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable

Regular private meetings are held between the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable, in order to ensure that there is an open exchange of information and to help them to maintain an effective working relationship.

The Police and Crime Commissioner will raise concerns and discuss a wide variety of subjects relating to routine business with the Chief Constable.

These include:

- matters of immediate concern
- trends in performance and incidence of crime that may impact on priorities included in the Police and Crime Plan
- strategic proposals of the Police and Crime Commissioner / Chief Constable not considered in other forums
- matters raised by the Police and Crime Panel
- strategic finance
- personnel matters
- strategic policing initiatives and
- complaint and misconduct issues

Public Scrutiny meetings

The Police and Crime Commissioner holds scrutiny meetings to publicly hold the Chief Constable to account for the service provided by Cheshire Constabulary.

The scrutiny meetings are held regularly and are chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner and attended by the Chief Constable and Chief Officers. They are a combination of quarterly performance assessment and thematic 'deep dive' sessions.

The primary objective of the meetings is to monitor Constabulary performance, leadership and consequently progress against the Police and Crime Plan.

It is where the Police and Crime Commissioner can raise matters arising from visits, correspondence and citizens' assemblies, as well as putting a Cheshire perspective on national issues. Recommendations from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) may also be discussed.

This forum also enables the Police and Crime Commissioner to question and challenge the Chief Officers to consider improvement and alternative ways of tackling issues.

The dates for the Public Scrutiny meetings will be published on the Cheshire PCC website and available to attend via teams, with a recording available to be watched online afterwards. This ensures that the meeting is also accessible to those members of the public who may wish to attend but are unable to do so.

Papers for each meeting will be published on www.cheshire-pcc.gov.uk five working days in advance of the meeting.

This ensures that progress can be monitored by the public as well as the Police and Crime Commissioner.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

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As an additional strand to the scrutiny meetings, a section is dedicated to the discussion around the HMICFRS Programme.

Police and Crime Commissioners have a statutory duty to respond to HMICFRS reports that feature recommendations relating to their police force.

To facilitate communication with HMICFRS, the Police and Crime Commissioner has a single point of contact and provides responses to each relevant HMICFRS inspection.

[Find out more](#)

Joint Management Board

Management Board is a joint governance arrangement which enables the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable to make decisions relating to strategic direction, policy issues, medium / long term planning and any matters which have significant resource or reputational issues.

Joint Management Board is held each month, subject to need.

[Find out more](#)

Joint Audit Advisory Committee

The Joint Audit Advisory Committee provides the Police and Crime Commissioner and Cheshire Constabulary independent assurances on the adequacy of internal control, financial management and reporting, risk management as well as anti-fraud and corruption arrangements.

[Find out more](#)

Local Criminal Justice Board

The Board brings together criminal justice partners to identify priorities, address cross-cutting issues, reduce re-offending, improve the experiences of victims, survivors and witnesses and deliver agreed objectives to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the local criminal justice service.

[Find out more](#)

Police and Crime Commissioner led scrutiny panels and advisory groups

Out of Court Resolutions Panel

There are four panels per year which include magistrates, legal representatives from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and support services, who meet alongside the Police and Crime Commissioner and Cheshire Constabulary representatives. They review cases where an Out of Court Resolution has been used and whether it was appropriate in the circumstances.

[Find out more.](#)

Custody Cohesion Group

Local people make up this group and independently review matters of disproportionality and police / detainee behaviour in the context of legislation, guidance, policy and procedure.

Independent Ethics Panel

A group of independent members who discuss ethical matters and promote good practice.

[Find out more here.](#)

Scrutiny volunteers

The Police and Crime Commissioner has a team of volunteers who provide information which can then be used to help scrutinise Cheshire Constabulary's performance.

The volunteers who provide this scrutiny function are:

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs)

Members of the local community who volunteer to visit custody suites unannounced to check on the treatment and welfare of people held in police custody. Their recommendations can require the police to make improvements for the welfare of detainees.

Police Dog Welfare Scheme

A scheme to check on police dog welfare and involves volunteers from the community visiting to check on the dogs in their police kennels, vehicles and the dog unit's training areas.

We operate this scheme in collaboration with the North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner.

Call Management Auditors

Volunteer auditors meet monthly and undertake an audit of randomly selected emergency and non-emergency calls, received by the Constabulary's Force Control Centre, to ensure that the demands and expectations of the public are met.

[Find out more here.](#)

Representation at Constabulary governance and scrutiny

Force Performance Day

Monthly, in-depth performance review chaired by the Chief or Deputy Chief Constable.

Gold Groups

Established to deal with key operational issues

Procedural Justice

A meeting with independent members alongside police who review outputs from community scrutiny to promote fairness, transparency and impartiality.

Other meetings and scrutiny panels

These range from rape scrutiny panels to strategic progress meetings such as estates and cover many areas of policing.



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