



**Wiltshire Police and Crime Panel
Briefing Note No. 23-28**

Service: Legal and Governance
Further Enquiries to: committee@wiltshire.gov.uk
Date Prepared: October 2023

1. The purpose of this briefing note is to explain the role of Wiltshire's Police and Crime Panel ('the Panel') and to reflect on the Panel's challenges and achievements over the past year.

The Role of the Panel

2. The Panel is a joint committee of Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council, serving the Wiltshire Police Force Area. The Panel consists of seven Wiltshire Councillors and four Swindon Borough Councillors together with two Co-opted Independent Members. It is funded by, and directly accountable to, the Home Office.
3. By acting as a critical friend to Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) the Panel plays a key role in supporting and scrutinising his work. The PCC is elected by the public to hold the Chief Constable of Wiltshire Police to account, making the police answerable to local communities for the services they deliver. As such, the PCC has responsibility for engaging in the community and bringing different stakeholders together. He has responsibility to set the precept and sets the strategic objectives of the force through a Police and Crime Plan.
4. The main role of the Panel is to review and make recommendations about the Police and Crime Plan and the Annual Report. As part of this role the Panel receives regular updates and questions the PCC about his proposals. The Panel also helps to provide financial oversight and has the power to block the PCC's precept.

2022/23 – Challenges and Achievements

5. In January 2023, the Panel held a confirmatory hearing during which they put questions to the PCC's preferred candidate, Commander Catherine Roper, to be Wiltshire's next Chief Constable. The Panel is able to veto the appointment of the PCC's preferred candidate but were impressed by Commander Roper and endorsed the Commissioner's view that she had the qualities to drive the force forward. They also analysed and approved the PCC's proposed precept for the forthcoming year after considering the findings of a public consultation on his proposals.
6. The support that the Panel provides is more important than ever, as in July 2022 Wiltshire Police received a report from Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services grading the force as inadequate. As Wiltshire Police take the necessary steps to address the issues identified, the Panel has closely monitored how the PCC is overseeing Wiltshire's new Chief Constable. By supporting the PCC with the implementation of his Crime Plan, and providing challenge and robust scrutiny, the Panel aims to play a part in driving sustained improvements in policing across the county.