



Briefing note

Latest information re transition to Police & Crime Boards

02/03/26

Executive summary

The Government is progressing reforms to replace the current Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) model with Policing and Crime Boards (PCBs) by May 2028. The aim of the new model is to introduce a collective leadership approach, seeking to strengthen democratic oversight, resilience, and transparency across policing governance.

The reform programme is structured through a central Police Reform Board and multiple thematic workstreams covering governance design, finance, scrutiny, partnerships, Wales-specific issues, fire governance, and workforce transition. Engagement with local partners is ongoing to ensure the proposals are practical and aligned with policing needs.

The reform timeline includes policy refinement through early 2026, legislative drafting through 2027, and local implementation planning into 2028. A Police Reform Bill is expected to receive Royal Assent in early 2027.

PCBs will include elected local leaders and independent members, with statutory appointments for a Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, and Chief Finance Officer. Boards must set local rules covering membership, terms, committees, and decision-making processes. Eligibility and disqualification rules are being aligned across policing governance roles, with additional restrictions for co-opted members.

A new Policing and Crime Lead (PCL) will oversee day-to-day governance functions, while strategic decisions, such as the Police and Crime Plan, budgets, and Chief Constable appointments, remain with the Board. Further consideration is underway regarding political restrictions and vetting requirements for PCLs.

Fire governance arrangements remain under consultation, with options for integrated or separate models depending on local context. Stakeholders are invited to provide feedback on membership balance, procedural consistency, eligibility criteria, and fire governance design.

Detail

1. Context

Government proposals set out a move from the current PCC governance model to multi-member Policing and Crime Boards by 2028. The reforms aim to strengthen oversight, resilience, and democratic representation across policing governance.

The new Board structure is now being shaped and is expected to be the dominant national governance model post-2028. Hosting arrangements are still under review, and this means that where the Board physically sits is to be determined, although expectations are that this will be locally decided.

Of note, the Home Office have acknowledged poor wording around the idea that local offices would act merely as a “secretariat”, recognising this does not reflect the breadth of OPCC functions.

2. Overall programme structure

Several thematic workstreams feed into the programme, covering:

- Board mechanics
- Finance
- Scrutiny
- Partnerships
- Wales-specific governance
- Fire governance integration
- Staffing and transition arrangements

3. Reform timelines

Dates	Detail
Nov 2025 – Dec 2025	Develop and agree governance arrangements
Jan 2026 – March 2026	Refine policy with transition working groups
Jan 2026 – July 2026	Instruct lawyers, develop clauses for Police Reform Bill
(tbc) July 2026	Police Reform Bill introduced
(tbc) July 2026 – March 2027	Passage of Police Reform Bill through Parliament
(tbc) March 2027	Police Reform Bill receives Royal Assent
Spring 2027 – Spring 2028	Work with local areas to progress Implementation
04 May 2028	Go live of new arrangements
Summer 2028	Evaluation

Timelines remain ambitious, especially given parliamentary pressures for example, a collective Wales proposal is expected on 09 March.

4. PCB core design features

The Policing and Crime Boards (PCBs) are introduced as the multi-member governance bodies intended to replace the PCC model in non-mayoral areas. Their core design reflects a shift to collective leadership, with membership expected to include local authority Leaders and Mayors from the force area, supported by two independent co-opted members appointed based on required skills, typically those relating to finance, criminal justice, policing knowledge, or governance.

PCBs are designed to be scalable to variations in force size and local government structures, ensuring equitable representation across relevant organisations. The new model seeks to maintain close alignment with broader devolution policy and regional authority structures. Overall, the design emphasises strategic leadership, statutory responsibility, and effective partnership working across policing and community safety systems. In other words, partnership responsibilities and convening powers will be a priority. It is likely that Local Criminal Justice Board chairs will be Police and Crime Leads for example.

Boards will become body corporate and will employ Police and Crime Leads (PCLs). They must be scalable to accommodate potential future force reorganisations - important when considering prospect of force mergers. Where there is a Mayor, the Deputy Mayor role is expected to align with the Board structure.

Boards will assume full responsibilities for budget, precept setting and scrutiny. There will be no structure overseeing the Board which increases the importance of the Monitoring Officer role. The role of Best Value and HMICFRS is under consideration here too.

5. Governance roles and requirements

Each PCB will be required to appoint three statutory officers: a Chief Executive, a Monitoring Officer, and a Chief Finance Officer. This replicates the governance structure currently in place for PCCs. Where appropriate, these roles may be shared with other organisations (suggested to be

Local Authority or other force areas). The Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer posts may be combined, provided this is legally compliant and operationally manageable.

Alongside these appointments, PCBs must also establish their own local procedural framework. This will cover matters such as:

- the processes for appointing, resigning, determining the term of office, and removing the Chair and Vice-Chair;
- setting quoracy requirements;
- agreeing voting arrangements;
- creating committees and sub-committees; and
- determining policies on allowances and expenses.

Although PCBs will not fall under Local Government Access to Information regulations, they will still need to comply with transparency and accountability standards set out in statutory guidance. This approach is intended to provide local flexibility while ensuring a consistent and robust governance framework nationally.

This is a change of anticipated direction as it was thought savings could be realised by removing the requirement of these statutory roles. This change may reflect concerns about losing the expertise of key staff who currently hold these roles. A further development is that accommodation arrangements may remain unchanged, given the potential impact relocating may have on relationships, ways of working, and data-sharing.

6. Eligibility, disqualification and complaints

Proposals are being developed to align eligibility and disqualification criteria across governance roles (including PCCs, Mayors, and council leaders) given the significant variation in current rules. The aim is to introduce a fairer, more consistent, and proportionate framework across the wider governance landscape. Areas under review include whether individuals who have recently served as police officers, police staff, or employees within the local criminal justice system should face a period of disqualification. Consideration is also being given to tightening rules for individuals with imprisonable convictions to bring them closer to existing PCC standards.

For co-opted PCB members, additional restrictions are being explored. These may include bans on holding elected office within the PCB area, recent employment within policing or criminal justice organisations, or having conflicts of interest that could compromise independence. The overall intention is to strengthen public confidence, safeguard impartial oversight, and ensure decision-making remains free from undue influence.

Complaints handling within the new governance model distinguishes between elected and co-opted PCB members. Elected members will continue to be governed by their respective local authority Codes of Conduct, with any complaints managed by their own local authority Monitoring Officer, ensuring continuity with established standards regimes. Co-opted members, however, will be subject to the Code of Conduct of the PCB's administering body, and complaints relating to them will fall under the remit of the PCB's Monitoring Officer.

This dual-track approach reflects the mixed membership of PCBs and the need for oversight arrangements to align with each member's appointing authority. The role of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) in relation to complaints about PCB members remains under consideration within the scrutiny workstream, which is currently focused on issues involving individual members rather than the Board as a whole. Public confidence is a vital consideration here.

7. The Policing and Crime Lead (PCL)

Every PCB will be required to appoint a PCL, who will exercise day-to-day governance functions currently carried out by Deputy Mayors for Policing and Crime or, in some areas, PCCs. The PCL will oversee police force performance, partnership engagement, and delegated decision-making on matters not reserved to the PCB.

Reserved functions that must remain with the PCB include issuing the Police and Crime Plan, setting the budget and precept, and making decisions regarding the appointment, suspension, or removal of the Chief Constable.

The PCL role is designed to provide dedicated professional oversight capacity, ensuring strong daily governance while enabling the PCB to focus on strategic leadership. This model aims to deliver a balance between democratic accountability and operational effectiveness by creating a clear organisational distinction between strategic and delegated operational governance.

At present the Home Office has indicated that this role will not be politically restricted, i.e. a politician will be eligible to be a PCL. The role will be appointed to via a process and on a fixed term contract with a break clause and will be employed directly by the PCB rather than by any constituent authority, reinforcing both organisational independence and clear lines of accountability. Eligibility and disqualification rules are expected to mirror those that apply to Deputy Police and Crime Commissioners and Deputy Mayors for Policing and Crime, including compliance with the Official Secrets Act and disqualification where an individual is subject to sexual offence notification requirements under the Local Government Disqualification Act 2022.

There is ongoing debate about whether the post should be politically restricted or whether decisions on political restriction should rest with local areas. It should be noted that this may change during the Parliamentary process as there is pressure from some for the role to be politically restricted. Vetting requirements are also being explored, reflecting the sensitivity and significance of the role (NB. PCCs are not required to be vetted).

8. Fire governance

Options for fire governance can be considered i.e. integrated police–fire governance, or separate, depending on local context. This draws on and expands the Policing and Crime Act 2017.

As with policing, certain functions would remain reserved to the PCB, such as approving the Fire and Rescue Plan, setting the fire budget and precept, and appointing or removing the Chief Fire Officer. Deciding whether these responsibilities should sit with the PCL or be allocated to a dedicated Fire Lead will depend on local capacity, organisational complexity, and the extent to which areas want consistency across their governance arrangements.