

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Police Authority Board – For decision	Dated: 23/07/2025
Subject: Reform to Police Authority Board governance	Public report: For Decision
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides business enabling functions 	
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of:	Town Clerk
Report author:	Charles Smart, Police Authority team

Summary

This report proposes 'structural' reforms to the agendas and remits of the Police Authority Board (PAB) and its sub-committees.

These aim to make a clearer distinction between PAB as a 'strategic overview' forum and sub-committees as 'policy detail' forums, establish more fixed and stable agendas, address areas of overlap, duplication, and gaps in sub-committee remits, and align these more closely to Policing Plan priorities.

Overall, these seek to make PAB's governance more effective and easier to service and administer, ultimately enhancing the value and impact of the committee process and in turn its contribution to ensuring the delivery of high-quality police services.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to **agree** the recommended reform proposals at paragraph 6 (and consequent sub-committee Terms of Reference amends at **Annex 3**) :

- A fixed agenda composed of summary overviews for PAB, providing a strategic 'point in time' view across City policing
- Changes to sub-committee remits to delineate clearer areas of policy focus, remove cross-cutting and overlapping 'thematic' responsibilities, and align remits to 2025-28 Policing Plan priorities
- More fixed agendas for sub-committees, in line with their new remits

Main Report

Background

1. The Police Authority Board is responsible for holding the Commissioner of the City of London Police to account in running an efficient and effective service, ensuring value for money in the way the City Police is run, and setting priorities for the service (through the Policing Plan).
2. PAB's effectiveness in exercising these functions is linked closely to its 'governance structure' – the rules and processes for how it receives information (i.e. agendas and papers) and how responsibility for different areas of information is assigned amongst PAB and its sub-committees (i.e. remits).
3. In 2024, PAB endorsed the Town Clerk's department business plan for 2025/26 which included a priority workstream to "*develop and implement an approach to reform PAB governance and increase its efficiency and effectiveness as a scrutiny body*".
4. The current governance structure is, broadly, that:
 - *PAB* is the lead committee, receiving all 'for decision' papers and any 'for information' papers judged to be of sufficient importance
 - *Strategy, Planning and Performance (SPPC)* focusses on local crime prevention, City-Police-wide business planning and performance management, all HMICFRS¹ recommendations, and security
 - *Professional Standards and Integrity (PSIC)* focusses on public trust, use of powers, EDI, and professional standards and complaints
 - *Resources, Risk and Estates (RREC)* focusses on workforce management, accommodation, internal audit recommendations, and City-Police-wide finance, funding, and risk management
 - *Economic and Cyber Crime (ECCC)* focusses on City Police's national lead roles on fraud, economic and cyber-crime
 - While a number (c.20) of quarterly and annual 'standing agenda items' provide a degree of regular structure, committee agendas also include a range of 'ad hoc' items (such as one-off papers requested by the committee or papers shared from other areas of the Corporation)
5. PAB's governance also includes the FCCRAS Procurement sub-committee and Police Pensions Board, though these specialised committees have not been included in the scope of reform proposals.

¹ HM Inspector of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services. They inspect police services and issue recommendations for improvement including through the 'PEEL' process.

Current Position

6. There are several issues, and so areas for improvement, in this structure:
- *Overlap* – SPPC's responsibility for all business planning and performance management, and RREC's responsibility for all risk, both 'design in' overlaps with other sub-committee remits. For example, SPPC oversees performance on Policing Plan metrics related to professional standards and to National Lead Force functions, and RREC looks at risks relating to operational performance and planning, professional standards, and fraud and economic crime. This makes lead responsibility unclear.
 - *Duplication* – There are at least ten standing agenda items for which, as standard, identical papers are sent to both PAB and one of its sub-committees (examples include the E&I update, risk register update, Policing Plan performance report, and capital and revenue budget outturn). This duplicates scrutiny of the same information.
 - *Gaps* – Most notably, neither PAB nor its sub-committees receive regular reports on the City Police's overall victims work, a longstanding Policing Plan priority. Vulnerability, serious organised crime, and counter-terror work are also scrutinised through ad-hoc 'deep dives' rather than regular reporting.
 - *Long agendas and papers* – For PAB in particular, agendas can run to 20+ items and paper packs to 400+ pages. The latter makes it challenging to draw out key issues and risks and the former means there is often very limited time to discuss them.
 - *No 'strategic overview'* – PAB's agenda is composed of decision papers, 'important' standing agenda items and 'important' ad-hoc papers. In practice this means it varies significantly meeting-to-meeting and does not provide a clear and consistent overview of the top priorities, issues, and risks across City policing at the point in time.

Options

7. The Police Authority team has developed proposals (*see next section*) to address the above issues, which have been refined and agreed at working and Chief Officer level with the City Police and tested with the Chair and Deputy Chair. For completeness, other options are:
- A) *Do nothing* – no change to current governance structures.
- B) *More limited reform* – this could entail only parts of the proposals set out in the next section, for example implementing a fixed agenda for PAB but not altering sub-committee remits. Partial reform only delivers partial improvements, and the proposals overleaf are intended to stand together as an integrated whole. As there are no material costs to the recommended reforms, there is also no substantive saving to pursuing more limited reform

(indeed, the ‘full’ reforms intend to reduce some of the admin currently associated with assembling committee agendas and papers).

- C) *Substantive reform of another kind* – this option has not been explored in any detail, but could entail creating new sub-committees or other additions to the current structure to plug gaps and ‘spread out’ current agenda and paper loads. This would add to, not reduce, some current complexities and admin requirements. Alternatively, sub-committees could be eliminated with PAB handling (in longer meetings) all scrutiny, but this is not considered viable to adequately oversee the extent of City Police activities.

Proposals

8. The recommended proposals on which this paper seeks agreement are, in summary, that:
- A) PAB will become a ‘strategic overview’ forum providing – via a fixed agenda – a high-level view across key City Police matters. It will continue to receive decision papers (as the only policing committee with decision-making powers) but will otherwise only receive concise summary overviews of business areas and not duplicate the detailed scrutiny of sub-committees. The summaries that PAB receives will be taken by the Police Authority team directly from the “summary” section of underlying sub-committee reports (which will be slightly expanded).
 - B) Sub-committee remits will be altered so that they have clearly-delineated areas of sole policy focus, to remove cross-cutting ‘thematic’ responsibilities (like ‘performance’ and ‘risk’), and to more closely align remits and responsibilities to strategic priorities in the new (2025-28) Policing Plan. They will also more closely align with the City Police’s internal governance.
 - C) Sub-committees will also have more-or-less fixed agendas focussed on key thematic areas in their remits. Papers will also be written in new templates to make the presentation of information more uniform. Both of these changes have already been trialled in Professional Standards and Integrity Committee.
9. Fuller detail of these proposals– i.e. new remits and fixed committee agendas – is set out at **Annex 1**. The changes to committee remits can be summarised as:
- *PAB’s* remit is unchanged in principle, albeit in practice it will only by rare exception receive detailed reports on area-specific matters
 - *PSI’s* remit is unchanged, other than removal of Action Fraud complaints
 - *ECCC’s* remit is essentially unchanged and remains to scrutinise the City Police’s national policing work. It will take on responsibility for Action Fraud complaints from PSI

- *RREC's* remit will no longer include 'risk' (with area-specific Tier 2 risks instead scrutinised by relevant sub-committees and the top Tier 1 corporate-level risks scrutinised by PAB), so will focus on resources and estates including a new emphasis (per the new Policing Plan) on efficiency and productivity work
 - *SPPC's* remit will essentially no longer exist because – analogous to the change to *RREC* – area-specific performance and planning will instead be scrutinised by relevant sub-committees (PSI oversees EDI performance and relevant Policing Plan metrics, ECCC oversees National Lead Force Performance and so on). "New *SPPC*" (*new names to be determined* – see **Annex 1**) will instead provide detailed oversight and scrutiny of the City Police's operational work in the Square Mile (including neighbourhood policing, serious and organised crime, counter-terror, vulnerability, and custody and offender management).
10. Current standing agenda items have been mapped into the new committee remits and structures, with this set out in full at **Annex 2**. Corporate, strategic, and legal implications are detailed in the section below.
 11. Fixed agendas and template reports will be easier to plan for and to produce, reducing officer admin work while also producing a more uniform 'end product' for Members. The issue of 'committee sequencing' will be partly mitigated – the current structure means sub-committees should ideally precede PAB each round (so they can 'feed up' comments on papers), which in practice has proved exceptionally difficult to schedule.
 12. Under the new model, with papers only rarely going to more than one committee and with PAB and its sub-committees discussing issues at different levels of detail, the sequencing will matter less. Timing will continue to be kept under review, and Members should note it will remain difficult to deliver 'perfect' sequencing between committee timings and City Police's internal governance.
 13. These proposals will limit the room for ad-hoc reports (either commissioned or referred from elsewhere). This will be mitigated by the new remits being more comprehensive (i.e. there will be fewer gaps requiring ad-hoc reporting), by requested updates being provided within subsequent template reports (rather than as standalone items), and increased scope to answer ad-hoc questions outside of committee.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications – Reform proposals aim to improve PAB's effectiveness in exercising its strategic oversight and scrutiny functions, as detailed above. By aligning governance more closely with the Policing Plan, they also enhance PAB's oversight of delivery against key strategic policing priorities.

Financial implications – None, there is no financial cost to governance reform.

Resource implications – Reforms are anticipated to reduce the admin resource cost of servicing PAB’s governance structures, as indicated above. There is likely to be a ‘transition’ admin cost as the new model is adopted and refined.

Legal implications – Reforms do not alter PAB’s legal status, they are within the prescriptions of legislation on how it should exercise its scrutiny and oversight functions as a Police Authority, and they don’t change or conflict with PAB’s statutory duties (for example, PAB via PSIC will continue to monitor complaints against the City Police).

Risk implications – Reforms are expected to improve PAB and sub-committee oversight and scrutiny of risk management, with this being distributed more widely and formally across sub-committees.

Equalities implications – There are no equalities implications, scrutiny of EDI will remain a key part of PSI Committee’s remit

Climate implications – None

Security implications- None

Next steps if proposals are agreed

14. If Members agree the proposals set out at paragraph 6 and **Annex 1**, and consequent changes to sub-committee Terms of Reference at **Annex 3** then the ‘new model’ will be in place from September. No changes are required to PAB’s Terms of Reference. New template report formats will be developed with the City Police (similar to those in use by PSI Committee) for the September committee round.

Conclusion

15. The Police Authority team’s ambition is to ensure that accountability arrangements for the City Police are best-in-class: efficient, effective, anticipatory, insightful, and strategic. To that end, this paper has set out a range of reforms to PAB’s governance structures targeting key areas for improvement.
16. The main expected benefits are: that PAB will have a clearer strategic overview of City Policing and that this will in turn assist strategic discussion and decision-making; that sub-committees will have more focussed scrutiny within clearer remits and aided by shorter and more consistent papers and agendas (which will be quicker and simpler for officers to produce); that performance (including against Policing Plan priorities) and risk will be more clearly and closely scrutinised in their ‘subject area’ sub-committees; and that oversight will more clearly cover all important areas, most notably victims work. In sum, this should improve performance, transparency, and clarity.
17. A degree of ongoing iteration is anticipated, particularly to reporting templates, and it will remain important to keep governance and accountability under review, checking it is meeting the above ambitions and not adding unnecessary or unanticipated burdens.

18. Lastly, these reforms present a broader opportunity to explore new 'ways of working' between PAB, the Police Authority, and the City Police. These are under consideration and proposals will be brought forward in due course.

Appendices

- Annex 1 – Detail of new committee agendas and remits
- Annex 2 – Mapping current standing agenda items to new committee remits
- Annex 3 – Changes to sub-committee Terms of Reference – ***for decision***

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Annex 1 - Detail of new committee agendas², remits, and proposed names

<p>Police Authority Board standing agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policing Plan summary performance update • [Square Mile policing] updates (= 'new SPPC') • National fraud, economic, and cyber policing updates (= 'new ECCC') • Professional standards and EDI updates (= 'new PSI') • Resources, workforce, and estates updates (= 'new RREC') • Summary overview of HMICFRS reviews and recommendations • "AOB" updates • Corporate risk register review and risk management update • Forward look and 'wider world of policing' update
<p>LOCAL POLICING COMMITTEE standing agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policing Plan priorities update - <i>"Keep people in the City safe and feeling safe"</i> • Local policing update (=neighbourhood, response, non-Servator patrols e.g. in night-time economy) • Victims services and strategy update • Vulnerability update – <i>Bi-annual, not quarterly</i> • Serious & Organised Crime (SOC) update - <i>Bi-annual, not quarterly</i> • Counter-terror update • Custody and offender management update – <i>Annual, as at present</i> • Community engagements and collaboration update • [Local policing] key risks and mitigations • [Local policing] forward look and wider policing matters
<p>ECONOMIC AND CYBER CRIME COMMITTEE standing agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policing Plan priorities update - <i>"Improve the national policing response to fraud, economic, and cyber crime"</i> • Fraud strategy delivery and performance update, including National Lead Force victims work • Other key programme delivery updates – DCU, O3C, cyber resilience • FCCRAS / Report Fraud implementation update • Action Fraud complaints update • ECCC key risks and mitigations • ECCC forward look and wider policing matters
<p>PROFESSIONALISM AND TRUST C'TTEE standing agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policing Plan priorities update - <i>"Put victims at the heart of all we do", "be one of the most inclusive and trusted police services in the country"</i> • Use of powers update • EDI Strategy update • Professional standards and vetting update • Conduct cases dip-sample • P&T key risks and mitigations • P&T forward look and wider policing matters
<p>RESOURCES AND ESTATES COMMITTEE standing agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policing Plan priorities update - <i>"Be an employer of choice", "Improve our productivity"</i> • Strategic finance update • Strategic workforce update • Estates and fleet management update • Digital, data, and tech update • REC key risks and mitigations • REC forward look and wider policing matters

² NB – all committees will retain 'stock' agenda items such as minutes, outstanding references. PAB will retain the Commissioner's and the Chair's written updates

Annex 2 - Mapping current standing agenda items to new committee remits

Standing quarterly / annual item	Currently goes to...	Will now...
E&I update	PAB, PSIC	Go to PSIC only (in 'EDI strategy update'), with top issues summarised in regular PAB overview
Risk register update	PAB, RREC	PAB will review corporate-level (Tier 1) risk register, other (Tier 2) risks will be reviewed by relevant sub-committee
Community engagement update	PAB, SPPC	Go to 'new SPPC' only, with top issues summarised in regular PAB overview
Policing Plan performance report	PAB, SPPC	Headline PP metrics reported to PAB, detailed metrics and delivery reported to relevant sub c'tees
Provisional capital and revenue update	PAB, RREC	Go to RREC only (as part of 'strategic finance update' standing item), with top issues summarised in regular PAB overview
Capital and revenue budget outturn	PAB, RREC	
Medium Term Financial Plan	PAB, RREC	Go to RREC and PAB as 'one off' item (i.e. no change)
Police Pensions Board annual report	PAB	Go to RREC as 'one off' item (potentially to PAB if necessary)
Health & Safety annual performance report	PAB	Go to PSIC as 'one off' item
City & Hackney annual safeguarding report	PAB	Go to 'new SPPC' as 'one off' item
Annual review of fees and charges – for decision	PAB, RREC	Go to PAB as a decision paper (maybe via RREC)
HMICFRS update	SPPC	Now go to PAB, in more 'summary' format
Safer City Partnership annual report	PAB, SPPC	Go to 'new SPPC' as 'one off' item
Complaints and IOPC annual report	PAB, PSIC	Go to PSIC as 'one off' item
CoLP complaints data	PSIC	Go to PSIC, as at present
Action Fraud complaints data	PSIC	Be switched to ECCC
Stop and search and use of force	PSIC	Go to PSIC, as at present (in "use of powers update")
NLF performance	ECCC	Go to ECCC, as at present, incorporated into agreed agenda item templates
Cyber Griffin	ECCC	
Cyber portfolio update	ECCC	
NLF strategic comms and engagement update	ECCC	

