



# SUSSEX POLICE & CRIME PANEL

## Sussex Police and Crime Panel

**2 July 2026**

### **Review of Membership and Proportionality**

### **Report by The Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel**

#### **Recommendations**

The Panel is recommended to:

Review its proportionality against the political make-up of Sussex and determine the arrangement it wishes to operate for 2026/27 and:

1. Agree that Brighton and Hove City Council be invited to appoint a Conservative second representative to the Panel (see para 2.3 & 2.4), for a one-year period of office, to take effect immediately.
2. Agree that both East and West Sussex County Councils should each be invited to appoint an additional local authority member, for a one-year period of office; and
3. Subject to agreeing recommendations 1 and 2, agree either Option A or Option B set out in the report.
4. Authorise the Clerk to amend the Panel's decision in respect of recommendation 3 in the event Chichester District Council appoints either a Conservative or a Reform representative.

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Schedule 6, paragraph 31 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (the Act) requires the Panel to consider ("from time to time") whether available seats could be assigned to additional councillor members to enable the balanced appointment objective to be met, or more effectively met. If so, the Act requires the Panel to exercise this option. The balanced appointment objective is that the councillor members of the Panel (when taken together) represent the political make-up of the 15 Sussex local authorities (when taken together). The Constitution of Sussex Police and Crime Panel sets out that the Panel reviews its political make-up and size once a year, at its Annual Meeting.

1.2 The 15 Sussex local authorities can appoint any councillor of their choosing (i.e. without regard to that councillor’s political affiliation).

## 2. **Additional Local Authority Members**

2.1 The Panel is required to appoint additional councillors from East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and/or West Sussex County Council (WSSC) if these would improve political proportionality and, as set out below, this is now the case.

2.2 At the time of publication, Chichester District Council has yet to appoint its representative.

2.3 Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) has an automatic second appointment, which must be made in accordance with the Panel’s recommendation as to political affiliation.

2.4 Referring to appendix 1 (Political Make-up of Sussex Local Authorities), the allocation of the second BHCC seat to a Conservative councillor for 2026/27 is the most effective means of contributing towards the balanced appointment objective.

### **Recommendation 1:**

That the Panel agrees that Brighton and Hove City Council be invited to appoint a Conservative second representative to the Panel, for a one-year period of office.

Including the second BHCC Conservative councillor appointment, the resulting Panel make-up is below:

Table 1 – Political Make-Up of a 16 Member Panel, Assuming Recommendation 1 (with one vacancy, see 2.2)

<b>Number of Councillor Seats</b>	Liberal Democrat	Labour	Conservative	Green	Reform
<b>16</b>	5	5	1	3	1

2.5 From Appendix 1, the theoretical politically proportionate make-up of a 16/17/18-member Panel as of 23 Jun 2026 is set out in Table 2. The statutory maximum number of councillor Panel members is 18. For the purposes of this discussion, the two Independent Co-opted Panel Members are not considered.

Table 2 – Theoretical Politically Proportionate Panel Make-Up

<b>Number of Councillor Seats</b>	Liberal Democrat	Labour	Conservative	Green	Reform
<b>16</b>	4.29	2.95	2.78	2.73	1.96
<b>17</b>	4.56	3.14	2.95	2.90	2.08
<b>18</b>	4.83	3.32	3.13	3.07	2.20

2.6 The Panel’s Constitution states that in order to meet the statutory duties imposed under the Act, additional local authority members must be appointed from each of the county councils on the agreement of the Panel, to address any perceived imbalance in political proportionality. Such members will have a one-year period of office. The Panel should today review its proportionality against the political make-up of Sussex and determine the arrangement it wishes to operate for 2026/27.

2.7 Considering the data in appendix 1, and assuming recommendation 1 is agreed, there is still some political imbalance, with under-representation of Conservative and Reform political parties. To achieve a more politically balanced membership, the Panel’s Constitution enables one additional member to be appointed from either or both ESCC and WSCC. It is a matter for the Panel on this occasion to determine which political groups these additional members should represent, with two options (A and B) set out below for consideration. The Clerk will work with colleagues in both councils to ensure the requisite representatives are appointed in time for the Panel’s next meeting, in accordance with the Panel’s decision.

Option A:

That one of ESCC or WSCC appoints a Conservative additional member, and the other an additional Reform councillor.

2.8 For clarity, make-up of the resulting 18-councillor Panel, by political party, will be as below (with one vacancy, see 2.2):

Liberal Democrat	5 (4.83)
Labour	5 (3.32)
Conservative	2 (3.13)
Green	3 (3.07)
Reform	2 (2.20)

Note:

1. Shown in parenthesis is the politically proportionate aspiration
2. In the event Chichester District Council appoints its representative before the date of the Panel’s annual meeting, members will be updated with a revised version of this report. In the event the appointment is made after the annual meeting, but makes a significant difference to the analysis presented herein (ie if the authority appoints either a Conservative or a Reform representative) Clerk will adjust the Panel’s decision accordingly.

2.9 Under Option A, ESCC, having proportionately more Reform councillors, would be invited to appoint the additional Reform councillor and WSCC,

having proportionately more Conservative councillors, would be invited to appoint the additional Conservative councillor.

Option B:

That ESSC and WSCC both appoint a Conservative additional member.

- 2.10 For clarity, make-up of the resulting 18-councillor Panel, by political party, will be as below (with one vacancy, see 2.2):

Liberal Democrat	5 (4.83)
Labour	5 (3.32)
Conservative	3 (3.13)
Green	3 (3.07)
Reform	1 (2.20)

**Recommendations 2, 3 and 4:**

That the Panel:

2. Agrees that both East and West Sussex County Councils should each be invited to appoint an additional local authority member, for a one-year period of office; and
3. Subject to agreeing recommendations 1 and 2, agrees either Option A or Option B.
4. Agrees that the Clerk is authorised to amend the Panel's decision in respect of recommendation 3 in the event Chichester District Council appoints either a Conservative or a Reform representative.

**3. Resource Implications and Value for Money**

- 3.1 For 2026/27, the Home Office grant allows for up to £920 per Panel Member for travelling expenses.

**4. Risk Management Implications**

- 4.1 The Panel must strive to be politically and geographically proportionate. Failure to adequately do so risks breaching the relevant terms of the Act.

**5. Other Considerations – Equality – Crime Reduction – Human Rights**

- 5.1 Not applicable.

**Lauren McCann**

Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

**Contact:**

Ninesh Edwards

(T) 0330 222 2542  
(E) ninesh.edwards@westsussex.gov.uk

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Political Make-up of Sussex Local Authorities (23 June 2026)