



Policing Accountability Framework

Establishing a practical civic architecture through which communities can participate directly, independently and democratically in police accountability.

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

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The Policing Accountability Framework (PAF) is the Alliance for Police Accountability’s standalone strategic and practical framework for community police accountability. It is distinct from the APA’s five-year Policing Accountability Strategy (PAS). See the Glossary of Core Terms towards the end of this document for the full set of definitions used throughout.



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Executive Summary

The Policing Accountability Framework (PAF) establishes a practical civic architecture through which communities can participate directly, independently and democratically in police accountability. It responds to a structural deficit: the people and communities most affected by police disproportionately rarely determine the standards by which policing is judged, control the evidence agenda, or possess sustained mechanisms for escalating institutional failure.

This framework is intended to be a replicable model that communities can utilise to establish community-led scrutiny structures in their localities. The resulting structure will operate as a fourth pillar of accountability alongside: governmental; professional; and internal police scrutiny. It does not displace those systems but adds the missing democratic component that connects lived experience and community mandate to operational and national scrutiny with the aim of reducing the disproportionate use of police powers and low levels of trust in the police.

THE CENTRAL PROPOSITION

Policing by consent requires more than public consultation. It requires durable civic infrastructure through which communities can establish expectations, gather evidence, assess performance and publish findings requiring a response.

Devolution, Community Empowerment and Public Accountability

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 establishes a new architecture for devolving powers, funding and public functions to strategic authorities and mayors. Public safety and health, well-being and public service reform are expressly identified as areas of strategic competence. PAF provides the community-facing accountability infrastructure through which the exercise of those functions can be informed, tested and scrutinised by communities.

In England, PAF is designed to complement the transfer and exercise of policing-governance functions within strategic authorities. It provides a disciplined route from neighbourhood experience to local evidence, democratic mandate, devolved decision-making and national policy learning.



SCOPE AND LIMITS

PAF does not exercise statutory policing, mayoral or police and crime commissioner functions. It does not replace police and crime panels, local scrutiny committees, inspectorates, complaints bodies, courts or statutory consultation. Its distinctive contribution is independent, continuous and community-mandated scrutiny.

Recognition of a local PAF process may be established through a memorandum of understanding, standing evidence arrangements, referral protocols, commissioned activity, data agreements or a formally evaluated pilot. Any such recognition must preserve the community's control over priorities, appointments, findings and publication.

The framework operates through an integrated accountability chain. Popular Assemblies establish priorities. Black Policing Charters translate those priorities into standards and commitments. Community Police Monitoring Groups gather and analyse evidence. Structured interfaces with police services, local authorities, strategic authorities, mayors, policing-governance bodies and statutory scrutiny arrangements secure responses and track implementation. National coordination identifies systemic trends and carries community evidence into national reform.

A Civil Society Framework, Adapted for Black Communities

PAF originated in the Community Oversight Working Group (COWG), convened and led by the APA following the contributions of anti-racist organisations to the National Police Chiefs' Council's (NPCC) Police Race Action Plan (PRAP). The consultation part of making the PRAP made clear the need for independent community scrutiny bodies. Pooling expertise from the APA, Action for Race Equality, Black Equity Organisation, Operation Black Vote, Race Equality Foundation, Runnymede Trust, and other community leaders, practitioners, researchers, policy specialists and organisations of all demographics, came PAF.

The APA has adapted it for its Black-led Policing Accountability Strategy (PAS), in which local Black Policing Charters (BPCs) and Community Police Monitoring Groups (CPMGs) produce mandates for national dialogue and coalition-building where genuine agreement exists. The APA's mission focuses on Black African, Black British, Black Caribbean and mixed-heritage Black communities in England and Wales, but the framework can serve any community facing low trust in the police and disproportionate use of police powers, including women, young people, LGBTQ+ and disabled people. Aligned with devolution by default, PAF ensures that as power moves from Westminster to strategic authorities, voice, evidence-setting and scrutiny capacity move to communities, strengthening public accountability within places rather than merely relocating power.



The Crisis of Police Legitimacy

Police legitimacy rests not only on crime prevention but on whether their coercive powers are used fairly, lawfully, transparently and accountably. Communities cannot be expected to consent to policing when their experience is shaped by racial profiling, disproportionate use of force, child strip search, deaths following police contact, weak complaint and misconduct outcomes, institutional defensiveness, over-policing and under-protection.

Successive inquiries and reviews have identified recurring problems in policing culture, governance, discrimination and accountability. The continuing gap between reform commitments and everyday practice has produced justified scepticism about institution-led reform. The problem is not an absence of plans, strategies or consultation exercises; it is the absence of sustained community power that is capable of testing whether those commitments change outcomes.

NAMING THE HARM

The APA describes the repeated extraction of community testimony without corresponding power, resourcing or accountability as consultative abuse. It contributes to Black fatigue, democratic disillusionment and the concentration of civic labour among a small number of unpaid community leaders. PAF replaces episodic consultation with a structured cycle of mandate, evidence, scrutiny, response and renewal.

The framework also recognises that legitimacy is differentiated. National confidence measures cannot substitute for the experience of communities disproportionately exposed to police powers. Lived experience is therefore treated as democratic evidence to be considered alongside disaggregated quantitative data, official assessments, complaints, misconduct outcomes and policy commitments.



Historical and Constitutional Case for Independent Community Oversight

Policing accountability is a constitutional question because police officers exercise some of the state's most coercive powers: detention, stop and search, surveillance, restriction of liberty, use of force and, in extreme cases, lethal force. The legitimacy of those powers depends on robust safeguards and a credible relationship between public authority and democratic consent.

The Stephen Lawrence inquiry highlighted the institutional racism at the centre of British policing. Subsequent reviews, including the Casey Review and the Angiolini Inquiry, have continued to identify serious failures of culture, standards, equality and accountability. The repeated pattern is familiar: inquiry, recommendation, institutional plan, initial activity, declining momentum and unresolved structural harm. Internal reform alone has not proved sufficient to sustain change.

Existing accountability mechanisms are necessary but incomplete. Ministerial and political accountability, police leadership and professional standards, inspectorates, complaints bodies and courts each perform distinct functions. None provides a continuing democratic structure through which communities most affected by police disproportionality can collectively set standards, scrutinise reform delivery and require public answers.

PAF is also grounded in civil and human rights. Relevant rights include life, freedom from inhuman or degrading treatment, liberty and security, non-discrimination, privacy and family life, expression, peaceful assembly and association. The Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty requires public authorities to have due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. PAF asks whether these duties are visible in outcomes, not merely whether an institution has adopted a strategy.

Devolution creates an opportunity to connect policing governance with public health, safeguarding, housing, youth services, transport, employment support and other determinants of community safety. It also creates a risk that power previously concentrated nationally becomes concentrated within regional executive structures. Independent community oversight is therefore necessary to ensure that devolved governance remains accountable downward to affected communities as well as upward to ministers, electorates and statutory scrutiny bodies.



Purpose and Status of this Framework

This document is both a strategic statement and a replicable framework. It explains why independent community oversight is constitutionally and democratically necessary, defines the core architecture, describes the relationship between civic & technical scrutiny, and establishes minimum standards for legitimacy.

The framework is designed to be used by communities, civil society organisations, local anchor organisations, policing and crime governance bodies, strategic authorities, mayors, deputy mayors for policing and crime, police and crime panels, local scrutiny committees, successor policing and crime bodies, community safety partnerships, police services, local authorities, universities, funders and policymakers. It can operate independently within civil society and can also complement existing formal accountability structures where institutions are prepared to recognise community mandate and preserve democratic & civic independence. The framework may provide an independent evidence and participation mechanism for those bodies, but adoption or funding by a statutory institution does not convert PAF, a BPC Steering Group or a CPMG into a statutory decision-making body.

PAF has an England and Wales programme scope. References in this document to strategic authorities, mayoral PCC functions and the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 apply to implementation in England. Welsh implementation must be adapted to the distinct Welsh devolution, local government and policing-governance context.



APA CONFERENCE ATTENDEES REGISTERING FOR THE DAY'S EVENT.



The Fourth Pillar: Democratising the Police Accountability Space

The framework identifies three extant pillars of policing accountability: national government, strategic authorities and elected democratic office-holders; professional regulation and internal governance; and inspection, complaints investigation and legal accountability. PAF proposes a fourth pillar: independent community oversight grounded in democratic participation and civic legitimacy.

THE THREE EXTANT PILLARS, AND THE FOURTH

PILLAR	PRIMARY FUNCTION	STRUCTURAL LIMITATION ADDRESSED BY THE FOURTH PILLAR
National and devolved democratic accountability	Legislation, national standards, funding, strategic direction, devolved public-safety governance, policing plans and budgets, cross-service coordination and the exercise of PCC or successor functions.	Electoral mandates are broad and periodic. Devolution may strengthen local executive capacity without giving communities most affected by policing a continuing role in setting standards, evidence priorities or assessing outcomes.
Professional regulation and internal governance	Operational leadership, organisational discipline, standards and workforce management.	The institution remains responsible for assessing and reforming itself.
Inspection, complaints and legal accountability	Inspection, misconduct investigation, adjudication and legal remedy.	Processes are often incident-based, technical or retrospective and do not provide continuing community mandate.
Policing Accountability Framework	Community-defined standards, civic evidence, public reporting, democratic escalation and sustained scrutiny.	Connects lived experience and organised community judgement to operational and national accountability.

SCOPE AND LIMITS

The fourth pillar does not confer operational command or statutory enforcement powers. Its authority is civic: the legitimacy of a transparent democratic process, the quality of its evidence, the independence of its governance and its capacity to mobilise public and institutional attention. Where appropriate, formal institutions may recognise or embed elements of the model, but the source of community authority must remain independent of the body being scrutinised.



The fourth pillar provides downward democratic accountability. Statutory bodies remain accountable through elections, legislation, audit, inspection and formal scrutiny. PAF complements those arrangements by creating a continuing route through which affected communities can organise evidence, establish collective priorities, assess institutional responses and bring findings into devolved and national decision-making.



Co-produced Origins, Adaptation, and National Relevance

The Community Oversight Working Group (COWG) was convened and led by the Alliance for Police Accountability (APA) through a wider civil society call. It drew on the experience of Black and anti-racist organisations, community leaders, practitioners, researchers and policy specialists, with contributions spanning across organisations of all demographics. It should therefore be understood as a wider civil society contribution to democratic policing accountability rather than solely as an internal product of the APA.

The APA has reviewed and adapted that framework for its Black-led Policing Accountability Strategy (PAS). The strategic sequence is to build a coherent Black policing accountability agenda; express it through local BPCs; develop local oversight and evidence structures as CPMGs; use the resulting mandates as the basis for national dialogue and wider coalition-building where genuine agreement exists.

PAF therefore holds two positions at once. The APA's programme is focused on Black African, Black British, Black Caribbean, and mixed-heritage Black communities in England and Wales. The underlying framework however is capable of wider application by women's, youth, LGBTQ+, disability, and other communities where there is a recurring problem of low-trust in the police and disproportionality in the use of police powers.

THE MISSION OF THE APA

The APA exists to democratise the police accountability space for Black African, Black British, Black Caribbean, and mixed-heritage Black communities.

PAF is aligned with the current national direction towards devolution by default, local-first decision-making, joined-up public services and greater community control. Its role is to ensure that the transfer of power from Westminster to strategic authorities is accompanied by a corresponding transfer of voice, evidence-setting and scrutiny capacity to communities. Devolution should not merely relocate institutional power from the national to the regional level; it should strengthen democratic accountability within places.



The Policing Accountability Framework

PAF is an integrated accountability chain rather than a single board. It operates through mutually reinforcing functions at community, operational and national levels.

LEVELS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE ACCOUNTABILITY CHAIN

LEVEL / FUNCTION	CORE MECHANISM	PRIMARY OUTPUTS	ACCOUNTABILITY RELATIONSHIP
Community deliberation	Popular Assemblies and thematic forums	Priorities, lived-experience evidence, elected or ratified advocates and democratic mandate.	Accountable to participating communities through transparent rules, inclusion and public reporting.
Community standard setting	BPC co-production	Locally agreed expectations, standards, evidence questions, commitments and escalation procedures.	Ratified through a recognised local democratic process.
Continuous monitoring	CPMG	Evidence logs, data analysis, quarterly briefings, findings and annual reports.	Reports to the local assembly and operates under agreed terms, conflict rules and evidence protocols.
Operational scrutiny	Local or operational oversight arrangement	Structured dialogue, public evidence sessions, assessment of institutional responses and escalation.	Independent civic scrutiny aligned to the relevant policing jurisdiction.
National learning and scrutiny	National network, thematic scrutiny and future national arrangements	Comparative analysis, national reports, policy recommendations and systemic escalation.	Synthesises local mandates without directing local priorities.
Civic intelligence	APA Activity and Insight Hub	Searchable evidence, dashboards, explainers, action tracking and public intelligence.	Human-reviewed, transparent, secure and governed by rights-based data protocols.

The architecture is deliberately adaptable. It is aligned to enduring accountability functions rather than the current configuration of police forces or governance bodies. Local implementation should map the relationship between neighbourhoods, local authorities, strategic-authority areas, police areas and local policing areas. PAF can therefore remain relevant where PCC functions transfer to mayors,



policing governance moves to successor boards, police areas are altered or a strategic authority covers more than one police jurisdiction.



POLICE OFFICERS ON DUTY IN CENTRAL LONDON. — ILLUSTRATIVE IMAGE

Black Policing Charters & Popular Assemblies

For the APA's programme, PAF is applied through locally produced BPCs. The APA provides the method, facilitation, evidence support, training, national coordination and quality standards. Local communities determine the content, priorities, constitution, election or ratification process, standing orders and monitoring arrangements. Each local process should produce a jurisdictional crosswalk identifying the relevant police force or local policing area, local authorities, strategic authority, mayor or PCC, deputy mayor or policing lead, police and crime panel, local scrutiny committee, community safety partnership and other responsible public bodies. Community-defined geography must remain possible, but institutional responsibilities and escalation routes must be clearly mapped.



A CAPTIVATED AUDIENCE LISTENING DURING ONE OF THE APA'S CONFERENCES.

Popular Assemblies move beyond statutory consultation because the community does not merely respond to an institutional agenda. Participants consider lived experience, local history, oral testimony, official data, policy commitments and rights duties; deliberate on priorities; and establish a collective mandate. Trauma-informed practice is essential: testimony must not be extracted and abandoned, and



participation must be supported by informed consent, safeguarding, accessibility and clear expectations about how evidence will be used.

THE TEN-STAGE IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAY

STAGE	PURPOSE	MINIMUM OUTPUT
1. Readiness and local anchor	Assess local capacity, legitimacy, risks, resources and partner commitment.	Readiness decision and local delivery agreement.
2. BPC SG recruitment and onboarding	Establish inclusive civic leadership, terms, safeguarding and paid participation.	BPC SG and agreed governance arrangements.
3. History, memory and rights evidence	Document local experience, campaigns, harm and community priorities.	Local evidence and history pack.
4. Architecture of policing and power	Map decisions, budgets, governance, scrutiny and influence.	Power and accountability map.
5. PRAP, Maturity Matrix and rights literacy	Build institutional literacy and assessment capability.	Community assessment framework and questions.
6. Comparative accountability and policing by consent	Examine local, UK and international models.	Options and design principles.
7. Community education and youth engagement	Use accessible methods, including legislative theatre and youth forums.	Broader participation and youth evidence.
8. Assembly organising	Prepare facilitation, outreach, evidence, access and voting arrangements.	Assembly plan and trained delivery team.
9. Popular Assembly	Deliberate, set priorities and elect or ratify advocates.	Democratic mandate and priority set.
10. Charter, monitoring and review	Draft and ratify the BPC; form the CPMG; agree engagement, reporting and renewal.	BPC, CPMG, MoUs and review cycle.

A BPC is more than a statement of values. It is an accountability instrument. It should define standards, indicators, qualitative evidence questions, institutional commitments, data expectations, review intervals, publication arrangements and escalation procedures. It operates over a five-year cycle to provide continuity across changes in police and political leadership, while annual assemblies and end-of-cycle renewal preserve democratic accountability.

In England, relevant indicators should be cross-referenced, where appropriate, against the Police and Crime Plan or successor plan, strategic-authority public-safety priorities, neighbourhood-policing commitments, policing budgets and precepts, community safety strategies, equality objectives and



health-inequality duties. This does not make the BPC subordinate to those documents; it enables the community to assess whether devolved policy commitments produce fair outcomes.

THE ALLIANCE FOR POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

ISOB & Charter Relationships

Independent Scrutiny & Oversight Boards (ISOBs) are complementary but distinct. PAF will provide technical and professional scrutiny of the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Police Race Action Plan (PRAP) using the Maturity Matrix. A BPC provides the local standards against which the community assesses policing.

Where an ISOB exists, the local BPC should agree to a memorandum of understanding covering: information exchange, referral, meeting cadence, independence, confidentiality, publication, and how to address disagreements. The BPC SG or CPMG must retain the right to publish its own assessment and must not be required to adopt an ISOB conclusion.

IN PRACTICE

The BPC SG or CPMG must retain the right to publish its own assessment and must not be required to adopt an ISOB conclusion.

The Maturity Matrix is the tool that police forces and the public should use to measure a force's progress against the PRAP and the police's Anti-Racism Commitment. The national ISOB and PRAP team developed it with feedback from Black communities both inside and outside policing. It sets 14 measures spanning culture and workforce, powers and procedures, trust and reconciliation, safety and victimisation, data and accountability, and leadership, and assesses forces using both quantitative data and qualitative narrative evidence. Through the Maturity Matrix, BPCs and CPMGs carry the legacy and impact of the National ISOB forward, with PAF offering the independent mechanism for communities to set expectations, scrutinise evidence and test forces against the Matrix's metrics.



Community Police Monitoring Groups

The CPMG provides continuity between assemblies. It gathers, tests and organises evidence concerning the BPC's priorities and the responsiveness of relevant institutions. It is not a substitute for the IOPC, HMICFRS, courts, formal complaints systems or professional standards processes. It examines patterns, institutional responses and community experiences.

Evidence may include disaggregated stop and search, use of force and strip-search data; complaints and misconduct outcomes; deaths following police contact; safeguarding and mental-health concerns; policing in schools; hate crime and non-crime incidents; public confidence and trust; surveillance and facial recognition usage; community testimony; family and youth evidence; equality impact assessments; and progress against PRAP, Maturity Matrix and BPC metrics.

MINIMUM EVIDENCE PRACTICE

EVIDENCE FUNCTION	MINIMUM PRACTICE
Evidence collection	Use informed consent, defined purposes, secure handling, source records and a clear distinction between verified fact, testimony, analysis and allegation.
Data access	Seek regular, disaggregated and accessible information through proactive publication, FOI, MoUs, formal evidence requests and lawful data-sharing arrangements. Strategic authorities and statutory partners should identify what data can lawfully be shared. This framework does not create a direct statutory entitlement to restricted information.
Analysis	Compare institutional claims with published data, community evidence, rights duties and BPC standards; record limitations and uncertainty.
Quarterly scrutiny	Prepare a structured briefing, questions, commitments log and actions for engagement with policing and statutory agencies.
Public reporting	Publish proportionate annual reports, findings, institutional responses, unresolved concerns and planned next steps.
Hearings and evidence sessions	Convene public or community evidence sessions where significant concerns require deeper examination, subject to safeguarding and procedural fairness.
Escalation	Use notice of concern, evidence request, review period, dialogue, corrective action and public reporting before any formal community judgement.

EVIDENCE FUNCTION	MINIMUM PRACTICE
Ethical technology	Use the Hub for accountability, mobilisation and administration, never for profiling or surveillance; retain human review and data-protection controls.

NOT A LEGAL ORDER

Community Consent Orders may be used where a recognised local democratic process concludes that a police service has maintained, breached and lost community confidence in relation to charter commitments. They are civic and political judgements, not legal orders, and cannot withdraw police powers. Their legitimacy depends on transparent evidence, notice, opportunity to respond, corrective action and ratification through agreed democratic rules.



ANY COMMUNITY'S GREATEST ASSET IS ITS PEOPLE.



Paid Participation & Community Compensation

KEY PRINCIPLE

PAF rejects a model in which policing institutions arrive with salaried officers, legal teams, analysts, communications capacity and data systems while community advocates are expected to read papers, absorb trauma, organise evidence and represent their communities without payment. Sustained democratic scrutiny cannot be built on unpaid community exhaustion.



A ROOM FULL OF CONFERENCE ATTENDEES LISTENING TO AN EXPERT PANEL.

Budgets should provide for honoraria, sessional payments, BPC SG participation, youth participation, thematic consultation, community research, travel and subsistence, access costs, childcare or other caring support and justified regional variation. Payment should be transparent, proportionate, consistently administered and designed not to compromise independence or eligibility for benefits without appropriate advice.

Paid participation is both a fairness principle and an inclusion safeguard. It broadens who can participate, reduces dependence on a small number of established leaders and recognises that community knowledge and accountability labour have value.

Where community representatives or independent experts participate in a formal statutory scrutiny arrangement, the relevant authority should provide transparent and proportionate remuneration, access and support in accordance with the applicable legislation, regulations and governance rules. Such formal participation must not replace investment in the wider independent BPC and CPMG infrastructure

THE ALLIANCE FOR POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

Funding Strategy

Independent oversight requires reliable resources. The framework should be supported through a diversified funding architecture combining philanthropic grants, civil society investment, local funding, research partnerships and, where safeguards permit, public funding. No funder or policing institution should control appointments, findings, publication or escalation.

- Core funding for governance, coordination, administration, evidence systems and organisational resilience.
- Place-based funding for local anchors, coordinators, assemblies, BPC development, CPMG activity and annual reporting.
- Ring-fenced paid participation and access budgets.
- Technology and evidence investment for the Activity & Insight Hub (hosted by the APA), data quality, security and training.
- Independent evaluation and learning resources
- Contingency and reserves sufficient to protect continuity and independence.

Funding arrangements should state that the community retains ownership of its priorities and mandate. Where police, local authorities or public bodies contribute resources, governance must prevent institutional capture and make funding relationships public.



Risks, Safeguards and Independence

Independence does not mean disengagement. The framework anticipates structured dialogue with police leaders, mayors, PCCs or successor bodies, councils, safeguarding partnerships and national institutions. Independence means that community priorities, analysis, publication and judgement cannot be vetoed by those institutions.

RISK REGISTER AND CORE SAFEGUARDS

RISK	POTENTIAL EFFECT	CORE SAFEGUARD
Institutional resistance	Refusal to engage, provide evidence or accept scrutiny.	Coalition-of-the-willing approach, public reporting, evidence requests, MoUs, escalation and independent implementation.
Politicisation	Partisan capture or loss of credibility across communities.	Transparent selection, plural civic participation, evidence standards, published decisions and non-party governance.
Institutional capture	Oversight becomes dependent on or controlled by the body scrutinised.	Independent appointments, diversified funding, conflict rules, publication rights and community ratification.
Fragmentation	Local adaptation produces incompatible or weak practice.	Minimum national standards, community of practice, shared templates, peer review and annual learning.
Community fatigue	Low participation, concentration of labour and burnout.	Paid participation, realistic cadence, local coordination, accessibility and periodic assemblies rather than continuous consultation.
Insufficient resources	Weak evidence, delayed delivery and loss of continuity.	Phased implementation, minimum viable model, funding milestones, reserves and transparent delivery gates.
Data and AI risk	Privacy breach, biased analysis or inappropriate surveillance.	Data-protection impact assessment, minimisation, source tagging, human review, no profiling and secure access controls.
Weak democratic legitimacy	Unclear mandate, unrepresentative leadership or opaque decisions.	Constitution, standing orders, inclusion plan, elections or ratification, conflict register and annual public accountability.



RISK	POTENTIAL EFFECT	CORE SAFEGUARD
Safeguarding and retraumatisation	Harm through testimony, public disclosure or unsafe participation.	Trauma-informed facilitation, informed consent, support routes, confidentiality and controlled publication.
Defamation or procedural unfairness	Unsubstantiated public allegations or unfair judgements.	Evidence thresholds, right of reply, legal advice, clear distinction between fact and allegation, and staged escalation.



APRIL LAMAI & LEROY LOGAN ON A PANEL AT APA'S FOUNDING CONFERENCE.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning

PAF should be evaluated as both a democratic process and an accountability mechanism. Evaluation must not reduce success to attendance or the number of meetings. It should test whether communities have gained knowledge, rights literacy, evidence capability, democratic mandate, economic equity and mobilising power; whether institutions respond; and whether policy or practice changes.

OUTCOMES AND EVIDENCE, BY LEVEL

LEVEL	ILLUSTRATIVE OUTCOMES	ILLUSTRATIVE EVIDENCE
Local	BPC ratified; CPMG operating; broader and more inclusive participation; improved evidence use; annual assembly and reporting; sustained engagement with agencies.	Charter records, participation profile, training feedback, evidence logs, meeting commitments, annual reports and community feedback.
Operational	More transparent data; clearer institutional responses; corrective action; improved scrutiny of patterns and reform commitments.	Data agreements, response times, action completion, public hearings, policy changes and unresolved issue logs.
Devolved governance	Community priorities are considered in strategic-authority public-safety policy, Police and Crime Plans or successor plans; statutory bodies provide timely written responses; evidence informs budget, prevention, service-integration or neighbourhood-policing decisions; and communities can identify who is responsible for implementation.	Formal submissions, committee records, published responses, recommendation trackers, policy citations, budget decisions, service agreements, scrutiny referrals, petitions and cross-agency action plans.
National	Shared learning across places; systemic analysis; national recommendations; stronger relationship between local evidence and policy debate.	Comparative reports, network participation, parliamentary or institutional engagement, national evidence packs and policy citations.
Democratic and power outcomes	Increased confidence, leadership transfer, reduced unpaid dependency and stronger ability to act collectively.	Advocate surveys, youth leadership evidence, participation payments, network density, mobilisation and qualitative learning.

Learning should be continuous and participatory. Local reflection, annual strategic review, peer learning through a community of practice, evaluation partnerships and transparent adaptation should



feed into future versions of PAF. Communities must be able to identify the model's failures as well as its successes.

Evaluation should be capable of supporting both independent learning and any formal governmental pilot-impact requirements. It should distinguish process measures, institutional-response measures, policy and practice changes, community-power outcomes and longer-term public-safety or equality outcomes.



LORNA, INTERIM DIRECTOR OF BRIG, PRESENTING AT THE LAUNCH OF THE BIRMINGHAM BLACK POLICING CHARTER.

Strategic Recommendations

1. Recognise independent community oversight as the missing democratic pillar of policing accountability and include it in national reform discussions.
2. Support the Birmingham proof of concept and document implementation learning before rapid replication.
3. Resource BPC development, CPMGs, local anchors and paid participation as durable civic infrastructure rather than short-term consultation activity.
4. Maintain a clear distinction and constructive relationship between PAFs democratic mandate and any University partner's technical scrutiny.
5. Develop standard MoUs, evidence protocols, safeguarding procedures, standing orders, escalation routes and Community Consent Order safeguards.
6. Provide timely, disaggregated and accessible policing data to independent community oversight bodies, subject to lawful privacy protections.
7. Establish national learning and coordination arrangements that synthesise local evidence without centralising local authority.
8. Invest in the Activity and Insight Hub as ethical civic intelligence infrastructure, with human review and no surveillance or individual profiling.
9. Embed intersectional participation, youth leadership and disability access in every local process.
10. Protect independence through diversified funding, transparent governance, conflict controls and unfettered publication rights.



Conclusion

PAF renews the principle of policing by consent for the twenty-first century. Consent cannot be presumed from the absence of disorder, the existence of consultation or the publication of institutional plans. It must be tested through fairness, protection, accountability, rights and the organised judgement of communities.

The framework provides a disciplined pathway from lived experience to evidence, from evidence to democratic mandate, and from mandate to sustained accountability. Its purpose is not to create another advisory mechanism dependent on institutional goodwill. It is to establish a civic infrastructure capable of maintaining scrutiny across political cycles, leadership changes and reform programmes. As political and policing powers are devolved, the requirement for organised community accountability becomes stronger rather than weaker. PAF ensures that devolution does not end at the strategic-authority boundary but reaches the communities whose consent and confidence policing depends upon.

THE FRAMEWORK IN ONE SENTENCE

Community-led assemblies establish the mandate; charters define the standards; monitoring groups build the evidence; independent oversight requires public answers; and national coordination turns local experience into systemic accountability.



REFERENCE

Glossary of Core Terms

APA Policing Accountability Strategy (APA PAS)

The APA's five-year programme and investment case covering April 2026 to March 2031.

APA Policing Accountability Framework (APA PAF)

The standalone strategic and practical framework through which communities can establish democratic police accountability in their areas.

Independent Community Oversight Framework

The co-produced civil society framework convened by the APA and informed by African Caribbean, Asian and white anti-racist organisations. It is the source architecture adapted in PAF.

Independent Scrutiny and Oversight Board (ISOB)

The former technical and professional scrutiny model associated with the Police Race Action Plan, force implementation and the Maturity Matrix. ISOB provided technical scrutiny which is now missing with their dissolution.

Black Policing Charter (BPC)

A locally produced democratic charter through which African, African Caribbean and African/Caribbean mixed-heritage communities define expectations, standards, priorities and accountability demands in relation to policing.

BPC Steering Group (BPC SG)

The local civic group responsible for developing, stewarding and monitoring a BPC.

Popular Assembly

A structured deliberative forum through which communities discuss policing, safety, accountability and justice, consider evidence and establish a democratic mandate.

Community Police Monitoring Group (CPMG)

A local community-led evidence-gathering and monitoring body emerging from the charter process.

APA Local Anchor Organisation

A trusted local organisation supporting place-based delivery, community convening, outreach and local legitimacy.

APA Activity and Insight Hub

The AI-enabled digital, administrative, research, policy, data, communications and public-intelligence infrastructure supporting the programme.



National Black Policing Network

The emerging network of city-based Black policing accountability groups and BPC SG members.

National Black Policing Networking Conference

An early broad-invite gathering to showcase Birmingham, share emerging local work, introduce PAF and invite other places into the process.

National Black Policing Assembly

The later democratic assembly bringing together mature local charter processes, evidence, youth participation, thematic work and policy analysis.

National Black Policing Charter (NBPC)

The national charter or accountability agenda emerging from and ratified through the National Black Policing Assembly.

Inclusive Black Equality Thematics

The commitment to examine differentiated policing experiences across Black young people, women, children, LGBTQ+ communities, disabled people, elders, families and other vulnerable groups.

Community Consent Order

A civic and political accountability instrument, not a legal order. It records a democratically mandated judgement on whether a police service has maintained, breached or lost community confidence.

Black Public Health Charter

A future, separately funded community-facing charter focused on serious violence, safeguarding and public health within African, African Caribbean and African/Caribbean descent communities.

Strategic Authority

An authority recognised under section 1 of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026, including foundation, combined and mayoral strategic authorities. Strategic authorities may exercise functions across defined areas of competence, including public safety and health, well-being and public service reform.

Mayoral PCC Functions

Functions of a police and crime commissioner exercised by the mayor of a combined authority or combined county authority following the statutory transfer of those functions.

Devolved Policing Governance

The arrangements through which a strategic authority mayor, deputy mayor for policing and crime, police and crime panel, successor policing and crime body or other authorised structure provides political governance and scrutiny of policing.



Local Scrutiny Committee

The statutory overview and scrutiny arrangement provided for certain mayoral strategic authorities under the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026, subject to commencement and regulations. These committees are distinct from PAF's independent community oversight structures.

Neighbourhood Governance

Local governance arrangements established under section 62 of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 to move engagement and decision-making closer to residents. PAF structures may work alongside these arrangements while retaining their independent civic mandate.



ATTENDEES AT AN APA CONFERENCE ARRIVING AND NETWORKING.

Appendices

Appendix A: Framework implementation cycle

01

Readiness

Key decision: Is there sufficient local legitimacy, capacity, safety and funding to begin?

Quality gate: Anchor due diligence; stakeholder and risk map; inclusion and resource plan.

02

Formation

Key decision: Is the BPC SG representative, accountable and equipped?

Quality gate: Terms of reference; conflict register; safeguarding; payment and access arrangements.

03

Evidence and learning

Key decision: Do participants understand local history, policing structures, rights and reform commitments?

Quality gate: Evidence pack; source records; training completion; agreed evidence questions.

04

Assembly

Key decision: Has a fair deliberative process established priorities and representatives?

Quality gate: Published rules; participation profile; decision record; ratification evidence.

05

Charter and monitoring

Key decision: Are standards measurable and is the CPMG operational?

Quality gate: Ratified BPC; work plan; MoUs; monitoring framework; data protocol.

06

Scrutiny and response

Key decision: Are institutions responding and are findings fair, evidenced and public?

Quality gate: Quarterly briefings; responses; actions; right of reply; annual report.

07

Renewal

Key decision: Does the mandate remain current and legitimate?

Quality gate: Annual feedback; leadership review; end-of-cycle Popular Assembly and revised charter.



Appendix B: Minimum governance & evidence standards

- Written constitution or terms of reference, standing orders and decision authority.
- Transparent recruitment, election or ratification and a documented inclusion plan.
- Conflicts-of-interest register and procedures for recusal.
- Safeguarding, complaints, data protection, confidentiality and testimony-handling protocols.
- Paid participation and access policy.
- Defined evidence taxonomy distinguishing data, testimony, analysis, allegation and judgement.
- Source tagging, version control, secure storage and retention rules.
- Right of reply and correction process before adverse publication.
- Quarterly action and commitment tracking and at least annual public reporting.
- Independent funding disclosure and protection of publication rights.
- Annual democratic accountability to the community and five-year charter renewal.

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Funding relationships are made public in accordance with the independence safeguards set out in this framework: no funder or policing institution controls the APA's appointments, findings, publication or escalation decisions.





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