

Report to: Sandwell Metropolitan Council

Report of: Councillor Elaine Costigan – Panel Member, West Midlands Police and Crime Panel

West Midlands Police and Crime Panel – Update February 2018 – September 2018

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report sets out the work of the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel since the last report presented in February 2018. Sandwell has one member and two substitute members serving on the Panel.

2 It is recommended that:

- a) The information contained in the report be noted;**
- b) Members consider whether there are any recommendations relating to the PCC and policing and crime in Sandwell that could be championed by the West Midlands Police and Crime Sandwell Panel Members.**

3 Introduction

- 3.1 The West Midlands Police and Crime Panel was established in November 2012 as part of the new governance arrangements for policing to provide the checks and balances in relation to the performance of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). The Panel consists of 12 councillors representing the 7 districts across the West Midlands and 2 independent members. Named substitutes have also been appointed for each councillor member. Cllr John O’Shea (Birmingham) is Panel Chair, and Cllr Ken Hawkins (Solihull) is Vice Chair.

- 3.2 Sandwell is represented on the Panel by Cllr Elaine Costigan. Cllr Julie Webb is Cllr Costigan’s named substitute. In addition, Cllr David Hosell is one of the Association of Black Country Authorities’ named substitute appointments.

- 3.3 Panel meeting papers, its statutory and scrutiny reports, together with more information about the Panel and meeting dates can be found on the Panel’s website:
www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk.

4 The Role of the Police and Crime Panel

- 4.1 The Panel has a dual role to both support and scrutinise the work of the PCC. The Panel acts as a critical friend on behalf of West Midlands residents and has a number of statutory tasks:
- Scrutinise and comment on the PCC’s Police and Crime Plan;
 - Scrutinise and make a recommendation on the policing precept and budget for policing;
 - Review the PCC’s Annual Report;
 - Hold confirmation hearings before the PCC makes certain key appointments;
 - Handle complaints about the PCC, referring serious complaints to the Independent Office for Police Conduct.

5 Work of the Panel (February 2018 – September 2018)

- 5.1 The Panel has met three times since February 2018.
- In February 2018 the Panel reviewed the PCC's policing precept and budget for 2018/19; The Panel's letter and the PCC's response are available at <http://westmidlandspcp.co.uk/publications/>
 - In March 2018 the Panel questioned the PCC on the Force's Estate Strategy. This proposed closure of 24 buildings and renovations of others and had received public and media attention. The PCC clarified closure decisions rested with the Chief Constable. However the PCC would not sign the release any building without assurance the local policing requirement and local police presence was met in each area.
 - In July 2018 a number of new members from across the Region were appointed to the Panel and the Panel elected its chair and vice chair for 2018/19. Members examined the PCC's provisional revenue and capital budget outturn for 2017/18.
- 5.2 In addition, the Panel has considered progress on the WMCA Public Sector Reform research programme to drive reform of the local youth justice system. The Panel has also considered the eight West Midlands Drugs Policy Recommendations that aim to bring services together and introduce new ways to reduce crime and harm of drug addiction on the public and addicts. Other topics raised with the PCC include traveller encampments, theft of vehicles and the Force's capacity to handle 101 and 999 calls – Members are visiting the Contact Centre in October.

6 Raising the Panel's Profile and Public Engagement

- 6.1 The Panel has a duty to raise awareness of it with key stakeholders, the public and the media. Efforts have continued to engage the public at meetings by holding them at venues across the region. There is the option for members of the public to ask questions of the Panel at each meeting.
- 6.2 The Panel communicates via Twitter (@westmidspcp). The Panel has a website: www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk

7 Panel Resources and Officer Support

- 7.1 The Panel continues to operate within the limits of the Home Office Grant. The Panel agreed that Members would not use this to draw special responsibility allowances but Member travel and carer expenses can be claimed.
- 7.2 The Birmingham Scrutiny Office acts as the Panel Secretariat. Support is also provided by Birmingham legal officers and a Solihull finance officer.

8 Opportunities for Further Dialogue with Overview and Scrutiny

As we shape the Panel's work programme for 2018/19 and assess the impact, actions and decisions of the PCC there are opportunities for further dialogue and closer working with local scrutiny committees. Elected members from all parties should be encouraged to raise issues relating to policing and crime with the Sandwell Police and Crime Panel Members.

9 Background Papers

West Midlands Police and Crime Panel Minutes and Agenda: www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk

Contact officer:

Emma Williamson, Panel Officer

Email: wmppc@birmingham.gov.uk Tel: 0121 464 6870