

**Report to:** Sandwell Metropolitan Council

**Report of:** Councillor Yvonne Davies, Leader and West Midlands Police and Crime Panel Member

**Date:** 15 October 2019

## **West Midlands Police and Crime Panel – Update October 2019**

### **1 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 Bi-annual reports on the activities of the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel are presented to Sandwell MBC for consideration. Sandwell is represented on the Panel by Cllr Yvonne Davies and Cllr Farut Shaeen. Cllr Richard Jones is named substitute.
- 1.2 This report reflects on the work of the Panel during 2018/19 and activities this Municipal Year July - October 2019.

### **2 It is recommended that:**

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

### **3 Role of the Police and Crime Panel**

- 3.1 The West Midlands Police and Crime Panel was established in November 2012 as part of the new governance arrangements for policing. Under these arrangements the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) sets the strategic direction and budget for local policing holds the Chief Constable to account for an efficient and effective police force.
- 3.2 The Police and Crime Panel provides the checks and balances in relation to the performance of the PCC.
- 3.3 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. It reviews and scrutinises the decision and actions of the PCC, makes reports and recommendations and fulfils a number of statutory tasks.

### **4. Panel Membership**

- 3.4 The Panel consists of 12 councillors representing the 7 West Midland districts. The membership reflects the political balance of the region. Named substitutes are appointed for each councillor member. Two independent members also serve on the Panel who were appointed following a regional advertisement and competitive interview process.
- 3.5 In July 2019 the Panel appointed Councillor Ken Hawkins (Solihull) as Chair and Cllr Narinder Kaur Kooner (Birmingham) as Vice Chair for the 2019-2020 Municipal Year.
- 3.6 Sandwell is represented on the Panel by Cllr Yvonne Davies and Cllr Farut Shaeen. Cllr Richard Jones is named substitute.
- 3.7 Panel meeting papers, meeting dates, its statutory and scrutiny reports, together with more information about the Panel can be found on the Panel's website:  
[www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk](http://www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk)

#### **4 Core Work Programme –Statutory Tasks**

4.1 The Panel has five statutory responsibilities that are the core element of its work programme:

- Scrutinise and make a recommendation on the PCC's proposed policing precept and budget, with the power to veto the precept;
- Scrutinise and comment on the PCC's Police and Crime Plan;
- Review the PCC's Annual Report;
- Hold confirmation hearings before the PCC makes certain senior appointments; and
- Handle non-criminal complaints about the PCC, referring serious complaints to the Independent Office for Police Conduct. (Task delegated to the Birmingham Monitoring Officer).

4.2. Panels are encouraged to also undertake wider exploratory work to build its knowledge and insight and hold the PCC to account.

#### **5 Highlights from 2018/19**

5.1 The Panel challenged the PCC on response times to the 101 non-emergency number.

5.2 Panel members raised resident's concerns about police visibility and questioned the PCC and Deputy Chief Constable on resources for local policing and improving public engagement.

5.3 Members advocated greater promotion of the PCC's Active Citizens Fund to encourage greater take up by local groups.

5.4 The Panel sought assurance from the PCC of his oversight to improving crime recording arrangements following the HMICFRS 'inadequate' rating.

5.5 The Panel encouraged the PCC to evaluate the cashable and non-cashable benefits of the WMP2020 force business transformation programme and consider how best to communicate these to the public.

5.6 A subgroup of Panel members carried out detailed scrutiny of budget issues, pressures and projections ahead of the formal review of the PCC's precept proposals.

5.7 The Panel examined the proposal to transfer the PCC. Members spoke to the West Midlands Mayor, the PCC and officers of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) before responding to the WMCA consultation.

#### **6 Activities July – October 2019**

6.1 **Training and induction** – An induction was held in July 2019 for new members to learn about the role of the Panel. A police finance briefing took place in September and a briefing by the PCC and Force is scheduled for October, including a tour of the call centre. The Annual Police and Crime Panel Conference in November 2019 will provide an opportunity for members to attend a number of topical police and crime workshops.

6.2 **Confirmation Hearing for Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner** – In July the Panel held a confirmation hearing and questioned the PCC's proposed appointee to assess his suitability for the post. The Panel recommended the PCC should appoint Mr Bertie.

- 6.3 **Review of the PCC's Annual Report** - In September the Panel considered the PCC's draft Annual Report. Members questioned the PCC on progress made during the previous year towards his Police and Crime Plan priorities and made a number of suggestions for the final version of the report.
- 6.4 The Panel receives regular updates at each meeting from the PCC on recent activity, including efforts to tackle vehicle thefts, violent crime, the police cadet scheme, grant funding and the development of the Violence Reduction Unit.
- 6.5 Further Panel meetings are planned for 25 November 2019, 13 January 2020, 3 February 2020 and 16 March 2020.

## **7 Raising the Panel's Profile and Public Engagement**

- 7.1 The Panel has a duty to raise awareness of it with key stakeholders, the public and the media. There is an opportunity for the public to ask questions of the Panel at each meeting. All 2019/20 meetings have been live streamed and each had over 300 views.
- 7.2 The Panel has a website: [www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk](http://www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk) and also communicates via Twitter @westmidspcp.

## **8 Panel Resources and Officer Support**

- 8.1 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 travel and carer expenses can be claimed.
- 8.2 Dudley's Chief Executive supports the Panel and the Birmingham Scrutiny Office acts as the secretariat. Support is also provided by Birmingham legal officers and a Solihull finance officer.

## **9 Opportunities for Further Dialogue with Overview and Scrutiny**

- 9.1 As we shape the Panel's work programme for 2019/20 and assess the impact, actions and decisions of the PCC there are opportunities for further dialogue and closer working with local scrutiny committees.
- 9.2 Elected members should be encouraged to raise issues relating to policing and crime with the Sandwell Police and Crime Panel Members.

## **Background Papers**

West Midlands Police and Crime Panel Minutes and Agenda: [www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk](http://www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk)

## **Contact officer:**

Emma Williamson, Panel Officer

Email: [wmpcp@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:wmpcp@birmingham.gov.uk) Tel: 0121 464 6870