

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 2019

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 September 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 Role of the Panel and Membership

- 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 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.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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.

4 Core Work Programme – Statutory Scrutiny Responsibilities

- 4.1 The Panel has a number of statutory scrutiny responsibilities that it must deliver. These constitute the core work programme:
- Scrutinise and comment on the PCC’s Police and Crime Plan;
 - Scrutinise and make a recommendation on the policing precept and budget for policing, with the power to veto the proposed precept;
 - 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 Achievements 2018/19

- 5.1 In October 2018 the Panel reviewed the PCC's Annual Report examining the progress made towards his priorities and targets set out in his Police and Crime Plan.
- 5.2 In January 2019 Members questioned the PCC and Deputy Chief Constable over their plans for local policing and the improving public engagement.
- 5.3 In February 2019 the Panel reviewed the PCC's policing precept and budget for 2019/20. The Panel was not quorate for this meeting, which means that a formal decision could not be reached. However, those present agreed to support the PCC's proposal. The Panel's report on is published on the Panel website at <http://westmidlandspcp.co.uk/publications/>
- 5.4 **Budget Scrutiny** - The Panel established a sub group to carry out detailed scrutiny of budget issues and develop a good understanding of key issues, budget pressures and projections. The sub group looked in detail at the PCC's budget outturn, medium term financial plan, and the PCC's preliminary revenue budget and capital programme.
- 5.5 **The Future of Police Governance** - The Panel plays a key role in police governance so a key focus of work this year was examining the proposals to transfer the PCC responsibilities to the West Midlands Mayor in 2020. Members challenged Andy Street, West Midlands Mayor, and officers of the WMCA on proposals. The Police and Crime Commissioner also outlined his views on the two roles merging. The Panel's response to the WMCA consultation is on the Panel website.
- 5.6 The Panel also received regular updates at each meeting from the PCC on recent activity, including his efforts to tackle vehicle thefts, violent crime, reduce drug related deaths, and the development of the police cadets scheme. In addition Members have challenged the PCC on the recent HMICFRS 'inadequate' rating for crime recording and questioned the PCC and Deputy Chief Constable on resources for local neighbourhood policing and benefits arising from the WMP2020 police transformation programme.

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 has a website: www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk and also communicates via Twitter @westmidspcp.

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 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. 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

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