

**Report to:** Sandwell Metropolitan Council

**Report of:** Councillor Preet Kaur Gill – Panel Member, West Midlands Police and Crime Panel

## **West Midlands Police and Crime Panel - Update October 2016 – January 2017**

### **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 2016. Sandwell has one member and one substitute member 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.
- 3.2 Sandwell is represented on the Panel by Cllr Preet Kaur Gill. Cllr Julie Webb is Cllr Gill's named substitute.
- 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](http://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 and Deputy PCC, referring serious complaints to the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

## **5 Work of the Panel (October 2016 – January 2017)**

- 5.1 The Panel has met twice since September 2016.
- 5.2 In November, the main item on the agenda was to consider progress made by the PCC and other key partners towards implementing the recommendations in the Panel's scrutiny inquiry report Tackling Female Genital Mutilation in the West Midlands. The original report was published in June 2015, and contained recommendations for the PCC and partner agencies. The report led to the establishment of a West Midlands Regional Taskforce, chaired by Head Teacher, Hazel Pulley. Hazel, Shelley Ward, Prevention of Violence against Vulnerable People Programme and Benita Wishart, who supports the FGM task force attended to report back to the panel.
- 5.3 The Panel discussed a number of issues, including the need for CCGs and other health organisations to be involved as community safety officers in local authorities cannot tackle this alone; the disappointing lack of prosecutions – however, it was recognised that prevention was the best option; the idea of having community champions; the involvement of the education sector (it was noted that Hazel Pulley had been briefing teachers over the summer about a teaching pack that has been developed and asking them to go out to their schools to talk to other teachers. It was agreed that progress was being made and that there are some very innovative approaches, and hope that these are pushed out to the other local authorities so that these can spread.
- 5.4 The report and the PCC's response can be found at [westmidlandspcp.co.uk/publications/](http://westmidlandspcp.co.uk/publications/).
- 5.5 The panel also considered a report from the PCC on his oversight role in police complaints; the effectiveness of the police complaints and appeals monitoring; and the proposed changes set out in the Policing and Crime Bill.
- 5.6 In January, the meeting focused on the proposed inquiry into the wider criminal justice system and the PCC's role within it. There are a wide range of partnerships or areas of partnership that could be considered, so it is suggested that the Panel focus on those areas where most value can be added. Members settled on a focus on youth offending and how partner agencies are working together to reduce offending.
- 5.7 A new slot on the agenda for the Commissioner to update the Panel on what he is working on has been a good opportunity for members to hear more about a range of matters including bike crime, the recruitment of police staff and the efforts being made to increase the diversity of the police force and the forthcoming summit on unauthorised encampments.
- 5.8 The next meeting will be held on 6<sup>th</sup> February, where panel members will consider the PCC's budget and precept proposals.

## **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) and press releases are distributed to the local media contacts. The Panel has a website: [www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk](http://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**

8.1 As we shape the Panel's work programme for 2016/17 and assess the impact, actions and decisions of the PCC there are opportunities for further dialogue and closer working with local scrutiny committees. A mechanism to share future work programmes and recommendations arising from scrutiny work would assist this process.

8.2 Sandwell Police and Crime Panel Members are able to champion recommendations that arise from Overview and Scrutiny inquiries which relate to policing and crime in Sandwell.

8.3 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  
Location: [www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk](http://www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk)

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